Word, Spirit and Community: Operant Hermeneutics in Charismatic Preaching

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Abstract

Timothy James Miller

This research explores the hermeneutic and homiletic priorities of five Charismatic preachers through qualitative sermon analysis and in-depth interviews. These operant and espoused voices are considered in dialogue with formal and normative voices, providing robust analytical tools for reflection on Charismatic preaching.

The central hypothesis suggests that Charismatic preachers are attending to the Word, the Spirit and the Community in distinctive ways. To establish the broader context for these influences, the research considers the historical background of the Charismatic movement and considers Craig Keener's *Spirit Hermeneutics* as a formal voice, providing a normative standard for pneumatic interpretation.

The fieldwork offers a rich description of the operant and espoused practices of the five preachers and generates data which serves to enrich and complexify the initial hypothesis. Whilst all preachers acknowledge the significance of the three dimensions, Charismatic emphases provide a unique shape to this triad. Four key themes arose from the empirical data that nuance the triadic model, opening rich avenues for theological reflection.

In relation to the Word, most of the preachers were adept at 'bridging horizons' in a way resonant with 'Theological Interpretation of Scripture.' This challenges the primacy of historical-critical methodologies and provides a framework to consider pre-critical interpretive models. Secondly, Charismatic preachers expand traditional Evangelical conceptions of the Gospel, advocating for a holistic Gospel that integrates a Kingdom emphasis alongside a crucicentric focus. In relation to the Spirit, Charismatic preachers adopt a unique approach to 'prophetic preaching', marked by timeliness, affectivity and authority. Finally, in relation to the community, Charismatic preachers are attending to the felt needs of their listeners, desiring to communicate in a way that impacts and fosters transformation. This resonates with some aspects of the 'New Homiletic', offering a broader context for Charismatic preachers to reflect on their practice.

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Contents

List of Abbreviations

PA	Preacher A
PB	Preacher B
PC	Preacher C
PD	Preacher D
PE	Preacher E
S1	Sermon 1
S2	Sermon 2
I1	Interview 1
I2	Interview 2

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1. Introduction

This thesis explores the hermeneutics witnessed in the sermons of five Charismatic preachers. In this introduction, I will outline the shape of the research and some of the key methodological considerations, but I begin with a brief account of how I came to this topic.

In February 2018, I returned to the UK to resume local church ministry, having lived in Zambia for four years. The church I would be working with was the same one I'd left four years earlier—an independent Evangelical Charismatic church. Having been in a different context for the previous four years, I returned with fresh eyes, and a curiosity that cross-cultural work had instilled in me. One of my primary responsibilities was to look after the teaching and preaching in the church, and so I was particularly interested in that aspect of ecclesial practice. In the first few Sundays of my return, I started to sense there was a particular hermeneutic approach to the Bible that was peculiar amongst Charismatics. For example, I noticed a bias towards narrative and an exemplar hermeneutic, in which biblical characters are treated as examples to follow or avoid. This resonated with some aspects of sermons I'd heard overseas from prosperity preachers and so I was keen to explore further the way that Charismatic preachers were interpreting the Bible in the UK.

My initial perception that there was a distinct and intuitive hermeneutic in Charismatic preaching became the focus of this research project. Of particular interest is the real-world hermeneutic practice of Charismatic preachers, and evaluating their approaches in light of academic theological voices. As a Charismatic preacher myself, and therefore an 'insider researcher,' I had a good intuition about the practices of Charismatic preachers, but I was keen to interrogate and develop my theories. An early hypothesis was that Charismatic preachers intuitively attend to three priorities, albeit to varying degrees. The first priority is the Word. Charismatics, broadly situated within Evangelicalism, place a distinctive authority on the Bible. Charismatic preachers, in a variety of ways, usually do something specific with the Bible in their sermons. Secondly, Charismatics attend to the Spirit. The origin of the British Charismatic movement can be traced to the 1970s, when the second 'wave of the Spirit' impacted the church. Charismatic preachers pay particular attention to the pneumatological dimension in the preparation and delivery of their sermons. The third priority is the community. Charismatics often demonstrate a bias towards pragmatism and entrepreneurialism, wanting to see growth and transformation in people and communities.

The influence of the seeker-sensitive movement on Charismatic churches has resulted in a particular attention being paid to the community, and a desire to be relevant towards their felt needs.

The interplay of these three dimensions is a key theme, which weaves throughout this project. The dynamic of each is considered and complexified through empirical data, and in conversation with formal and normative perspectives (defined and explained below). This thesis examines aspects of Charismatic hermeneutics by reflecting on the practice of five preachers. It is my hope that by sharing their stories and exploring their practice, other Charismatic preachers will resonate with the themes explored here.

1.1 Practical Theology

I was keen to explore empirically some of the hermeneutic practices of Charismatic preachers and to use theological tools to critically reflect on the data. Practical theology, as a discipline, facilitates such a conversation. It is helpful to think of two conversations that are often engaged within practical theology. The first is between theory and practice. The shorthand 'theory' includes the Bible, its interpretation, the tradition of the church and theological structures. Mark Cartledge refers to this as 'system', that is, 'beliefs and values which constitute a theological position.'[1] Similarly, practice includes experience, locatedness and context, what Cartledge calls 'lifeworld.'[2] The dialogue between these poles of theory and practice is the domain of practical theology.

The second conversation regards the tension between the indicative and imperative moods. Alistair McKitterick uses the axis of mood to describe the tension between 'what is' (indicative) and 'what ought to be' (imperative).[3] The sciences, he argues, provide a descriptive account of what is, but cannot offer a normative 'ought.'[4] This second tension allows practical theologians to reflect deeply on what is going on in practice, but also to offer

[1] Mark J Cartledge, *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003), 18.
[2] Cartledge, 17.
[3] Alistair McKitterick, 'The Theological Imperative Model for Practical Theology', *Journal of European Baptist Studies* 16, no. 4 (2016): 5–20.
[4] McKitterick, 7–8.

hope for transformative action. 'Practical theology finds its ultimate legitimacy in the currency of practical transformation.'[5]

Practical theology, therefore, mediates between theory and practice, but also between description and transformation. The reality is that these tensions are not clearly defined, and the boundaries are often blurry and malleable. For example, the combination of theory with the imperative mood could be considered to be the normative task, in which we draw on relevant theological voices to ask what ought to be going on.[6] However, as Kaufman observes, the distinction between these tensions is not straightforward.[7] Practice, and descriptive accounts of practice are often laden with normative preconceptions.[8] Kaufman's response is to resist prescriptive approaches to practical theology, preferring for the discipline to stay within the realm of the indicative and interpretive.[9] Nevertheless, I will argue that practical theology has a unique contribution to make, not only as a descriptive discipline but as a prescriptive enterprise.

1.2 Methodology

Whilst most practical theologians would agree that the discipline attends to both the system and the lifeworld, many discussions concern the nature of the inter-relation between the two (some of which will be discussed below).[10] Unlike other disciplines, practical theology is defined not primarily by its content but by its methods and methodologies. However, it is important to observe the distinction between method and methodology. As Cameron and Duce note, 'methodology is the philosophical approach to research you are taking and methods are the techniques you use to gather the data that will answer your research question.'[11] Regarding methodology, practical theology is concerned with approaches to

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[5] Cory E. Labanow, *Evangelicalism and the Emerging Church: A Congregational Study of a Vineyard Church* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 22.
[6] See, for example, Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), 105–38.
[7] Tone Stangeland Kaufman, 'From the Outside, Within, or In Between? Normativity at Work in Empirical Practical Theological Research', in *Conundrums in Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Joyce Mercer, Theology in Practice (Boston: Brill, 2016), 134–62.
[8] Kaufman, 159.
[9] Kaufman, 159–60.
[10] Paul Ballard and John Pritchard, *Practical Theology in Action: Christian Thinking in the Service of Church and Society* (London: SPCK, 2006), 45.
[11] Helen Cameron and Catherine Duce, *Researching Practice in Ministry and Mission: A Companion* (London: SCM Press, 2013), 29.

theory and practice, so it is necessary to be reflexive and open about my presuppositions and prior commitments. The methodological starting point is always 'in the middle of things'[12], that is, we recognise that the researcher can never come to the research project without prior experiences and ideas. The theology we receive has been shaped by experience and practices, both of our own, and of those we receive from. Similarly, our experience has been shaped by our theology and preconceptions.

Jonas Idestrom describes the unease that this methodological starting point can create:

> Initially I struggled with the challenge of the broad character of the research questions. Standing in the middle of things, not really knowing where to begin and where to end, I soon realized that, like a juggler, I had to keep several things in the air at the same time and to be patient before narrowing things down.[13]

The active involvement and reflexivity of the researcher in empirical studies can lead to a 'messiness' of method.[14] I shared this unease, particularly in the early stages of data gathering, a process I will write more about below.

1.2.1 Approaching the Bible

Evangelicalism has been defined in various ways (which will be discussed later), but as Kidd notes, it is 'hard to imagine any sufficient definition of an Evangelical Christian that did not include a reference to the Bible.'[15] The high position that Scripture has for Evangelicals has resulted in a reticence to question the role of Scripture in relation to experience. Other Christian traditions have not been so uneasy. Zoë Bennett, for example, discusses the relationship between theory and practice, noting that whilst both 'go all the way down' (that is, one can never properly 'start' from either theory or practice), there is still scope for a

[12] Nicholas M. Healy, 'Ecclesiology, Ethnography, and God: An Interplay of Reality Descriptions', in *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, ed. Pete Ward (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2012), 182.
[13] Jonas Ideström, 'Implicit Ecclesiology and Local Church Identity: Dealing with Dilemmas of Empirical Ecclesiology', in *Ecclesiology in the Trenches: Theory and Method under Construction*, ed. Sune Fahlgren and Jonas Ideström (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015), 126–27.
[14] Jason Boyd, *The Naked Preacher: Action Research and a Practice of Preaching* (London: SCM Press, 2018), 1–33.
[15] Thomas S. Kidd, 'Introduction', in *Every Leaf, Line, and Letter: Evangelicals and the Bible from the 1730s to the Present*, ed. Timothy Larsen and Thomas S. Kidd (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2021), 7–13.

variety of perspectives regarding 'starting points, trusting places and priorities we hold to.'[16] This is helpful, since it recognises that theory and practice will always be inter-dependent, whilst allowing for differing methodological assessments regarding the value and priority of each.

Bennett observes three broad 'ideal types' of relationship between theory and practice, whilst acknowledging that real situations are more nuanced:[17]

1. Theory to practice.
2. Mutual dialogue between theory and practice.
3. Practice is all we have.

The approach one takes, according to Bennett, is based on epistemological and ontological questions, such as 'what do you trust?' and why and how is such trust warranted.[18] She identifies a pole between two traditions, or families of traditions, one which is committed to the text and tradition, and one which critiques it. Theological and anthropological perspectives affect the way we approach the relationship between theory and practice. If, for example, we hold a high view of the sovereignty of God, and emphasise the fallibility of humanity, we are more likely to emphasise the authority of theory. If, on the other hand, we highlight the image of God in humankind, and the action of the Holy Spirit in leading the community to shape the text, we are likely to give authority to practice, to challenge and critique theory.[19]

Bennett concludes that such polarisations are unhelpful, and she ultimately argues that 'commitments, visions and experiences in both traditions are much more fluid and mixed.'[20] However, the discussion does alert the researcher to the need of being reflexive and open about their own prior commitments.

[16] Zoë Bennett, *Using the Bible in Practical Theology: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 43.
[17] Bennett, 43–46.
[18] Bennett, 47.
[19] Bennett, 47.
[20] Bennett, 134.

Cartledge notes that Evangelicals have been wary of stepping into this debate, usually adopting 'theory to practice' since it preserves the authority of Scripture.[21] However, fresh approaches to practical theology have sought to preserve the authority of Scripture, whilst engaging robustly with practice.[22] Helen Cameron and Helen Morris have recently published *Evangelicals Engaging in Practical Theology*, which seeks to provide method and worked examples of practical theology from an Evangelical perspective.[23]

Andy Thomas' contribution to that edited volume considers an Evangelical approach to practical theology, using Bebbington's four Evangelical distinctives (biblicism, crucicentrism, activism and conversionism).[24] He suggests three features of an Evangelical practical theology method: Firstly, Scripture, and the presence of the Spirit are necessary, not as methodological starting points, but as priorities in the interpretive process. Secondly, a communal response is preferred. Finally, the whole process is overarched by crucicentric love.[25]

This demonstrates that some Evangelical scholars are engaging robustly with practical theology, acknowledging that practice can be a legitimate theological voice, albeit one which is in careful dialogue with the ultimate authority of Scripture. More specifically, this thesis navigates through the tension of theory and practice by listening carefully to the operant and espoused voices embedded in practice, but also recognising the authority and significance of normative and formal voices.

The Bible and Interpretation

The Bible is viewed by Evangelicals as an authoritative historical text that is also applicable and relevant to their lives.[26] These beliefs require interpreters to draw links between the historical text and the contemporary context. If the contemporary context is ignored, the interpretation loses relevance. If the historical context is ignored, the interpretation loses

[21] Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, 3.
[22] Helen Collins, *Reordering Theological Reflection: Starting with Scripture* (London: SCM Press, 2020).
[23] Helen Morris and Helen Cameron, eds., *Evangelicals Engaging in Practical Theology: Theology That Impacts Church and World* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022).
[24] Andrew Thomas, 'Practical Theology and Evangelicalism: Methodological Considerations', in *Evangelicals Engaging in Practical Theology: Theology That Impacts Church and World*, ed. Helen Morris and Helen Cameron (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), 25–39.
[25] Thomas, 36.
[26] Discussed in detail in section 2.3.3

authoritative legitimacy. Therefore, the Evangelical interpreter must be comfortable in drawing two worlds together. Gadamer uses the metaphor of 'horizon', to refer to 'the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point.'[27] He further describes the 'fusing' of horizons as the regaining of the 'concepts of an historical past in such a way that they also include our own comprehension of them.'[28] As Thiselton, building on Gadamer's though states, 'the goal of biblical hermeneutics is to bring about an active and meaningful engagement between the interpreter and text, in such a way that the interpreter's own horizon is re-shaped and enlarged.'[29] This language recognises the interpreter's locatedness (what Gadamer calls 'effective-history') and demonstrates the expanded perspective that emerges from engagement with the text.

Charismatic interpreters use a range of approaches (outlined in section 4.1) to fuse horizons, enlarging their own vision as they understand the textual context.

1.2.2 Four voices

This brief overview of the relationship between theory and practice has demonstrated the complexity of the relationship, and also the necessity of considering epistemological and ontological priorities. Pete Ward has argued that starting points in practical theology are 'methodologically problematic.'[30] He suggests that a disdain for applicationism is naïve, since even if we start with the theological voice and seek to apply it, we are doing so through the lens of our experience. Conversely, if we think we can start with experience, we recognise that it has been shaped by prior theological norms. 'Methods set out in the classroom and in the pages of an academic text are never as clean or straightforward when they are used by people in the context of the church.'[31]

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[27] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Garrett Barden and John Cumming, 2nd edition (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 269.
[28] Gadamer, 337.
[29] Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Special Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein* (Carlisle, Grand Rapids, Michigan: The Paternoster Press ; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), xix.
[30] Pete Ward, *Introducing Practical Theology: Mission, Ministry, and the Life of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 4.
[31] Ward, 4.

Practical theology has offered a number of methods for integrating theory and practice, perhaps most notably with various iterations of the pastoral cycle. Cartledge surveys a number of methods that draw on liberationist perspectives to analyse and theologise on their concrete experience.[32] A concrete situation or experience is identified, analysed and investigated, often bringing in interdisciplinary voices, reflected upon theologically, and, finally recommendations are made. Richard Osmer's model of practical theology offers a similar cycle,[33] as does Swinton and Mowat's model.[34] These cycles demonstrate movement from the indicative to the imperative mood, and also from practice to theory and back to transformed practice.

However, whilst the pastoral cycles do provide methodological clarity, the mechanistic nature of the cycle loses something of the fluidity and 'messiness' of real-life situations. There exists a further, more fundamental challenge to pastoral cycle or correlational approaches that carefully define and divide the various tasks/stages/phases of practical theology. Clare Watkins notes that these approaches require a starting point of separation (both between theory and practice, and reflection and action), and can end up perpetuating the very separation they are trying to avoid.[35] In contrast, she offers theological action research as an approach that begins 'with an assumption of coherence', in which theology and practice are inextricably intertwined.[36]

Watkins herself was part of the original ARCS (Action Research: Church and Society) team, which started to experiment with theological models of action research.[37] One of the features of their project is research that is 'theological all the way through.'[38] Theology is not just one phase of the research, rather it is embedded in all aspects of the research. This commitment led the team to articulate how theology is embedded in practice, resulting in the vocabulary of theology in 'four voices.'[39] The four voices are the normative voice of church teaching, the

[32] Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, 20–22.
[33] Osmer, *Practical Theology*.
[34] John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 2016).
[35] Clare Watkins, *Disclosing Church: An Ecclesiology Learned from Conversations in Practice* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 7.
[36] Watkins, 10.
[37] Helen Cameron et al., *Talking about God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2010).
[38] Cameron et al., 51–53.
[39] Cameron et al., 53–56.

formal voice of academic theology, the espoused voice in the articulation of theology and the operant voice embedded in actual practice.[40]

Looking back on the original research, Watkins wants to be clear that the four voices were not designed to be a 'method', rather they are a way to articulate the theology that is already present in practice.[41] She observes, 'far from being a tool or method for answering practical theology's dominant question of disintegration, theology in four voices is rather an expression of a theological conviction concerning the reality of an integrated "whole-theology."'[42] Points of synergy or dissonance between the voices invite interrogation and reflection.

Watkins observes a shift in the pastoral-cycle approach as it is taken out of its ecclesial location and used by the academy.[43] It becomes more schematized and the different stages become more discreet and independent. In contrast, 'the four voices commit us to sitting with the cacophony and occasional harmony of the voices, attentively waiting for the insight (disclosure) to become clear.'[44]

Whilst practical theology is particularly concerned with method and methodology, this section has shown that a fixed methodology can be complex and problematic. For this reason, in this research project, I have chosen to be directed by principles, allowing for fluidity in the methodology. The four voices guide the research by providing a framework for distinguishing between theological sources and bringing them into meaningful dialogue. In this research, sermon analysis is employed to identify the operant hermeneutic–how preachers are actually using the Bible when they preach. Data gleaned from interviews provides the espoused hermeneutic–how preachers articulate their use of the Bible. Formal and normative voices are then introduced through the process of theological reflection. As Watkins notes, theology emerges from 'moments of disclosure', as the dialogue unfolds.[45] Some of the most useful reflections result from attentiveness to the dissonances and

[40] Cameron et al., 53–56.
[41] Watkins, *Disclosing Church*, 43.
[42] Watkins, 43.
[43] Watkins, 44.
[44] Watkins, 45.
[45] Clare Watkins, 'Practising Ecclesiology: From Product to Process', *Ecclesial Practices* 2, no. 1 (8 May 2015): 23–39.

synergies between the voices. Therefore, the methodology described in section 3.2 outlines the process used to generate the operant and espoused voices.

The four voices are a helpful paradigm that intentionally acknowledges theology as it is embedded in practice. Espoused and operant voices are given credence as bearers of theology, but many scholars are wary of experiential voices given the same weight as normative voices. Some practical theologians have observed the work of Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, who has argued that the Chalcedonian formula be applied analogously to assume an asymmetry between normative voices and experiential voices.[46]

Swinton and Mowat pick up this theme when they ask, 'how can a system of knowledge created by human beings challenge a system of knowledge that claims to be given by God?'[47] However, the asymmetry of the voices is not in their relative volume level but in the different 'kind' of authority that the voices represent.[48] In other words, theology embedded in the doctrines and teachings of the church should not be used as a 'medieval trump card' that silences operant and espoused theologies.[49] Operant and espoused theologies are often more contextual and local than formal and normative voices, and so they bear a different kind of authority. In this thesis I draw on normative and formal voices, but I do not consider those sources to be the sole authority. I will demonstrate that by listening deeply to the voices embedded in practice, normative theology can be richer and deeper.

1.3 Thesis Overview

Chapter 2 sets the scene by locating the research both in the Charismatic movement and in congregational hermeneutics. In section 2.1, I give an overview of the Charismatic movement, demonstrating the influence of both Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism. The primary sources of two important periodicals of the Charismatic movement help to give a summary of key themes within the movement. I demonstrate how the influences of Word, Spirit and community have developed within the Charismatic movement, and the various

[46] Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, *Theology and Pastoral Counseling: A New Interdisciplinary Approach* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 93–94.
[47] Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 79.
[48] Watkins, *Disclosing Church*, 49.
[49] Andrew Root, *Christopraxis: A Practical Theology of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 279.

factors that have shaped contemporary Charismatic preaching. Section 2.2 evaluates Craig Keener's 'Spirit Hermeneutics' as a sample Charismatic methodology for bringing together Word and Spirit in hermeneutics. In section 2.3, I introduce the field of congregational hermeneutics, in which this project most naturally fits. Finally, section 2.4 gives a brief overview of practical theological approaches to sermon analysis, in order to demonstrate how this project builds on earlier work.

Chapter 3 introduces the reader to five Charismatic preachers, and provides a summary of the fieldwork data. I describe and defend the process of gathering data, in which each preacher was interviewed twice, and two sermons from each preacher were analysed in detail to ascertain key themes. I provide examples of their preaching and their responses to common questions, which serves to locate the preachers and anticipates the theological discussion.

In chapter 4, I reflect on the empirical data, using theological tools to interrogate and develop the findings. In each of the four sections contained within this chapter, I provide a 'thick description'[50] of the operant and espoused practices of the preachers, using a suitable theological framework. Each section takes a normative turn in which I draw on appropriate formal or normative voices to develop the conversation. These four sections (outlined below) serve to complexify and advance the inter-relationship of Word, Spirit and community in Charismatic preaching.

Section 4.1 considers the horizon fusing processes of the five preachers, which link together the Word and the congregation. The hermeneutical practices are brought into dialogue with the 'theological interpretation of Scripture', which I argue can provide a framework for Charismatic hermeneutics.

Section 4.2 analyses the operant and espoused formulations of the gospel demonstrated by the preachers, as a further exploration of the 'Word' dimension. I suggest that Charismatic conceptions of the gospel are sometimes more 'kingdom-centric' than crucicentric, and I bring this kingdom-oriented approach into conversation with the theological theme of union

[50] The language of 'thick description' as an ethnographic term emerges from the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who used it to explore the depth of human behaviour in context. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana Press, 1973).

with Christ. Union with Christ, I argue, is a more appropriate Charismatic formulation of the gospel than traditional Evangelical forensic accounts of the gospel.

In section 4.3, I consider the work of the Spirit in contemporary Charismatic preaching, thinking especially about operant and espoused expressions of 'prophetic preaching.' I bring this into conversation with various definitions of prophetic preaching, and I argue that Charismatic prophetic preaching is more nuanced and complex than many of the overly simplistic definitions found in literature. I draw on understandings of prophecy and preaching in the New Testament as a normative voice.

Section 4.4 considers the influence of the congregation in Charismatic preaching. The way the preachers attend to the needs of the congregation is evaluated, in conversation with formal voices from the 'new homiletic.' The 'turn to the listener' reflects a shift in authority in preaching, which is demonstrated to varying degrees by the Charismatic preachers in this study.

Finally, chapter 5 concludes the thesis by drawing the themes together and returning to the hypothesis that Charismatic preachers are attending to the Word, the Spirit and the congregation in a nuanced and complex way. In this concluding chapter, I also reflect on the way that Charismatic preachers draw on both Evangelical and Pentecostal influences, and how those relationships inform and challenge their position within Evangelicalism.

2. Locating the Research

This chapter serves to provide context for the empirical research and the reflections that follow by giving an overview of the fields in which this study is situated. Practical Theology is not a discrete field that can be defined by a subject area, but rather seeks to bring together sometimes disparate areas of study into conversation with the voice of practice. Accordingly, I will introduce the key areas that have a bearing on this research. Broadly, sections 2.1 and 2.2 locate the research with reference to Charismatic spirituality. Sections 2.3 and 2.4 provide an overview of the methodological fields of congregational hermeneutics and sermon analysis.

2.1 Influences on Contemporary Charismatic Preaching

This section seeks to locate the research project in historical context by examining some of the influences of Charismatic preaching over the past century. I will argue that the contemporary British Charismatic movement has developed from within British Evangelicalism, and as such maintains key principles of the Evangelical church, albeit with significant modifications. However, the Charismatic movement has also been influenced by the pneumatology of classic Pentecostalism, the impact of which is considered here. Furthermore, by examining two of the key periodicals from the early Charismatic movement, the Word-Spirit axis can be clearly seen. This contributes to my hypothesis that Charismatic preachers are attending to the triad of Word-Spirit-community. I argue below that the 'community' aspect is brought into focus by considering the role of the church growth movement on the Charismatic church.

The Charismatic movement today is a broad church, and there are congregations from almost all major Christian denominations that describe themselves as Charismatic. As a working definition, I will follow William Kay, who defines Pentecostalism as the classic Pentecostal denominations (such as Assemblies of God, Elim, Apostolic Faith Church), formed at the beginning of the twentieth century.[51] In contrast, Kay observes that the

[51] William K. Kay, 'Marks of British Pentecostal and charismatic Churches', in *Pentecostals and charismatics in Britain: An Anthology*, ed. by Joe Aldred (London: SCM Press, 2019), pp. 53–70 (p. 68).

Charismatic movement describes a movement that began in the 1960s and impacted mainline denominations with Charismatic or Pentecostal phenomena.[52] Today the Charismatic movement encompasses mainline denominations that recognise Charismatic experience and theology, but also new networks[53] that also experience Charismatic phenomena (such as New Frontiers and Vineyard[54]).

As we consider the main movements that have shaped ordinary Charismatic theology and preaching, examples will be shown from their popular journals that demonstrate the various themes and influences. For instance, Mark Cartledge has shown that a popular British Pentecostal journal provides a good example of 'ordinary' Pentecostal theology.[55]

2.1.1 Evangelicalism

Whilst the Charismatic movement is broadly ecumenical, an Evangelical emphasis and theology are often central tenets of Charismatic spirituality.[56] Bebbington notes that the renewal had a 'discernibly Evangelical' flavour.[57] Evangelical distinctives such as 'conversionism' were present in the renewal across the ecumenical spectrum.[58] Indeed the relationship between the Charismatic movement and Evangelicalism is overlapping and complex. The scope of this study is within churches that have traditionally defined themselves as Evangelical, and so the influence of Evangelicalism is considered as a factor that shapes preaching style and content.

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[52] Kay, 'Marks of British Pentecostal and charismatic Churches', p. 57.
[53] I am avoiding the term 'denomination' for these networks, as they resist the term and in organisational terms, churches in these networks are often more autonomous. Sociologically, they seem very similar to traditional denominations.
[54] Andrew Davies, 'Heritage and Hope: A Story of British Pentecostalism', in *Pentecostals and charismatics in Britain: An Anthology*, ed. by Joe Aldred (London: SCM Press, 2019), pp. 3–18 (p. 4).
[55] Mark J Cartledge, 'The Early Pentecostal Theology of Confidence Magazine (1908-1926): A Version of the Five-Fold Gospel?', *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 28, no. 2 (October 2008): 117–30.
[56] For example, Allan Anderson, 'The European Protestant Reformation and Global Pentecostalism', in *Pentecostals and charismatics in Britain: An Anthology*, ed. by Joe Aldred (London: SCM Press, 2019), pp. 137–49 (pp. 141–44); Andrew P. Rogers, *Congregational Hermeneutics: How Do We Read?*, Explorations in Practical, Pastoral, and Empirical Theology (Burlington: Ashgate, 2015), p. 69.
[57] David William Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1995), 247.
[58] Bebbington, 247.

It is widely agreed that definitions of Evangelicalism are made with reference to Bebbington's quadrilateral.[59] Whilst his definition has endured countless critiques and revisions, it is the closest to a consensus among Evangelicals.[60]

> There are the four qualities that have been the special marks of Evangelical religion: *conversionism*, the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism*, the expression of the gospel in effort; *biblicism*, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Together they form a quadrilateral of priorities that is the basis of Evangelicalism.[61]

Rob Warner has developed this model further, arguing that British Evangelicals can be thought of in two camps: The 'theologically oriented' Evangelical stresses biblicism and crucicentrism, where the 'entrepreneurial' Evangelical stresses conversionism and activism.[62] Warner suggests that Charismatic churches tend toward the conversionist-activist axis, whilst conservative Evangelicals tend toward the biblicist-crucicentric axis.[63]

Warner credits part of the activist-conversionist movement in the UK to the pragmatic entrepreneurialism of Clive Calver, leader of the Evangelical Alliance between 1983 and 1997.[64] As a former evangelist with Youth for Christ, Calver brought an evangelistic zeal to the Evangelical Alliance, significantly increasing membership during his time as General Secretary.[65] He also encouraged Evangelicals to think broadly about their responsibility to issues of social justice.[66] Warner charts the rise of Evangelical entrepreneurialism through pan-Evangelical movements such as Spring Harvest and Alpha, particularly in the 1980s and 90s:[67] He argues, 'the evidence suggests that many [Evangelicals] have long since embraced as integral to holistic mission what their conservative forebears derided as the "social gospel."'[68]

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[59] Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones, 'Evangelicals and Evangelicalisms: Contested Identities', in *The Routledge Research Companion to the History of Evangelicalism*, ed. Andrew Atherstone, Routledge Studies in Evangelicalism (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019), 10–11.
[60] Derek Tidball, *Who Are the Evangelicals? Tracing the Roots of the Modern Movements* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1994), 14.
[61] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 2–3 Emphasis original.
[62] Rob Warner, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism, 1966-2001: A Theological and Sociological Study* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 20.
[63] Warner, 20.
[64] Warner, 41–66.
[65] Warner, 41–66.
[66] For example, Clive Calver, *Where Truth and Justice Meet*, Hodder Christian Paperbacks (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1987).
[67] Warner, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism*, 41–148.
[68] Warner, 110.

Younger Evangelicals

The tension between these two Evangelical camps can perhaps be expressed as reflecting the desire for orthodoxy and orthopraxy, in which conservatives place a greater emphasis on the former and the entrepreneurs on the latter. Warner's approach and the examples given above demonstrate that Evangelicals typically do not adhere solely to one extreme or the other, rather they may lean in a particular direction. This development of Bebbington offers a helpful taxonomy, although there are of course outliers. Terry Virgo's New Frontiers network of churches affirms a fairly cautious and conservative biblicism, typically holding a complementarian perspective on gender, and yet bucking national trends in growth and church planting.[69]

Ruth Perrin has also questioned whether Warner's axis can adequately account for younger Evangelicals, some of whom may be inspired to social action by a commitment to faithful Scripture reading.[70] Robert Webber argues that Evangelicalism since the 1950s can be categorised in three broad movements: traditional (1950-1975), pragmatic (1975-2000) and younger (2000-).[71] Traditional and pragmatic Evangelicals may correlate to Warner's theological and entrepreneurial axis, but younger Evangelicals are (according to Webber), returning to historically rooted Christianity and seeking authentic social change.[72] Webber's research is within the US context which is distinct from UK Evangelicalism, although it is interesting to note the trend towards pragmatism within Evangelicalism in both the UK and the US.

The bifurcation of Evangelicalism provides a useful lens to view Charismatic preaching, although we note with Rogers, that 'one objective of ethnographic study is to interrogate such macro categories.'[73]

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[69] David Smith, 'An Account for the Sustained Rise of New Frontiers International within the United Kingdom', *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 23, no. 1 (2003): 137–56.
[70] Ruth H. Perrin, *The Bible Reading of Young Evangelicals: An Exploration of the Ordinary Hermeneutics and Faith of Generation Y* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2017), 4–5.
[71] Robert E. Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 2002), 17–20.
[72] Webber, 17–20.
[73] Rogers, *Congregational*, 69.

Critiquing Bebbington's Quadrilateral

Although Bebbington's quadrilateral was formed through an historical survey of Evangelicalism, the four points have become theological indicators for Evangelicals. Timothy Larsen, however, critiques the quadrilateral for not paying enough attention to the historical and theological context in which Evangelicalism is situated.[74] He has given his own definition, which seeks to locate Evangelicalism, whilst providing a description of theological identity.

> An Evangelical is:
>
> 1. an orthodox Protestant
> 2. who stands in the tradition of the global Christian networks arising from the eighteenth-century revival movements associated with John Wesley and George Whitefield;
> 3. who has a preeminent place for the Bible in her or his Christian life as the divinely inspired, final authority in matters of faith and practice;
> 4. who stresses reconciliation with God through the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross;
> 5. and who stresses the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of an individual to bring about conversion and an ongoing life of fellowship with God and service to God and others, including the duty of all believers to participate in the task of proclaiming the gospel to all people.[75]

This definition is helpful as it locates Evangelicalism in theological and historical context (points 1 and 2 respectively), before describing the distinctive theological emphases (points 3-5). However, this broad definition does not acknowledge the variety of flavours that exist within Evangelicalism. Evangelical 'tribes', according to Pete Ward, shape Evangelical identity, not only on the basis of theological agreement but in social networks and relations.[76]

Ward, following David Wells, argues that a significant change has taken place in Evangelicalism from the 1970s, away from shared doctrinal beliefs towards strategy and

[74] Timothy Larsen, 'Defining and Locating Evangelicalism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology*, ed. Timothy Larsen and Daniel J. Treier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1–14.
[75] Larsen, 1.
[76] Pete Ward, 'The Tribes of Evangelicalism', in *The Post-Evangelical Debate*, by Graham Cray et al. (London: Triangle, 1997), 22.

organisational power.[77] Ward describes tribes within Evangelicalism that coalesce not around theology but according to 'festival, organisation and programme.'[78] As Evangelicalism has become more mainstream it seems to have lost a sense of dogmatism, and has splintered along more pragmatic lines. Evangelical identity, previously centred on theological distinctives, is now established upon relational networks.[79]

Evangelical Charismatics, to varying degrees, have a particular relationship with the Bible, observed by Bebbington in the biblicist axis. This influence will be observed in their preaching, but a second key influence is the place of the Spirit. The pneumatological focus can be traced to classic Pentecostalism. The critiques of Larsen and Ward provide helpful cultural context for defining 'Evangelical', although Bebbington's analysis, modified by Warner will primarily inform this research.

2.1.2 Classic Pentecostalism

Whilst Pentecostals argue that their denomination is rooted in apostolic Christianity, they typically trace their recent heritage to Azusa Street, 1906, where revival meetings led by William Seymour gained national and international attention.[80] Azusa Street did not occur in a vacuum, however, and although it follows earlier holiness and healing movements,[81] this particular moment was distinct for the 'eschatological restoration of the gifts of the Spirit to the church.'[82] Alongside its theological emphases, Pentecostalism was marked by the experience of 'Spirit-baptism,' with speaking in tongues considered evidence that one had been baptised by the Holy Spirit. For those early Pentecostals, manifestations of the Spirit were signs that the last days had come and this fuelled their missionary and evangelistic zeal.[83]

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[77] Ward, 26–27.
[78] Ward, 27.
[79] This is not to suggest that theology is irrelevant, as many of the networks share common theological commitments.
[80] Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 41–45.
[81] Anderson, 19–38.
[82] Davies, 'Heritage', 6.
[83] Anderson, *Pentecostalism*, 217.

William Seymour himself was African-American and Pentecostalism thrived particularly well as a convergence of Wesleyan holiness and black spirituality.[84] Emerging from this cultural context, orality and preaching played prominent roles in early Pentecostalism.[85]

Pentecostal Preaching

Pentecostal preaching has often been caricatured in anti-intellectual terms and whilst there are some legitimate reasons for this, the story is more nuanced. Classic Pentecostalism was more concerned with spiritual experience than logically reasoned arguments, so the preachers of early Pentecostalism were expected to be 'anointed' rather than educated, thus men, women and even children were considered eligible for ministry.[86] Early Pentecostal preachers describe their experience of this anointing in various ways. Frank Bartleman writes, 'I felt almost drawn off the platform by the hungry desire of the people. I could not talk as rapidly as the thoughts came to me and almost fell over myself trying to speak fast enough.'[87] Bishop J.H. King writes, 'The power of God was mightily upon me … I was lifted … into the heavens almost, and the truth was poured through me as if I had been only an oracle through whom God was speaking.'[88]

It would be wrong to assume that this commitment to experiencing and responding to the Spirit in preaching precluded any sense of preparation, logic or formal exposition. Before the Pentecostal revival, King had gained a diploma from Chattanooga Methodist Episcopal Church seminary and remained committed to the hard work of study after his experience of Spirit baptism.[89] John Gordy's analysis of Aimee Semple McPherson's sermons reveals the same commitment to study and preparation. 'Apparently, she was interested in engaging

[84] Joseph K. Byrd, 'Pentecostal Homiletic: A Convergence of History, Theology, and Worship', in *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Preaching*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Cleveland, TN, 2015), 276.
[85] Adam G. White, 'Pentecostal Preaching as a Modern Epistle: A Comparison of Pentecostal Preaching with Paul's Practice of Letter Writing', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 25, no. 1 (20 April 2016): 125.
[86] John Gordy, 'Toward a Theology of Pentecostal Preaching', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 10, no. 1 (2001): 86.
[87] Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2000), 111.
[88] Joseph H King and Blanche L King, *Yet Speaketh: Memoirs of the Late Bishop Joseph H. King* (Franklin Springs, GA: The Publishing House of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, 1949). Cited in Daniela C Augustine, 'From Proclamation to Embodiment: The Sacrament of the Word for the Life of the Word and Its Destiny in Theosis', in *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Preaching*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Cleveland, TN, 2015), 224.
[89] Tony G. Moon, 'J.H. King's Theology and Practice of Pentecostal Preaching', in *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Preaching*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Cleveland, TN, 2015), 225–26.

both head and heart. She also frequently preached "series" of messages, in which she dealt with individual books of the Bible, characters and themes."[90]

Joseph Byrd has examined the uniqueness of the Pentecostal homiletic, acknowledging and confronting the challenge that Pentecostal sermons are simplistic and emotional.[91] He argues that Pentecostal preaching is experiential, not merely intellectual as the listeners are invited to relive the story of Scripture.[92] 'The preacher must look to her or his task with expectation of pneumatic exegesis and Spirit inspired assistance in the kerygmatic event.'[93] Thus for Pentecostals, the purpose of preaching is not primarily giving accurate information, but divine encounter and transformation. In this way, preaching becomes sacramental and is seen as a charism given to the church.[94]

Themes in Classic Pentecostal Preaching

As we examine classic Pentecostal preaching, some common themes emerge in line with the theological concepts that were distinctive about Pentecostalism. Here we see both continuation and development of Evangelical themes.

Christology

Early Pentecostal preachers referred to the gospel, assuming that listeners automatically understood what this gospel was.[95] Although the idea of the 'fourfold gospel' predates Azusa Street, it found resonance among Pentecostals and quickly became a cornerstone of early Pentecostal theology.[96] The concept is essentially Christological and refers to the offices of Christ as saviour, healer, Spirit-baptiser and coming King (sometimes sanctifier is added or replaces Spirit-baptiser). Pentecostals are keen to emphasise a Christological focus in their preaching,[97] but the 'full gospel' approach does give a uniquely Pentecostal perspective.

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[90] Gordy, 'Toward a Theology of Pentecostal Preaching', 87.
[91] Byrd, 'Pentecostal Homiletic: A Convergence of History, Theology, and Worship', 271.
[92] Byrd, 278–79.
[93] Byrd, 284.
[94] Augustine, 'Proclamation'.
[95] Revd Dr Andy Lord, 'Good News for All? Reflections on the Pentecostal Full Gospel', *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 30, no. 1 (January 2013): 18.
[96] Lord, 18–19.
[97] R.H. Hughes, 'Preaching, a Pentecostal Perspective', in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and charismatic Movements*, ed. by Stanley M. Burgess, Gary B. McGee, and Patrick H. Alexander (Grand Rapids, Mich: Regency Reference Library, 1988), pp. 722–24.

Eschatology

Early Pentecostals viewed the gift of the Spirit as an eschatological sign and empowerment for the end time harvest, indeed they often viewed the gift of tongues as a missionary language.[98] A 1909 issue of *Confidence* asks the question directly:

> Should we connect this 'Movement' of the last two years with the approaching return of the Lord Jesus? Yes; for in every land where this blessing has come there have been prophetic utterances, "Jesus is coming soon," etc. It seems as if the Lord were giving His warnings to His own people.[99]

Tim Walsh has shown how early British Pentecostalism, although being heavily influenced by dispensationalism, managed to maintain a positive outlook, with the belief that they were experiencing the end-times work of the Spirit.[100]

Pneumatology

The main distinctive of Pentecostalism is of course in their particular pneumatological focus. The early British Pentecostals frequently preached on the necessity, meaning and consequences of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.[101] Whilst there was a strong emphasis on the charismata in early British Pentecostalism, we also see a development of Evangelical crucicentrism. For example, the Pentecostal pioneer, Pastor Barratt wrote in early issue of Confidence magazine, 'We could never have understood Calvary *fully* had it not been revealed by Him [the Holy Spirit]. Without this giving of the Spirit the work of redemption would have been of no avail.'[102]

Josh Samuel has contrasted the pneumatology of Evangelical and Pentecostal approaches to preparing and preaching a sermon.[103] He focuses on one homiletic scholar, from each

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[98] Allan Anderson, 'The Azusa Street Revival and the Emergence of Pentecostal Missions in the Early Twentieth Century', *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 23, no. 2 (April 2006): 107–18.
[99] Unnamed author, 'The Baptism of the Holy Ghost with the Sign of Tongues', *Confidence* 2, no. 5 (May 1909): 122.
[100] Tim Walsh, 'Eschatology and the Fortunes of Early British Pentecostalism', *Theology* 113, no. 871 (January 2010): 31–43.
[101] J.R. Williams, 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit', in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and charismatic Movements*, ed. by Stanley M. Burgess, Gary B. McGee, and Patrick H. Alexander (Grand Rapids, Mich: Regency Reference Library, 1988), pp. 40–48 (pp. 40–41).
[102] Thomas Ball Barratt, 'The Baptism of the Holy Ghost-What Is It?', *Confidence*, October 1909, 221.
[103] Josh P. S. Samuel, 'The Spirit in Pentecostal Preaching: A Constructive Dialogue with Haddon W. Robinson's and Charles T. Crabtree's Theology of Preaching', *Pneuma* 35, no. 2 (2013): 199–219.

approach respectively, and rejects a naïve stereotype that there is no pneumatology in the conservative Evangelical or that there is no exegesis in the Pentecostal.[104] For the Pentecostal homiletician, the emphasis is on the character of the preacher—their call, holiness and ongoing experience of the Holy Spirit in preparation and delivery of the message.[105] The pneumatology in the conservative Evangelical approach is more muted but still present. The past work of the Spirit in inspiring Scripture is emphasised, and therefore the preacher's task is to use the available tools to understand and apply the text, with the help of the Spirit.[106] In the actual preaching event, the Pentecostal approach is distinctive for both the expectation of supernatural signs and wonders to accompany the sermon, and spontaneity of responding to the Spirit.[107] A Pentecostal hermeneutic assumes that the Bible *becomes* the Word as the power of the Holy Spirit 'assimilates, enlivens and transmits' it.[108] Therefore, the goal in preaching is not simply sound exegesis but divine transformation.[109]

Sanctification

For Pentecostal preachers, sanctification and holiness are not just themes to be preached, but character necessities for the one who will deliver God's message.[110] Preaching in Pentecostalism places a higher priority on the personal call, 'anointing' and holiness of the individual. In early Pentecostalism, we see elements of continuity with Evangelicalism, but also significant areas of theological development. The subjectivism and experiential nature of Pentecostalism also required greater attention be given to the person of the preacher. The Word of God was mediated through the anointed preacher. The Charismatic movement relied heavily on Pentecostal themes, albeit with revisions that represented its own context and priorities.

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[104] Samuel.
[105] Samuel, 203–8.
[106] Samuel, 206–7. Therefore, in this thesis, my discussion of pneumatology refers to the distinctive pneumatology present in Pentecostal/Charismatic preaching and interpretation, and is not intended to imply that only Pentecostal preaching is pneumatological.
[107] Samuel, 206–7.
[108] Marius Nel, 'Re-Enactment Leading to Transformation: A Critical Assessment of the Distinctives of Pentecostal Preaching', *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 3, no. 1 (2017): 294.
[109] Nel, 294.
[110] Aldwin Ragoonath, *Preach the Word: A Pentecostal Approach* (Winnipeg: Agape Teaching Ministry of Canada, 2004), 16–27.

2.1.3 Charismatic Renewal and Restoration

In the late 1950s, a few individuals started to experience Pentecostal phenomena outside of the Pentecostal denomination.[111] Early pioneers such as David du Plessis, Arthur Wallis and David Lillie grew relational networks, and organised conferences to communicate and grow the Charismatic movement.[112] David du Plessis' constantly preached Pentecost, making it clear 'that the central blessing God was bestowing in this movement was baptism in the Spirit.'[113]

By the mid 1960s, the movement had spread throughout the UK, and was gaining some momentum in the established denominations, particularly among Evangelical Anglicans, fuelled in part by Michael Harper and the Fountain Trust.[114] However, an ecclesiological difference arose between those who wanted to remain in the traditional denominations (renewalists), and those who wanted to form new house churches in a Charismatic mould (restorationists).[115] Both groups began publishing their own journals to spread ideas amongst churches and leaders.[116] These journals cover a range of issues around church doctrine and practice, but are dominated by pneumatological themes such as the gifts of the Spirit, Spirit-baptism and healing. The Charismatic movement saw itself as rediscovering an experience of the Holy Spirit that was available as a present-day experience to ordinary believers. Testimonies of such experiences permeate the journals, commonly describing feelings of power, warmth, joy and intimacy with God.

Renewalists stressed the importance of remaining within the mainline denominations, and consequently they were theologically more akin to the denominations in which they were found. As David Watson, a key leader in the renewal movement wrote, 'God forbid that we should split off simply to form a fellowship to our own liking, however biblical that fellowship may seem to be.'[117] Thus the renewal movement maintained much of their Evangelical beliefs, but viewed them though a Charismatic lens. Evangelism, for example,

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[111] Their story is told in Peter Hocken, *Streams of Renewal: The Origins and Early Development of the charismatic Movement in Great Britain* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 1997).
[112] Hocken, 11–20.
[113] Hocken, 131.
[114] William K. Kay, *Apostolic Networks of Britain: New Ways of Being Church* (Milton Keynes; Waynesboro, Ga.: Paternoster, 2007), 9.
[115] Hocken, *Streams*, 137.
[116] *Renewal* journal for the renewalists, and *Restoration* journal for the restorationists.
[117] David Watson, 'New Life from Inside', *Renewal* 52 (1974): 13.

was seen in relation to baptism in the Spirit: 'Evangelistic urgency is surely the purpose of Pentecost.'[118] Whilst Evangelicalism had placed an emphasis on conversionism, Charismatic renewal ignited a commitment and boldness that fuelled the movement.

Restorationists were more distinctive, advocating for a departure from existing denominations and starting house churches that eventually became networks such as Newfrontiers, Pioneer and Ichthus. This departure led restorationists to rethink ecclesial structures; 'new wine needs new wine skins.'[119] The ministry of Apostles and Prophets was seen as necessary for the life of the church. The restorationists followed the classic Pentecostal concept of prophetic preaching, which is not necessarily predictive but rather a specific transformative encounter with the Word: 'Unlike the teacher, who carefully takes the Scripture and systematically applies it to the hearts of his hearers to establish them in the truth, the prophet has a thought, a word of knowledge or a scripture laid upon his heart for a *particular situation*.'[120]

More differences emerged between the renewalists and the restorationists (for example, in eschatology[121]), although later developments such as the ministries of John Wimber, the Toronto blessing, and Spring Harvest often served as unifying factors for the Charismatic movement.[122] Two examples of Charismatic distinctives (biblicism and crucicentrism) demonstrates how Evangelical priorities are modified by a Charismatic emphasis on the Spirit.

Charismatic Biblicism

The Charismatic movement was concerned with the need for a hermeneutic approach that was both textually appropriate and yet relevant and transformative.[123] Restoration magazine devoted at least two issues to the importance of the Word, with articles setting out basic

[118] David Watson, 'Spirit of Evangelism', *Renewal* 12 (1968): 6.
[119] Terry Virgo, from personal interview.
[120] Alan Vincent, 'Prophetic Preaching', *Restoration*, 25–28 (p. 27) emphasis original.
[121] Views started to diverge over the millennium and the role of Israel. Brian Hewitt, *Doing a New Thing?: Seven Leaders Reflect on the Past, Present and Future of the House Church Movement* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995), 3, 33, 125.
[122] Hocken, *Streams*, 207–11; Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 58.
[123] For example, Stanley Jebb, 'How to Interpret the Scriptures', *Restoration* 5, no. 6 (December 1979): 7–10.

hermeneutic principles and the need to rightly read the Bible.[124] In an editorial to one of these issues, David Matthew writes,

> This, then, is the Book of books, the Word of God that lives and abides for ever, perfect, final and complete. Let's read it, hear it, preach it, teach it, embrace it, obey it and practise it. In short, let's be filled with the Word![125]

The popular renewal preacher, Mark Stibbe, wrote an influential article in 1998 attempting to define and defend a Charismatic hermeneutic.[126] Stibbe suggests that Charismatic interpretation should take account of both the original meaning and the contemporary 'prophetic significance.'[127] In doing so, Stibbe builds on the Pentecostal tradition espoused earlier of McPherson and others, that the 'supernatural experience of biblical characters need to be re-enacted in contemporary believers.'[128] A Charismatic hermeneutic will be explored more comprehensively in section 2.2, but this serves to demonstrate the historical fusion of Word and Spirit within Charismatic theology.

Charismatic Crucicentrism

I have already noted Evangelicalism's crucicentric tendency, and so this feature of the Charismatic movement is not surprising. However, Cartledge notes that the Charismatic movement sought to reclaim the resurrection as a necessary resolution to the cross.[129] A favourite theme of the charismatic movement is 'raised with Christ', emphasising the victory of resurrection and the believer's union with Christ.[130] Teaching in the Renewal magazine, Smail demonstrates that the Spirit gives power to obey Christ because of our union with his death and resurrection.[131] Other conservative Evangelicals would assert the necessity of not

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[124] For example, David Tomlinson, 'Every Man a Bible Student', *Restoration* 5, no. 6 (December 1979): 3–6; Terry Virgo, 'The Bible Tells Me so: The Auhtority and Inspiration of Scripture', *Restoration*, August 1984, 15–18; Richard Haydon-Knowell, 'Help! I Want to Understand the Scriptures!', *Restoration*, August 1984, 3–5.
[125] David Matthew, 'Solid Ground', *Restoration*, August 1984, 2.
[126] Mark Stibbe, 'This Is That: Some Thoughts Concerning charismatic Hermeneutics', *ANVIL*, 15.3, 181–93.
[127] Stibbe, 182.
[128] Nel, 'Re-Enactment Leading to Transformation', 295.
[129] Mark J Cartledge, 'Theological Renewal (1975-1983): Listening to an Editor's Agenda for Church and Academy', *Pneuma* 30, no. 1 (2008): 98.
[130] For example, Adrian Warnock, *Raised with Christ: How the Resurrection Changes Everything.* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2010).
[131] T.A. Smail, 'Law, Gospel and Spirit', *Renewal* 64 (1976): i–iv.

separating the cross from resurrection,[132] but the theme of victory and resurrection is given pneumatological focus by the Charismatics. Accordingly, restorationist writer Tony Ling observes a 'fundamental fault' in teaching about the cross that fails to recognise the 'finality of Satan's defeat and the total destruction of the believer's old nature.'[133]

Bebbington notes that the development of crucicentrism by the renewal movement is also demonstrated in the burgeoning hymnody through the 1970s and 80s.[134] For example, Charismatic songwriter, Graham Kendrick's 1988 album, 'Make way for the King of Kings'[135] contained several popular praise songs that reflected a sense of triumphalism. This demonstrates a shift in crucicentrism as it is given a distinctly Charismatic lens.

In the early days of the Charismatic movement, there was a radical distinctiveness about their practice, seeing themselves as a Spirit-empowered, eschatological community. However, over time the movement softened and became more pragmatic, which partly explains the shift of younger Evangelicals away from dogmatic allegiances towards tribal loyalties noted earlier. One key factor in the growing pragmatism was the influence of the church growth movement, and its adoption by the emerging 'neo-Charismatics', also known as 'third wave Charismatics.'

2.1.4 'Third wave' Charismatics

In the late 1970s, John Wimber was teaching a popular course in evangelism at Fuller School of World Mission, a subdivision of Fuller Theological Seminary.[136] His course consisted not only in teaching, but practical workshops, where Wimber taught and demonstrated the importance of signs and wonders to accompany the proclamation of the gospel. In this context, the 'Vineyard' movement of Charismatic churches was birthed, and began to exercise influence in the UK, particularly through renewal movements amongst Anglican Charismatics.[137]

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[132] John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2006), 255–73.
[133] Tony Ling, 'The Cross Confronts Sin and Satan', *Restoration*, February 1988, 7.
[134] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 248.
[135] Graham Kendrick, *Make Way for the King of Kings - A Carnival of Praise* (Kingsway/Make Way Music, 1988).
[136] Jon Bialecki, *A Diagram for Fire: Miracles and Variation in an American Charismatic Movement*, The Anthropology of Christianity (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2017), 15.
[137] Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 160–65.

Fuller Theological Seminary was also significant in the 'church growth movement', popularised by Peter Wagner and Donald McGavran.[138] Both men had been overseas missionaries and worked together at Fuller School of World Mission where they taught and promoted missionary strategies within the US church.[139] As colleagues, Wimber picked up many of their principles as he led the fledgling Vineyard movement. Bialecki observes that the 'movement in applied missiology aimed at identifying and circulating numerically quantifiable and replicable practices that would allow churches to bring in greater numbers.'[140] He identifies a business-influenced efficiency in this drive for growth, with a shift in terminology and language, for example, from 'ministries' to 'teams.'[141] Similarly, Derek Tidball observes a more subjectivised and 'toned-down' Evangelicalism as the church growth movement shifted the tone of its message. 'Evangelicalism has learned to market its message in a way which is appropriate to contemporary society.'[142]

This approach found its zenith in the seeker-sensitive model popularised by Willow Creek church and promoted around the world through megachurch initiatives such as the Global Leadership Summit. The church model which prioritises local mission, and structures the organisation of the church around that purpose is, according to Tidball, consistent with a traditional Evangelical emphasis on mission.[143] However, Tidball is also critical of the way that accommodating to culture can result in a translation of the gospel akin to psychological therapy.[144]

The outward missional emphasis of the third wave Charismatics also served to heal some of the schisms between renewal and restoration streams.[145] The 'neo-Charismatics', in line with the entrepreneurial spirit identified earlier amongst Evangelicals, were more concerned with growth and mission than doctrinal purity.

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[138] It was Wagner who coined the term, 'third wave' to describe this movement. The first two waves refer to classic Pentecostalism and the charismatic renewal respectively. They are also sometimes called 'neo-Charismatics.'
[139] Bialecki, *A Diagram for Fire*, 27–39.
[140] Bialecki, 27.
[141] Bialecki, 27–28.
[142] Tidball, *Who Are the Evangelicals?*, 73.
[143] Tidball, 166–67.
[144] Tidball, 226.
[145] Andrew Walker, *Restoring the Kingdom: The Radical Christianity of the House Church Movement* (Guildford: Eagle, 1998), 311; Hocken, *Streams*, 207.

The influence of the seeker-sensitive movement on the Charismatic church has generated a distinctive approach to the community, in which relevance to the felt needs of the listeners is a guiding principle for the form and content of the church service. This approach to the community is epitomised by Andy Stanley, who writes, 'if you are going to create a church unchurched people love to attend, then unchurched people need to love the weekend message. Even if they don't love it, they need to engage with it to the point that they want to return the next weekend.'[146] Many Charismatics would not align themselves with the seeker-sensitive movement, but the Charismatic church is influenced by a particular strain of pragmatism. This influence is often reflected in varying degrees of adaptation to the concerns of the community.

2.1.5 Word, Spirit, Community

This section has sought to demonstrate the historical context of key influences on Charismatic preaching, namely the Word, the Spirit, and the community. Evangelical themes run throughout Charismatic preaching, albeit with a pneumatological distinctive. The 1970s marks a significant shift in Evangelical identity, as the Charismatic movement exerts a greater influence within Evangelicalism. Tribal distinctives are based less on theology and more on relational networks. Alongside this, the entrepreneurial spirit amongst Evangelicals, especially in the Charismatic movement fosters an increased emphasis on pragmatism for the sake of the gospel.

With the increased emphasis on experience, Pentecostal preaching places a greater emphasis on the personality of the preacher. Pentecostal preaching is expected to be 'anointed', addressing not only the head but the heart too. This emphasis also influences the newer Charismatic preachers, who have an affective pneumatology. According to Stibbe, two key tenets of a Charismatic hermeneutic are emotion and experience.[147]

One of the features of these movements is the eschatological expectations that accompanies the birth of revival movements. Over time, that expectation gives way to a more pragmatic

[146] Andy Stanley, *Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 229.
[147] Stibbe, 'This Is That'.

realism and a dampened urgency for mission. As Hocken notes, 'Revival reactivates apocalyptic expectations, a sense of the end-times, the urgency of the hour; renewal tends to build for the future, to devise strategies to that end, to form community.'[148] Similarly, Kapofu has noted that contemporary neo-Pentecostalism has largely traded an imminent eschatology for a more pragmatic mission, viewing social action as a key role for the church.[149]

In this research project, I will argue that Charismatic preachers are attending to the Word, the Spirit, and the community. This section, tracing the growth of the Charismatic movement, has shown how those features have developed, in the context of wider influences. I have shown that emphasis on the Word has always been a key part of Evangelicalism, and the adoption of aspects of Pentecostal pneumatology has added the dimension of the Spirit.

I have argued that Evangelicalism became more mainstream and tribal in the 1970s, and that pragmatic concerns started to eclipse doctrinal concerns. Entrepreneurialism, coupled with an Evangelical concern for activism and conversionism helps to explain a greater emphasis on the needs of the community, and I shall demonstrate below how this has impacted preaching in Charismatic churches.

2.2. Aspects of 'Spirit Hermeneutics'

'Spirit hermeneutics', also called 'pneumatic hermeneutics,' 'is defined as a scholarly approach attempting to account for the role of the Holy Spirit in biblical interpretation.'[150] The term covers Pentecostal and Charismatic scholars from across the global church who hold that contemporary experience of the Spirit influences interpretation. Whilst the majority of scholars in this field are Pentecostal, there are some voices from the younger Charismatic tradition.[151]

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[148] Peter Hocken, 'The Pentecostal-charismatic Movement as Revival and Renewal', *Pneuma*, 3.1 (1981), 31–47.
[149] Emmanuel Kapofu, 'Post Pentecostal and charismatic Expressions', in *Pentecostals and charismatics in Britain: An Anthology*, ed. by Joe Aldred (London: SCM Press, 2019), pp. 150–60 (pp. 158–59).
[150] Kevin L. Spawn and Archie T. Wright, 'Introduction', in *Spirit and Scripture: Exploring a Pneumatic Hermeneutic*, by Kevin L. Spawn and Archie T. Wright (London: T&T Clark International, 2012), xvii.
[151] Archie T. Wright, 'We Are Not All Pentecostals: A Response to Dunn, Moberly and Bartholomew', in *Spirit and Scripture: Exploring a Pneumatic Hermeneutic*, by Kevin L. Spawn and Archie T. Wright (London: T&T Clark International, 2012), 177. Distinctively Charismatic

This section explores the shape of pneumatic hermeneutics, focusing particularly on the interplay between the Word, the Spirit and the community in the interpretive task. I have previously argued that Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism are key influences on the Charismatic movement, and this can be seen in the tensions between Word and Spirit that are highlighted in this section.

Hannah Mather has recently traced the history of pneumatic interpretation in the renewal tradition.[152] Within contemporary renewal hermeneutics, she identifies two 'hermeneutical thought hubs;' the Cleveland school and the Regent school. These schools, named after the Pentecostal Theological Seminary in Cleveland and Regent University School of Divinity respectively, are connected with a number of key scholars in the field of pneumatic interpretation, although in Mather's thesis, the 'schools' should not be viewed as restrictive, but representative of certain themes, with shades of complexity and nuance. [153]

The Cleveland school emphasises spiritual experience and the affective and ethical dimensions of encounter with the Spirit. Scripture, in this school of thought, is seen sacramentally, as a place of encounter with the Spirit. Meanwhile the Regent school, populated more with biblical scholars, values historical-cultural frameworks and places a greater emphasis on the Spirit's communication through cognitive frameworks. Ultimately, Mather concludes that whilst there are different emphases in the two schools, they are complementary.[154]

As a key text, Craig Keener's *Spirit Hermeneutics*[155] provides a contemporary manifesto for interpretation that is guided by both Word and Spirit. Craig Keener is a prolific biblical scholar and Pentecostal theologian, writing extensively in both areas and is therefore well regarded as one of the most influential contributors to this field. Half of a special double

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hermeneutics include the contributions of Pinnock, Stibbe and Mather mentioned in this section. Stibbe's contribution particularly has made a significant impact for a short article on Charismatic hermeneutics.

[152] Hannah R.K. Mather, *The Interpreting Spirit: Spirit, Scripture, and Interpretation in the Renewal Tradition* (Eugene, Or: Pickwick Publications, 2020).

[153] Mather, 138–42.

[154] Mather, 146.

[155] Craig S. Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016).

issue of *Pneuma* Journal was devoted to a round table discussion of *Spirit Hermeneutics*, in which the editor noted that the book is 'a manifesto with which future works on pneumatic hermeneutics will have to contend.'[156] In Mather's scheme, Keener is included in the Regent school, although he also wants to emphasise affective and ethical experience.

Keener's primary goal is for Bible interpretation to be a faithful fusion of the two horizons of text and reader. He sees danger at the ends of either spectrum, whether it is neglecting the original meaning in radical reader response criticism or neglecting the contemporary meaning in a historical-grammatical approach. Spirit hermeneutics works when the interpreter is faithful to the original meaning, but also inspired by the Spirit to bring contemporary significance. This section will consider the contours of Keener's approach, firstly to the Word as ancient text and then to the Spirit as mediator of our contemporary experience of the text.

2.2.1 Word

Keener is critical of some unnamed Charismatic preachers who use their tradition as an excuse not to attend to the diligent study of Scripture: 'Preachers should not pretend a prophetic omniscience in areas where God expects us (with the Spirit's help) to study, even if we must rely on translations and background helps to assist us.'[157] He argues that, contrary to some Pentecostals, the first horizon does matter, and therefore we need to be careful to understand the ancient context.[158] For Keener, Scripture has epistemic primacy and careful study is necessary to determine meaning. However, this approach borrows significantly from Evangelical hermeneutics, and has been criticised as 'Evangelical plus Spirit-baptism' in contrast to distinctly pneumatic approaches.[159]

Pentecostal academic Andrew Davies is less persuaded by the necessity of understanding the ancient text: 'Within our tradition, the reading, interpretation and proclamation of

[156] Robby Waddell and Peter Althouse, 'An Editorial Note on the Roundtable Dialogue of Craig S. Keener's Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in the Light of Pentecost', *Pneuma* 39, no. 1–2 (2017): 124.
[157] Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, 102.
[158] Keener, 125–26.
[159] John Christopher Thomas, 'A Critical Engagement with Craig S. Keener's Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in the Light of Pentecost (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016)', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 27 (2018): 195.

Scripture have little to do with intellectual comprehension and all to do with divine self-revelation.'[160] Davies recognises the subjectivity in such an approach, and embraces the idea that such a methodology has more in common with the liberal progressive wing of the church than the Evangelical.[161] However, whilst he shares the desire of some liberal theologians to reject the 'monstrous alien' of grammatico-historical criticism,[162] it is because he desires to emphasise the present work of the Spirit through the text.

Other Pentecostal scholars have also minimised the importance of authorial intent to determine meaning. Rickie Moore, identified with the Cleveland school, laments the trend in Pentecostal scholarship to adopt methodologies from non-Pentecostal sources.[163] By this, he is referring to the inclusion and sometimes primacy of Evangelical historical-cultural approaches. He notes the irony of this happening at a time when the general trend in hermeneutics have moved closer to experiential readings.[164]

Archer is likewise suspicious of what he views as a dualism in Keener, between Evangelical, rational objectivism and Pentecostal, experiential subjectivism.[165] This is indeed quite evident in *Spirit Hermeneutics*, as Keener wants to bring the two poles of Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism together, in what he sees as a powerful combination of Word and Spirit.[166] Keener has responded to this critique, asserting that he affirms both the subjective and the objective,[167] although it seems that Archer's concern is with what he views as a privileging of the objective pole in Keener's work. Archer prioritises the subjective, experiential reading but does not want to be characterised as anti-intellectual or naïve.

The critique of Keener's approach as dualistic may be valid. Keener does seem to imagine that the hermeneutical process is a two-step of critical exegesis followed by Spirit inspired application. Archer and others want a more synthetic approach, although in practice it is

[160] Andrew Davies, 'What Does It Mean to Read the Bible as A Pentecostal?', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18, no. 2 (2009): 220.
[161] Davies, 222.
[162] Davies, 222.
[163] Rickie D. Moore, 'A Pentecostal Approach to Scripture', in *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 13.
[164] Moore, 13.
[165] Kenneth J. Archer, 'Spirited Conversation about Hermeneutics', *Pneuma* 39, no. 1–2 (2017): 191–92.
[166] Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, 9.
[167] Craig S. Keener, 'Refining Spirit Hermeneutics', *Pneuma* 39, no. 1–2 (2017): 210–13.

unclear how such an approach could hold in tension both the subjective and objective dimensions.

The Locus of Meaning

The emphasis on lived experience and the Spirit's role in bringing contemporary significance is praised by Keener, but he is still ardent that Scripture can only be the final authority if the authors' 'original intended meaning' is determinative.[168] For Keener, the danger of Davies' proposal is that Pentecostal tradition, rather than Scripture becomes normative for discerning meaning.[169]

A commitment to the contemporary voice of Spirit through the text means that Scripture can be polyvalent. Keener acutely senses the danger here, particularly for Pentecostals, and cites examples where claims to pneumatic interpretation have clearly gone against literary and historical contexts.[170] Here, Keener is in agreement with Gordon Fee, arguing that our presuppositions and agendas must not silence the text's voice.[171] If Scripture is authoritative, it must be allowed to speak over our presuppositions.

This is clearly a tension within Pentecostal hermeneutics. On the one hand, there is a desire to hear the Spirit speak with fresh revelation to the contemporary context. An emphasis on the revelatory gifts of the Spirit leads to a desire to hear the words of God, not only in the historical Word but in the contemporary moment. On the other hand, interpreters do not want to read into the text their own ideas or to allow our own voice to be authoritative. For Keener, this means that contemporary meaning must be in continuity with the author's intent. This is a significant area where Keener departs from Cleveland school interpreters.

John Thomas suggests that Keener's depiction of experiential Pentecostal hermeneutics is uncharitable, and that prioritising experience and contemporary significance does not necessarily lead to error.[172] Those in the Cleveland school are defensive of experiential

[168] Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, 138.
[169] Keener, 148.
[170] Keener, 122–23.
[171] Keener, 123.
[172] Thomas, 'A Critical Engagement with Craig S. Keener's Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in the Light of Pentecost (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016)'.

readings, and in their school of thought, it is not necessarily that the author's intentions are irrelevant, but rather that determinacy lies in hearing the voice of the Spirit mediate the text in the contemporary situation.

Keener does acknowledge the pragmatic challenges in hearing the voices of the original authors. He argues that historical accuracy is based on probability, not certainty, and so we try to discern the text's 'implied authorial intent.'[173] For Keener, listening to the author's intent is an ethical responsibility, 'we respect "the other" that comes to us in the text by hearing it rather than simply treating it as a reflection of ourselves.'[174] Limitations in contextual reconstruction does not mean that the principle should be abandoned. Keener, following Gordon Fee, shows that Paul corrected the misunderstandings of his hearers and wanted to be understood, therefore there is an imperative to respect the original voice (for example in 1 Cor 5:9-10, where Paul is dismayed that the Corinthians have not understood his intent).[175] However, this case may be overstated, as Paul seems not to have prioritised authorial intention in his own interpretation of the OT (e.g. 1 Cor 10:1-5).

John Poirier has argued that the very definition of 'meaning' is problematic, and that disagreements arise in part because of the various usage of the terms.[176] He suggests that whilst scholars use the term to variously describe authorial intention, textual signs and reader construction, not all definitions are equally valid.[177] Asking, 'what does this text mean?' could be interpreted as 'what did the author intend when he wrote this?' but it could equally be understood as 'how do I personally appropriate this text?' Whilst those two interpretations could be very different, Poirier argues that they should not be.[178] Thus he makes the case that original intent should determine contemporary meaning. This view follows a standard Evangelical view, that the goal of hermeneutics is to discern the 'author's intended meaning in the text.'[179]

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[173] Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, 140.
[174] Keener, 148.
[175] Keener, 138.
[176] John C. Poirier, 'There Is Nothing Outside the Intention: Addressing "Meaning" in Pentecostal Hermeneutics', in *Constructive Pneumatological Hermeneutics in Pentecostal Christianity*, ed. Kenneth J. Archer and L. William Oliverio, Christianity and Renewal--Interdisciplinary Studies (New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 67–81.
[177] Poirier, 70.
[178] Poirier, 75–76.
[179] William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Third edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2017), 208.

Pentecostals will clearly continue to debate the role of Scripture in their tradition, but for Charismatics who are more closely related to historical Evangelicalism, the author's intention should carry weight in determining meaning. Although Keener has been criticised for his 'Evangelical plus Spirit-baptism' approach, the emphasis on authorial intention provides a helpful framework for Charismatic interpreters.

Appropriating the Text

A particular feature of Pentecostal hermeneutics is the way in which narrative is interpreted not only as historical fact but as story to be re-lived and experienced in the contemporary world. Thomas argues that Pentecostals were a narrative people before narrative as a methodology was acceptable.[180]

Pentecostals interpret Acts through the lens of their current charismatic experience and see a bridge between then and now based on shared experience of the Spirit. Pentecostal scholars have disagreed about the extent to which narrative (particularly Acts) can be considered paradigmatic for believers today. Roger Stronstad, for example, argues that Luke, as a theologian, cannot be merely describing history and in fact the distinction between the narrative and didactic portions of Scripture is in fact a false dichotomy.[181] Stronstad argues that since Paul used OT narrative as a paradigm for the church's contemporary experience (e.g. Gal 4, 1 Cor 10), it would be surprising if Luke did not expect his narrative to be used didactically.[182]

Stronstad's position is a rigorous and academic defence of the classic Pentecostal view, that arose almost intuitively as early Pentecostals saw the connection between Acts and their current experience. Doctrines such as the baptism in the Holy Spirit and tongues as initial evidence were based on a paradigmatic interpretation of Acts. Gordon Fee, as a Pentecostal theologian, was instrumental in challenging this hermeneutic, and helped to develop a more

[180] Thomas, 192.
[181] Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 6–7.
[182] Stronstad, 7.

nuanced Pentecostal approach to Acts.[183] Fee does not deny Luke's theological agenda, but insists that we must acknowledge the author's purpose for writing. In other words, Fee questions whether it was indeed Luke's intent to propose a normative agenda to Spirit reception.[184]

Despite contemporary Pentecostal hermeneutics taking a less rigid approach to narrative, it is clear that an experiential reading of Acts has shaped Pentecostal hermeneutics. Clark Pinnock has been vocal in seeing a distinction between didactic and historical passages, arguing that didactic passages should take precedence in providing a contemporary paradigm and that historical passages cannot be uncritically applied today.[185] Nonetheless, Pinnock does not want to relegate narrative to mere historiography. He cites Peter's Pentecost sermon as an example of inviting the listeners to participate in the grand redemptive narrative.[186] This would seem to be a common feature of Charismatic hermeneutics, demonstrating a desire to view the text as more than a document to be understood but as a world to be entered into. 'Charismatics also see the paradigmatic value of biblical narratives, though they reject some of the ways Pentecostals have interpreted those narratives.'[187]

Keener argues that a commitment to the truth of Scripture means that the boundaries between our world and the narrative are permeable.[188] For Keener, an important aspect of Spirit hermeneutics is that a supernatural worldview is epistemically viable, and so a Charismatic interpretation sees continuity between then and now, which breaks down historical and cultural barriers between then and now. Lee Roy Martin has also shown how early Pentecostals 'read the Bible literally, collapsing the distance between the original context of Scripture and the context of the reader.'[189] This approach can also be seen in the

[183] Bradley Truman Noel, 'Gordon Fee and the Challenge to Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Thirty Years Later', *Pneuma* 26, no. 1 (2004): 60–80.
[184] Noel, 64.
[185] Clark H. Pinnock and R. Osborne, 'A Truce Proposal for the Tongues Controversy', *Christianity Today* 16, no. 1 (1971): 8.
[186] Clark H. Pinnock, 'The Work of The Spirit in the Interpretation of Holy Scripture from the Perspective of a Charismatic Biblical Theologian', in *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 245.
[187] D. Allen Tennison, 'Charismatic Biblical Interpretation', in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the BIble*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 108.
[188] Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, 188.
[189] Lee Roy Martin, ed., *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 3.

way Pentecostals read narrative with an expectation that it is easily applicable to their contemporary context. This is helpful for preachers as it provides a framework for interpreting narrative in a way that goes beyond the recollection of past events. A pneumatic interpretation allows preachers to appropriate the text and 'enter into' its world.

Reading Analogically and Christologically

The Bible is a book containing historical information, and yet as Scripture it is not *just* a book. Accordingly, Keener wants to guard against opposite extremes. On the one hand, Scripture should not be reduced to interesting history; on the other, not everything is indiscriminately directed to all people. He warns against the naivete of proof-texting and collapsing completely the historical and cultural differences, but also asserts that the Spirit helps us to bridge the horizons.[190] Keener argues that believers have always used narrative analogically, and argues persuasively that analogical and Christological interpretations are valid ways the Spirit still speaks through Scripture.

Keener doesn't want to force an artificial schism between Christological interpretation and personal application, arguing that 'in many cases Christological readings were simply application par excellence, applying principles about God's way of working with his people to the ultimate embodiment of his people's salvation.' He shows that both NT and OT writers used Scripture both practically and Christologically. For example, Keener shows how Stephen uses the theme of the rejected prophet in Acts 7 to refer both Christologically and personally. Similarly, Keener demonstrates a sophistication in Matthew's use of the OT that sees both Messianic fulfilment as well as pastoral application.[191]

Jacqueline Grey observes the tension between personal and Christocentric application in Pentecostal hermeneutics.[192] Grey is rare among Pentecostal theologians by examining hermeneutic approaches specific to the OT. She argues that following the example of NT writers, a *sensus plenior* approach can be appropriate if it is placed within the wider framework of redemptive history.[193] She argues that whilst the Pentecostal community

[190] Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, 251–58.
[191] Keener, 238–43.
[192] Jacqueline Grey, *Three's a Crowd: Pentecostalism, Hermeneutics, and the Old Testament* (Eugene, Or: Pickwick Publications, 2011).
[193] Grey, 100.

should be challenged to engage more critically with biblical scholars in order to hear the unique voice of the text, a Pentecostal reading model should look to the significance of Christ, as well as the ongoing ministry of Christ in the church.[194] Pentecostal hermeneutics, despite its pneumatic emphasis, maintains a commitment to Christocentric readings.

Keener cautions us to be careful in our use of narrative, arguing that most ancient writers did not intend their writings to be allegorized, although they did expect readers to learn moral lessons from them.[195] This is a nuanced Pentecostal approach to narrative, that sees the value of paradigmatic, Christological and typological approaches but requires some careful exegetical controls rather than an ad hoc undisciplined reading. Again, Keener is trying to balance rational scholarship with pneumatic application and sometimes the two do not rest easy together. The balance of Christocentric and practical application, based upon careful exegesis is a good fit for interpreters within an Evangelical tradition, but for it to be Charismatic there must be an emphasis on hearing and experiencing the Holy Spirit through the text.

2.2.2 Spirit

Keener argues that authorial intent is necessary to anchor interpretation soundly, but he is equally insistent that the text must be interpreted from a context of faith. 'A persistent refusal to embrace the message in faith, conditioning one's habitual way of reading the text, can ultimately produce a hardness against it.'[196] In endorsing experiential reading, Keener does not only mean that the interpreter's experience shapes their hermeneutic, but also that the reader is shaped and transformed by reading the text, expecting to find not only information but encounter.[197]

Jacqueline Grey has observed that whilst charismatic experience is generally recognised as a core tenet of Pentecostal hermeneutics, there is little consensus about how it should

[194] Grey, 102.
[195] Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, 167.
[196] Keener, 25.
[197] Keener, 25–26.

function as part of the interpretative process.[198] Grey diagnoses this as a symptom of reflective scholarship in this area being in its relative infancy.[199]

Experience as an Epistemological Foundation

Keener has examined the role experience plays in interpretation, citing many examples from Scripture, particularly in Jesus and Paul. He shows that approved interpretation comes through proclamation and faith, for example in Thomas' experience of the risen Christ.[200] Keener also believes that Paul demonstrates that the 'full message of the Spirit can be embraced only by those conditioned by the Spirit (1 Cor 2:13-3:1).'[201] Keener goes on to demonstrate that epistemology in John is based on experiential knowledge. An epistemic dualism is presented in the fourth gospel, so that there are insiders, who have access to truth, and outsiders who are blinded.[202] Whilst in practice, there is some room for ambiguity (such as Nicodemus), Keener persuasively asserts that experiential encounter is necessary for correct interpretation.

Kevin Spawn and Archie Wright have traced the importance of experience in the Pentecostal hermeneutic, and one of the important facets is that experience of the Holy Spirit provides a continuity between then and now.[203] An epistemological commitment to the contemporary supernatural experience of the Spirit, puts the believer in continuity with the apostolic church. This continuity also gives the Charismatic interpreter a simpler approach to hermeneutics that doesn't need to involve demythologising supernatural phenomena.[204]

Certainly, a crucial aspect of Keener's thesis is the epistemic validity of a supernatural worldview. One of the valuable insights from the majority world is the reality of miracles and spirits, often denied in a rationalist worldview.[205] Contemporary Charismatic scholars

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[198] Grey, *Three's a Crowd*, 3.
[199] Grey, 3.
[200] Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, 160.
[201] Keener, 161.
[202] Keener, 183–86.
[203] Kevin L. Spawn and Archie T. Wright, 'The Emergence of a Pneumatic Hermeneutic in the Renewal Tradition', in *Spirit and Scripture: Exploring a Pneumatic Hermeneutic*, by Kevin L. Spawn and Archie T. Wright (London: T&T Clark International, 2012), 11–13.
[204] Spawn and Wright, 12.
[205] Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, 95.

are producing robust arguments in defence of the plausibility of transcendent experience.[206] The advent of postmodernity and academic acceptance of subjectivist epistemology has lessened disdain of supernatural worldviews and enabled pneumatic interpreters to be taken more seriously.

Andrew Root, for example, holds an epistemic relativist position, in which he argues that knowledge is more than what can be scientifically proven, and that our transcendent experiences are valid as sources of knowledge.[207] For Root, within a postfoundational approach, Scripture, doctrine and tradition are conflated as witnesses to divine experience, and so contemporary experience is just as epistemically viable as Scripture.[208]

For Keener, a continuationist reading is also eschatological. The Pentecostal community sees itself as an eschatological community, in continuity with the Apostolic age, for whom the pouring of the Spirit required a new framework for interpreting Scripture.[209] Pentecostals have always viewed their experience of the Spirit as authoritative to a certain extent, but recent trends in postmodern hermeneutics are recognising the validity of that authority, even though it cannot be universally applied.

The role of the Community

A key concern for Keener is that the proper location for interpretation of Scripture is not primarily the academy but the community of faith, desiring to hear God. Indeed, interpretation that does not lead to the faithful living in the community of faith has missed the point of the text.[210] Keener acknowledges an exclusivity in Spirit hermeneutics, since aspects of truth are only accessible to those who see with eyes of faith.[211] Here, Keener is helpfully articulating the idea that the Bible is not just a book whose meaning can be

[206] Note Root's comments below, and see, for example, Michael L. Brown, *Authentic Fire: A Response to John MacArthur's Strange Fire* (Lake Mary: Creation House, 2015); James Porter Moreland, *Kingdom Triangle: Recover the Christian Mind, Renovate the Soul, Restore the Spirit's Power* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2007).
[207] Root, *Christopraxis*, 197–206.
[208] Root, 226–28.
[209] Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, 48.
[210] Keener, 5.
[211] Keener, 153.

discerned through careful study alone. This is a key theme of pneumatic interpretation, in which the community of faith is the proper location for right interpretation.[212]

The Spirit-filled community forms an important part of the interpretative process. Andrew Davies notes that 'our reading and readings arise from and within a community, and a community of faith.'[213] It is not, for Davies, that ultimately the community constructs interpretation, but rather, the Spirit, mediated through the community brings understanding and significance.[214]

The Community as Arbiter

Pneumatic hermeneutics is a global phenomenon, with Charismatic and Pentecostal interpreters found all around the world. Global readings can protect the interpreter from cultural blind spots that may exist. For some Pentecostal scholars, the global Charismatic community is the primary safeguard against exegetical excesses.

Mark Cartledge argues that in contrast to traditional Evangelical theological method, which relies on the historical-critical approach to determine meaning, Pentecostal theological method has usually focused on an experiential reading, mediated by the community.[215] He notes that recent Pentecostal scholarship has emphasised the triad of text, community and Spirit as an integrated interpretative approach.[216]

> This sacred encounter with the living God is by means of the Holy Spirit and in the context of the church as the community of the Spirit, thus illustrating the 'text-community-Spirit' understanding. The Bible does not merely describe our experiences of God; it enables us to have experiences of God.[217]

Cartledge does raise the concern that if interpretation is submitted to the community, the radical edge of the text and its capacity to challenge the community is diminished. He cites Vanhoozer, who is also concerned that in this scheme the text can become domesticated by

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[212] This theme will be explored more fully in section 4.1.
[213] Davies, 'Read the Bible', 227.
[214] Davies, 227–28.
[215] Mark J Cartledge, 'Text-Community-Spirit: The Challenges Posed by Pentecostal Theological Method to Evangelical Theology', in *Spirit and Scripture: Exploring a Pneumatic Hermeneutic*, by Kevin L. Spawn and Archie T. Wright (London: T&T Clark International, 2012), 133–34.
[216] Cartledge, 134.
[217] Cartledge, 135.

the community. He is also concerned that the Charismatic person could drown out the Spirit in the triad, and that the emphasis on Pentecostal ecclesiology may be idealised and far more complex in practice. However he ultimately concludes that there can be no other way.[218] The idea that the community can play a role in softening interpretation is an insightful dynamic that will be developed in later chapters.

Keener, whilst desiring to acknowledge the strength of diversity within global readings, is wary of the community as an arbiter of interpretation. He argues that interpretation under that scheme can become a political act, in which meaning is in the heads of those communities.[219] Keener notes that the difficulty in defining 'Charismatic' would naturally cause us to ask whose voices should carry weight in the interpretative community. He also shares Cartledge's concern that interpretation that is subject to the community is sometimes dominated by populist hermeneutics, for example the 'word of faith' theology that is prevalent in some Pentecostal circles.[220]

There is clearly a significant tension for Charismatics about the extent to which interpretation should be experiential, and what if any constraints there should be. As I've noted above, Keener argues that the arbiter of Charismatic interpretation should be consistency with the author's original intent. Cartledge, Land and others take a more pragmatic approach, acknowledging the potential dangers of communal interpretation, but nonetheless insisting it is the only way to allow the Spirit to speak freshly in the contemporary context.

Experience is Affective and Ethical

Pneumatic interpretation is concerned not only with discerning the text's meaning, but pays significant attention to prompting the right response from its readings. Keener, discussing the parable of four soils, states that not all reception of the text is equal. He suggests that the intellectual priorities of some academic exegesis is inconsistent with Jesus' expectation that true understanding leads to discipleship and transformation.[221] Here, Keener argues

[218] Cartledge, 141–42.
[219] Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, 86.
[220] Keener, 263–70.
[221] Keener, 207–8.

that this is not merely an obedience to rational understanding of the text but rather an experience of the Spirit through the text. A pneumatic reading is not a legalistic reading but rather an encounter with the Spirit behind the law. 'It is not enough for us to agree with Jesus' ethics in principle; we must let his reign transform us.'[222]

Keener expands on this when he discusses Spirit hermeneutics in relation to the Torah.[223] He cautions that ethics cannot merely be extracted from the law, since God's morality is higher than the law (as demonstrated in the Sermon on the Mount).[224] Re-contextualisation and discernment are works of the Spirit in the interpretative process, providing an experiential knowledge that should lead to ethical change. Rooted in Wesleyan and Holiness traditions, an emphasis on ethics is natural within Pentecostal hermeneutics. The relationship between ethics and interpretation in Pentecostal hermeneutics is bi-directional. Thus, good interpretation is not abstract, and Charismatics expect to see ethical transformation through encounter with the word. But from the other direction, faithful living in harmony with the Spirit is seen as a prerequisite for faithful interpretation.

More recently, Pentecostal scholars have also argued for the importance of 'orthopathy' (right feeling), that goes alongside orthodoxy and orthopraxis. Steven Land made an important contribution to Pentecostal spirituality, making the affective dimension central to his theological approach.[225] He argues that Pentecostals have resisted the schism that sometimes exists between theology and spirituality and that a historical understanding of *theologia* requires the integration of belief, practice and affections.

Amos Yong, approaching Pentecostal hermeneutics from a philosophical perspective, prioritises the affective dimension using the Trinity as analogy. He argues that whilst a Pentecostal approach ought to be pneumatologically driven, it must not collapse into pneumatocentrism.[226] The Spirit is first, experientially and epistemologically, but ontologically one with Father and Son.[227]

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[222] Keener, 214.
[223] Keener, 219–36.
[224] Keener, 231.
[225] Steven J Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Cleveland, Tenn.: CPT Press, 2010), 1–2.
[226] Amos Yong, 'The Hermeneutical Trialectic: Notes Toward A Consensual Hermeneutic And Theological Method', *The Heythrop Journal* 45, no. 1 (2004): 27.
[227] Yong, 28.

Yong's construct is thoroughly trinitarian, but he is not primarily offering an account of the Godhead, but rather using the trinity to build on a Word-Community-Spirit model. Yong was showing that the Spirit can be first in a 'pneumatological imagination' without diminishing community or Word. He argues that all three are essential in dialogic relationship for a fully functional Pentecostal hermeneutic.[228] His contribution gives Pentecostal scholars a solid model for the priority of the affective dimension.

Lee Roy Martin has provided a helpful worked example of affective reading, using Psalm 63 to demonstrate the importance of reading not only cognitively but experientially.[229] He observes that a 'Pentecostal approach would recognize the psalms not only as a witness to right theology and practice, but also as an aide in the formation of the affections.'[230] For Martin, even though he emphasises the affective dimension, he affirms that 'affective elements become clearer and more precise when they emerge from sound exegesis.'[231]

This demonstrates that the *telos* of pneumatic interpretation is not limited to correct exegesis and sound application. Rather, it is concerned with the right aligning of affections and a sense of holistic transformation towards faith and obedience.

2.2.3 Word, Spirit and Community in Keener

Although Craig Keener sometimes goes to great lengths to defend his Pentecostal credentials,[232] as a biblical scholar, he values critical scholarship and historical engagement. 'An early Pentecostal voice invites us to bring Word and Spirit together – a collaboration that I would envision as the best of Evangelical exegesis of the text combined with the best of charismatic power to embrace and carry out its message.'[233] Keener does not go far enough for some Pentecostal scholars, but the synthesis of Word and Spirit makes this approach a useful starting point to bring in the formal voice of Charismatic hermeneutics.

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[228] Yong, 36–37.
[229] Lee Roy Martin, 'Psalm 63 and Pentecostal Spirituality: An Exercise in Affective Hermeneutics', in *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 263–84.
[230] Martin, 267.
[231] Martin, 269. A view affirmed by Keener. Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, 146.
[232] Keener, 'Refining Spirit Hermeneutics', 224.
[233] Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*, 289.

Keener's proposal expands and builds on Stibbe's earlier brief work on hermeneutics, that Charismatic interpretation is experiential, analogical, communal, Christocentric, eschatological, emotional and practical.[234] A distinctively Charismatic hermeneutic sits, perhaps uncomfortably, between Evangelical rationalism and Pentecostal experientialism. John Thomas is critical of Keener for this 'Evangelical plus' approach to hermeneutics,[235] but if Charismatics want to remain in the Evangelical stable, they cannot easily discard authorial intention as a hermeneutic guide.

In this section, I have shown the pneumatic interpretation is aware of the importance of authorial intention for determining meaning, as Keener's approach demonstrates. However, a hermeneutic approach, empowered by the Spirit and for the community, wants to do more. It encourages not just understanding of the text, but entering into the text, thereby minimising, if not collapsing the distance of horizons between text and reader. The affective impact on the community is important too, in that attentiveness to the Spirit should not leave the community unmoved.

The postmodern reflex has enabled a more serious discussion of the role of experience as an epistemic foundation. Similarly, recent narrative trends in hermeneutics have given Pentecostal interpretations a scholarly basis. However, Keener argues that these subjective elements should be taken in tandem with an objective approach to Scripture that holds on to the importance of original context and authorial intent. In the combination of these principles we find elements of an interpretative approach that most Charismatics could identify with. It would be too bold to suggest this is a normative hermeneutic, but it does give us a foundation from which to bring the right questions to the empirical research.

Following this historical and theological overview of Word, Spirit and community as they influence Charismatic preaching, I turn now to locating the research project methodologically, in the field of congregational hermeneutics.

[234] Stibbe, 'This Is That'.
[235] Thomas, 'A Critical Engagement with Craig S. Keener's Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in the Light of Pentecost (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016)', 195.

2.3. Congregational Hermeneutics: An Overview and Exploration of the Field

This research project, examining preaching in Charismatic churches, is located within the relatively recent field of congregational hermeneutics. This section seeks to provide an overview of the field, as well as describing some of the key features that are particularly relevant for Charismatic Evangelicalism.

Rob Warner has given a sociological account of Evangelicalism in the UK, and argues that Thiselton and Stott were influential in the 'hermeneutical turn' beginning in the late 1970s.[236] This had particularly arisen as Evangelical Anglicans debated the ordination of women, and turned to the Bible to support their views.[237] John Stott popularised hermeneutics for Evangelicals, particularly with his book, 'I believe in preaching.'[238] He challenged conservatives concerning the need to be relevant, citing the need to 'plunge fearlessly into both worlds, ancient and modern, biblical and contemporary, and to listen attentively to both.'[239]

Stott helped shape a more nuanced view of Scripture, giving Evangelicals tools to build a more robust hermeneutic. He encouraged preachers to ask themselves, 'how can I, who have been brought up in one culture, take a particular biblical text which was given in a second culture, and expound it to people who belong to a third culture?'[240] Stott's status among Evangelicals allowed him to critique and challenge a narrow literalism and gave conservatives a theologically robust rationale for adopting scholarly hermeneutic principles in the ordinary task of reading and preaching.

Evangelical hermeneutics can be characterised as a 'two step' process of exegesis to application, although specific methods vary.[241] Popular level hermeneutic text books argue that the starting point is 'what God originally intended it to mean when it was first spoken.'[242]

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[236] Warner, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism*, 190.
[237] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 269.
[238] John R. W. Stott, *I Believe in Preaching* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1982).
[239] Stott, 145.
[240] Stott, 185.
[241] Rogers, *Congregational*, 57.
[242] Gordon D. Fee and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 3rd ed (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2003), 30.

The priority of the Bible over contemporary experience is a key foundation of Evangelical epistemology, but this stance is challenged through the observation of ordinary practices of reading and interpreting the Bible.

2.3.1 Exploring the 'Ordinary'

The adjective 'ordinary', has been used to describe various subdisciplines of theology in recent years. Hermeneutics (2007),[243] ecclesiology (2017),[244] pneumatology (2010)[245] and Christology (2012)[246] have been studied from this perspective, but Jeff Astley was probably the first academic to use the word to modify theology in a formal way.[247] The concept of wanting to find out what 'ordinary' people think, however, predates his work. For example, Stringer, having undertaken a course on the history of liturgy, laments that to 'understand worship', we should go not to historical texts, but to 'ordinary' churches.[248] Despite this, the study of ordinary hermeneutics is a relatively small but growing field within practical theology.[249]

The reference to 'ordinary' reflects a wider trend, not only within practical theology but in the social sciences more generally that seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Miller-McLemore discusses the influence of social sciences on theology, which provided tools to reflect more robustly on everyday practices.[250] She writes, 'in recent years, as those in philosophy and the social sciences sought new ways to engage practice, scholars

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[243] Andrew Village, *The Bible and Lay People: An Empirical Approach to Ordinary Hermeneutics* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).
[244] John Gregory Hoyland, 'Theology in a Local Church: An Ordinary Ecclesiology' (DProf Thesis, Chester, University of Chester, 2017).
[245] Mark J Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology*, Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology (Farnham: Ashgate Pub, 2010).
[246] Ann Christie, *Ordinary Christology: Who Do You Say I Am?: Answers from the Pews*, Explorations in Practical, Pastoral, and Empirical Theology (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).
[247] Jeff Astley, *Ordinary Theology: Looking, Listening, and Learning in Theology* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2002).
[248] Martin D. Stringer, *On the Perception of Worship: The Ethnography of Worship in Four Christian Congregations in Manchester* (Birmingham: The University of Birmingham Press, 1999), 1.
[249] Perrin, *Bible Reading*, 16.
[250] Bonnie Miller-McLemore, 'The Contributions of Practical Theology', in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie Miller-McLemore (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 1–3.

traditionally housed in separate disciplines in theological and religious study took new interest in lived religion, ordinary theology, and popular culture.'[251]

2.3.2 Clergy, Laity and Congregational Hermeneutics

Mark Allan Powell has explored some of the tensions between the readings of clergy and laity, in two studies conducted to identify reader's interpretations.[252] In the first study, he asks 50 lay people and 50 clergy to read a short text (Mark 7:1-8) and to answer the question, 'what does this mean to you?'[253] In this example, he noticed a distinct difference between empathy choices of clergy and empathy choices of laity. Clergy were far more likely to identify with Jesus (which Powell describes as 'idealistic empathy') whereas laity were far more likely to identify with either the disciples or the Pharisees (described as 'realistic empathy').[254]

This is a good example of the way in which locatedness impacts reading. The differences between lay and clerical readings are not accounted for solely by theological knowledge,[255] but have more to do with the reader's social location. This brings a helpful nuance to Astley's ordinary / academic continuum, in which readers are placed between two poles, largely dependent on their theological knowledge. However, academic training is only one factor and may not be the primary distinction between clergy and laity. In many Charismatic churches, preachers sometimes find a more theologically-educated laity. In this present research, two of the five preachers had little or no formal theological education, and yet were located as clergy, which as Powell shows, impacts the way the text is read.

In a further study, Powell asked a similar group of people to read a different text (Luke 3:3-17) and answer the question, 'what does this mean?'[256] The omission of 'for you' in this second question leads Powell to different observations. Whilst the laity generally answered the question in the same way as the first study (i.e. generating meaning that was relevant for

[251] Miller-McLemore, 3.
[252] Mark Allan Powell, *What Do They Hear? Bridging the Gap Between Pulpit and Pew* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007).
[253] Powell, 31–55.
[254] Powell, 50–52.
[255] Powell, 9.
[256] Powell, *What Do They Hear?*

them), the clergy responses made much more reference to Luke's intentions as an author.[257] In this sample, it was clear from the responses that the laity assumed personal meaning and relevance as a hermeneutic priority, whereas the clergy tended to assume meaning was tied to authorial intent. This may well be a product of theological education, as many clergy will have been schooled in historical/critical methods.

Powell further views this distinction as an example of a cognitive bias in the clergy and an affective bias in the laity.[258] He argues that clergy interpret the question of meaning to refer to its message, whereas laity interpret meaning to refer to the impact of the text.[259] With the absence of the personal referent in the question set, Powell interprets the data to say that whilst clergy can read for personal application (as in the first study), their tendency is to prefer a two-step hermeneutic process of exegesis to application.[260]

In Powell's study, the assumption that meaning refers to personal impact and relevance is a difference between lay and clergy readings, although it would be interesting to conduct this study among Charismatic clergy, who may also assume that meaning assumes 'for me.'

'Ordinary' Charismatic Preaching

Given this tension exists between the hermeneutics of clergy and laity, it may seem odd to suggest that Charismatic Pastors interpret Scripture in an 'ordinary' way. Cargal argues that a contrast can be drawn between the interpretative approaches of the church and the academy, but that preachers would fall on the side of the church:

> Pentecostal preachers within parish communities have generally continued traditional modes of Pentecostal interpretation with their emphases on the immediacy of the text and multiple dimensions of meaning. While these interpreters would assert the historical reliability of the narratives (on essentially pre-critical grounds), the historical context does not materially contribute to their appropriation of the text since the dominate patterns of meaning tend to be typological.[261]

[257] Powell, 92–93.
[258] Powell, 95–96.
[259] Powell, 95.
[260] Powell, 92–95.
[261] Timothy B. Cargal, 'Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy: Pentecostals and Hermeneutics in a Postmodern Age', *Pneuma* 15, no. 1 (1993): 164.

He notes the similarities of Pentecostalism with fundamentalism, describing an anti-intellectualism in which Pastors and Preachers will often have little or no formal academic training. Where Pentecostals have sought post-graduate theological degrees, they have largely aligned with Evangelical scholarship, thus creating the tension between academy and the church.[262] In this sense, the preaching in most Pentecostal churches could rightly be described as 'ordinary', in that it does not reflect the methodology and characteristics of the academy.

Cargal is careful to note that he is talking specifically about classic Pentecostal preachers here in his analysis,[263] but there is plenty of resonance within Charismatic preaching. The Charismatics identified in this project sit somewhere between classic Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism in terms of their relationship with modern historical-critical methods. Tellingly, when Andrew Village conducted a quantitative study of Charismatic Anglican clergy, he found little difference between their approaches to reading and that of the lay people in terms of their imaginative engagement, arguing that few clergy would be well acquainted with academic concerns of the text.[264]

A further consideration concerns the role of academic theology outside the academy. Astley argues that the academic theologian 'always began life as an ordinary theologian,' and that 'inside the academic the ordinary theologian slumbers.'[265] Even among those trained in historical-critical methodologies, attention to context and authorial intention can dissipate in the pressure to preach relevantly and prophetically.

Grenz and Olson offer a 'spectrum of reflection,' in which academic theology sits at the opposite end of the spectrum to folk theology, with 'ministerial theology' sat right in the middle:[266]

[262] Cargal, 170.
[263] Cargal, 165.
[264] Andrew Village, 'The Charismatic Imagination: Clergy Reading Mark 9:14-29', *PentecoStudies* 11, no. 2 (December 2012): 228.
[265] Astley, *Looking, Listening*, 58.
[266] Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *Who Needs Theology?: An Invitation to the Study of God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 26.

Ministerial theology is described as 'reflective faith… practiced by trained ministers and teachers in Christian churches.'[267] In some of the ethnographic studies referenced below, folk, lay and ministerial theologies can all be seen in operation in churches. Whilst they might all be described as ordinary, there is clearly a range of engagement with serious reflection.

Astley argues that the analogy between academic and ordinary is more 'dynamic' than a spectrum between the two.[268] It is not necessarily the case that the academic informs and shapes the ordinary, as academic theology can often 'be tracked back to more ordinary disturbances.'[269] The tension between the academic and the ordinary is not merely a matter of theological knowledge or training, and in fact the academic theologian is very capable of ordinary theology, especially when they are out of an academic context. I would suggest that for many Charismatic preachers, at the forefront of innovative ministry situations, their day-to-day theology tends towards the ordinary.

Andrew Rogers prefers to use the term, 'congregational', acknowledging that whilst people intuitively understand what is meant, 'ordinary' does not properly account for the range of educational backgrounds within the church.[270] Rogers traces the origin of the term 'congregational hermeneutics' to Stuart Murray, who has argued that the congregation is the hermeneutical community in the Anabaptist tradition.[271] For Murray, the congregation serves in a communal discernment process, in which even the weakest members are included in the process. The term 'congregational hermeneutics' helpfully situates the research in ecclesial practice, emphasising the agency of the whole community. However, the term 'ordinary hermeneutics' more accurately captures the *mode* of hermeneutics, distinguishing it from academic methods. This is not to infer that the preachers are uneducated or simplistic in their interpretations–on the contrary, some held graduate and post-graduate degrees in theology.

[267] Grenz and Olson, 31.
[268] Astley, *Looking, Listening*, 86.
[269] Astley, 87.
[270] Rogers, *Congregational*, 5.
[271] Rogers, 4–5.

Preaching as 'Ordinary'

Preaching, in its very nature is usually required to maintain a degree of relevance to the listeners, and this demand is a further contrast between the ordinary and the academic, regardless of the theological training of the preacher. Preachers do not share the luxury of academic theologians in being able to explore a concept or idea without any reference to their listeners or the contemporary world. Rather, the need to maintain relevance makes preaching an 'ordinary' act.

Thomas Long argues that contemporary meaning of the text is not self-evident, rather preaching requires imagination to apply the text to the hearers.[272] A traditional model of exegesis-application is not, in fact, feasible since the preacher always brings their experience to the text and reads from their locatedness. 'A certain kind of eisegesis, the kind that renders us completely present before the text and passionately concerned to hear a Word that addresses our world, is not a sin to be avoided, but rather is an earnestly sought prerequisite to productive exegesis.'[273] Preaching is therefore a 'particular' act, dependent upon the location of the preacher and the hearers.

Researching Ordinary Hermeneutics

Observing the ordinary practices of Evangelical readers requires empirical research and a range of methods have been fruitfully employed. Whilst Andrew Village effectively utilises a quantitative approach,[274] most researchers of ordinary hermeneutics tend towards an ethnographic process, which provides a 'thick description' of ordinary readers.[275]

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[272] Thomas G. Long, 'The Use of Scripture in Contemporary Preaching', in *A Reader on Preaching: Making Connections*, ed. David Day, Jeff Astley, and Leslie J. Francis (Aldershot: Ashgate Pub, 2005), 37–39.
[273] Long, 39.
[274] Village, *Bible*.
[275] Susan Friend Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001); Brian Malley, *How the Bible Works: An Anthropological Study of Evangelical Biblicism* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004); Labanow, *Evangelicalism and the Emerging Church*; James S. Bielo, *Words upon the Word: An Ethnography of Evangelical Group Bible Study*, Qualitative Studies in Religion (New York: New York University Press, 2009); Rogers, *Congregational*; Perrin, *Bible Reading*.

Bielo describes ethnography as an extended, long-term study, among people, using multiple techniques to collect data.[276] It is the close-up, longitudinal study that enables a researcher to deeply capture and report on a chosen people group. It is a primary tool of anthropologists in the study of people and culture. However, some practical theologians have been keen to modify the anthropological definition of ethnography to make it more appropriate for use in theological contexts. Elizabeth Phillips argues that theologians tend to use the term 'ethnography' to mean something less intense than the 'extraordinarily comprehensive and holistic study of a culture.'[277] She suggests that the term 'theological ethnography' as a more appropriate description, as practitioners are guided not only by the scientific methods of anthropology, but by the practical demands of ministry.[278] Theological ethnography further distinguishes itself from its anthropological roots in epistemological foundations.

Ethnographic research into congregations (such as Malley's described further below) deliberately ignores any divine action and approaches the congregation solely as a human phenomenon.[279] Theological ethnography, in contrast, seeks to 'embrace methods of research that are simultaneously theological and 'ethnographic.'[280] Recent work from the ecclesiology and ethnography network has sought to avoid both anthropological accounts of church outside of the framework of faith *and* normative claims that fail to deeply listen to practice.[281] The approach taken in this project can be broadly classified as 'theological ethnography', in which observation and analysis of sermons is undertaken robustly, albeit with a theological agenda.

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[276] James S. Bielo, *Anthropology of Religion: The Basics*, The Basics (London ; New York: Routledge, 2015), 31.
[277] Elizabeth Phillips, 'Charting the Ethnographic Turn: Theologians and the Study of Christian Congregations', in *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, ed. Pete Ward, Studies in Ecclesiology and Ethnography (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2012), 102.
[278] Phillips, 102–3.
[279] Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 2.
[280] Pete Ward, 'Introduction', in *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, ed. Pete Ward, Studies in Ecclesiology and Ethnography (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2012), 2.
[281] Christian Scharen, 'Introduction', in *Explorations in Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, ed. Christian Scharen, Studies in Ecclesiology and Ethnography (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2012), 3–4.

2.3.3 Characteristics of Ordinary Reading

Drawing on the research of ordinary Bible reading and interpretation, we can make some observations of the primary characteristics of ordinary hermeneutics. Evangelicals in ordinary contexts read Scripture with a general set of shared assumptions, observed challenges and pragmatic tensions. This section explores the assumptions, challenges and tensions that have previously been observed in Evangelical congregations, with a view to examining the extent to which they may be present within my own sample of Charismatic preachers. Most of the research examples in this section are located within the UK context, with the notable exceptions of Bielo and Malley. However, there are resonances from their research that are useful for the present discussion.

The language of assumption implies that these criteria are often unchallenged, and indeed Malley's approach suggests that Evangelicals tend to uncritically adopt biblicist approaches.[282] However, other accounts of congregational reading demonstrate that Evangelicals are not merely naïve receptors of an inherited tradition. This is reflected below in their engagement with challenges and ability to negotiate tensions.

The Assumption of Truth

Evangelicalism is defined largely in terms of its relationship to the Bible as the divinely inspired word of God. Evangelicals hold the Bible as the ultimate source of authority, above church tradition and leadership, and for Charismatic Evangelicals, charismatic experience is even subordinate to the authority of Scripture.[283] Evangelicals approach the Bible with a hermeneutic of trust, expecting the Bible to represent history accurately. Perrin notes that 'participants were not inclined to engage with the Bible as constructed literature, redacted oral traditions, or use literary techniques to decipher them. Rather they understood narratives as factually accurate and reliable narrative.'[284]

The assumption of truth is based on the authority and inspiration of Scripture, although Malley notes that Evangelicals seem generally unconcerned about the ambiguity around

[282] Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 136.
[283] Mathew Guest, *Evangelical Identity and Contemporary Culture: A Congregational Study in Innovation* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), 81.
[284] Perrin, *Bible Reading*, 92.

inspiration.[285] For such a key plank of Evangelical epistemology, scant attention seems to be paid to the basis of this belief. In Malley's scheme, Evangelicals treat the Bible as authoritative because that is one of the key principles of membership within the community.[286] Biblical authority is, in anthropological terms, an 'ultimate sacred postulate', meaning that it does not have to be explained, but is rather a primary belief of the group that is reinforced through the practices of the group.[287]

However, his own bias may be evident here. Even though he acknowledges that Evangelical scholars have given 'empirical and logical arguments for biblical inspiration,' he suggests that these are only given to scaffold their own 'nonempirical' beliefs.[288] Furthermore, this is one example where the differences between US and UK Evangelicalism is evident. Hutchinson has shown that the 'battle for the Bible' that erupted in the US was far more muted in the UK, with British Evangelicals less engaged (although not ignorant) of the concern for biblical inerrancy.[289]

Literalism

Biblical literalism has been uncharitably caricatured, especially by critics of fundamentalism, but Malley argues that the term itself is nuanced and often covers a range of meaning.[290] When Evangelicals say they read the Bible 'literally', they rarely mean absolutely literally! For example, it is absurd for most Evangelicals to think that the sun 'literally' rises and sets (Ecc 1:5) and thus oppose a heliocentric solar system. As Village argues, 'even the most conservative fundamentalist will concede that the Bible can speak metaphorically in places.'[291] Rather, Malley argues that in his observations, literalism refers to 'normal' interpretation, in contrast to figurative or rhetorical hermeneutics.[292]

> Typically, they understand that a text means what it appears to say and that the narrative voice presents a trustworthy report of actual events. They often ignore (or

[285] Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 136.
[286] Malley, 140.
[287] Malley, 136–40.
[288] Malley, 140.
[289] Anna Hutchinson, *The Influence of the Doctrine of Scripture: How Beliefs about the Bible Affect the Way It Is Read* (Lanham: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2024), 92.
[290] Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 92–103.
[291] Village, *Bible*, 57.
[292] Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 98.

> are unaware) of literary theories on interpretation, thus, unless texts cross certain lines, resistant reading is unlikely.[293]

Malley demonstrates that Evangelical biblicism has been particularly shaped by two key developments; the Protestant reformation and the fundamentalist/modernist controversy of the 1920-30s.[294] This second factor has particular implications for understanding literalism, since it exists partly in defence against critical interpretive approaches. Demythologizing projects by critical scholars such as Rudolph Bultmann prompted significant resistance from Evangelicals, who were concerned that the foundation of their faith was being shaken. Evangelicals vary in their willingness to accept scholarly perspectives on the Bible. As Noll observes, 'some… have been able to appropriate aspects of modern criticism that they regard as resting on empirical investigation instead of presupposed historicism, evolutionism and demythologizing.'[295]

Historicity

Village's quantitative study asked respondents about the historicity of certain events in the Bible (Jonah was in the belly of a big fish, Jesus turned water into wine etc.) In Evangelical churches, over 90% believed that miraculous events described in the gospels happened literally (i.e. as described).[296] In discussing the narrative of Jonah, Village notes that Evangelicals tended to adopt the default position of historicity of the text, despite their reading of parables as fiction.[297] Historical factuality is assumed to be the norm unless there is an appropriate reason for assuming otherwise. 'Charismatic practice' was also associated with higher levels of plain readings, but this is not a naïve literalism but rather a principled position that is found in Charismatics, among both those theologically educated and those that are not.[298]

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[293] Perrin, *Bible Reading*, 76.
[294] Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 18.
[295] Mark A. Noll, 'Evangelicals and the Bible', in *The Routledge Research Companion to the History of Evangelicalism*, ed. Andrew Atherstone (London: Routledge, 2019), 37.
Malley's empirical observations also showed Evangelicals adjusting their perspectives on the basis of trusted scholarship. Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 99.
[296] Village, *Bible*, 65.
[297] Village, 66.
[298] Village, 68.

Anna Hutchinson looked at the reading practice of Evangelical Anglicans, analysing the way that the doctrine of Scripture influenced their reading.[299] She rightly observes that in practice, truth is not the same as historical accuracy, and that Evangelicals are able to recognise the difference. Participants viewed some texts as truthful, not in the historical sense but in the sense of theological lessons, which was largely deemed to be more significant.[300] Hutchinson deliberately chose Genesis *7* for readers, so that they would have to wrestle with the historicity of the flood narrative. Although readers discussed the historicity of the text, she observes a fluidity in the definition of 'truth' in which historicity is not the determining factor. Rather, truthfulness is located in the theology of the text and what it reveals about the character of God and humanity.[301] Thus with regards to the assumption of truth, the primary concern for her participants was not the historical factuality, but the truthfulness of theological and moral insights that could be wrought from the text.

The Assumption of Applicability

One feature of congregational Evangelical hermeneutics that has been consistently observed is the motivation of relevance.[302] Readers assume transitivity between the text and their context, and as a result, every time they sense God speaking to them through the text, their faith in the authority and relevance of Scripture is bolstered.[303]

Whilst observing Evangelical Bible studies, Perrin discovered that whilst there was a clear concern to relate the passage to the reader's lives, the groups generally preferred to explore the text in its own context first.[304] In fact, she observed groups censuring individuals who too quickly wanted to find the application in the text, thus allaying the fears of their church leaders who had assumed that ordinary reading practices would be quite anthropocentric.[305]

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[299] Hutchinson, *Influence*.
[300] Hutchinson, 50–51.
[301] Hutchinson, 43.
[302] See Perrin, *Bible Reading*, 82–84; Bielo, *Words upon the Word*, 58–63; Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 105–6; Rogers, *Congregational*, 108–9; Village, *Bible*, 82–87; Powell, *What Do They Hear?*, 92.
[303] Bielo, *Words upon the Word*, 59.
[304] Perrin, *Bible Reading*, 99–100.
[305] Perrin, 99–100.

Rogers also witnessed this 'two-step' hermeneutic, that is a unidirectional process from exegesis to application.[306] Bible study was often undertaken with the motivation of application, as noted for example in the prayer beginning one small group study, asking for divine help to apply the lessons of the text to contemporary life.[307]

Evangelicals demonstrate some awareness of culture, context and genre when they read and often seem concerned to read the text carefully. However, they approach the text expecting God to speak something that will relate directly to them. As Hutchinson notes, 'participants read with the goal of learning theological insight (belief) or guidance for life (behaviour) as a consequence of their belief that the Bible was God's teaching resource.'[308]

The Assumption of Christocentrism

Perrin observes a second pattern of Evangelical reading, which prioritises Christological readings of both Testaments.[309] The Evangelical commitment to crucicentrism and biblicism is demonstrated through a hermeneutic that sees the Bible as a unified whole, climaxing in God's salvific action through Christ. As Bielo argues,

> Scripture is characterized by continuity of form and theme with no room for contrary meanings or purposes. Much like the ideology of relevance, beliefs about the textuality of scripture emerge from the authority of scripture. The uniform authorship of the Bible—despite its variety of known and anonymous human authors—underwrites this assumed continuity. Because God is always ultimately the author, it is no mystery to find such coherence from Genesis to Revelation.[310]

The centrality of the cross became for Evangelicals the unifying feature of the Bible, and identifier of Evangelical doctrine.[311] Stephen Burnhope, proposing a hermeneutic model for the Vineyard movement, suggests that interpretation should be Christological and Christocentric.[312] Scripture, he argues, is analogous to Christ, and should therefore be recognised in two natures – both truly divine and truly human.[313] Secondly, Christ is a

[306] Rogers, *Congregational*, 110.
[307] Rogers, 108.
[308] Hutchinson, *Influence*, 103.
[309] Perrin, *Bible Reading*, 77.
[310] Bielo, *Words upon the Word*, 64.
[311] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 14–17.
[312] Stephen A. Burnhope, 'A Proposal for a Vineyard 5-Step Hermeneutical Model', 2014.
[313] Burnhope, 2.

'hermeneutical lens for knowing what the unchanging God is like and knowing his unchanging ways.'[314]

Rogers observed a Christocentric emphasis at one of the churches he studied:

> There was a conspicuous tradition in Fellowship public settings of inserting into many sermons and other public discourses highly compressed accounts of Jesus' atoning death on the cross, often without much connection to what came before or after.[315]

The pastor at this church argued that it is important to consider authorial intention and original context to avoid taking 'fanciful leaps', but did see a 'Jesus hermeneutic' in the practice of the early church and so aspired for that approach in his preaching.[316]

Rogers suggests there is some evidence that such a Christological move slows the fusion of horizons between the text and the contemporary context.[317] For Evangelicals who read the Bible through a Christocentric lens, the step towards contemporary application takes secondary place after revelation of the person and work of Christ.

In congregational reading, some Evangelicals reflect the view that all Scripture should be interpreted Christocentrically, whilst others will ignore Christocentric priorities. However, this is probably not a principled position but rather an echo of the Evangelical tradition they are part of.

The Challenge of Scholarship

Historically, Evangelicals have had an uneasy relationship with critical scholarship, viewing various modernist approaches as a threat to the integrity of the Bible. Against this background, Evangelical scholars have sought to engage with these methods to exegete texts consistent with Evangelical doctrine.[318]

Perrin notes a variety of attitudes among Evangelicals towards scholarly biblical engagement today.[319] Conservative Evangelicals, who in the past would have been sceptical

[314] Burnhope, *4*.
[315] Rogers, *Congregational*, 87.
[316] Rogers, 103.
[317] Rogers, 109.
[318] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 185.
[319] Perrin, *Bible Reading*, *77*–81.

of historical-critical methods, have been persuaded that this is not necessarily a threat to biblicism and can aid their interpretation. Introductory-level hermeneutic texts help readers to understand issues such as context, genre, structure etc.[320] Indeed, Malley's ethnographic study revealed evidence of some engagement with critical scholarship in the ordinary reading habits of Evangelicals.[321] Malley argues that this dynamic cannot be described as a hermeneutic tradition, but an interpretive tradition, which exists to give credence to the pre-existing beliefs of the readers.[322][323] He identifies a rigorous hermeneutic tradition in the Evangelical academy but argues that it is not observable in the church, and that this tension between the church and the academy is the practical response to the conflict between authority and relevancy.[324]

Malley may have overstated his case in two ways: Firstly, he recounts a sermon in his fieldwork in which the pastor was giving hermeneutic instructions to the listeners.[325] It is not to be expected that ordinary readers should generally be conversant with critical scholarship, but there is evidence that some hermeneutic boundaries are being encouraged and practiced by the church. Secondly, the voice of the Evangelical academy is heard in the church, even if the hermeneutic methods are not always followed.

The Challenge of Horizons

We have already seen that congregational readers are not ignorant of contextual questions, often expressing a desire to interpret the text in its own context. Despite the motivation of relevance and applicability, congregational readers consistently demonstrate awareness that their world is not the same as the world of the text or the author (although they may not distinguish between the author and the text).

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[320] Perrin, 80.
[321] For example, in this extract, the respondent demonstrates awareness of literary context and cultural background. Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 139.
[322] For Malley, an interpretive tradition is a set of beliefs directed towards the Bible, whereas a hermeneutic tradition is 'a socially transmitted set of methods for reading the Bible.' Thus he considers Evangelical reading to be determined by a theological agenda, rather than a hermeneutic agenda. Malley, 124.
[323] Malley, 124.
[324] Ibid.
[325] Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 90–91.

Horizon Preference

Andrew Village's empirical study attempts to provide a quantitative metric for 'horizon preference' and applicability.[326] Using the test case scenario of Mark 9:14-29, he asked respondents to identify how the story applied to their lives, and then sought to identify their preference for author (e.g. 'this story shows the mind of the original writer'), text (e.g. 'this story shows the attitude of Jesus to his generation') or the reader (e.g. 'this story shows what it means to be faithful disciples today').[327] This is quite a blunt and rudimentary tool for interpreting how people read, but the results are nonetheless interesting for our current discussion.

Higher levels of education (and especially theological education) correlated with horizon preferences for text and author, which is perhaps unsurprising given the emphasis on historical-critical methods within the academy. [328] Perhaps more surprisingly, belief in supernatural healing was correlated with a preference for the reader's horizon, independent of the level of education.[329]

> The people most likely to apply the story were those who believed that supernatural events like the one described in the passage happen today, that is, what Jesus did is a direct paradigm for the actions of his followers today and this is possible because, in effect, disciples can do what their master did.[330]

However, this may simply be because the passage chosen in this research specifically concerned a supernatural miracle. It is possible that preference for the horizon of the reader is diminished among conservatives when the narrative involves supernatural events.

Perrin similarly considers the extent to which readers inhabit the world *behind* the text, the world *in* the text and the world *in front* of the text. She suggests that genre may be a key factor in determining horizon preference, so in OT narrative, readers showed little interest in the authorial horizon, whereas with NT texts they showed some awareness of the world behind the text.[331]

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[326] Village, *Bible*, 83–89.
[327] Ibid.
[328] Village, *Bible*, 88.
[329] Village, 89.
[330] Village, 89–90.
[331] Perrin, *Bible Reading*, 95–96.

> Nevertheless, finding an objective meaning, the author's meaning, which Evangelical literature encourages us a first interpretative step, was not the priority of the ordinary readers. Instead, understanding the world *within* the text, the events described and their context were more important.[332]

Fusion Processes

Andrew Rogers describes a range 'fusion processes' by which Evangelicals correlated the horizon of the text with the horizon of their world.[333] 'Exemplar hermeneutics often took text and congregational horizons to be proximate, that is, to have little hermeneutical distance between them.'[334] This approach was also evident in small groups, in which participants studied the lives of biblical characters, and the 'default move was to hold them up as examples and/or cautions, with some group discussion treating them in quite contemporary categories.'[335]

Rogers also extensively describes the process of 'text-linking', in which texts that are seen to correlate are strung together. This, Rogers argues, is 'a form of recontextualization allowing for new understandings of text, although this could also have unintended deconstructive effects.'[336] As an example, he considers the song *These are the Days of Elijah*, which links together and reconstructs several OT texts.[337]

Even in a church with an 'explicit Christological tradition', Rogers observes the most common hermeneutic move from the Old Testament was to the contemporary horizon.[338] Ordinary readers read the text with the over-arching goal of finding meaning they can relate easily to their own context. Yet this does not mean they are ignorant of the distance between the two horizons. Interviewees discussed with Rogers the importance of original context and authorial intention, but they also relied on the Holy Spirit to bring contemporary relevance to them.[339]

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[332] Perrin, 96.
[333] Rogers, *Congregational*, 100–101.
[334] Rogers, 104.
[335] Rogers, 109.
[336] Rogers, 105.
[337] Rogers, 105.
[338] Rogers, 109.
[339] Rogers, 112–15.

Empathy Choice

One primary observed strategy for bridging horizons is through imaginatively identifying with the characters in a narrative text. 'Characters in the texts were viewed as inspiration role models, or salutary warnings.'[340] We have already noted Powell's study of empathy choices above, but the distinction of realistic and idealistic empathy is noteworthy here.[341] Rogers observed this fusion process in his own research, in which participants read character narratives as examples and/or cautions.[342] He notes that sometimes they used quite contemporary categories to enable empathy (e.g. 'elder material' or 'bored housewife', both for OT characters).[343] When readers adopted idealistic empathy, for example when looking at the lives of David, Christ or Paul, they recognised a greater distance between the horizons.[344]

This approach has particular resonance with Pentecostal approaches to hermeneutics. As Nel notes, Pentecostals are less concerned with orthodoxy than orthopraxy, and so biblical characters are used as examples of experiencing divine reality.[345] Biblical narrative, particularly in the Pentecostal imagination, offer repeatable examples of God's interaction with his people that can be reappropriated for the contemporary reader. This is one of the key methods employed to bridge horizons.

The Tension between Text and Meaning

The assumptions and challenges of congregational Evangelical reading results in holding together a tension between text and meaning.

For Malley, Evangelicals live in the tension of biblical authority and interpretive relevance.[346] Since the ability to derive authoritative meaning from the text is a key plank of Evangelical epistemology, there must be robust method of transitivity from text to

[340] Perrin, *Bible Reading*, 98.
[341] Powell, *What Do They Hear?*, 30.
[342] Rogers, *Congregational*, 109.
[343] Rogers, 109.
[344] Rogers, 109.
[345] Marius Nel, 'Pentecostals' Reading of the Old Testament', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 28, no. 2 (17 November 2007): 532.
[346] Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 123–25.

meaning.[347] In other words, Evangelicals must be able to restrict what the text means, otherwise their interpretation is arbitrary. However, if that method is too rigid, the Bible loses its practical relevance, and so Evangelicals employ interpretive methods to reapply the text.

Perrin acknowledges this tension in Evangelical hermeneutics, discussing the variety of approaches regarding women in leadership and charismatic gifts.[348] Some Evangelicals will take a "plain sense" reading of the one but will argue that the other is contextual and should be reinterpreted. Evangelicals from a different perspective will see the two issues in reverse.[349] This is a good example of Malley's critique that Evangelicals 'present the text as an object for hermeneutic activity, but the goal of that hermeneutic activity is not so much to establish the meaning of the text as to establish transitivity between the text and the beliefs.'[350]

Evangelicals have developed hermeneutic procedures to ascertain which commands are universal and which are culturally conditioned. However, for Malley, 'it is an ad hoc argument, widely endorsed because it has the convenient consequence of exempting Evangelicals from an inconvenient command.'[351]

Devotional / Historical Reading

In reading praxis, Evangelicals inhabit this tension by accessing both 'devotional' and 'historical' modes of reading.[352] The Evangelical reader is persuaded by objective rational interpretations that are grounded in a coherent hermeneutical method but can also be moved by the subjective devotional meanings found in prayer and meditation. Guest observed a similar pattern at a large Charismatic Anglican church in the UK. In the ordinary use of the Bible, congregants avowed 'historical foundationalism', stressing the belief that the Bible's historicity rested on empirical data.[353] They were able to recognise the validity of scholarly

[347] Malley uses the language of transitivity to refer to the idea that there is an implicit connection between the words of Scripture, and the concepts derived from them, so that the authority of the interpretation is assumed from the authority of Scripture. Malley, 83–84.
[348] Perrin, *Bible Reading*, 81.
[349] Ibid.
[350] Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 124.
[351] Malley, 144.
[352] Malley, 111.
[353] Guest, *Evangelical Identity*, 85.

interpretation, and yet they also rely on the Holy Spirit as a 'guiding force' to carry meaning.[354]

For ordinary Evangelicals, devotional reading is constrained by a commitment (at least in theory) to authorial intention. Perrin argues that devotional readings are not a form of reader-response hermeneutics, since Evangelical readers consider the text to have an objective meaning correlating to the author's original intention.[355]

Word and Spirit

Indeed, Charismatic Evangelicals (as a distinct subset of Evangelicals) read with the dual emphasis of Word and Spirit.[356] It is a deliberate hermeneutic approach that is practiced across laity and clergy. The influence of Charismatic spirituality impacts the tension between text and meaning. Rogers, observing the reading practices of two churches, observes that Fellowship (the more Charismatic church) seemed to be epistemologically looser:

> Fellowship was less concerned with the Bible's status, since its authority was relativised to an extent by Charismatic practices which were understood to be other ways in which God speaks. Fellowship also was marked by more perspectival/experiential language about the Bible, low authority discourse, comfort with unresolved texts, more open critique of the Bible, and more extensive indeterminacy.[357]

In Rogers' observation, Charismatic beliefs correlate with an increased openness to hermeneutic innovation. He makes the brief comment that 'their epistemology contributed to a greater emphasis on the individual as opposed to the congregation.'[358] A more innovative hermeneutic also opened up the possibility for greater engagement with culture.[359]

Andrew Village has also considered the role of charismatic imagination in congregational hermeneutics.[360] He considers the influence of psychological type and identifies a correlation

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[354] Guest, 86.
[355] Perrin, *Bible Reading*, 80.
[356] Mark Bonnington, *Patterns in Charismatic Spirituality* (Cambridge: Grove Books Limited, 2007), 5.
[357] Rogers, *Congregational*, 135.
[358] Rogers, 136.
[359] Rogers, 136.
[360] Village, 'Charismatic Imagination'.

between intuition and feeling types and charismatic readings.[361] 'The link between present-day lived experience and the biblical accounts of the "acts of God" partly explains the importance of the Bible to Charismatics.'[362]

Openness to the ongoing revelation of the Spirit has enabled Charismatics to interpret the Bible more freely, drawing implications and applications that can speak more directly into individuals and cultural issues.

Polyvalence

Since God is actively speaking through the text, Evangelicals are often unconcerned that people find variant meanings within the text, but it is not an unrestricted hermeneutic.[363] Particularly within the looser epistemological framework of Charismatic hermeneutics, a text can mean more than one thing. Powell defines polyvalence as 'the capacity-or, perhaps, the inevitable tendency-for texts to mean different things to different people.'[364]

Malley describes the tension of Evangelical interpretation,

> caught between the Scylla of hermeneutic freedom and the Charybdis of irrelevance: too much hermeneutics freedom and the tradition disintegrates, loosing its epistemological appeal; too little interpretive freedom and the Bible becomes merely an irrelevant historical artifact, rather than the ever-living word of God.[365]

For Malley, interpretive variation is a threat to the Evangelical epistemology.[366] If any interpretation is possible then the Bible loses its authority. Interpretive boundaries thus help to provide stability and cohesion to the group's beliefs.

An interesting observation in congregational reading is the extent to which Evangelicals can be happy to leave questions of objective meaning unanswered. Perrin, Bielo and Malley all report observations of Evangelical Bible studies in which divergent interpretations are offered, with no clear conclusion being reached.[367] Bielo describes extensively a group Bible

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[361] Village, 231.
[362] Village, 216.
[363] Perrin, *Bible Reading*, 84.
[364] Powell, *What Do They Hear?*, 3.
[365] Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 123.
[366] Malley, 123.
[367] Perrin, *Bible Reading*, 101; Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 125–26; Bielo, *Words upon the Word*, 69–70.

study in which little consensus was reached over the objective meaning of a text.[368] He argues that the primary purpose of the group Bible study is not to identify objective meaning, but rather for the group members to have a positive spiritual experience, to be 'edified.'[369] 'Allowing multiple possibilities of meaning to linger keeps the group dynamic from being too contentious, and the small group experience of 'edification' from being threatened.'[370] Perrin reports these situations being resolved through statements such as 'for me…' or 'Personally I'd take from this…'[371] Even in group scenarios, the tone is primarily individual and subjective.

The community of faith is often referenced as an arbiter in interpretation, particularly in the Charismatic tradition.[372] Research into congregational hermeneutics supports the role of the community in establishing interpretive boundaries, although more by guarding the unity of the group rather than by discerning orthodox meaning. Congregational readers are often more concerned with group harmony than establishing objective meaning.

However, even in ordinary Evangelical practices, there is awareness that polyvalence should not be treated as an unrestricted smorgasbord of meaning, even for Charismatics who tend to be more comfortable with divergence. The canonical metanarrative, particularly culminating in God's redemptive work through Christ is a particular boundary that Evangelicals are usually unwilling to transgress.[373]

2.3.4 The Purpose of Congregational Hermeneutics

The goal of this research project is to investigate the congregational hermeneutics of Charismatic preachers, and so it is worth asking what value is found in such a study. To put it another way, how can evaluation of congregational reading practices shape and inform the wider church? There is understandable hesitancy towards making normative claims from ordinary theology, but that hesitancy should not cause us to be dismissive of voices from outside the academy.

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[368] James S. Bielo, 'On the Failure of "Meaning": Bible Reading in the Anthropology of Christianity', *Culture and Religion* 9, no. 1 (March 2008): 1–21.
[369] Bielo, 17.
[370] Bielo, 18.
[371] Perrin, *Bible Reading*, 101.
[372] See section 2.2 on the role of community in interpretation.
[373] Perrin, *Bible Reading*, 86.

Astley argues that ordinariness is rarely valued in other subjects; we would not expect to pay attention to ordinary medicine or ordinary biology as if the claims of non-experts in scientific fields should be taken seriously.[374] However, Astley argues that ordinary theology can be analogous to ordinary psychology or morality, in that it provides a model that 'works', albeit as it may be open to refinement and correction through engagement with cognitive and academic processes.[375] This pragmatic concern will be problematic for Evangelicals, whose concern for orthodoxy means that the primary question is not 'does it work?' but rather 'is it right?'

The role of the ordinary is a major issue in practical theology, as scholars aim to prioritise the role of experience whilst recognising that it does not bear normative weight. For example, Kaufman acknowledges the conundrum that practical theologians face, that they must simultaneously hear experience as authoritative, regard the tradition of the church and consider their own reflexive bias.[376] However, the distinction between the descriptive and the normative is, in practice, more permeable, since even descriptive theology is a bearer of normativity.[377] Researching congregational hermeneutics enables us to hear the normative embedded within operant and espoused voices, and to expose the conversation between 'normativity-from-within' and 'normativity-from-the-outside.'[378]

The Normative Voice

Astley's account of ordinary theology is constructed in contrast with academic theology. The two are not binary, however, and he acknowledges that the spectrum between academic and ordinary is not always clear.[379] Still, for Astley the dialectic between the two poles exists. Astley imagines detractors questioning the validity of ordinary theology, suggesting that ordinary theology is too varied, too confused, too anthropomorphic, too biographical and too subjective.[380] Astley's response to a number of these points is to level the same critique

[374] Jeff Astley, 'The Analysis, Investigation and Application of Ordinary Theology', ed. Jeff Astley and Leslie J. Francis (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 2.
[375] Astley, 2–3.
[376] Kaufman, 'From the Outside, Within, or In Between? Normativity at Work in Empirical Practical Theological Research', 137–38.
[377] Kaufman, 154.
[378] Kaufman, 159.
[379] Astley, 'Analysis', 1.
[380] Astley, *Looking, Listening*, 123–45.

at academic theology. He argues that academic theology can be equally varied, and often *more* diverse than ordinary theology.[381] The scholarly interest in narrative theology demonstrates that academic theology can also be biographical.[382] Academic theology also has its own strategies to avoid critical demands, focusing on peripheral issues.[383]

Astley's construction of the two poles (academic and ordinary) doesn't account for the distinction between academic and normative voices.[384] For example, whilst the critique of diversity among academic voices is valid, the same variation does not necessarily exist in normative voices such as creeds and hymns. Cameron *et al* make a distinction between the formal and normative voice; the normative voice is 'concerned with what the practising group names as its theological authority', whereas the formal voice is more synonymous with Astley's academic theology- the professional theology of the academy.[385] Indeed, Wier has argued that practical theology often pays scant attention to the relationship between the descriptive and the normative,[386] possibly due to a preference for the formal voice. Similarly, Watkins agrees that normativity is a neglected aspect of practical theology, although the field has developed since Watkins made this observation.[387]

The normative voice can still be complex and is not univocal, but it is constrained by community revisions over the history of the group. In contrast, the formal academic voice has the freedom to speak individually without repression by the community. In Cameron *et al*, the normative voice represents a source of theology that is brought into conversation with the others, to allow for mutual critical dialogue. However, the term 'normative' can also be used prescriptively, implying a standard to guide thought and praxis.[388] In the reflection chapter of this project I have sought to use normative and formal voices in mutual critical

[381] Astley, 125.
[382] Astley, 133.
[383] Astley, 139.
[384] Elsewhere Astley seems to conflate academic theology with ecclesial theology. Jeff Astley, 'Ordinary Theology and the Learning Conversation with Academic Theology', in *Exploring Ordinary Theology: Everyday Christian Believing and the Church*, ed. Jeff Astley and Leslie J. Francis (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 47.
[385] Cameron et al., *Talking about God in Practice*, 55.
[386] Andy Wier, 'From the Descriptive to the Normative: Towards a Practical Theology of the Charismatic-Evangelical Urban Church', *Ecclesial Practices* 4, no. 1 (17 May 2017): 115.
[387] Clare Watkins, 'Reflections on Particularity and Unity', in *Ecclesiology in the Trenches: Theory and Method under Construction*, ed. Sune Fahlgren and Jonas Ideström (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015), 141.
[388] See, for example, Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 106.

dialogue with operant and espoused voices, following Cameron *et al*'s definition. However, they recognise that the normative voice does have a role in shaping the thought and practice of the ecclesial community, even as operant and espoused voices challenge normative and formal voices.[389] The normative voice is therefore a dialogue partner, but in the process of critical conversation, I have also made some prescriptive suggestions.

2.3.5 Congregational Hermeneutics in Charismatic Preaching

This research project is located within the field of congregational hermeneutics, which is primarily concerned with the ordinary interpretive practices of readers. I have argued that the preachers in this study should be considered in this category, not because they are uncritical or unacademic, but because the weekly sermon and its focus of relevance finds more correlation with ordinary theology than with academic theology. Many of the characteristics of congregational hermeneutics explored in this section will be observed in the Charismatic sermons that follow. However, before I turn to the empirical observations, I will first consider the methods and processes that have previously been utilised by scholars to research preaching.

2.4 Empirical Sermon Analysis

Providing commentary and analysis of sermons is not a new phenomenon. Almost since the Christian sermon has existed, commentary and critique has accompanied the preached word.[390] However, practical theology engagement with homiletics is less developed. In this section, I give a brief summary of some of the key developments in empirical research on sermons.

2.4.1 Hennie Pieterse, Theo Pleizier and Grounded Theory

Pieterse gained his PhD in homiletics, and has since lectured in practical theology in South Africa.[391] He has written frequently about grounded theory as a method for analysing and

[389] Cameron et al., *Talking about God in Practice*, 54–56.
[390] See for example, Jerome's introductions when he translates Origen's sermons. Origen and Jerome, 'Preface of Jerome the Rebyter', in *Homilies on Luke: Fragments on Luke*, trans. Joseph T. Lienhard (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 3–4.
[391] Hendrik J.C. Pieterse, ed., *Desmond Tutu's Message: A Qualitative Analysis* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2001), 150.

coding sermons.[392] Initially, he sought to use quantitative analysis and having examined 105 sermons from 15 preachers, looked at the use of Scripture in sermons.[393] He concluded that three 'ideal-typical' preaching styles could be seen: topically-oriented (39%), scripturally-oriented (31.4%) and situationally-oriented (17.1%), alongside 12.4% which were unclassifiable.[394] However, as the academy started to recognise the legitimacy of qualitative methods, Pieterse was attracted to the greater nuance that was possible through qualitative methodologies, and in particular, grounded theory.[395]

Pieterse went on to use grounded theory as an analytical tool for Desmond Tutu's sermons.[396] Pieterse and his researchers analysed sermons line by line (as written texts) to code and recode the data. For example, 'liberation theology' as a theme was subdivided into the theological, political, the ecclesial.[397] This enabled the researchers to gain a thorough and comprehensive thematic analysis of twelve of Tutu's sermons.

Following his retirement, he conducted further grounded theory analysis of sermons, particularly investigating the practice of preaching on poverty in South Africa.[398] Following a grounded theory methodology, he describes the coding process in three stages; open, selective and theoretical. This allows the data to direct the outcomes of the research project.

Pieterse was invited by Gerrit Immink to share his research with students at Utrecht University where it was picked up by Theo Pleizier, amongst others.[399] Pleizier uses grounded theory to evaluate 'ordinary' sermons, emphasising the reception of the messages

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[392] See for example, Hendrik J.C. Pieterse, 'An Open Coding Analytical Model of Sermons on Poverty with Matthew 25:31-46 as Sermon Text', *Acta Theologica* 31, no. 1 (20 June 2011): 95–112; Hendrik J.C. Pieterse, 'The Grounded Theory Methodology to Conduct Content Analysis of Sermons and Interviews: Critique and Response', *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 76, no. 1 (5 March 2020).
[393] Hendrik J.C. Pieterse, 'A Short History of Empirical Homiletics in South Africa', *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 6, no. 2 (2020): 346–47.
[394] Pieterse, 347.
[395] Grounded theory, developed by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s, is a method of generating theories specifically derived from the practical context, rather than relying on 'armchair experts.' Julianne S. Oktay, *Grounded Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 5. Pre-existing theoretical knowledge is set aside to allow the empirical data to drive the analysis.
[396] Pieterse, *Desmond Tutu's Message*.
[397] Fred Wester and Vincent Peters, 'Appendix 1: An Introduction to the Principles and Practice of Our Method of Qualitative Analysis', in *Desmond Tutu's Message: A Qualitative Analysis*, ed. H. J. C. Pieterse (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 133.
[398] Pieterse, 'An Open Coding Analytical Model of Sermons on Poverty with Matthew 25'.
[399] Pieterse, 'A Short History of Empirical Homiletics in South Africa', 352.

by the congregation.[400] Pleizier interviewed 15 listeners, generating a 'grounded theory on getting religiously involved in hearing sermons.'[401] Attending to the listeners is relevant, especially as the new homiletic has shifted the authority from preacher to hearer.

2.4.2 Kess van Ekris and 'Making See'

Kess van Ekris' PhD dissertation also used grounded theory as an analytical tool in prophetic preaching.[402] He chose nine sermons from three well-known preachers (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Desmond Tutu and Martin Luther King Jr.) and supplemented the research with various other sermons to test and refine his conclusions. Following a grounded theory method, sermons were chosen on the following criteria:[403]

1. A general consensus that the sermon had a prophetic quality.
2. Accessibility of the sermon to the researcher.
3. The availability of secondary material on the sermon.
4. The sermon comes from a corpus of prophetic preaching.
5. The sermons should be reasonably contemporary.
6. Variety in the selection to add depth and richness.

Van Ekris notes the difficulty in defining 'prophetic preaching' and has taken a grounded theory approach to 'develop a conceptual reconstruction of a contemporary understanding of how prophetic preaching can be understood.'[404] From detailed analysis of the sermons, van Ekris observes the following distinctive themes in prophetic preaching:

1. Exposing destructiva (societal evils).
2. Interrupting dominant discourses.
3. Recognising the Word.
4. Overcoming destructiva.
5. Edifying the congregation.

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[400] Theo Pleizier, *Religious Involvement in Hearing Sermons: A Grounded Theory Study in Empirical Theology and Homiletics* (Delft: Eburon Academic Publishers, 2010).
[401] Pleizier, 155.
[402] C. M. A. van Ekris, *Making See: A Grounded Theory on the Prophetic Dimension in Preaching* (Wien Zürich: Lit, 2018).
[403] Ekris, 53–54.
[404] Ekris, 5.

By coding and re-coding the sermon data, van Ekris is able to identify key features and resonances in the sermons. He argues that prophetic preaching is about vision (making see); making visible evil, giving theological voice and insight, and urging an ethical response.[405]

Using Van Ekris' Approach in this Research

Van Ekris provides a thorough and helpful example of sermon analysis, and models deep listening to the sermons. His research is focused on the *content* of prophetic speech, whereas my own research is more concerned with the hermeneutical approach of preachers, namely, how they are using the Bible. However, 'recognising the Word' is a key theme for van Ekris, in which he analyses how the preachers are using the Bible constructively. He describes an 'entelectical hermeneutic', in which a passage of Scripture 'is recognised in the present, and the recognition functions as a spin-off for a new word in the context of the hearers, and something of the authority and power present in the canonical text, jumps over to the contemporary context.'[406]

Prophetic preachers, in his study, have an 'absorbing competence' that enables them to see the resonances between the biblical text and their contemporary experience, and to present the text in such a way that it gains powerful new meaning in the present.[407] These observations are deeply instructive, and resonate with some of the approaches of the Charismatic preachers in this study.

Van Ekris' use of grounded theory as a methodology for evaluating sermons is instructive, and challenges researchers to allow the data to speak on its own terms. In his study, however, the normative voice is diminished. Van Ekris' definition and characterisation of prophetic preaching is wholly dependent on the empirical data coming from his research, which in turn is dependent on sermons selected because they are deemed to be prophetic by common consensus. There is little space here to challenge or critique the dominant paradigms. As is also seen in Pieterse's and Pleizer's approaches, grounded theory can generate knowledge of sermons, based on careful coding and recoding of data. It allows operant and espoused voices to be heard and conceptualised in new theory.

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[405] Ekris, 264.
[406] Ekris, 172.
[407] Ekris, 156–64.

2.4.3 Jason Boyd and Action Research on Preaching

Jason Boyd has explored the use of action research (AR) as a theological method for analysing his own sermons.[408] With the purpose of being more self-reflective about his own preaching, Boyd set up 'Word café', in which hearers of his sermons could discuss together what was happening in the sermon event. He acknowledges that action research is variously and ambiguously defined, which makes it difficult to pin down as a concept. In his own practice, the Word café was designed to be a place of 'learning by doing', collaboration, being together and transformation. It is deeply reflexive, as power imbalances are openly acknowledged and discussed, with the aim that all participants are learners together. Boyd approached this task, with the aim of discovering answers to certain questions:

> What was going on in that space between the preacher and the congregation?
>
> Why did people hear what I was sure I never said?
>
> Why did others fail to hear what I intended them to hear?
>
> How did I know if I was communicating effectively and whether or not the sermon changed anything?[409]

AR, as practiced by Boyd, resists an easily identifiable and defined methodology. Although this leaves it open to the critique of the absence of rigour, it also allows the researcher to embrace the 'messiness' of research, and the complexities of the researcher's own participation in the research. AR has the distinctive characteristic of the researcher's active involvement, in contrast to the stance of neutral observer that is often assumed in other empirical approaches.[410] Boyd discusses his own tension of wrestling with the subjective nature of action research:

> My growing reflexivity raised my consciousness to a dissonance between my espousal of AR and my deeply held belief in the mainstream scientific method. It was the latent belief that the only kind of research that is 'worthy' is research that adheres to the objectivist approach of the researcher as observer of the 'field'.[411]

AR moves away from the epistemological positivism of other approaches, and embraces the subjectivity and positionality of the researcher.

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[408] Boyd, *The Naked Preacher*.
[409] Boyd, 2.
[410] Boyd, 20–21.
[411] Boyd, 22.

The feedback loops generated by Boyd's word café enable him to reflect deeply on his preaching practice. For example, he devotes a chapter to considering his eye contact with the congregation, based on some of the prior feedback he received from the congregation.[412] The repeated cycles of dialogue enabled Boyd to refine his communication style and work in changes. This initial observation leads to a wider discussion on the importance of attention, into which he brings interpretive and also some normative discussion, through Ignatian spirituality. This leads him to renew and develop his practice: 'Both the attentional practices of AR and of Ignatian spirituality are sources for framing and reframing my enacted vision.'[413]

Boyd focuses his research on the craft and presentation of preaching, identifying issues such as silence in preaching, his physical place as a preacher, and his connection with the congregation through eye contact and use of manuscript. In chapter 4, he discusses his use of the Bible, both as a researcher and as a preacher, but he does not submit his interpretive processes to the AR approach. This seems to be because of his epistemological commitment that deeds precede words in terms of authority and importance.[414] Boyd's approach contrasts with my own epistemological commitment, that normative and formal voices should be allowed to interrogate and critique practice.

Boyd draws upon the work of Cameron et al, who describe a *Theological* Action Research (TAR).[415] He suggests that in making the process more deliberately theological, something of the action research is lost; the researcher is not 'on the page' as a self-reflexive presence, and their process seems more like theological consultancy to Boyd.[416] Boyd's own action research is far more reflexive, and he is evidently committed to the presence of the researcher in the process, noting his own perceptions and feelings throughout the research.

However, TAR does pay more attention to normative and formal voices, and is deliberately 'theological all the way through.'[417] The concept of the four voices, highlighted above in

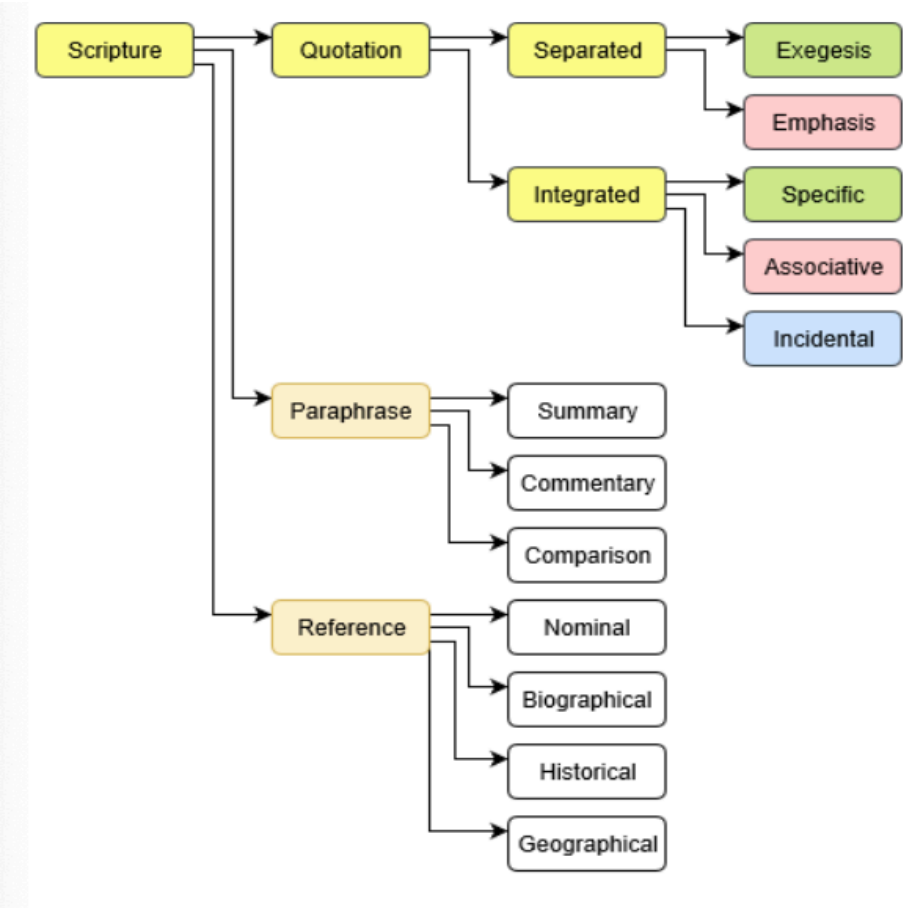
[412] Boyd, chap. 5.
[413] Boyd, 146.
[414] Boyd, 99.
[415] Cameron et al., *Talking about God in Practice*.
[416] Boyd, *The Naked Preacher*, 37.
[417] Cameron et al., *Talking about God in Practice*, 51.

section 1.2.2 emerged through the iterative process of theological action research as the team paid attention to the different means by which theology was expressed.[418]

2.4.4 Emma Swai and Scriptural Categorisation Analytics

Emma Swai identified a lacuna in empirical homiletics, noting that there seems to be little attention given to the way that Scripture is used in preaching.[419] Her article seeks to build on corpus linguistics to explore how Scripture is being used. She compares a small volume of work from two British preachers, ministering in very similar contexts, whose works were published. Five sermons from Martyn Lloyd-Jones, and fifteen from William Edwin Sangster were studied, and references to Scripture were identified to establish the frequency of the terminology (e.g. 'Scripture', 'Bible', 'Gospel', 'Testament').[420] This provides an initial quantitative analysis, in which Swai argues a contrast of ideologies can be seen between the two preachers. She contends that the data demonstrates that Lloyd-Jones is far more explicit in his use and reliance on Scripture, whereas Sangster focused more on the gospel as God's encounter with humanity.[421] Swai then takes a more qualitative turn and uses 'inductive categorisation' to consider how the Bible is used in these sermons, following the grounded theory approach of Pieterse, but specifically looking at the use of the Bible. She identifies several helpful categories, demonstrated in the chart below.[422]

[418] Watkins, *Disclosing Church*, 40.
[419] Emma Swai, 'How Did Lloyd-Jones and Sangster Use Scripture in Their Preaching Responses to the Outbreak of World War II? Trialling Analytical Approaches to the Homiletical Use of Scripture', *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* 23, no. 02 (September 2023): 12.
[420] Swai, 14–18.
[421] Swai, 18.
[422] Swai, 34.



This taxonomy enables Swai to identify the frequency of each category within the corpus of material that she's chosen, and to pose some interesting hypotheses. For example, it's not surprising, she argues, that Lloyd-Jones should have a higher number of incidents coded as 'exegesis' or 'specific', since those are codes she has identified as 'having the express purpose of exposition.'[423] What is perhaps more surprising to Swai, are the higher frequency of 'emphasis' or 'associative' references, which she suggests may be indicative of proof-texting, or using Scripture to bolster the authority of the preacher's words.[424]

Swai offers this approach, utilising a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, as a starting point for evaluating the use of Scripture in sermons. In a short article, she helpfully exposes some of the complexity of sermon analysis, noting that even with grounded theory, the categories are often fluid and open to interpretation.

[423] Swai, 38.
[424] Swai, 38.

The categories used here generate an initial vocabulary for analysing Scripture use in sermons, but her initial survey highlights the importance of qualitative data for making sense of the numbers. Every sermon is given within a local and specific context, and preachers use Scripture in a multitude of ways. Swai acknowledges that, for example, Sangster's use of the cross is a metaphor, and not necessarily a historical reference, and so further analysis is required to establish the purpose of the reference.[425] Furthermore, she notes that the category of 'summary paraphrase' is used for different purposes by Lloyd-Jones and Sangster.[426]

Swai has made an important first step towards addressing the lack of method for analysing the use of the Bible in preaching. However, in order to develop the method further, more attention needs to be paid to the context and particularity of the codes she has identified. The analysis starts to experience 'definitional drift' as some codes are taken from their context. Building on this approach, it would be helpful to see not only what the preacher is doing with the Bible but how and why they are doing what they're doing with the Bible.

2.4.5 Using Sermon Analysis in Charismatic Preaching

A short survey of empirical research on sermons reveals a strong emphasis on descriptive and interpretive approaches, especially using grounded theory. My own research in this project builds upon previous empirical research in preaching, utilising and adapting some of the methods and processes described above. Swai's method has been particularly paradigmatic in terms of coding and categorising uses of the Bible. Her coding provides a helpful language for discussing uses of the Bible in preaching. Empirical research in preaching is limited, particularly regarding interpretative approaches to Scripture, and this current project offers a contribution to that field.

Methods based on grounded theory have produced significant knowledge, and have helped to highlight the importance of sermon analysis focusing on both the preacher and the listeners. However, as an insider researcher and a theologian, it was important for me not only to describe the practice of the preachers, but also to critically and theologically reflect on their approaches, with the goal of suggesting transformed practice.

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[425] Swai, 42.
[426] Swai, 41.

Use of the Bible in empirical homiletics is still an under-researched area, and in the chapters that follow, I have developed my own approach to sermon analysis, building on the work of others.

2.5 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has located the research project historically, theologically and methodologically. An historical overview of the Charismatic movement has demonstrated the influences of Word, Spirit and community on contemporary Charismatic preaching. This triad is further seen in the formal voice of Craig Keener, who has demonstrated the contours of a distinctly pneumatic hermeneutic. His contribution, whilst not universally accepted, nonetheless provides helpful criteria by which we can examine the hermeneutics in Charismatic preaching. An overview of congregational hermeneutics provides some general characteristics of interpretive processes and priorities that will form a helpful lens for viewing operant Charismatic preaching. The tension between text and meaning, for example, is evident when we look at the operant hermeneutics in Charismatic preachers. Similarly, previous empirical research in homiletics has produced approaches to sermon analysis that inform this project. In the following chapter I present five Charismatic preachers and sample sermons for further analysis.

3. Empirical Research Report

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the fieldwork undertaken for this research project. In this chapter I give an overview of the process by which I gathered qualitative data, and then introduce the five Charismatic preachers, providing a summary of their views concerning preaching. This section serves to anticipate the theological discussion that follows by familiarising the reader with the empirical data.

From March to September 2022, I interviewed 5 preachers from different streams of Charismatic churches and listened to their sermons. I questioned them about their approaches to preaching and hermeneutics in general and, in a second interview, about some of the specific points they had made in their sermons. This was all in the hope of being able to provide a thick description of the hermeneutics that occurs in their preaching.

3.2 Empirical Process

At the beginning of the empirical phase of this research project, I was faced with the important question of how to collect data that would be relevant and useful to answering the questions I was asking. I was keen to explore and explain how Charismatic preachers were using the Bible in their preaching, and so the research instrumentation was orientated towards that end. I did have an early hypothesis, that the preachers were attending to the Word, the Spirit and the community to varying degrees. These factors weighted towards a deductive design, in which I would start with a conceptual framework and develop an appropriate sampling plan and methodology.[427]

Instrumentation (observing and recording empirical data) takes many forms in qualitative research, and the extent to which the methods are decided in advance depends on the research questions and approach.[428] In this research, it was necessary to have a reasonable

[427] Matthew B. Miles and A. M. Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, 2nd ed (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1994), 22.
[428] Miles and Huberman, 34–36.

level of prior instrumentation, in order to compare and contrast the different preachers. This approach would also lead to a 'confirmatory, theory driven' deductive stance, in which explanation takes priority over description.[429] However I would approach the research with flexibility, making some instrumentation decisions throughout the process.

Ethnography usually involves extensive time in the field, using both observation and interviews to collect data in order to describe and interpret a social group.[430] Time constraints restricted the possibility of conducting large scale ethnographic research amongst multiple churches, but 'micro-ethnography' allows the researcher to concentrate on a small feature of the subject.[431] This works well with a tightly focused research question.

During the fieldwork phase of this research, many churches were conducting their services online, some with a congregation and some without, as a result of the covid-19 pandemic. Along with pragmatic reasons, I therefore chose to conduct all of the sermon analysis using videos available online. Although the focus of the study is on preaching, I watched the entire service to ascertain the context of the sermons. All interviews were conducted in person, at the church offices of the preachers, with the exception of Preacher E who preferred an online meeting. Ethical approval was given by the University of Durham on 20th August 2021 and appropriate consent forms were completed by all participants.

The fieldwork for each preacher was conducted in three phases. Phase one involved an initial semi-structured interview, in which the questions followed a set format for each preacher (see section 3.8 for some of the common questions). In phase two, I listened to and transcribed two of their sermons and conducted some initial analysis. In the final phase, I went back to the preachers with my analysis, and designed a second round of questions based on the observations I had made in phase two.

[429] Miles and Huberman, 36.
[430] Colin Robson, *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers*, 2nd ed (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 165.
[431] Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 3rd ed (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 403.

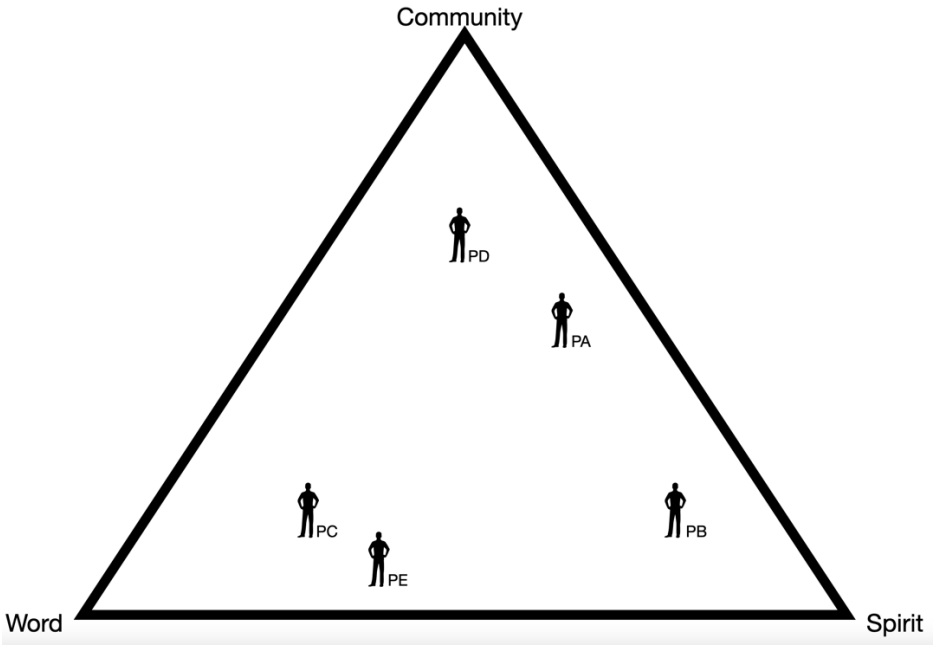
3.2.1 Sampling

The five preachers were chosen heuristically to represent a range of voices across the Charismatic spectrum. From my own relational network I was able to identify several preachers who represented different emphases in their homiletical style. The broad categories I initially identified were conservative, experiential and seeker-sensitive. Conservative preachers are those who tend to prioritise the written word in their preaching and tend to fit more neatly in the Evangelical mould. Experiential preachers tend to prioritise the prophetic work of the Spirit in their preaching style. Seeker-sensitive preachers tend to prioritise the felt needs of the congregation and emphasise contemporary topics.

The taxonomy above was based on my own intuition and experience as an insider researcher, but part of the rationale for the research was to challenge my assumptions. I was aware that preachers would not fit neatly into these categories, but it would provide a helpful starting point. This approach finds resonance with Mark Cartledge's trialectic approach in Pentecostal practical theology, in which he appeals to Scripture, the Holy Spirit and the community as sources of authority.[432] Cartledge argues that in contrast to a puritan Evangelical approach that prioritises rationality and thereby emphasises 'The Word', Pentecostal methods also take seriously the experience of the Spirit and the role of the community.[433] I was interested to explore this dynamic, and the extent to which Charismatic preachers feel the tension of being pulled in these different directions. Thus sampling for this research began with discerning preachers who would hopefully represent these voices, but also challenge and complexify the categories.

The diagram below represents my initial observations about the priorities of the five preachers:

[432] Cartledge, 'Text-Community-Spirit: The Challenges Posed by Pentecostal Theological Method to Evangelical Theology'.
[433] Cartledge.



In this study, all of the preachers were men. This was not a deliberate choice but reflects the pragmatic challenge of choosing preachers from my relational network who represented a diversity of perspectives in terms of Word, Spirit and community. Secondly, this reality does reveal something of the nature of the Charismatic church. Peter Brierley reported in 2020 that just 5% of independent churches and 16% of new churches had women ministers.[434] This is far less than many other denominations, and may be partly caused by a higher number of Charismatic churches holding complementarian theological positions.

3.2.2 Interviews

In the first interview, I asked the preachers to describe the main purpose of preaching, and to elaborate on their hermeneutic and homiletical approaches. The first interview was designed to establish background and context, and to ask benchmark questions that would later help to describe and distinguish the preachers. The second interview would delve more deeply into the particularity of their hermeneutic processes. Having completed some initial sermon analysis, I presented my findings to the preachers to ascertain their perspective on the analysis I had done. This formed a type of 'member check' that would corroborate or

[434] Peter Brierley, 'Introduction: UK Church Statistics No 4: 2021 Edition', *Brierley Consultancy* (blog), accessed 22 April 2024,https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54228e0ce4b059910e19e44e/t/61025ff065fbe6552c6a9d76/1627545585712/Church+Stats+Intro.pdf.

challenge my own findings. I was aware that by presenting my own analysis to the preachers, I could prejudice their responses, and so to mitigate for this I offered my perspective tentatively and allowed them to correct any aspect of my analysis.

All of the preachers were generous with their time and willingness to allow me to probe and evaluate their preaching. Even so, I was aware of the potential power dynamics that existed in my role as a researcher, seeking to critique an aspect of their ministry. I was intuitively aware that preaching can feel quite a personal endeavour and so I felt a responsibility to approach the interviews sensitively, whilst also wanting to have integrity to appropriately challenge perceptions about preaching. This was particularly evident in the second interview, when I presented my sermon analysis to the preachers, and asked about apparent discrepancies between their operant hermeneutics (the sermons), and their espoused hermeneutics (what they had told me in interview). I approached the task firstly by positioning myself as an insider researcher. As a Charismatic preacher myself, I framed the interview around a desire to reflect carefully on Charismatic preaching and the reflective learning that could emerge from the process. All the preachers expressed a keenness to learn and develop their own preaching and were open to my observations. I did my best to avoid technical jargon, avoiding terms such as 'horizons' and using example to start the conversation. For example, I asked most of the preachers how they would preach about David and Goliath, a well-known story that offers many interpretive options. I then asked them why they chose a particular approach. At times, I did query the perceived discrepancies between operant and espoused hermeneutics, I tried to frame it as my perception of their work and invited them to comment on my observations.

3.2.3 Sermon Analysis

I then listened, transcribed and analysed two of each preachers' sermons, paying particular attention to structure and hermeneutical methodologies. In the pilot project, I adopted a style of sermon analysis that attempted to demonstrate the structure of the sermon in relation to the biblical content. I used deductive coding to identify the following features:[435]

[435] This analysis has many similarities with Swai's approach outlined in the last chapter, although the codes relate more specifically to what the preacher is doing with the Bible.

1. Reading the text. When the preacher was reading or otherwise quoting the biblical text.
2. Exposition. Describing or expounding the context of the text, still staying in the hermeneutical horizon of the world of the text.
3. Applying the text. I subcategorised application as following:
    a. Moral application. Describing actions or behaviours the listeners should do.
    b. Therapeutic application. This code describes ways in which the preacher expected God to do something for the listeners.
    c. Christocentric application. The way in which the text points to Christ.[436]
4. Illustrating the text. Illustrations from a variety of sources to exemplify and illuminate the point being drawn from the text.
5. Other extraneous material. I found that sometimes preachers would make digressions that were not directly related but served a number of functions beyond the scope of inquiry (for example, to build rapport with the congregation by telling a joke).

This deductive coding structure worked well with a sermon analysed in the pilot project and yielded instructive data that is given in Appendix 1.

I was hopeful that this coding method would enable some useful comparative data, but it quickly became obvious that the real-world data couldn't be squeezed into the mould of these categories in a way that would provide any useful conclusions. I realised that these categories are all related to the use of Scripture (e.g. expositing Scripture, applying Scripture, illustrating Scripture) and that some of the sermons I listened to had sections that did not have an overt connection to a particular Scriptural passage. For example, a preacher might give an extended discussion on a particular theme, without referencing any specific Scripture. Or they might base their sermons on contemporary prophecy, or what they sense God is saying.

For this reason, I settled on trying to summarise the structure and movements of the sermon as faithfully as I could, without inserting my own gloss, and allowing the preachers to

[436] I coded this as an application point if the sermon was not already about Christ. For example, if the preacher was talking about an Old Testament text and applied it typologically to Christ, it is a way of bringing an application out of the original context.

respond in the second interview. Further coding would take place after that. Listening to preacher B also provided coding challenges, as it was difficult to discern the movements of the sermons. I made several attempts to provide a structural summary of his sermons, but realised that they would not be faithful to his approach or message, and so there is no sermon summary for preacher B. Rather, in the second interview, I provided a thematic summary to the preacher for his comment and evaluation. In the following section, I give a brief summary of each preacher, and two of their sermons that were analysed in detail.

3.3 Preacher A

As the congregation gathers in the main auditorium, a big clock counts down to the beginning of the service. Since covid lockdowns, everything runs punctually to accommodate those who are watching online, although around 140 people have gathered here this morning. As the clock reaches zero, a video presentation begins that sets the scene for Pentecost. Preacher A (PA[437]) takes to the stage as the band begins to play over his welcome: 'We're not just here for a meeting, we're here to encounter God, just as the disciples encountered God on that day.' There's a palpable sense of excitement in the congregation as PA invites the band to lead a time of sung worship.

PA is the Senior Pastor of an urban non-denominational Charismatic church (church A): 'If you had to put a theological label on us based on our characteristics, then you would say Pentecostal, Charismatic, we believe in gifts of the Spirit. We're a Word and Spirit church, we believe in the integrity of the scriptures, and we give room for the Holy Spirit to meet' (PAI1). Church A was originally a Baptist church, but PA led the church out of the denomination early in his tenure as Senior Pastor. His own heritage is classic Pentecostal, with a strong missional emphasis: 'Everything that we do is all geared around how are we loving God, reaching out, making disciples and we count that as it's not just local, it's national and global' (PAI1).

The placement of PA in the triangle above indicates a commitment to the needs of the congregation and listening to the Spirit. It does not imply that fidelity to the Scriptures is

[437] I have used the shorthand formula, P for Preacher, I for interview and S for sermon. So, for example, PBI2 refers to Preacher B, interview 2.

unimportant for PA, as can be seen in the sermon outlines given below. However, it did seem that the priority was preaching that was prophetic and relevant.

I listened to two of PA's sermons after the first interview and then transcribed and conducted some structural analysis which was then presented to PA for the second interview.

3.3.1 Sermon 1: Pentecost

The first sermon I listened to was on Pentecost Sunday, and the preacher had entitled the sermon, 'The Transfiguration of Pentecost.'[438] In interview, PA described his wish to approach Pentecost from a different perspective, and that reading about Jesus' transfiguration in Matthew 17 gave him the idea to link the two passages together: 'I was trying to join the dots with the whole Pentecostal fire that have these mountaintop experiences, but you got to come down and, you know, do the stuff' (PAI2).

In the first third of the sermon, PA gave a typically Pentecostal summary of Acts 2, including the application that the gift of the Holy Spirit (and tongues) is available to all today. Around 10 minutes into the sermon, he linked Acts 2 with Matthew 17, using the theme of transformation as a unifying factor. He situated the text in literary context by briefly summarising events in Matthew 16. One of the features of this sermon was the continual contemporary application. For example, Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah, followed by him trying to deny the necessity of Jesus' death was applied to us:

> You know, you can go out this service, you know, and beyond, you know, just really up in the clouds and just amazing in your experience with God, feeling really holy. You get in your car and someone cuts you up. And suddenly, you're operating under a different spirit (PAS1).

3.3.2 Sermon 2: Father's Day

The second sermon I listened to was given on Father's Day 2022. Part 1 emphasised the theme of our inclusion in God's family. In part 2, PB stressed the importance of honour in the spiritual family of God.

[438] My structural outlines of the sermons are provided as appendix 1.

As an example of part 1, PA gave this example to represent the privilege of being chosen by God:

> I don't know if you've ever seen the National Lottery advert where the big finger, the hand comes out the sky and it says it's you. And it points that an individual. Well you need to know that heavenly father today says over each and every one of you, it's you (PAS2).

PA's rhetoric emphasised the prophetic significance of the sermon, invoking the voice of God to add a sense of authority to his words.

> And that's a word for some of you right now. Because some of you have felt miserable about some stuff and God's saying, 'there's a reason why there's that holy dissatisfaction, that righteous rising up on the inside of you that there needs to be justice that some things need to be put right' (PAS2).

Additionally, in this excerpt we see an emphasis on the word of God that meets people's felt needs. In fact, a noticeable feature of this sermon was an emphasis on the feelings of the hearers: 'if you're feeling fatherless,' 'you can feel a sense of loneliness,' 'it made me feel devalued,' 'I feel that will be particularly powerful.' PA does seem to draw out the felt needs of the congregation. When I asked him about that, he said:

> I understand there can be a danger where everything's just all about emotion, and you become emotionally driven, which tends to be more soulish. And we're told to be led by the Spirit, not the soul. But God has given us a soul and he can use, you know, our soul is the place of our intellect, thinking, choosing feeling that's, you know, mind will and emotion (PAI2).

3.4 Preacher B

Before Preacher B (PB) starts to preach on a February morning, the congregation worships enthusiastically for around an hour, during which time prophetic words are given and received, and spontaneous prayers are offered. PB places his Bible and notes on the music stand at the front of the church as he prepares to preach. Throughout the sermon he wanders casually around the front of the building, often speaking extemporaneously and engaging with the vocal responses of the listeners. There is no stage in the converted warehouse where the church meets, which contributes to the informal atmosphere in the service this morning. After he prays, PB pauses, breathes deeply and explains that he feels God has led him to pray for one of the congregants. People gather around her as PB leads the congregation in praying for healing: 'Be healed now in Jesus' name, we declare a hedge of protection around them right now in Jesus' name.'

PB is one of the Pastors at a semi-rural, non-denominational church, that traces its heritage back to the Toronto blessing.[439] The church began as a house church that quickly grew and now meets in a warehouse on the edge of the town. PB describes the core values of the church as presence-led, worship, Scripture-centred and a Father-heart emphasis. PB and other preachers at the church rarely preach series and so each sermon is a usually stand-alone message.

PB has had no academic theological training, and emphasised repeatedly the importance of relying on God for the words to preach. His preparation often involved spending time in the church's prayer room, where 'the presence of God is thick' (PBI1). I placed PB quite near the 'Spirit' corner of the triangle because in conversation it seemed evident that this was important for him: 'I just want to be in the Spirit' (PBI2).

3.4.1 Sermon 1: Kingdom Mindset

The first sermon I listened to from PB was self-titled 'kingdom mindset.' It became clear to me that a structural analysis would not be appropriate for this 49 minute sermon, as PB interwove themes and ideas about the kingdom of God without a clear structure. PB himself acknowledged the lack of structure, which he ascribed to his lack of formal training. However, he effectively expounded themes including the centrality of Jesus' kingship, the association of miracles with the kingdom, the culture of the kingdom and the role of believers today as those sent as Jesus was sent.

I questioned PB about this approach and he responded that a lot of these themes came out of questions posed as a result of the covid-19 lockdown. What is church? Is it more than Sunday? This led to prayer and questioning on the nature of the kingdom of God and wanting to change the mindset of the church to be more kingdom-oriented.

[439] The 'Toronto blessing' was a spiritual phenomenon emerging from Toronto Airport Vineyard Church in the mid 1994, accompanied by supernatural signs and wonders. Meetings spread around the world, including the UK, and in time, churches were planted from the initial movement. Kay, *Apostolic Networks*, 203–16.

3.4.2 Sermon 2: Come out of the Cave

I also listened to PB preach from 1 Kings 19, on the subject of Elijah in the cave. PB describes this sermon as a more disciplined approach, by which he meant that he more closely followed the Scriptural narrative. He chose this passage based on the idea that the church was like Elijah, coming out of the cave, and he saw the resonance as a prophetic call for the church to re-engage with its call.

PB had a strong experiential and 'prophetic' aspect to his preaching. He talked repeatedly about God dropping a thought into his mind, or going with what's on your heart. He saw his job as a preacher to be a mouthpiece for God, in which the aim of preaching was to be in tune with what God was saying at that present time. He saw a distinction between teaching and preaching, and placed himself in the latter category, in which hearing and conveying the voice of God was more important than expositing a text. An aspect of this approach was the importance he placed on reading and sensing the congregation, both in the preaching moment and more generally understanding the culture and needs of the church. PB draws the congregation into the sermon by weaving in personal experiences and the personal testimony of those in the congregation.

PB saw the importance of narrative in Scripture as pointing to more than the individual story, but helping us to see the ways of the kingdom. This was how he justified inserting the contemporary congregation into the story through his call for the church to come out of the cave. The Scriptural narrative is living, although PB did sometimes take some license with the text, speculating about different aspects of the story, imagining what Elijah could have been thinking in the cave.

3.5 Preacher C

As the countdown time reaches zero, the worship leader invites the congregation to stand to their feet and lift their voices in praise to the king of kings. After a couple of songs, one of the elders steps forward to read a Psalm. After more songs and notices, the congregation are encouraged to greet one another and then Preacher C steps forward to preach. He remains fairly static as he speaks, keeping a close eye on his notes on the large silver stand.

PC is the Senior Pastor of an urban church which is part of the Newfrontiers network. He was raised within the Charismatic movement and pursued a scientific career before a 'prophetic encounter' led him to pastoral ministry in the church. PC prefers to describe the church as 'Spirit empowered' rather than Charismatic, because of some of the connotations 'Charismatic' has, particularly in the U.S. He preaches regularly in the church as well as writing within the network. At the time of the fieldwork, PC was working through a long series giving an overview of the Old Testament, and so both the sermons I listened to were part of that series. As is evident in the descriptions of the sermons below, PC demonstrates a keenness to locate the texts in historical and canonical context.

PC discussed the importance of Christocentrism in preaching, arguing that 'Christ is present on every page' (PCI1). This is also demonstrated in the church taking communion together every week, a practice that is probably quite uncommon in Charismatic churches.

3.5.1 Sermon 1: A New David

In this first sermon, PC recounts prophetic words given to the church and reminds them of the importance and application of those words. PC clearly drew parallels between biblical prophecy and contemporary prophecy, telling me later, 'biblical prophecy feeds contemporary prophecy' (PCI2). This was evident in this sermon, as one of the main themes was 'root down and fruit up', based on Isaiah 37:31. PC described a careful discernment process, in which the elders of the church had 'weighed' the prophecies given to them, based partly on the word itself and partly on the integrity and track record of the person bringing the prophecy (PCI2).

Having considered the prophetic 'pillars' (significant messages that shaped the church's mission), PC provided an overview of selected Isaianic prophecies and their application to the congregation. For PC, the point of the sermon was to 'allow this fresh prophetic breath amongst us to capture our hearts and propel us into what God has for us' (PCS1).

3.5.2 Sermon 2: Daniel & Esther

The second sermon I listened to from PC was a summary of Daniel and Esther, in which he emphasised the exilic context of the books and drew parallels to contemporary Christians

living as exiles today (1 Pet 1:1). PC presented a summary of the two books and demonstrated some of the similarities and differences between them, applying the principles to our contemporary situation. For example, he argues that whilst Daniel refused to eat the royal food, Esther did, and he so he wonders aloud whether Esther compromised, and what we might do in these kinds of situations.

PC spends a lot of time summarising the narrative, pausing briefly to invite the congregation in ('and what about you?') and then spends the final third of the sermon expounding five principles for the congregation to apply. His final point becomes a rousing appeal to see our future hope in Christ.

3.6 Preacher D

At the beginning of the service, the worship leader starts the first song in a dark room. Purple lights create a soft glow over the band. 'Let our praise be your welcome, let our songs be a sign—we are here for you.'

At the time of the fieldwork, Church D were still conducting online services and only meeting in person once a month. The church has a well-established media team which manage to create a polished production—notices were given over a green screen, lyrics and Bible passages appeared on the screen and sound quality was exceptional.

Preacher D (PD) is the Senior Pastor of a large semi-urban non-denominational church. He describes his background in the Charismatic movement, but argues that the distinctiveness of the contemporary Charismatic church is more in style of worship and community rather than the activity of the Spirit. The church is aligned with a Charismatic network of churches, and PD preaches at network events as well as regularly in the church.

Whilst PD was concerned with the authority of Scripture and listening to the Spirit, he seemed most interested in the applicability and effects of the sermon, that it had to bring about a transformation in the hearers (albeit whilst recognising that this may happen gradually over time): 'The way I do theology is very much about application' (PDI2). I placed PD towards the community corner of the triangle because of all the preachers I interviewed, he was the most concerned to answer questions that people were actually

asking and was critical of irrelevance in preaching. In every sermon, he sought to find a 'hook' that answers a key question people are asking and leads them to change.

PD emphasised the importance of narrative in preaching, frequently mentioning the importance of story to hook people into the message, modelling this on Jesus' approach to communication. When I probed this emphasis further, he was confident that we can and should put ourselves in the story, which engages the congregation, but he also argued that we need to be careful how we enter the story. He described a cycle where we can enter the story through the lens of our experience:

> How do I not just bring a story from the Bible and go 'Well, you know, David beat Goliath because he trusted in God, so do you trust in God? And can you slay your giants?' How do we bring that story back round and go, 'Well, I had a situation where my giant didn't get slayed. And now can I reread the story of David again? And look through the story of maybe not his eyes, but his brother's eyes?' I just think that cycle is really important (PDI2).

3.6.1 Sermon 1: Renewing our Worship

I listened to two sermons from PD. The first was based on Ezra 1-4, which PD centred on the theme of worship. This sermon demonstrated well some of PD's approaches to preaching. Before expositing Scripture, PD set up the sermon with a key question, 'how do we rekindle our worship?' He introduced the concept with a personal story about fire, and interwove the text with points of application.

PD also displayed a sensitivity to the prophetic activity of the Spirit: 'It is time to light the fire again, it's time to reignite, it's time to call down the power of God and say God will you fill me anew, fill me afresh with your Holy Spirit set me on fire again, that I may transform into becoming more like you' (PDS1).

3.6.2 Sermon 2: Sermon on the Mount

The second sermon took a much shorter passage of Scripture, and enabled PD to explore the text in more depth. However, we still see his espoused homiletic approach in operation here. PD identifies the 'hook' of living a successful life but flips that around to describe Jesus' approach to the successful life in the Sermon on the Mount as our utter helplessness without God. He describes this approach, in the second interview:

> You've got to have a message that's going to interest people, and maybe it's going to look like it's about themselves. But then if you're a really talented communicator, you could turn that round and you can challenge their own self motivation (PDI2).

Again, we see PD's method of inviting the hearers to engage with the text through entering the story. We are invited to 'lean in' to hear what Jesus is saying, as the original listeners would have done.

3.7 Preacher E

One of the church elders welcomes the congregation to the service. The atmosphere is informal; the host, preacher and several members of the band are dressed in jeans and t-shirts. The elder reads from Psalm 100, encouraging the congregation to thank God, enter his courts with thanksgiving as the band start strumming the chords to the first praise song. The congregation are encouraged to thank God for what he's done, 'in a burst of loud praise.'

Preacher E (PE) is the Senior Pastor of an urban church connected with a large apostolic network. He has an early background in a Baptist church and has been part of the Charismatic movement for many years. I placed PE towards the 'Word' corner of the triangle because he repeatedly stressed the importance of the Bible for his preaching. In many ways, PE exemplified the biblicist/crucicentrist axis of the Evangelical quadrilateral. Of all the preachers I listened to, his sermons had the most Bible references, alongside quotations from scholars. Even a cursory glance at the table in appendix 1 demonstrates his commitment to biblicism, and also a gospel centredness, understood in the classic Evangelical sense.

PE discussed the importance of christocentrism as a key hermeneutical lens, arguing that the New Testament gives us permission to read the text that way. Despite this, PE also demonstrated a concern in his preaching for conversionism, seeking a response a deliberate presentation of the gospel in every sermon. He is concerned about applicability, always seeking to apply the text to the congregation, and find illustrations to ground the key principles for people. However, he was wary of an over-emphasis on relevance, arguing that the Bible is relevant on its own terms.

Both of the sermons I listened to from PE were part of a series on Exodus, and in both sermons we can see evidence of cross-referencing and a commitment to christocentrism.

3.7.1 Sermon 1: Crossing the Red Sea

In this first sermon, PE takes the narrative of the crossing of the Red Sea as an analogy of faith and obedience that overcomes obstacles. As can be seen in the outline in appendix 1, PE had the most number of cross-references of all the preachers in this project. I asked him about this and he asserted his commitment to Word and Spirit, arguing that it was important to model the importance of the Bible to the congregation (PEI2). From the limited sample, he also read more extensive portions of Scripture without interruption. PE had a confidence in the authority of Scripture and its ability to speak; 'we don't need to make the Bible relevant, the Bible is relevant—we just need to help people understand its relevance' (PEI2). His commitment to the importance of Scripture can be seen in the higher proportion of the sermon that is given to reading and exegeting the text, but the use of New Testament texts also demonstrates particular Christocentric lens.

3.7.2 Sermon 2: The Ten Commandments

Again, this sermon demonstrates the importance of Scripture for PE, who referenced several other verses in support of his main argument. PE used the ten commandments to speak more broadly about the purpose of the law, demonstrating how they are preceded by grace, fulfilled in Christ, and applied to us in the new covenant.

A further notable feature of PE's approach was the use of authoritative and declarative statements, such as 'that's the real question God is wanting to impress upon you,' and 'that's why some of you are suffering.' This is part of the Charismatic perspective that the text speaks with prophetic significance into contemporary situations. PE defended this approach, arguing that you can have authority when you're under authority [of the Word] (PEI2). For him, this authority was based upon clear Scriptural principles.

3.8 Common Questions and Distinctive Answers

The following questions were asked to all five participants to benchmark their perspectives and reveal some of the distinctives of their various approaches. In part, the different emphasis of their answers is indicative of their location within the triangle of Word, Spirit and community given above. The preachers' answers are given here with minimum commentary at this point.

3.8.1 What is the main purpose of preaching?

These first two questions were designed to establish the preacher's espoused priorities in preaching. Whilst elements of Word, Spirit and community are present in each of the preachers' responses, the biblicist/crucicentrist axis is more clearly demonstrated in PC and PE. A sense of pragmatism and conversionism can is seen in PD, with a focus on evangelism and relevance to the congregation.

PA

> The main purpose of preach I believe is to be a conduit through which God speaks and communicates with his people. So ultimately you want to see transformation. So you want you want to see those that are in darkness brought into light, you want to see those that are in deception brought into truth, those that are confused, having clarity of direction. So ultimately, it's about transformation (PAI1).

PB

> For me, the main purpose of preaching is to communicate God's heart to the people and revelation of what God's speaking to us at this moment, you know, where God's taking us at the moment, part of it is that communication (PBI1).

PC

> So it's to edify the saints, and to speak to the unconverted. There's always trying to apply the gospel, everybody needs to hear the gospel. If you're a believer, you need to hear the gospel and respond to what it's calling you to and if you're an unbeliever, you need to hear the gospel and make that first response of faith. So that's what I'm trying to do when I stand up and preach (PCI1).

PD

> I think for me, preaching is about impartation, rather than just giving people more knowledge… For me, it's really important that my preaching on a Sunday is really applicable, that it really affects people's everyday living (PDI1).

PD discussed the importance of preaching across many levels – for those who had been to church for many years, but also for those who were new and had very little knowledge of Christianity or the Bible. He emphasised the importance of Scripture and historical context but was keen to see a distinction between teaching a Bible study and preaching which brings transformation.

PE

> So every time I preach, I always have a gospel element in there. Usually, like 99% of the time I will give a gospel appeal in whatever I'm preaching, so there is a little bit of including the gospel in some, in some short form…but you're looking to how do I apply it in our culture in 21st century Britain (PEI1).

PE stressed the importance of the biblical text but was also keen to emphasise a Christocentric approach and an applicational focus.

3.8.2 What core message most encapsulates your ministry?

PA

> God is love. It's not just something that he does. He's who he is. It's the essence of who God is (PAI2).

PB

> The power of the cross, the power of what that actually means to me, tied in with the kingdom. So the power of what Jesus did on the cross, and that it's for everybody isn't just for one person. And that God has made all of us to be big people (PBI2).

PC

PC was very blunt about the centrality of crucicentrism:

> When I was with you I resolved to know nothing except Christ and Him crucified (PCI2).

PD

PD emphasised the importance of evangelism:

> If I had one preach left in me it would be, 'tell people to tell people.' I just think it's not enough to just, you know, to live it privately. What we do and who we are has to echo through eternity. And we have to play our part (PDI2).

PE

> It would have to be very Christ-centred, pointing people to the gospel. It will definitely include the great commission and our need to fulfil it… those two, and probably something about living for eternity (PEI2).

3.8.3 How do you choose a preaching series?

Questions 3 and 4 were designed to examine their priorities in preparation. Again, some of their distinctives in relation to the Word, Spirit, community triad can be seen. For example, PB's emphasis on prayer and listening to the Spirit in preparation. In contrast, PC preferred a more cognitive approach (although not ignoring spiritual preparation). In preparing a preaching series, PA's attentiveness to the community is demonstrated in these answers, revealing a desire to listen to the listeners and pitch the sermon at the right level for the congregation.

PA

> It's a mixture. Sometimes it might be, you know, I'm just praying and just a sense of something's like, you need to address this area, that's a weakness in the church. So it was just a kind of an internal nudge. Sometimes I might ask myself a question. Where's the church? Where does the church need developing? And so I'm kind of thinking about those areas where we need to be better that we need to strengthen that we need to address and then other times, it might just be kind of as you're going through life and journeying with God, that there might be certain like, I don't know, a book that you read that you think that would help or something that really resonates around a podcast you hear or a book you read, or it might be a phrase or a title that suddenly just sparks off something (PAI1).

PB

PB didn't generally follow series but described his discernment process for a sermon (which occasionally would turn into a mini-series over 2 or 3 weeks).

> I'm spending time in that place of just, heart open to God's saying, Okay, God, what is it, you're what's on us now, there's also probably a little bit of a vibe going around

> in what God's speaking to us as a church in a season. So some of those things are coming through. I would then just be open to him, and quite often I've found is that, you know, scriptures will just drop into my, my heart, and I'll go in and I'll spend time then just looking through those things, looking at some of the roots of that (PBI1).

PC

> We plan quite far out, so normally, I plan a year out. And that tends to be a task for August. So at the moment, I do not know what we're doing in September. But in August, we'll take some time to try and plan for the following 12 months. And some of it is in a sense, kind of a rational process and thinking about what have we covered what have we not covered, and just wanting to maintain a healthy teaching diet for the church through the course of the year… Normally, we'd be looking for that combination of teaching from the Old Testament teaching from the New Testament, teaching different genres and kinds of literature from Scripture. And maybe one or two little topical series in there as well… But also then looking for, again, the Spirit inspiration. So normally, there'd be a sense when we come to preaching, we feel the Lord is leading us to cover this to teach into this area (PCI1).

PD

> So I always make sure there's some old and there's some new. Typically I'll do a book. Normally, they're a shorter book, so I'll do Philippians, four chapters for four weeks. I will do a character of some sort, pick out a great character- an Elijah a Moses a David, and go, there's so much to learn. But I tend to have kind of a bit of a rhythm, I will pick out some of those, maybe do a visionary piece at the beginning of the year, sort of three four weeks, and where are we going? (PDI1).

PD also discussed using preaching resources from other churches in the UK and US, that had small group material to go alongside them (e.g. 40 days on wellbeing). He also discussed the current teaching series, which was formed from a sense of seeing the church come out of the covid-19 pandemic needing to relearn some of the basics of discipleship:

> And so we've had some tough subjects, but really, for me, I really felt the prompting the Holy Spirit, and some of the things I could see in our church, lack of discipleship, I thought that's on me, not on the Holy Spirit. And let's push back into that (PDI1).

PE

PE discussed the prompting of the Spirit, needs of the church and the pragmatic requirement to give a balance of different types of Scripture, giving this example:

> So for example, we preached from Revelation a few years back, that was a mixture of feeling right and my spirit to do it. And that also being confirmed, partly by the number of (it was around the time of Brexit) and the number of wacky prophecies that were coming out and words that were being said, and I just thought this… needs

> to be, you know, from my perspective taught into a bit more. It would help the church grab some of the universal principles that come out of Revelation, rather than just this strange word here that's taken this bit completely out of context, or, or was being very, very sort of literal in its application to this specific situation (PEI1).

3.8.4 How do you prepare to preach?

PA

> I would say I spend time praying… So just praying, Lord, what do you want me to say?.. So there might, as I'm praying, as I'm asking myself questions, I'm asking the Lord questions, I just begin to start to put stuff down. Now, if I'm at a computer, like I was, this morning, I just started typing it up, you know, just these things and gradually, a sort of a picture starts to build. And, and then yeah, as you begin to pray, even elements where I even start to kind of almost like rehearse preaching, and then it starts to build, and you start to see a little bit more, and then you know, go back to the computer, and a bit more (PAI1).

PA did discuss the role of dictionaries and more formal research, including original languages and various English translations to shed more light on the subject, but he was critical of sermons being too academic:

> Sometimes, you know, we can bring in these lofty, high sermons, which are amazing intellectually, but actually, it's people are like, what? And then the comments you get at the end, when someone comes up to you and says, Pastor, that was really deep sermon. That is not a compliment. Cause often a lot of the time they mean, you know, that it was so deep, I was drowning, you know, I was getting a bit lost in it (PAI1).

PB

PB emphasised the role of prayer and his relationship with God in the process of preparation, and a desire not to be reliant on academic resources:

> I just find for me, I have to go with what I'm sensing in my spirit that you know, because if I'm doing it out of my flesh, then I fall on my face, because I'm not bright or clever enough to do it. It has to be God in me doing anything (PBI1).

He did acknowledge that part of the process does sometimes involve reading around the subject on the internet.

PC

> I will plan out the series, break it down, give some kind of a little summary for each week. So by the time we come to it, there's already been done some background work that's been done… If we're going to teach through a book, I normally just go and buy the best three or four commentaries there are, and then would read through them as we go… Preaching is a spiritual process that involves the preparation as well as the delivery. So I would be very much looking for God's leading in terms of this is the

> emphasis this is the now Word of God. This is how this part of Scripture speaks to us in our situation, at this moment (PCI1).

PD

> I would read it numerous times, I would pray. But for me, the important piece is the mulling over time. So it's the walking, it's the head noise, it's the fact that it's been in my head for a few weeks… I'll then delete, edit, delete, move around, find a sort of healthy flow, and then bring in some kind of like, order. I suppose that's how I would typically do it. And then on a Sunday morning, I get up early and pray. I read through and pray, maybe refine it a bit… I'm trying to imagine different people in my congregation that I know, I'm going for that person what will this mean? How will they hear this? How can I make it accessible to them? How can I make it memorable to them? (PDI1)

PD emphasised the importance of storytelling as the most natural form of communication and an effective way to connect with people but still the key thing is to allow the Holy Spirit to speak.

PE

PE described a process of meditation on the passage, reading the commentaries and looking for key themes to apply. He also emphasised the importance of looking for a Christocentric application of the text: 'I'll just spend time highlighting how it links to Jesus, and then what Jesus has done for us and our need for Jesus. So that should always be in there' (PEI2).

3.8.5 Can a text mean today something it would not have meant to the original hearers?

This final question tries to establish their espoused hermeneutic in relation to the tension between text and meaning. This reveals something about their approach to the written text, but their answers also show something about the role they see for the Spirit in their interpretation.

PA

> Yes, I believe so. I believe I believe scripture is not 2D… It is important to know like, culture, context, history, that's like helpful… I kind of view scripture like a multifaceted diamond, that it reflects the light in many ways, and I believe it speaks to the time and the situation, but also, there's an element of prophetic dimension to

> Scripture. So even when Jesus quoted Scripture, there were prophetic dimensions and it wasn't always used in the way that it perhaps originally where he was quoting it from the Psalms or whatever, how it how it was then (PAI1).

PA emphasised the importance of transformation, to demonstrate that Scripture needs to be reinterpreted and applied prophetically today, and when I probed further, the arbiter of interpretation and protection from erroneous meanings was learning to hear the voice of God.

PB

> I sometimes wonder when Jesus spoke, or texts were written, whether there was an understanding in the context of this… People don't necessarily understand it at this level, there are different levels. And I think it's a bit like peeling an onion. If we got to the root of it, the truth is still the truth… So the text is relatable to the time and in context, but also how does that those truths relate to me today in the context of what I'm doing and so it is important on both (PBI1).

PC

> I think the answer to your question is probably yes. But that's too simplistic an answer. So always wanting to be as far as we can, obviously, within our limits of knowledge and distance of time and history to be explaining what it meant in its context. And then showing how that is relevant to us today... I'd always want to start from that place. What was the original purpose and intention of this text? And let's work from there rather than the other way around (PCI1).

PC was open to the possibility that that Spirit can reveal hidden things in the text but wanted to protect the integrity of preaching from wild interpretations by stating the importance of education and faithfulness to the Scriptures. He placed a high value on the importance of diligently seeking context and original meaning.

PD

> Absolutely, absolutely, which I think is a little bit controversial, but I generally believe that. Partly, I think that's what keeps the Bible alive. But I also think many historical writers, especially, you know, the Jewish writers, the Hebraic writers were, they often wrote with mystery (PDI2).

As I probed PD about how we can discern faithful interpretation from erroneous interpretation, he appealed to an inner peace and the role of accountability with others, especially when interpreting controversial texts (PDI2).

PE

> I think exegetically no, it can't mean more than it did to the original hearers but I think the Spirit can impress on people from a passage and I think the Spirit can do that because he's God, he can do what he likes in a way. But I think when you're preaching something, you have to be careful to stick to what's clear from the passage (PEI1).

PE did note some nuance here, arguing that the Holy Spirit will highlight certain aspects of a passage to him, but that has to be in accordance with Scriptural principles and the liberty that NT writers had to reinterpret OT passages does not extend to contemporary preachers today.

3.9 Common themes and areas for further reflection

As I conducted these interviews, listened to the sermons, and reflected on the significance of the data, some themes started to emerge that I sensed are worth further reflection. As I reflect again on the initial hypothesis of Word, Spirit and community being key factors in Charismatic preaching, it seems that these themes are in the data but that there is more nuance to explore further.

Approaches to coding qualitative data can start with hypothesis (deductive) or they can start with the data (inductive).[440] These are not necessarily mutually exclusive, however, as an 'abductive' approach can cycle between them. Jonas Ideström describes his own perspective to field work as 'theologically reflective and abductive.'[441] He describes abduction as 'a dialectic process where theory shaped the empirical material at the same time as the growing corpus of material forced me to work on the theoretical components that I used.'[442]

The initial coding strategy was deductive, based upon my insider knowledge of the Charismatic church. This dynamic required me to be reflexive concerning my own role as an insider researcher. The themes that I discuss below, emerged as I considered the initial hypothesis and challenged it against the empirical data that was gathered through sermon analysis and interviews. Throughout the fieldwork, I kept an extensive diary in which I

[440] Cameron and Duce, *Researching Practice*, 102–5.
[441] Ideström, 'Implicit Ecclesiology and Local Church Identity: Dealing with Dilemmas of Empirical Ecclesiology', 127.
[442] Ideström, 128.

noted various thoughts and memos about the data I was collecting. This also proved invaluable for refining the key themes below.

3.9.1 Horizons in Charismatic Preaching

All the preachers gave an espoused commitment to the authority of the written word, but they varied in approaches to understanding and applying the text. The necessity to produce application, requires a 'bridging of horizons' that enables the ancient text to say something to a contemporary audience. The methodology of the preachers to cross the bridge demonstrates some of the assumptions they are making about the text.

PC described the history of Israel as 'our family history', and so whilst he acknowledged the great difference in culture and worldview, he viewed it as an imperative to understand and apply the Old Testament to our contemporary situation (PCI2).

A number of the sermons I listened to assumed very close proximity to the two horizons, with statements such as:

> When I'm praying for the sick, people are getting healed. I want to see that. Acts two, look at the church. Signs and wonders followed them all of their days. Wherever they went, people were set free, healed. Come on church, it's about us (PBS1).

This was also reflected in the ease by which the preachers switch between text and application. For example, PE, commenting on Exodus 13:17, states:

> The Lord knew that they were not ready to fight the battle emotionally, mentally, and of course, most importantly, spiritually, as well. Their trust had grown in God, but not to the point of trusting God with their lives. God in His kindness shows grace to them in their weakness, and he also shows his power to deal with their oppressors once and for all, as we'll read in a minute, God leads them by supernatural means of the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire by day representing his presence, his Holy Spirit on them and with them, as a people. My friends, Jesus Christ, as we've heard already, this morning, is the Good Shepherd, he will lead your life better than you could, yourself. He will lead you in a way that you can cope with, he will protect you from things that you can't cope with as well. And his Spirit's leading of your life isn't always the most direct route it's not always, oh, I've got to get a to b so there's a line, the Spirit sometimes takes us takes us wandering around different paths (PES1).

PA demonstrated this tendency particularly in sermon 1, in which every aspect of the transfiguration narrative was applied directly to the congregation:

> Then it goes on to say here in Matthew 17, verse one, he says that he led them up on a high mountain, by themselves by themselves. It's interesting, isn't it that that it uses that word by themselves? Sometimes the Lord orchestrate orchestrates times where he leads us away from the crowds to be alone with him (PAS1).

I discussed this technique with PA in the second interview:

> I've found like, where people if they'll just rattle off a really big old long text. Often I'm like, you can get lost in it. It's almost like you need a Selah, you need a pause, you need to let me chew, let me think like, 'and how does that relate?' So I'm trying to help them to know the relevance or you know, to engage them in some way (PAS1).

I probed a little deeper on this issue with PA, and the way in which he would jump so fluidly across horizons:

> I definitely do see the value and the importance of understanding cultural context, where it was coming from what it meant to the original audience. But I do believe the Word of God is a multifaceted diamond. So I believe it reflects the light in beautiful ways. Jesus would quote scriptures that you would say were out of context. So you're just like, 'well, hang on, how can you say those things?' And he said, 'Well, he's the son of God, he can do what he wants.' But you know, even with Paul, you know, in some of his quotations you're like, 'Yeah, but it was a very different to where you've pulled up from it.' So I think there are prophetic dimensions of Scripture. And ultimately, you know, I'll be asking the question, Is this helping people fall more in love with Jesus? And is it helping people to look more like Jesus, to think more like Jesus, to be more like Him? (PAI2)

The concept of horizons in preaching represents the Word-community tension, as preachers seek to bridge the gap between then and now. This will be explored more fully in the next chapter.

3.9.2 The Gospel in Charismatic Preaching

A second area, relating to the Word dimension started to emerge, particularly as PA discussed the cross. A key theme of Evangelicalism in Bebbington's schema is crucicentrism, and as an insider researcher, I suspected that this focus was waning in some Charismatic preaching. As I interviewed PA about the cross, he alerted me to the possibility that Charismatic preaching may be more concerned with the kingdom than the cross. I heard similar ideas expressed from both PB and PD, which led me to reflect further on the nature of the gospel in Evangelical and Charismatic theologies.

Crucicentrism has typically been a key pillar of Evangelicalism, and part of what drives my interest here is to reflect on Charismatic spirituality in relation to Evangelicalism. All of the

preachers would hold an Evangelical heritage, although Bebbington's quadrilateral may need revising in light of Charismatic trends away from crucicentrism.

PC was the most insistent of the significance of crucicentrim in preaching (see his statement above that he would hope that his ministry is defined by the centrality of Christ crucified). For him, that keeps his sermons orthodox.

> The gospel isn't just how you come into relationship with Jesus in the Gospels, how you stay in relationship with Jesus. We have to keep applying the gospel. That means to keep proclaiming Christ finish work on the cross… So without that cruciform, Christocentric focus very quickly slip into pelagianism or moralism or therapeutism, or whatever it might be. So got to keep the focus on Christ and his cross (PCI2).

PB discussed the importance of the power of the cross, but was also keen to apply that theme to our kingdom life now:

> Jesus hung on the cross. That was a painful thing. But he did it because he loved me. And he wants me to be all that he intended me to be before the fall of man. That's his job… And when you start to engage in that a little bit more, the heavenly principles. There isn't any sickness in heaven. And because what he did, we can we can draw that down, so that we can see people getting healed (PBI2).

PD saw the importance with offering the congregation an opportunity to respond to the gospel, but did not really frame it in crucicentric terms, even when specifically asked:

> When I'm on it, I will always find that sort of a finishing landing point that we're saying "if for you listening today, you don't know Jesus and you're listening to this story of David and Goliath, what's it got to do with me today? You know, for you, maybe you feel like David and the world looks like your Goliath. You know, and God doesn't take everything away, but he can make you see a different perspective. Maybe you'd like to know more about Jesus today and what he's done for you and how he died and took your place." So I could find a way of connecting that if I'm on my game (PDI1).

However, PD honestly admitted that time constraints often prevented him from making a gospel appeal.

When I asked PA about crucicentrism in his preaching, he was keen to broaden the central message of Christianity to a message of the kingdom, of which the cross is a key part.

> I do believe, fundamentally, the whole Christianity hinges on the cross of what took place and what happened there. But it's the gospel of the kingdom that we're to preach. And that is so much more than just the cross that's one significant vital key part of it, but the gospel of the kingdom, it's about the King, the King's domain, it's about the King's values. It's, it's so much more (PAI2).

There was a perception amongst the preachers that preaching the 'gospel' was a key task they were to fulfil. Note for example, PE's earlier comment that he would try almost all the time to 'have a gospel element' (PEI1). But that statement also demonstrates that biblical preaching, in his view, is not necessarily the same as gospel preaching. There was a general sense that the core of the gospel revolves around Jesus, although there were some significant variations, explored in the next chapter. I understood the preachers' references to the gospel as a subset of the Word, referring to the Bible's account of particular aspects of Jesus' ministry. The nuances in their understanding will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

3.9.3 Prophecy in Charismatic Preaching

Thirdly, the category of the Holy Spirit was a key area to explore. Coding in this set was the easiest to maintain as a discreet category, although there is some overlap with both the community and the Word. I started to refer to this category as 'prophetic speech' although as is seen below, the terminology is complex and nuanced.

Most of the respondents in this survey in one way or another referenced the importance of hearing the Holy Spirit and a special anointing in the preached word:

> I tend to feel some like that there's something I don't know this urgency this stirring where I just feel a passionate zeal, conviction about something. And you know, I believe this is a word, we've got some right here, I just feel it. And then quite often I'll get someone say, Hey, you know, when you said that, that was for me (PAI2).

Most of the respondents expected their preaching to hold a prophetic significance, and for some of them, this meant they could use phrases of authority, almost as if they came from God himself. There seemed to be a sense of self-understanding that the preachers could speak on behalf of God. For example, PB sated:

> God is saying, "I have a plan. I have a plan in this season right now, in what's going on in the church, what's going on in this country, what's going on in the world right now, I have a plan. You might not see all of it. But I want you to stand in faith in the truth, that there is a plan" (PBS1).

Later, in the closing prayer of the same sermon, PB used another phrase to demonstrate prophetic authority:

> Break off anxiety. ***I saw that this morning.*** Any anxious people I pray you break that off everyone this morning, Let peace reign over our hearts this morning. That peace of heaven rest on each one this morning. Anybody who's anxious, we declare that over you this morning piece of heaven to come and rest on you (PBS1, emphasis added).

Although PC acknowledged that this was quite an unusual sermon, sermon 1 was in large part an explanation of '4 prophetic pillars' which have shaped the ministry of the church over the past decade (PCS1).

There was a sense of prophetic rebuke from PE:

> And actually, that's why some of you are struggling, because you're not actually, you love Jesus yes, but you're not living or investing your life in eternity. You're living for here and now. And things keep happening to you, which detract from your life here and now. And you're getting angry or sad with God, why are you letting this happen to me? And yet, actually, the problem is not God is you. You're building your life here, and God's trying to prepare you for eternity. My friends, Jesus says, in the world, you will have trouble. But take heart, I have overcome the world (PES1).

For all of the preachers, the Holy Spirit was present and active in their preparation and their preaching. For some of them, this was their primary source for preaching ('if I don't have the Spirit interact with me, I'm useless' PBI2). For others, the role of the Spirit was more to aid them in their preparation and delivery. But for all of them, their pneumatology enabled them to speak with a sense of authority and confidence. This theme will be explored in detail in the next chapter.

3.9.4 Pragmatism in Charismatic preaching

Fourthly and finally, in the broad category of community, I wanted to ask how the desire for relevance to the community impacts the message that is conveyed. I discussed with the preachers how they were responding to the community, and I thought about their preaching in light of attention to the listeners. The preachers wanted to be faithful to Scripture, and to the Holy Spirit, but were also concerned to meet the needs of the congregation. I coded that tension as pragmatism, as the preachers attended to the community and their needs.

All of the preachers reflected a desire to contextualise their preaching and to relate the written word to the congregation's contemporary experience. In the content of their sermons, there was a desire to meet people's needs.

> Recognising the realities of some of the issues that people are having to face in contemporary society. And wanting to get people to think about that and to fortify people, for the kinds of issues that we're having to contest (PCI2).

PC did later acknowledge that application is one of the biggest challenges he's found in preaching and was sceptical of a seeker-friendly approach that always tries to find a practical object lesson in the text (PCI2). PC also noted that some of the more radical tendencies of the Charismatic renewal had been softened for 'missiological reasons', to try and broaden the appeal and relevancy to non-believers (PCI2).

Some of the preachers were critical of an academic approach that cannot adequately address the needs of the congregation. PD, for example, argued, 'I think we've ended up with some very, very clever people who don't know what to do with their newly found theological knowledge,' although he did also wrestle with the tension of wanting to hold Scripture and context together:

> How do we take the truth of the Scripture? How do we take the needs of our world? And how do we ask really good questions to make people think twice? Because the world is fed up of the church [saying] "the Bible says, bang, bang, bang," and to someone who doesn't hold the bible in high esteem, because they're not part of a church community who have a Christian faith, why would they listen to that? (PDI1)

PA reflected the tension of wanting to hold the needs of the congregation with the voice of the Spirit:

> You know, in a sense, you're saying, so what, you know, this message, but so what? How is it gonna change their life? How is it going to speak to them in their situation? So I think I'm always trying to ask those questions. And I think that will influence me in some way. Not saying it's the dominant driver, I think it's more about 'Holy Spirit, what you want me to say? (PAI2)

All of the preachers demonstrated an awareness of the listeners and to varying degrees structured their sermons towards the perceived needs of the congregation. However, there was disagreement over the extent to which the needs of the community should control the sermon, in both their operant and espoused approaches. This dynamic will be analysed in the next chapter.

3.10 Refining the Hypothesis

An initial hypothesis, from my perspective as a Charismatic preacher and having listened to hundreds of Charismatic sermons, is that preachers in this tradition are attending to three primary dimensions; the Word, the Spirit, and the community. I set about designing a research project that would enable me to test and refine this theory, and started to realise that the categories were more complex and nuanced. Although the three dimensions are inter-related, it is possible to use a modified matrix to assess what these particular preachers are doing when they preach. In relation to the Word, how do they bridge the gap between then and now, or how do they 'fuse the horizons?' Secondly, still in relation to the Word, how do these preachers conceive of the gospel, and in what ways is that a priority for them when they preach? Thirdly, in relation to the Spirit, how do the preachers view the work of the Spirit when they preach? Finally, how do the dimensions of Word and Spirit stand in tension with the practical concerns of the community, and to what extent do the preachers feel the need to respond to the needs of the congregation?

Listening carefully and reflecting on the data, these are the key research questions that complexify the initial hypothesis, and which will be dealt with in the following discussion.

4. Theological Reflections on Word, Spirit and Community

This chapter builds on the findings of the previous chapter by offering theological reflection on the key themes of Word, Spirit and Community. The previous chapter demonstrated that early analysis of the data reveals complexity in this triad. As I coded the data according to my initial hypothesis, the following themes emerged:

1. Horizon fusion process: the methods and rationale that preachers used to bring together the Word and the Community.
2. The gospel: what the preachers conceived as the core message of the Word, and the way they incorporated it into their sermons.
3. Prophetic preaching: the way that experience of the Holy Spirit impacted preaching.
4. Pragmatism: the extent and implications of attending to the listeners in preaching.

These four themes relate to the triad of Word-Spirit-Community, but there is an observable complexity as Word-Spirit-community interact in real-world preaching.

Each of the following thematic sections follows a similar format. Firstly, I introduce the theme and use theological tools to interrogate the way the preachers exemplify the theme. Then, each section takes a normative turn where I choose an appropriate normative or formal voice to probe and challenge the operant and espoused voices.

4.1. The Word Part 1: Horizons-An Analysis of 'Then' and 'Now' in relation to Ordinary Charismatic Hermeneutics

4.1.1 Introduction

The preachers that I studied in this research paid attention to both the text of Scripture and the contemporary context of the congregation. This requires a fusing of 'horizons' between 'then' and 'now', which was done in a variety of ways. This section examines some of the observed hermeneutics of Charismatic preachers as regards to the fusing of horizons, and brings into the conversation formal voices that will enable deep reflection. The fusing of

horizons represents the tension between the Word and the congregation as the preacher seeks mutual dialogue between the ancient text and the contemporary context.

In this section I argue that the traditional Evangelical approach to fusing horizons is by first exegeting the text in its original context, and then seeking to apply it in the contemporary context. This approach was evident in some of the sermons I studied, but more common were approaches that might be described as pre-critical. I suggest that Charismatic preaching resonates more with a 'theological interpretation of Scripture' and demonstrate ways in which the preachers embody that approach. In a normative turn, I consider an Evangelical evaluation of theological interpretation, in which I suggest that whilst theological interpretation is appropriate for Charismatic preachers, there are some dangers to be wary of.

4.1.2 Horizons

The concept of horizons in hermeneutics refers to the limits of seeing and understanding. As a reader, I inhabit a world which is limited in what I can see and understand. This world is different from the world of the author, which may again be different from the world of the text. Whilst there are likely to be significant overlaps, awareness of the differences and limits of horizons provides clarity for the interpreter.

Andrew Village bases his own analysis of horizons on Anthony Thiselton's formational work, considering three horizons of author, text and reader:

> The world 'behind' the text is a way of referring to the complex weave of culture, conventions, intentions, history and chance that leads to the creation of texts. This world leaves its imprint on texts, but texts are not simply a product of this world, they are also a creator of other worlds. The world or worlds 'within' the text refers to attitudes, conventions and possibilities projected by texts. This is most obvious in narrative, but it is true of all writing. The Levitical laws of the Pentateuch project a world that is ordered in space and time with respect to the sacred. The Pauline epistles project a world centred on the apostle and his oversight of the early church. These projections are not unambiguous, and different readers will create different worlds as texts interact with human imagination. When readers inhabit a world in a text the process becomes transforming as this world interacts with the world 'in front of' the text, that is, the world of the reader. This latter world is shaped by the culture, conventions and understanding of the society in which reading takes place, as well as the unique world of particular readers formed by their origins, history and

> experience. Understanding the text is in effect a self- understanding in relation to the text. [443]

In this quote, Village helpfully provides an overview of the three worlds, and demonstrates some of the dynamics that occur as the worlds overlap.

As regards to hermeneutical horizons, as we have seen, Mark Allan Powell observes a distinction between clergy and laity when they were asked 'what does this text mean?'[444] Clergy, in contrast to lay people, were more likely to reference the author's intention, whereas lay people assumed the question referred to the meaning *for them*.[445] This emphasises the point that very often, ministerial formation trains preachers to analyse the horizon of the author and/or text before bringing an application to the congregation. This 'two-step' of exegesis-application has become the norm in Evangelical interpretation.[446]

The Evangelical hermeneutic has also seeped into the Pentecostal academy. Bill Oliverio has traced the evolution of Pentecostal hermeneutics, arguing that as Pentecostalism developed in the twentieth century, it adopted Evangelical and fundamentalist hermeneutics, to create a hybrid hermeneutic.[447] This hybrid often prioritised scholastic rationalism in the academy that was at odds with church experience.[448] Pentecostal hermeneutics has since matured and developed a more confident voice independent of its Evangelical heritage, as seen earlier in the discussion of pneumatic interpretation (section 2.2).[449]

Charismatic networks are developing their own training institutions, which are exhibiting some hermeneutical developments.[450] However, since these are still early developments, it is my contention that most Charismatic preachers will have been schooled in a predominantly Evangelical mode of hermeneutics, as characterised in part by the primacy of authorial

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[443] Village, *Bible*, 79.
[444] Powell, *What Do They Hear?*, 95.
[445] Powell, 93–95. However, Perrin's research demonstrates that lay people demonstrate a curiosity and desire to find authorial intention. Perrin, *Bible Reading*, 95.
[446] See, for example, Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 19–27.
[447] L. William Oliverio, 'Introduction: Pentecostal Hermeneutics and the Hermeneutical Tradition', in *Constructive Pneumatological Hermeneutics in Pentecostal Christianity*, ed. Kenneth J. Archer and L. William Oliverio, Christianity and Renewal--Interdisciplinary Studies (New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 3.
[448] Cargal, 'Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy', 163.
[449] Oliverio, 'Introduction', 3–4.
[450] See for example, Burnhope, 'A Proposal for a Vineyard 5-Step Hermeneutical Model'.

intention in interpretive practice. In practice, the preachers in this study represented a range of commitment to the horizon of the author/text.

The Evangelical 'two-step' was particularly evident in PC: 'I'd always want to start from that place: What was the original purpose and intention of this text? And let's work from there, rather than the other way around' (PCI1). Similarly, PE described his process of exegeting the text, drawing out principles and seeking to apply them to the contemporary situation (PEI1).

Kevin Vanhoozer, reflecting on his own journey in hermeneutics, has modified some of his earlier work which focused primarily on the priority of authorial intention.[451] He writes, 'my concern to preserve authorial rights had less to do with establishing a principle of authority, however, than it did with providing a pathway to transcendence.'[452] The Evangelical approach does give the perception of certitude in meaning—if we apply the right procedures, we can arrive at a 'correct' interpretation. However, as explored below, recent interest in the 'theological interpretation of Scripture' has questioned this approach from several directions.[453]

The Horizon of the Author

The horizon of 'then' includes both the 'world behind the text' and 'the world within the text.'[454] Perrin notes that in her observations, readers paid little attention to the author horizon, but were interested to find cultural cues and background data from the world of

[451] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, 'Imprisoned or Free? Text, Status, and Theological Interpretation in the Master/Slave Discourse of Philemon', in *Reading Scripture with the Church: Toward a Hermeneutic for Theological Interpretation*, ed. A. K. M. Adam et al. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2006), 51–93.
[452] Vanhoozer, 59.
[453] A. K. M. Adam et al., eds., *Reading Scripture with the Church: Toward a Hermeneutic for Theological Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2006); J. Todd Billings, *The Word of God for the People of God: An Entryway to the Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2010); Daniel J. Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008); Angus Paddison, *Scripture: A Very Theological Proposal* (London: T & T Clark, 2009).
[454] Stanley E. Porter and Beth M. Stovell, 'Introduction: Trajectories in Biblical Hermeneutics', in *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Beth M. Stovell (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2012), 12. The authors attribute the triad of 'world behind the text', 'world within the text' and 'world in front of the text' to Paul Ricoeur and argue that it correlates with author, text and reader.

the text in order to bridge the gap.[455] However, she ponders whether genre might have an impact on a reader's recognition of the author's role.[456] Perrin's study focuses on narrative texts, which she suggests may invite readers into the textual horizon, whereas other genres (such as letters) with supposed clearer authorship may invoke greater consideration of the horizon of the author.[457]

From my own research, preachers demonstrated little awareness of and interest in the world behind the text. The only direct evidence I heard of any consideration to the horizon of the author came from sermons on the New Testament. PD, preaching on Matthew 5, where PD describes the Sermon on the Mount as a summation of Jesus' preaching, as Matthew would have likely heard the same sermons many times (PDS2). There were occasional passing references to Paul as an author, although they did not particularly wrestle with Paul's context in any significant way.

In interview, all the preachers emphasised the importance of context, and in many of the sermons I listened to there was evidence of attention to historical and cultural factors. The preachers demonstrated little concern for the world behind the text, perhaps because it 'may appear to reflect a more remote and antiquarian set of concerns.'[458] A focus on the world of the text reflects their commitment to receive the text 'as is.'

Despite this, there was some evidence of the preachers making a distinction between the narrative itself and the agenda of the author. PC demonstrated an awareness of authorial agenda as he compared and contrasted the stories of Daniel and Esther (PCS2). In the sermon, PC suggests that the author of Esther has crafted the narrative to imply that Mordecai is manipulating situations to increase his own power. The crafting of this sermon also gives the subtle impression that the canonical context is considered, as the agendas of the two authors are brought into focus.

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[455] Perrin, *Bible Reading*, 87.
[456] Perrin, 95.
[457] Perrin, 95.
[458] Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan Publ. House, 1992), 57.

4.1.3 Fusing Horizons

A prevalent feature of almost all the sermons I studied was the frequent fusing of horizons between the world within the text and the world in front of the text. Charismatic preachers are particularly at ease jumping between horizons, as the 'Holy Spirit is the essential rule of continuity between the two hermeneutical horizons."[459]

The preachers felt very comfortable jumping between the horizons, with phrase such as 'it's about us' (PBS2), 'what about you?' (PES1), 'this is very real for some of you' (PCS2), 'they're leaning in, I hope you're leaning in' (PDS2).

PAS1 is a particularly clear example of this kind of approach, in which he expounds Matthew 17, and pauses the reading and exposition frequently to bring the hearers into that world. He treats the transfiguration story as an allegory for ways that God brings about our transformation:

> We see that Jesus led the disciples up and it doesn't just say a mountain, what does it say? It says it was a high mountain, he led them up this mountain, to bring about transformation. Mountains often represent difficulties, hardships that we will face and it's in that place of adversity that we often change the most (PAS1).

The ease with which the preachers fuse the horizons enables the listeners to connect with the stories, and indeed this is often a deliberate ploy. PA observed that the congregation can get lost in long texts or narratives, and so he deliberately breaks it up with contemporary application to help them engage and relate it to their lives (PAI2). Various approaches to fusing these horizons were evidenced amongst the preachers in this study. These are explored below, and it is clear that there is often significant overlap between fusing processes.

Principlizing

Walter Kaiser outlines a 'principlizing' approach, which seeks, via 'the ladder of abstraction,' to move beyond the specificity of the ancient application, to the abstract principle and back to the contemporary specificity. Against other approaches (such as allegorizing or

[459] Spawn and Wright, 'The Emergence of a Pneumatic Hermeneutic in the Renewal Tradition', 8. See also Pinnock, 'The Work of The Spirit in the Interpretation of Holy Scripture from the Perspective of a Charismatic Biblical Theologian', 241.

spiritualizing), principlizing identifies the focal point of the passage through careful study of the text in its own setting and context.[460] Kaiser is sceptical of models that try to impose contemporary ideas or even other biblical theological concepts on to the text at hand.[461] This kind of approach finds broad consensus within conservative Evangelicalism, in which there is an attempt to discover the 'spiritual, moral, or theological principles' from the text that find resonance for the contemporary believer.[462]

PE demonstrated a principlizing approach to the text when he preached from Exodus 14, concerning the crossing of the Red Sea and Israel's deliverance from Egypt (PES1). He observed that the key point of the passage in its own context was to generate faith among the Israelites, and he sought to apply that to the congregation:

> Don't be people who forget what God has done in the past or what he's doing in the present time amongst you. Like Moses encourages Israel to sing and to praise God, for what he has done, let's take stock of what God is doing and has done (PES1).

This was a key espoused hermeneutic for PE particularly: 'We're trying to bring out the principle of scripture or what it's teaching in that passage or the theme we're doing and then applying it to people's life here and now' (PEI1).

This approach may appeal to Evangelicals because it appears to offer a measure of objectivity, and a rational approach for determining meaning. However, Vanhoozer offers a gentle warning of the allure of this approach, arguing that principlizing may not be as theologically neutral as its advocates imply, as the identification of the principles in the text can be culturally conditioned.[463] Modernist Evangelicals have perhaps been naïve concerning the extent to which objectivity in hermeneutics can be achieved. A further objection from Vanhoozer is shared by Chris Wright: 'Once you have a principle in your pocket, why keep the wrapping? Sadly, this has been how many people have handled the

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[460] Walter C. Kaiser, 'A Principlizing Model', in *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, ed. Gary T. Meadors, Counterpoints Bible & Theology (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2009), 22–23.
[461] Kaiser, 23.
[462] See for example, Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 482–504.
[463] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, 'A Response to Walter C. Kaiser Jr.', in *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*, ed. Gary T. Meadors, Counterpoints Bible & Theology (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2009), 59–60.

Old Testament (or rather mishandled it).'[464] If preachers emphasise the 'kernel' of the principle over the 'husk' of the text, Vanhoozer fears that the congregation will value the timeless principles over the historical word.[465]

Finally, Vanhoozer is concerned that a principlizing approach is most often used by preachers to 'moralise' from the text, that often application of principles equates to ethical instruction.[466] Despite this, principlizing was a common observed practice in the preaching I witnessed in this study. The preachers were keen to find objective principles in the text in order to draw out timeless principles that the congregation could apply. PC, for example, structured his sermon on Daniel and Esther in this way, firstly explaining the texts and giving background context, and then expounding five principles that could be applied to the congregation in the contemporary context (PCS2).

Exemplar Approaches

Exemplar hermeneutics fuse horizons of text and reader by encouraging the readers to treat characters or situations in the text as a normative expectation for their own experience. This kind of approach was quite common in the sermons I listened to, particularly when preachers were using narrative. PD, for example, preaching from Ezra 4, concerning the opposition against the rebuilding of the temple:

> Be careful who you build with. There'll be people around you, the voice of the culture of the day, who have become comfortable with being part of all that we see around us. And sometimes it comes a point as Christians, as followers of Jesus, we have to say, "actually, we're not going to build it the way the world thinks we should build things, what is God calling us to do?" (PDS1)

The strategy of preachers is often to empathise and encourage empathy with the narrative hero within exemplar hermeneutics in order to generate ideal behaviour. PD was convinced that whether or not we *should*, we do empathise with characters in the stories as that is part of the power of the narrative form (PDI2). However, he demonstrated interest in empathy choice when he suggests that we should read and expound the stories identifying with different characters:

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[464] Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity, 2004), 70.
[465] Vanhoozer, 'A Response to Walter C. Kaiser Jr.', 60.
[466] Vanhoozer, 61.

> Going back to the storytelling piece, you're always the hero, always the best. But maybe if I reread the story… The truth is in a story like [David and Goliath], most people are with the people of Israel. There's only one David (PDI2).

Mark Allan Powell explores empathy choice, echoing PD's assertion that we 'naturally imagine ourselves as inhabiting the narrative world and being affected by what happens there.'[467] In the parable of the Good Samaritan, he observes the differences in empathy choice between Americans (who typically identify with the men walking) and Tanzanians (who identify with the man beaten).[468] He concludes that social location is a key factor in empathy choice, but also notes that in many narratives, the empathy choice is usually more explicitly intended by the author.[469] PB, for example, invites us to empathise with Elijah:

> Suddenly because of what this Jezebel was doing all hope seem to have got out. And he lost sight of who he was in God. His identity was no longer in who he was in God, but it was in the fear of what he was facing. And I'm using this as a reflection on my own life, that there are times when instead of me coming back to God and saying, my identity is in you, what I end up thinking is looking at my situations around me, and getting defined by them, rather than by him (PBS1).

Pentecostal Exemplar Hermeneutics

An exemplar approach is particularly relevant to Pentecostal hermeneutics, in which charismatic experiences in Acts are seen as models for today. Even within such a small sample size, it is interesting to note that two of the sermons I listened to specifically referenced Acts 2 as a repeatable example for believers today (PAS1 and PBS1). The expectation is that the experience of the early church in Acts can/should be experienced in the church today. And yet, as Nel notes, Pentecostals also take this approach to Acts and apply it to other narrative:

> This history of God with his people, starting in the Bible, is continued and accompanied by the same phenomena until the present day, and the narratives in the Bible of people's encounters with God are seen as normative for present-day believers. These narratives are understood literally, and taken to be repeatable and expected, and biblical characters' experiences are to be emulated.[470]

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[467] Mark Allan Powell, *Chasing the Eastern Star: Adventures in Biblical Reader-Response Criticism* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 20.
[468] Powell, 20–21.
[469] Powell, 22.
[470] Nel, 'Pentecostals' Reading of the Old Testament', 527.

PB argued that Elijah's encounter with God is paradigmatic of our own (PBS2). In interview, he suggests it is the Spirit inspiring him to make these connections, that Scripture shows us the ways of the kingdom through the example of its characters (PBI2).

In accordance with Nel's observation about Pentecostal approaches, Charismatics start with the expectation that the supernatural events in New Testament narratives are paradigmatic, but they apply that principle to other narrative passages, which helps them to fuse horizons. This resonates with Village's observation that Charismatic beliefs correlate with fusing the horizons through an exemplar hermeneutic. [471] Charismatics view the ongoing work of the Spirit as a way of reducing the distance between horizons, making it easier to appropriate the text for themselves.

Pesher hermeneutics

There is some correlation between an exemplar hermeneutic and a *pesher* hermeneutic, which is particularly associated with the Qumran community. Pesher interpretation fuses horizons by means of a 'this is that' methodology—the textual horizon finds creative resonance in the contemporary situation.[472] Longenecker notes that pesher interpretation was qualitatively distinct from other rabbinic exegesis that sought to contemporise the textual horizon, since it was 'considered to be first of all revelatory and/or charismatic in nature.'[473] F.F. Bruce observes that pesher 'is an interpretation which passes the power of ordinary wisdom to attain; it is given by divine illumination.'[474] He further elaborates how this process is used to fuse horizons: 'The biblical text is atomized so as to bring out its relevance to the situation of the commentator's day; it is in this situation, and not in the text, that logical coherence is to be looked for.'[475]

Because of the charismatic/revelatory nature of this kind of approach, pesher hermeneutics resonates naturally with a Charismatic spirituality. Indeed, Sheryl Arthur's research in a Pentecostal study group revealed pesher hermeneutics as a dominant mode of

[471] Village, *Bible*, 90.
[472] Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 181.
[473] Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 2nd ed (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999), 29.
[474] F.F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts* (London: The Tyndale Press, 1960), 8.
[475] Bruce, 18.

interpretation.[476] Mark Stibbe argues that his own Charismatic approach follows in the pesher tradition, criticising Longenecker for 'hermeneutical cessationism' when he states that such approaches may be fine for the apostolic period but are not appropriate today.[477]

For Stibbe, pesher approaches begin with interpreting the Spirit's activity in the contemporary context and then discerning analogy in the biblical text.[478] He acknowledges some of the weaknesses of this model, particularly that it can ignore the original context and can make big claims about fulfilment.[479] However, as a form of fusing horizons, pesher approaches start with the contemporary experience and seek to find analogy in the biblical text.

This approach was evidenced in some of the sermons I analysed. PC made comments on Isaiah 43, connecting God's promise of making streams in the wasteland both to spiritual barrenness and ecological degradation (PCS1). PA, preaching on Psalm 68:6 connected the release of prisoners with joy to our contemporary psychological struggles: 'So whatever those things are, that may be restricting you, he sets the prisoners free, and he gives them joy. So God wants you to experience joy' (PAS2).

As Vondey contends, 'Pentecostals relate their experience to scripture, to stories and events in the Bible, because they interpret and authenticate their present experiences as participating in the biblical events thrust anew into the present.'[480] Peter's pesher interpretation of Joel in Acts 2 provides the exemplary hermeneutic of using Scripture to interpret contemporary experience.[481]

When PB preached that the post-lockdown church needs to 'come out of the cave' (PBS2), he is not suggesting that Elijah's ministry is fulfilled in 2022 AD, but rather he is interpreting the contemporary experience of the church using the biblical analogy of Elijah. This helps

[476] Sheryl Arthur, 'An Elim Community Pneumatologically Engaged in Corporate Theological Reflection', in *Evangelicals Engaging in Practical Theology: Theology That Impacts Church and World*, ed. Helen Morris and Helen Cameron (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), 196–97.
[477] Stibbe, 'This Is That', 193.
[478] Stibbe, 184–85.
[479] Stibbe, 185.
[480] Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology: Living the Full Gospel* (New York: Bloomsbury, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017), 16.
[481] Vondey, 15–16.

to redefine and give meaning to the present, but also helps the contemporary church to participate in the ongoing biblical story.[482]

Allegory

A further mode of fusing horizons is that of allegory. Allegory is defined by Martens as saying one thing but signifying another, and can refer to an act of composition (e.g. in parables) or of interpretation.[483] Here, I am using the term to refer to acts of interpreting the biblical text, in which the literal meaning is treated as symbolising something else. This does not imply that the literal meaning is not factually accurate, but that the interpreter uses the text to signify something else. However, allegory can sometimes be employed when the interpreter might be embarrassed by the surface meaning. Philo of Alexandria, the most prominent Jewish allegorist of the first century, used allegory where the literal meaning might cause theological stumbling blocks.[484] 'He rejected entirely any literal interpretation where anthropomorphism was at issue,' allegorizing problematic texts to make them more palatable to his contemporary audience.[485] Longenecker argues that Philo's use of allegory was motivated by a desire to 'vindicate Jewish theology before the court of Greek philosophy' and so the Old Testament is treated primarily as symbols that signify spiritual and moral benefit.[486]

A similar desire for contemporary significance can be identified in PA's sermon on transfiguration, in which various parts of the story are allegorized to provide spiritual and moral benefit (PAS1). In this sermon, the mountain represents a journey of discipleship: It can be tough to climb but gives a sense of perspective. The mountain is a place of revelation and encounter, but we do have to come down for further assignments (PAS1). For PA, the literal meaning of the mountain was relegated to the background as the allegorical meaning as a phase in our discipleship takes central place.

[482] Vondey, 15–17.
[483] Peter Martens, 'Allegory', in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Daniel J. Treier and Walter A. Elwell, Third edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 98.
[484] Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 31.
[485] Longenecker, 30–31.
[486] Longenecker, 31.

PA described his own process at arriving at this interpretation, primarily guided by the Holy Spirit, but also taking into consideration the need to be applicable to the congregation. He further elaborated his thinking process:

> I think that there's certain things that then spark you off in other areas where like, with mountain, so when I did mountains, I looked up mountains in my Bible dictionaries, and it was just noticing all the different types of mountains. But I kind of like "well how do I see mountains?" I see there's some obstacles, you know, adversities, but also you're higher up so there's that perspective (PAI2).

Allegory and Typology

Treier argues that 'allegory stems from the concept of otherness, in which an external symbolic element becomes the key for interpretation. Of course, therefore, allegory often seems to read into or against the text.'[487] It is this point of departure from the text that seems to trouble some Evangelicals. Treier suggests that whilst some conservatives often reject allegory but approve of typology (as another, distinctive non-literal interpretation), they should really be considered as similar approaches along a continuum.[488] Thus the line between the two figural approaches is not easily identifiable. Both allegory and typology use external symbols to interpret a literal text, but if the symbol is derived from elsewhere in the canon, the symbol is not properly external.[489] Similarly, Billings argues that,

> rather than seeing typology and allegory as diametrically opposed methods of interpreting the Old Testament, we would probably do best to view them on a continuum based on the extent to which the "figure" draws on the historical sense of the biblical text.[490]

Thus, typology can be seen as a form of allegory which attempts to use symbols that are derived from the canon (and especially the flow of salvation-history) to provide figural readings of the text. There is a particular Christological nature to these readings, in that Christ reveals the true shape of the stories of Adam and Israel.[491] So, for example, PE is on well-trodden typological ground when preaching from Exodus by claiming that Christ is the Passover lamb (PES1). However, I was quite interested that overall, there seemed to be a lack of typological interpretation in this (admittedly small) sample. Despite an espoused hermeneutic of the centrality of Christ, in the few sermons I heard there was a noticeable

[487] Treier, *Theological Interpretation*, 48.
[488] Treier, 47–48.
[489] Treier, 48–49.
[490] Billings, *Word of God*, 179.
[491] Billings, 179.

lack of Christocentric typology. PD espoused a Christocentric hermeneutic; 'there's a thread that runs through every page of Scripture, and it is the name of Jesus' (PDI1). However, in his sermon on Ezra, there was no mention of Jesus. This is possibly because in practice, contemporary applicability concerns outweigh the doctrinal emphasis of allegory/typology.

In addition to PE, the only other typological interpretation I heard came from PC: 'Under Hezekiah, the nation of Judah faced the reality of death, but also the hope of resurrection... But the greater death and resurrection was that of David's true son, Jesus' (PCS1). I had expected to see more of a Christocentric emphasis in PC's sermons, and he did acknowledge that these were unusual sermons and that his normative practice would be to be more explicit about Christ and the cross (PCI2). In addition, PC was keen that I shouldn't analyse the sermon in isolation for the rest of the worship service, in which communion and sung worship are more explicitly Christocentric (PCI2).

Eschatological Readings

PE, in his sermon, 'crossing the Red Sea,' made a loose eschatological interpretation when he encouraged the congregation to 'invest their lives in eternity' (PES2). Here, he follows John O'Brien's schema for preaching this passage, in which 'the anagogical sense is that the crossing over also describes the passing from this life to the next (from death to eternity).'[492] PE was very keen that an eschatological emphasis would be in focus in his sermons (PEI2).

PC also demonstrated an eschatological commitment, observable particularly in PCS2, in which he argued that Daniel was motivated to take a counter-cultural stand because of his eternal reward: 'We've got to believe the same thing for us. Otherwise, why would you take a stand? Why would you own who you are' (PCS2). This, he argued was one of his regular tropes, of trying to encourage people to an eternal perspective (PCI2).

[492] John D. O'Brien, 'Apocalypse Now: Preaching the Anagogical Sense of Sacred Scripture', *Toronto Journal of Theology* 34, no. 1 (June 2018): 40. 'Anagogy' refers to the fourth of the four senses of Scripture in the medieval 'quadriga', an interpretive approach popularised by Cassian which sees four 'senses' of Scripture; the literal, the moral, the allegorical and the anagogical (which is broadly synonymous with eschatological).

De Lubac argues that allegory and anagogy are closely related, and are often brought together in medieval exegesis.[493] Both allegory and anagogy offer a 'spiritual' symbol in place of the literal meaning. However, anagogy differs in its eschatological perspective, particularly referring 'upward', to the things to come.[494]

Given this definition, PC is not really interpreting Scripture anagogically in the traditional, medieval sense of the word. This is an instance of exemplar hermeneutics rather than anagogy, in which we should follow the example of Daniel in looking towards eternal hope. And yet, the medieval quadriga has received renewed interest among some contemporary Evangelical scholars.[495] It is certainly noteworthy that PC and PE both drew interpretations from the text that pointed towards the 'not yet.'

4.1.4 Reading the Text as Christian Scripture

The preachers in this study demonstrated some of the characteristics of precritical exegesis, which has had a resurgence in recent years, partly correlated with recent trends towards 'theological interpretation of Scripture' (TIS). TIS emerged in the 1990s, when Francis Watson, Stephen Fowl, Kevin Vanhoozer and others sought to engage the Bible with an explicitly theological exegetical approach.[496] Proponents of this approach would argue that the principles stem from Jewish and Apostolic approaches, and so they are not so much creating a fresh approach as they are rediscovering an ancient method.[497] Furthermore, whilst TIS in its contemporary form didn't start to gain traction until the end of the twentieth century, aspects of the movement can be seen in Karl Barth's commentary on Romans and the canonical approach of Brevard Childs. [498]

Here I explore aspects of TIS and demonstrate some of the resonances with contemporary Charismatic preaching.

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[493] Henri De Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, trans. Edward M. Macierowski, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2000), 183–84.
[494] De Lubac, 2:180–81.
[495] See for example, Peter J Leithart, 'The Quadriga, or Something Like It: A Biblical and Pastoral Defense', in *Ancient Faith for the Church's Future*, ed. Mark Husbands and Jeff Greeman (Downers Grove, Ill: Inter-Varsity, 2008), 110–25.
[496] Treier, *Theological Interpretation*, 11.
[497] D. A Carson, 'Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Yes, But...', in *Theological Commentary: Evangelical Perspectives*, ed. Michael Allen (New York: T & T Clark, 2011), 188.
[498] Treier, *Theological Interpretation*, 14–20.

Reacting against Historical-Critical Approaches

'People can be so dogmatic that they do all the history and the context, and this is it, and there's no room for kind of any other interpretation, which I think is very dangerous' (PAI1). PA was reflecting here on the unrestrained priority of historical-critical methods, which he believed had their place, but he argued that interpretation should not be bound by them. This concern represents a key motivation of the TIS movement.

Daniel Treier has argued that modern hermeneutics saw a divorce between biblical theology as a historic enterprise and dogmatic theology as a normative one.[499] It was assumed that separating biblical theology from prior faith commitments would allow the Bible to speak clearly, but it ended up ignoring the Bible as Scripture.[500] Attempts to conduct presuppositionless exegesis have demonstrably failed, thus advocates of TIS feel they can be bold and explicit about coming to Scripture from the *a priori* perspective of faith. For example, Will Loescher argues against the primacy of historical approaches, suggesting that they depend too much on extrabiblical sources, which are not as objective as is sometimes claimed.[501] Coming from a Charismatic perspective, he suggests this can undermine the role of the Spirit in inspiration.[502] Suspicion of historical-critical approaches can reflect an unhelpful anti-intellectualism, but positively it represents a desire for interpretation to be holistic. As I have already shown, Charismatics are concerned with orthopraxy and orthpathy as well as orthodoxy.

One 'best meaning'

A.K.M. Adam suggests that one characteristic of modernist biblical theology is that it assumes there is a single determinate meaning of the text, and that if we apply the right hermeneutical methodology, we can discern that meaning.[503] The one best meaning is usually

[499] Treier, 13.
[500] Treier, 14.
[501] Will Loescher, *Transformation by the Spirit and the Word: A Literary Exploration of Acts* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2023), 8.
[502] Loescher, 8.
[503] Andrew K. M. Adam, 'Poaching on Zion: Biblical Theology as Signifying Practice', in *Reading Scripture with the Church: Toward a Hermeneutic for Theological Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2006), 21.

tied to authorial intent and is discovered through correct academic hermeneutical procedure. He argues that the academy has a dislike of multivalence and so it creates 'informal regimes that regulate interpretive legitimacy.'[504] This kind of approach keeps 'proper exegesis' in the domain of the academy and feels patronising amongst non-academic church members.

The schism between biblical studies and dogmatics during the modern period led to the concept of 'ideal exegesis' in which the objective of interpretation was to scientifically find the best meaning with no interference.[505] In reality, the modern scientific method itself became an interference, and interpreters started to question the idea of presuppositionless exegesis. TIS tries to be explicit about its theological foundations, arguing that the best way to come to the intended meaning is through faith.

PD discussed this idea briefly when he argued that the Bible 'is more than just a textbook' (PDI2). He was insistent that the Bible could mean different things in different contexts. In contrast, PE was more committed to the idea that authorial intent should determine meaning and preferred to talk of the Spirit 'impressing' on people in new ways (PEI1).

The extent to which Scripture is multivalent remains a point of tension amongst Evangelicals. Treier argues that Evangelicals have largely embraced the presuppositions of modernity; that there must be a distinction between a text's single meaning (which is what it *meant* in the past tense), and its multiple potential contemporary applications.[506] This modern Evangelical approach was clearly expressed by PE, but the same 'two-step' method was present in PC who was keen to root contemporary significance in the 'original purpose and intention of the text' (PCI1).

PB could see the importance of context and expressed a desire to go into more depth sometimes, but spoke of meaning on different levels, 'a bit like peeling an onion' (PBI1). In his operant hermeneutic, there was little evidence of the Evangelical 'two-step' method. For example, in his sermon on the kingdom, he referred to John 20:21, 'as the Father has sent me, I am sending you' (PBS1). Tellingly, PB made no attempt to consider the original

[504] Adam, 23.
[505] Charlie Trimm, 'Evangelicals, Theology, and Biblical Interpretation: Reflections on the Theological Interpretation of Scripture', *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 20, no. 3 (1 January 2010): 312.
[506] Treier, *Theological Interpretation*, 24.

context or the meaning to the early church, but jumped straight into what it means for the contemporary church to be sent. PB was echoing a key tenet of TIS when he argued that we shouldn't read the Scripture as any other book because it's uniquely alive and is inspired by the Spirit (PBI2).

The 'drama' of the Bible

Most of the preachers emphasised that a key goal of their preaching was not simply 'right interpretation' but provoking faithful living amongst the congregation. PA, for example, stated that preaching 'goes beyond the intellect. It's where it changes the way that you think, you talk, you live, you walk. You are different' (PAI1). This emphasis, shared in one way or another by all the preachers, is a key tenet of the TIS perspective. The church does not come to Scripture merely to understand the words but to inhabit their truth. Therefore the church reads differently to the academy. As Fowl asserts,

> For a professional biblical scholar, the Bible is simply one (among many) texts upon which scholars might bring their interpretive interests and practices to bear. Christians stand in a different relationship to the Bible. The Bible is their Scripture.[507]

Similarly, we have already noted in a previous chapter Kevin Vanhoozer's testimony concerning his prior commitment to authorial intent that he has revised in his later work. He argues (in his later work) against understanding merely as a cognitive exercise to determine the objective meaning of a text, but rather that 'Scripture is a script that exists for the sake of interpreting the drama of redemption.'[508]

For PD, entering the drama of the Bible was something that first needed to be done by the preacher. He emphasised in both interviews that the 'message' is caught more than it is taught, and so it depends on the faithful living of the preacher more than the articulation of biblical concepts (PDI1 & PDI2). Charismatics are concerned with the right performance of the gospel more than the right interpretation.

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[507] Stephen E. Fowl, *Engaging Scripture: A Model for Theological Interpretation* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 3.
[508] Vanhoozer, 'Imprisoned or Free? Text, Status, and Theological Interpretation in the Master/Slave Discourse of Philemon', 73.

Precritical Exegesis

I have already noticed the way in which some of the preachers in this study adopted precritical exegesis in their interpretations. However, there was discussion about the validity of some of those methods. PE, for example, discussing apostolic exegesis of the Old Testament argued that the NT authors are 'in a class of their own—we can't do that' (PEI1). Similarly, PC warned of the dangers of getting 'too allegorical', in which a story is spun 'into whatever fits the agenda that you've got' (PCI1).

Longenecker argues that the church has often made a distinction between descriptive and prescriptive accounts in other areas, and that hermeneutics should also be an area where we are wary of making normative claims from apostolic models.[509] He suggests that precritical exegesis is an example of an approach that should be regarded as descriptive and not prescriptive, and thus we should only follow apostolic exegetical methods when they conform to modern historical-grammatical models.[510] Longenecker's approach does seem to be selective and is rightly challenged by Leithart ('when the apostles do what we do, we can follow their example. When they do not, we cannot'[511]). Leithart sees this as an example of detaching the kernel of theology from the husk of the text, in that we may appreciate the theology and conclusions of Paul but not the road he took to get us there.[512]

Canonical Interpretation

A canonical approach to interpretation is particularly associated with the formational work of Brevard Childs, who has significantly developed this approach.[513] Christopher Seitz has described the key features of Childs' canonical approach, many of which correlate with features of TIS already mentioned.[514] Of particular note is the concept of the superiority of the final, canonical form of the text. Again, reacting against critical approaches that have often sought to identify the origins of the textual tradition and recreate the historical context,

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[509] Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 198.
[510] Longenecker, 197–98.
[511] Peter J Leithart, *Deep Exegesis: The Mystery of Reading Scripture* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 33.
[512] Leithart, 33–34.
[513] Treier, *Theological Interpretation*, 18.
[514] Christopher R. Seitz, *The Character of Christian Scripture: The Significance of a Two-Testament Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 36–79. For example, he identifies a reaction against historical approaches and the dogma of faith as an interpretive guide.

a canonical approach accepts the final form of the text and seeks to interpret the text accordingly.

Brian Malley has observed Evangelicals assuming the inspiration of the final form of Scripture whilst seeming to pay little attention to the historical tradition behind the text.[515] He assumes that this is a naïve ignorance of the historical realities, but it could be demonstrative of a canonical approach that prioritises the final form of the text. Evangelicals are resistant to some of the source critical methods, that can end up questioning the legitimacy of the received text, and so they often favour this aspect of the canonical approach. In my own observations, I saw very little awareness of diachronic approaches, with preachers assuming that the authoritative word is the Bible as it is received.

A second relevant feature of this approach is the notion that interpretation considers the canonical context. Thus Bryan Chapell argues that interpreters should pay attention to the canonical author in addition to the pericopal author in exegesis.[516] I have noted in a previous chapter that Evangelicals are divided over the extent to which individual Scriptures should be interpreted in light of the whole.[517] The preachers in this study were on the whole very happy to use texts from across the canon to illustrate and elucidate the points they were making. They shared an assumption that the canonical context allowed them to connect different themes and texts. PE, for example, preaching on the purpose and necessity of the Mosaic law, explains that Paul in Galatians 3 demonstrates the necessity of the law in revealing sin: "[The law is] supposed to drive us to Jesus who has secured God's approval for us on the cross" (PES2). PE is interpreting the law in light of the canonical context, assuming that the full interpretation cannot be established without the entirety of Scripture.

4.1.5 Evangelical Appraisal of Theological Interpretation

Evangelicalism has had an uneasy relationship with critical scholarship, resisting some of its liberal conclusions, but embracing some of its principles and methodologies.[518] This is one

[515] Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 136–37.
[516] Bryan Chapell, 'Response to Abraham Kuruvilla', in *Homiletics and Hermeneutics: Four Views on Preaching Today*, ed. Scott M. Gibson and Matthew D. Kim (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 72.
[517] See section 2.3.
[518] Treier, *Theological Interpretation*, 24.

reason why Treier suggests that Evangelicals could defend TIS practices and develop them further.[519] Here I assess some of the critiques and tensions from formal voices within Evangelicalism.

Malley has been critical of some Evangelical interpretive practices, although his disapproval comes in part from a failure to understand TIS in operant hermeneutics. He observed an Evangelical small group, in which Titus 1:2 ('in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began') was cited as evidence of something God cannot do (e.g. lie).[520] Malley is critical of this approach, arguing that 'God cannot lie' is not the normal semantic meaning of that verse and that the small group were 'recalling Bible passages on their own, and finding new ways of interpretatively supporting a traditional doctrine.'[521] In fact, I suggest that Malley's critique of this practice comes from his own commitment to critical modern exegesis, and a failure to value the theological interpretation of Scripture.

Whilst a formal articulation of TIS is largely absent from Evangelical theologians (with some notable exceptions[522]), Trimm argues that many of the principles have been normative practice among Evangelicals.[523] Despite the synergy between Evangelicalism and theological approaches to Scripture, there are some aspects that Evangelicals are wary of, which are as follows:

Rule of Faith

TIS explicitly acknowledges its theological presuppositions and seeks to read the text through that lens, yet that is potentially problematic. Carson, for example, asks how such presuppositions are chosen to be the core lens through which we read and who does the choosing.[524]

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[519] Treier, 25.
[520] Malley, *How the Bible Works*, 79.
[521] Malley, 84–85.
[522] Including, amongst others, Joel B. Green, *Seized by Truth: Reading the Bible as Scripture* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007); Craig G. Bartholomew, *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Framework for Hearing God in Scripture* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2023).
[523] Trimm, 'Evangelicals', 313.
[524] Carson, 'Theological Interpretation', 205.

The 'rule of faith' is a 'summary of fundamental Christian beliefs'[525] that form a normative theology to guide interpretation. The rule of faith typically serves two functions; firstly, it serves as a fence for interpretation and secondly, it provides a key for exegesis.[526] Trimm argues that Evangelicals have no problem with the first of these and have traditionally viewed a general orthodoxy as necessary for correct meaning.[527] However, Evangelicals are sometimes concerned about viewing Scripture through any particular lens, and espouse a desire for unbiased exegesis. Klein et al argue that 'the danger is that TIS puts the authority of a text of the Bible not in that divine text itself but in how the church fathers, or the creeds, or some church community understands the meaning of that text.'[528]

For Evangelicals holding a high view of Scripture, a rule of faith should be derived from Scripture, but should also be open to challenge from Scripture. Trimm suggests that a dialectic of historical-critical approaches and theological readings, possibly with the involvement of the ecclesial community can offer Evangelicals a fruitful path forward.[529]

Historically Rooted

Carson is concerned that an emphasis on theological interpretation ignores the reality that Scripture is also historically situated.[530] He argues that TIS should not set theology over history, and that because the theological issues are so important, its historicity should matter more.[531] The historical factuality of the Bible was not questioned by any of the respondents in this project, but it was clear that some were more interested than others in establishing the historicity of their theological claims. PC, for example, spent a significant portion of his sermon on Daniel and Esther establishing the historical context for the message.

Richard Briggs considers the story we tell of the history of interpretation, which can often cast modern exegesis as the answer to all the naïve approaches of the pre-critical era.[532] This

[525] Carson, 196.
[526] Trimm, 'Evangelicals', 315.
[527] Trimm, 315.
[528] Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 50–51.
[529] Trimm, 'Evangelicals', 316–18.
[530] Carson, 'Theological Interpretation', 188–92.
[531] Carson, 190.
[532] Richard S. Briggs, 'Premodern Interpretation and Contemporary Exegesis', in *The New Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Ian Boxall and Bradley C. Gregory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 307.

is clearly a condescending and biased reframing of hermeneutical history, but the answer, affirms Briggs, is not to discard modern exegesis but to recognise the value of both critical and precritical approaches.[533]

Canonical Approach

A canonical approach can be seen in part as a reaction to the diachronic methods of historical criticism, which serves to splinter the text. And yet Trimm cautions us against the opposite extreme, in which the diversity of Scripture is diminished for the sake of unity.[534] He gives the example of Lamentations, which expresses a sense of anguish that is sometimes downplayed by the canonical context of redemption.[535]

The depth and diversity of Scripture can be flattened if it is always viewed through the same lens, and at the same time a wider view is helpful. 'Lamentations does not offer the last word on grief. But neither should we be too quick to flatten the pieces that do not fit nicely into the big picture.'[536] Clearly there is a tension between the unity and diversity of Scripture that preachers should be aware of. This means avoiding the opposite extremes of atomisation in which the canonical context is ignored, and flattening the Bible's distinctive voices.

4.1.6 TIS in Charismatic Preaching

In this section, I have demonstrated some of the observed approaches used by Charismatic preachers to bridge the horizons between the world of the text and the world of the congregation. I have noted that many of their practices accord with an approach formalised as the theological interpretation of Scripture. Charismatic Evangelicals are particularly suspicious of overly academic critical approaches and are keen to embrace 'spiritual' readings, albeit within certain contextual boundaries. A TIS approach can provide a helpful framework for these preachers, but I have noted some of the cautions that those rooted in Evangelicalism should be wary of.

[533] Briggs, 307–8.
[534] Trimm, 'Evangelicals', 318.
[535] Trimm, 318.
[536] Trimm, 318.

TIS methods can give shape and boundaries to Charismatic preachers who are looking for tools that allow them to go beyond the traditional Evangelical exegete-apply model. Pre-critical models can provide a rich vein of interpretation that are particularly relevant for Charismatic models as they offer a 'spiritual' meaning and creativity in exegesis. Yet there is no reason to abandon helpful aspects of modern exegesis, which can give legitimacy and rigour to interpretation.

Some Evangelicals have suggested that the person and work of Christ form the rule of faith through which Scripture should be interpreted. A 'redemptive hermeneutic' has, for some Evangelicals, formed an interpretive key to read the Bible. I turn now to consider the gospel in Charismatic preaching and the ways in which redemption through Christ is seen as an interpretive lens.

4.2. The Word Part 2: Preaching the Gospel—An Analysis of Charismatic Christocentrism

4.2.1 Introduction

The 'gospel' is a primary hermeneutical key for many Evangelicals, and this was clearly seen in this project. 'Every time I preach, I always have a gospel element in there' (PEI1). 'We have to keep applying the gospel' (PCI2). 'I want them to come out into all the gospel' (PBI2). Yet what is meant by the word gospel can vary. For PA, the gospel is summed up in the word 'love' (PAI2), whereas for PE the gospel is understood as substitutionary atonement.

This section explores the operant and espoused gospel of five Charismatic preachers by considering the different emphases of both the cross and the kingdom. I then consider ways in which pragmatic concerns have shaped the gospel. Finally, I offer the theme of union with Christ as a normative voice which can hold the tension of cross and kingdom, and is also pneumatological.

The gospel is not only part of the content that is preached, but I will show that it forms a hermeneutical lens in many cases, through which the Word is interpreted and understood.

4.2.2 The Gospel of the Cross

Sydney Greidanus has charted the history of the 'redemptive hermeneutic' movement, that began in the Dutch Reformed church in the 1930s as a response to exemplary preaching.[537] Greidanus describes the concern that some preachers had that many sermons were ignoring Christ, preferring an exemplary model in which preachers primarily find moral instruction.[538] This approach found its way to the U.S. in the 1960s, when Evangelical homiletics was trying to reclaim biblical theology from the domain of liberalism.[539] The redemptive hermeneutic movement (RHM) sought to resist moralising tendencies of exemplary hermeneutics by seeing redemption through Christ as the key lens through which all Scripture is seen. Edmund Clowney, assistant professor and then president of Westminster Theological Seminary wrote:

> Without insight into the theological horizon of the period concerned, we will fall into thin moralizing which misses the progress of redemptive history and fails to see Christ in the midst. Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac will be only the supreme testing of a great man's faith. Or, in avoiding that error, we may seize upon an artificial connection and introduce Christ into the passage by sheer force of allegory.[540]

Influential Evangelical preacher and student of Clowney, Timothy Keller, espouses this view and has been instrumental in providing an example and methodology for Evangelical preachers. In his book, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Scepticism*, he outlines the importance of avoiding moralism by preaching Christ in every sermon.[541]

> To see how the text fits into its whole canonical context, then, is to show how it points to Christ and gospel salvation, the big idea of the whole Bible. Every time you expound a Bible text, you are not finished unless you demonstrate how it shows us that we cannot save ourselves and that only Jesus can. That means we must preach Christ from every text, which is the same as saying we must preach the gospel every time and not just settle for general inspiration or moralizing.[542]

The popular appeal of Keller and others have been instrumental in promoting a redemptive hermeneutic amongst preachers and providing a model for interpreting Scripture Christocentrically.

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[537] Sidney Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura: Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Texts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1970).
[538] Greidanus, 40.
[539] Bryan Chapell, 'Redemptive-Historic View', in *Homiletics and Hermeneutics: Four Views on Preaching Today*, ed. Scott M. Gibson and Matthew D. Kim (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 3.
[540] Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (London: Tyndale Press, 1961), 75.
[541] Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Scepticism* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2015), chaps 2–3.
[542] Keller, 48.

Crucicentrism in Operant Hermeneutics

PE specifically mentioned Keller's example: 'I think Keller's writings and his preaching has helped a lot of preachers think it's not moralism we're preaching, it's Christ' (PEI2). PC also held that a crucicentric focus would guard against moralising or therapeutic tendencies in preaching: 'Without that cruciform Christocentric focus we very quickly slip into pelagianism or moralism or therapeutism, or whatever it might be. So got to keep the focus on Christ and his cross' (PCI2).

It is important to note that Evangelical crucicentrism often represents more than a narrow view of Christ's death on the cross. Bryan Chapell, reading Paul, argues that the 'cross' functions as 'synecdoche, representing the entire matrix of God's redemptive work past, present and future, including the resurrection, advocacy, and reign his victory through the cross provides.'[543]

The Christocentric focus was evident in PC's sermon on Hezekiah, in which redemption through Christ forms a hermeneutic lens to interpret Scripture:

> Hezekiah is like David, but he's not the true, final Son of David… Isaiah is clearly prophesying into the bigger picture of what God is going to do in restoring the whole earth. That it's not only the people of Judah who will return from exile to their homeland, but God is going to come back to his people and reign as king, a saviour king, a true son of David is coming, who will bring permanent rescue for his people (PCS1).

PC was preaching through a series that looked at major events and themes throughout the Old Testament. In this particular sermon, he expounded sections of Isaiah 40-55, emphasising the historical context but also their broader applicability to our need of rescue.

Later in the same sermon, he demonstrates how the rescue has been accomplished:

> Jesus Christ, the true son of David has defeated, disarmed the principalities and the powers by His death and His resurrection. And so we need to grasp hold again of this prophetic hope we have for final vindication, when the day will come when we will say 'where are all our enemies? Where is all that opposition? We can't see them. They've gone they have disappeared.' That is our hope in Christ (PCS1).

[543] Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon.* (Grand Rapids: Baker Pub. Group, 2005), 278, https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/11476358. Interestingly, this is a clarification on the first edition of the book (p.15).

PC's hermeneutic was nuanced, as he was cautious of Christological allegory that was insensitive to contextual issues (PCI2). PC was aware of some of the criticisms of RHM, for example Dale Ralph Davis who argues that Christ is not honoured 'by forcing him into texts where he is not.'[544] Similarly, Kenneth Langley challenges preachers not to over-compensate against moralising that they fail to heed the Bible's imperative commands.[545] Langley is concerned about the kind of hermeneutics we model to the congregation when 'Jesus makes a surprise appearance in proverbs,' or 'when redemption trumps creation as the theological underpinning of every sermon.'[546] Thus the biblical author should be allowed to speak on their own terms, without arbitrarily importing Christ. However it was clear that RHM was a guiding hermeneutical principle for PC and PE.

4.2.3 The Gospel of the Kingdom

As I was talking with PA about crucicentrism in his preaching, he alerted me to the theme of the kingdom. For him, crucicentrism was part of the wider kingdom message that he was called to preach:

> I do believe, fundamentally, the whole Christianity hinges on the cross of what took place and what happened there. But it's the gospel of the kingdom that we're to preach. And that is so much more than just the cross; that's one significant vital key part of it, but the gospel of the kingdom, it's about the King, the King's domain, it's about the King's values. It's, it's so much more (PAI2).

Similarly, although PB espoused a conservative crucicentrism, in his message, 'kingdom mindset', he wanted to locate the cross in a wider kingdom narrative: 'There was a way for us through the cross, for us to start to engage in heaven again' (PBS1).

As I considered the operant gospel in the sermons I heard, the theme of kingdom surfaced regularly. This section briefly charts the influences on Charismatic kingdom theology, noting that the liberal emphasis on the social gospel and the Pentecostal emphasis on signs and wonders coalesce in Charismatic formulations.

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[544] Dale Ralph Davis, *The Word Became Fresh: How to Preach from Old Testament Narrative Texts* (Fearn: Mentor, 2006), 138.
[545] Kenneth Langley, 'Theocentric View', in *Homiletics and Hermeneutics: Four Views on Preaching Today*, ed. Scott M. Gibson and Matthew D. Kim (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 101.
[546] Langley, 96–97.

The Kingdom and the Social Gospel

Modern interest in kingdom theology arose as liberal theologians centred ethical doctrine around conceptions of the kingdom.[547] Albert Ritschl (1822-1889) emphasised the continuity between God and humanity, viewing the kingdom as a society of love.[548] For Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918), the kingdom is synonymous with the social gospel, it is the central doctrine and organising principle of the gospel.[549] The eschatology of the classical liberals was broadly postmillennial, seeking the increasing transformation of society, in line with the Enlightenment project.

Rauschenbusch advocated for a Christian society, under socialist principles, arguing that the 'kingdom of God includes the economic life; for it means the progressive transformation of all human affairs by the thought and spirit of Christ.'[550] Thus the kingdom of God became a central doctrine for classic liberalism under which social progress and ethics found theological rationale. The framework of the kingdom enabled liberals, frustrated with the withdrawal of conservatives from social ethics, to advocate for Christians to be involved in public life.

Pentecostal Kingdom Influences

A second influence on the kingdom emphasis in contemporary Charismatic theology is found in the historical roots of Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism is a renewal movement, seeing itself as an eschatological kingdom community. Matthew Thompson has tracked the movements of Pentecostal eschatology, particularly critiquing the acceptance of dispensationalism as an uncomfortable yoke for Pentecostals.[551] He argues that

> Pentecostalism's core theological identifying feature is its particularly pneumatic-Christological (Spirit-Word) eschatological impulse that professes the in-breaking of

[547] Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *20th Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 62.
[548] Grenz and Olson, 63.
[549] Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917), 51.
[550] Walter Rauschenbusch, quoted in John Atherton, *Social Christianity: A Reader* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1994), 27.
[551] Matthew K. Thompson, *Kingdom Come: Revisioning Pentecostal Eschatology*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 37 (Blandford Forum: Deo Publishing, 2010).

> the kingdom of God in the experience of the process of holistic salvation, its chief unique expression being that of Spirit baptism and glossolalia.[552]

Pentecostal eschatology expects the power of the Spirit to be present. As Land observes, 'there is an emphasis on the power and sovereignty of God, but because the Holy Spirit brings the life of the kingdom of God into the present, passivity and cultural pessimism are minimized as people are empowered for ministry.'[553]

Andy Lord argues that Pentecostals are drawn towards the narrative emphasis of the gospel in Acts, in contrast to a classic Evangelical understanding of the gospel that is centred on justification.[554] A Pentecostal emphasis on the 'full gospel' aligns gospel preaching with the ongoing power of the Holy Spirit to overcome evil and sickness.[555] The narrative approach of Pentecostals views the kingdom as one of power, demonstrated through signs and wonders.

Charismatic Kingdom Theology

Nigel Scotland has traced the development of kingdom theology within the Charismatic movement.[556] He argues that two distinctive phases of eschatology can be identified. The first, from 1962 to 1984, is the incipient phase in which the eschatological focus was on the reigning Christ who would soon return to establish his kingdom.[557] There was a strong postmillennialism, that 'as the church gradually and increasingly moved in the power and presence of God's spirit so the kingdom would come.'[558] In the early years of the Charismatic movement, notions of the kingdom were primarily futurist. As a renewal movement, it saw itself as an eschatological community. Praise songs from this era had a triumphal and futuristic tone.[559]

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[552] Thompson, 3.
[553] Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 222–23.
[554] Lord, 'Good News for All?', 23.
[555] Peter Kuzmic, 'Kingdom of God', in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess, Gary B. McGee, and Patrick H. Alexander (Grand Rapids, Mich: Regency Reference Library, 1988), 526.
[556] Nigel Scotland, 'From the "Not Yet" to the "Now and the Not Yet": Charismatic Kingdom Theology 1960-2010', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 20, no. 2 (2011): 272–90.
[557] Scotland, 276 ff.
[558] Scotland, 278.
[559] Scotland, 281.

However, the imminent kingdom failed to materialise, and eschatological hope waned. Into that scenario, the third wave of the Charismatic movement began to emerge. Don Williams shows how Vineyard founder, John Wimber, was influenced by the kingdom theology that George Eldon Ladd was teaching at Fuller Theological Seminary.[560] The Vineyard statement of faith is

> structured by kingdom theology. It is cast in the context of God as King, exercising his reign which, while usurped by Satan, is restored first to Israel and then to the nations. This is effected by Christ, who overcomes the powers of darkness. As we have seen, it is the presence of the kingdom, in the eschatological tension of the already and not yet, that dominates Vineyard thought and practice.[561]

Wimber was instrumental in reconstructing kingdom theology for Charismatics, by emphasising the 'now' of the kingdom as well as the 'not yet.'[562] He credits Ladd's teaching on the kingdom as the theological foundation for present signs and wonders.[563] For Wimber, the kingdom is central to the message of the gospel, inaugurated by the cross of Christ.[564]

This theme resonated with Charismatics, so Mark Cartledge cites Tom Smail, a leading UK Charismatic theologian and editor of *Theological Renewal*: 'It is the same Spirit, who shows us the living Christ and brings us to share his life, who also gives us insight and authority to be witnesses to the King and his kingdom in the world.'[565] Scotland argues that 'the majority of contemporary British Charismatics have clearly bought into the Ladd/Wimber perspective.'[566] This teaching also resulted in Charismatics beginning to engage with social issues such as poverty and justice ministries.[567] As renewal and restoration movements became less fervent in their eschatological hope, they adopted a more pragmatic eschatology and a more engaged approach to social issues. They adopted some of the principles of classic liberalism that envisaged a kingdom of social ethics.

For PA, the kingdom provides a broader vision of the gospel:

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[560] Don Williams, 'Theological Perspective and Reflection on the Vineyard Christian Fellowship', in *Church, Identity, and Change: Theology and Denominational Structures in Unsettled Times*, ed. David A. Roozen and James R. Nieman (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub, 2005), 173.
[561] Williams, 180.
[562] Scotland, 'Charismatic Kingdom Theology', 283.
[563] John Wimber and Kevin Springer, *Power Evangelism* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2001), 12.
[564] Wimber and Springer, 36.
[565] Tom Smail, cited in Cartledge, 'Theological Renewal (1975-1983)', 88.
[566] Scotland, 'Charismatic Kingdom Theology', 288.
[567] Scotland, 285.

> If you only preach the cross, then often I think that what you're saying is like people want the Saviour and they want to be saved from how they want their sins forgiven. They want something from God. But what I see of the gospel of the kingdom is not just what you can get. It's about take up your cross, follow me deny yourself, give your life away. It's not Jesus come into my life. It's, I'm giving you my life. It's not a consumer-based. "I want a Saviour. I want my ticket, I want pie in the sky when I die." It's saying, "no, there's a king, who is the King of the universe. He's supreme. And I'm coming under the King's domain under his authority" (PAI2).

Similarly, PB's sermon on the kingdom paints a broad vision of the gospel that includes ethical and social transformation (PBS1).

Christiconic Approaches

The Christiconic view, espoused by Abraham Kuruvilla, is a method of preaching Christocentrically, although it does differ significantly from the redemptive-historic view.[568] Kuruvilla is concerned that in Christocentric views, the author's original concerns can sometimes get lost, and so he seeks a method that prioritises the original message of the individual pericope. 'What is called for in any given pericope is the obedience of faith, the meeting of divine demand, *by the grace of God, through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, all made possible by the redeeming work of the Son*.'[569] Kuruvilla has not constructed his approach as a kingdom-centred gospel, but it closely correlates. For Kuruvilla, every pericope in the Bible points us towards God's ideal world, in which Christ perfectly embodies its values: 'Each pericope of the Bible is actually portraying a characteristic of Christ (a facet of Christ's image), showing us what it means to perfectly fulfil, as he did, the particular call of that pericope.'[570]

Kuruvilla links this together with a vision of the kingdom in which followers of Christ are conformed to the ethics of the kingdom: 'As pericopes are sequentially preached from, the resultant transformation of lives reflects a gradual and increasing alignment to the values of God's kingdom (his "world").'[571] When preachers draw out an ethic from the text and demonstrate how Christ is the perfect embodiment of that ethic, they are interpreting Christiconically. In the pilot project of this research, I encountered a clear example of this

[568] Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text: A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013), 239–42.
[569] Kuruvilla, 241 Emphasis original.
[570] Abraham Kuruvilla, 'Christiconic View', in *Homiletics and Hermeneutics: Four Views on Preaching Today*, ed. Scott M. Gibson and Matthew D. Kim (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 59.
[571] Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text: A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching*, 96.

approach. PP[572] was preaching on Numbers 32 concerning the tribes who remained on the East of the Jordan yet still crossed over to help fight for the promised land.

> Many times in the Old Testament, we see these shadows, we see these pictures that point towards the heart of God and the way of God. And Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh do it beautifully here. In fact, they say we're going to put our lives on hold, in order to help you, the rest of us fight your giants. And this is what Jesus says in John is 'a new command I give you, love one another' (PPS1).

Here, PP is identifying an ethic in the OT text and demonstrating how Jesus perfectly exemplifies the ethic. Interestingly, when I asked him about his approach, he was more drawn towards the redemptive-historic approach, because 'it's so Christocentric' (PPI2). There is probably a sense in which the Evangelical heritage of Charismatic preachers leads them to espouse the centrality of a redemptive hermeneutic, whereas the operant hermeneutic may be different.

PD wanted to maintain the centrality of Jesus in his preaching in a way that emphasised the ethical and transformative dimensions.

> And I think there's something for me as a Charismatic Evangelical preacher that I believe it's Jesus that changed people's lives. And God feels like a distant safe person, and God is to be revered, but asks nothing of us… And that's why I always want to land in the person of Jesus. I want to point people towards Jesus because Jesus makes it uncomfortable (PDI1).

PD did not always follow a Christiconic approach, as his sermon on Ezra and Nehemiah didn't mention Jesus at all. But it did seem evident that he was looking for a hermeneutic approach that was centred on Jesus but also retained the importance of ethical transformation.

In the Christiconic view, the primary purpose of Scripture is for our application, that we might be conformed to the image (icon) of Christ.[573] If that is the overarching purpose of Scripture, then each pericope points to an ethic that is supremely displayed in Christ.

[572] I have used the reference 'PP' to refer to the preacher from the pilot project.
[573] Kuruvilla, 'Christiconic View', 69.

4.2.4 The Pragmatic Gospel

Formulations of the gospel are further complexified in operant theology, as the message is simplified and presented. Pete Ward has noticed a degree of confusion about the nature and content of the gospel among Evangelicals, despite their insistence that the gospel is unchanging.[574] He suggests that 'the unchanging gospel has undergone some significant changes as Evangelicals have developed the most effective forms of communication.'[575] A keenness to evangelise, particularly among students and young people, has resulted in the message of the gospel shifting. Ward demonstrates that evangelistic techniques, such as the 'four spiritual laws,' or the 'bridge to life' have been developed in order to systematise and simplify the message of the gospel, with the goal of reaching more people.[576] However, this has also had the effect of creating a gospel message that is more propositional and formulaic.

The 'four spiritual laws', for example, were developed by Bill Bright (director of Campus Crusade for Christ) as a way of summarising and simplifying the gospel message.[577] The four laws are:

1. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.
2. Man is sinful and separated from God, thus he cannot know and explain God's plan for his life.
3. Jesus Christ is God's provision for man's sin through whom man can know God's love and plan for his life.
4. We must receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord by personal invitation.[578]

In another example, Ward observes a 'complex and layered interaction between a more personal and subjective form of theology, and a more objective and doctrinally propositional theology' in the preaching of Nicky Gumbel, the leader of a Charismatic Anglican network of churches,[579]

[574] Pete Ward, *Liquid Ecclesiology: The Gospel and the Church* (Leiden Boston: Brill, 2017), 103–22.
[575] Ward, 110.
[576] Ward, 114–20.
[577] John G. Turner, *Bill Bright and Campus Crusade for Christ : The Renewal of Evangelicalism in Postwar America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 99–100.
[578] John G. Turner, 99.
[579] Ward, *Liquid Ecclesiology*, 126.

Ward describes field work at another Charismatic Anglican baptism service, in which the operant theologies of the baptismal candidates seemed to represent a subjectivised faith: 'What appeared to be happening with these Evangelical testimonies was that the operant theology of the self in relation to God had become the primary means for self-understanding and for communicating the Christian faith to others.'[580] The operant gospel of the baptismal candidates centred on the personal experience of God and his plan for their lives. Ward contrasts this with the espoused theology of the sermon, which represented a more objective form of the gospel, with an Evangelical crucicentric emphasis. He observes that the objective aspects of the gospel have not disappeared from the conversation, but do not seem to operate as an everyday lived theology.[581]

Ward's analysis suggests that the discrepancy between the operant and espoused conceptions of the gospel could be caused by the reductive approaches of evangelistic zeal that have inadvertently shaped the normative theology of Evangelicalism. Morris elaborates on this further, arguing that wider cultural trends, such as the 'inward turn' described by Charles Taylor, have also impacted conceptions of the gospel.[582] This has significant implications for Charismatic preaching, especially where the proclamation of Christ and the gospel is concerned. My own research has suggested some differing emphases over the articulation of the gospel, as well as a layering of subjective and objective elements of the gospel, which will be explored below.

In Bright's *four spiritual laws*, a more individualised and privatised form of the gospel can be observed, as well as a simplified propositional arrangement. The pragmatic gospel can be considered more practical in the way it simplifies the message in order to make the message more memorable in communication. In this context, the pragmatic gospel is not a different theological emphasis, but rather provides a shade on crucicentric and kingdom perspectives.

PE, for example, offered this summary of the gospel:

> We all, the Bible is clear, need Jesus, the only one who ever lived that perfect life, fully pleasing God and He willingly went to the cross. He died on the cross for you

[580] Ward, 136.
[581] Ward, 137.
[582] Helen Morris, 'A Wonderful Plan for My Life? Pete Ward's "The Gospel and Change" in Dialogue with Charles Taylor', in *Evangelicals Engaging in Practical Theology: Theology That Impacts Church and World*, ed. Helen Morris and Helen Cameron (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022).

> and me, to take on himself our sin, our rebellion our going against what God has said, our ignoring of the living God who created us. Jesus receives, as our Passover Lamb, the punishment for that sin which actually enslaves us, it has power over our life. And we, through faith in Him, we get forgiveness, we get made righteous, thanks to Jesus (PES2).

This was followed by an invitation to pray and surrender your life to Jesus. PE expressed a desire to always preach the gospel, by which he meant a crucicentric redemption emphasis. That emphasis can be seen in the extract above, but there are also elements of pragmatism here. The gospel message was not the main theme of this sermon, but PE placed a high value on preaching the gospel in every message and so the content was reduced and simplified in order to allow PE time to expound the main theme of the sermon.

PA argued that whole gospel can be summed up as love. In elaborating further, he wanted to emphasise love as the only way for ethical transformation and evangelistic zeal, but that the heart was experiential knowledge of the love of God (PAI2).

The theme of love was evident in PA's sermon from Father's Day, in which we see a formulation of that message.

> So even though at times, it might be a temptation to think that you're not, you know, that you don't deserve his love that you're not worthy, you need to know that because of Jesus, you have been put in right standing with God, that we can have that relationship with him (PAS2).

Later in the same sermon, PA asserted,

> We've been chosen. We have been chosen by the King of the universe, think about that you are in a royal family. That is not of this earth or not of this world. But you are adopted into the kingdom of light, the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God (PAS2).

Although he doesn't mention the cross, it is implied in the phrase, 'because of Jesus.' Here, PA is offering a pragmatic shade of the gospel, in which elements of the cross and the kingdom can be seen. A subjective focus emphasises the perspective of the listeners and helps them to connect with the message.

4.2.5 Reconciling Cross and Kingdom

In the normative turn of this section, I consider two approaches to reconciling the gospels of the cross and the kingdom. Both seek to present a more holistic vision of the gospel.

N.T. Wright and the Gospel

N.T. Wright has described the significance of Jesus' *life* in relation to the gospel as a significant theme of his life's work.[583] He is concerned that Evangelicals have read a Pauline theology of justification into the gospels, thereby missing the major thrust of the Evangelist's message. He is equally critical of liberals who have divorced the historical Jesus from the Christ of faith and so have similarly missed the message of the gospels. He maintains, 'we have lived for many years now with kingdom Christians and cross Christians in opposite corners of the room, anxious that those on the other side are missing the point, the one group with its social-gospel agenda and the other with its saving-souls-for-heaven agenda.'[584] We could perhaps also apply this tension to Pentecostals and Evangelicals, where Pentecostals stress the signs-and-wonders agenda.

Wright observes that the absence of theological emphasis on the middle of Jesus' life (i.e., ignoring everything between the incarnation and crucifixion) is not unique to modern Evangelicalism, but is also a feature of the ancient creeds. 'These great statements of faith, which the church has treated as foundational for its life ever since, manage not to talk about what the gospels primarily talk about and to talk about something else instead.'[585]

Similarly, Scot McKnight observes a reductive gospel in Evangelical churches, in which the sum of the gospel is viewed as synonymous with double imputation and penal substitution views of atonement.[586] He is not trying to dispute those Evangelical doctrines, but rather argues that reducing the gospel to those elements has distorted the gospel message to a 'plan of salvation.' The reductive gospel of individual justification has resulted in a struggle for churches to promote and enable wholehearted discipleship. By surveying the gospel in Acts, McKnight argues that the gospel is announcing the lordship of Christ, as the fulfilment of

[583] N. T. Wright, *How God Became King: The Forgotten Story of the Gospels* (London: SPCK, 2012), 16.
[584] Wright, 106.
[585] Wright, 23.
[586] Scot McKnight, 'Atonement and Gospel', in *Church in the Present Tense: A Candid Look at What's Emerging*, ed. Kevin Corcoran (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2011), 123–40.

Israel's story.[587] This correlates with Ward's analysis discussed earlier, that a reductive gospel has resulted in an individualised operant theology.

PA and PD both reflected a concern that Evangelical formulations of the gospel can be reductive. 'It's so much more [than the cross]. And so if we're looking at scripture in its entirety, you know, when James is talking about, you know, your mouth being like a rudder and stuff, he's not talking about the cross there. But it's still really important, still really valuable' (PAI2). PD was wary of Evangelical crucicentrism that was overly dogmatic, preferring an approach to following Jesus centred on the Sermon on the Mount (PDI2).

The constructive aspect of Wright's work is to demonstrate how the kingdom and the cross are united as central themes in the gospels:

> The themes of kingdom and cross are not simply theological themes that the disciples have to learn, abstract ideas on their way to constituting a credal 'orthodoxy.' They are the pattern of their life, both as they follow Jesus around Galilee, despite not understanding what he's up to, and as they then follow him, in the power of the Spirit, to the ends of the earth.[588]

Wright carefully demonstrates how the key movements of the gospels intertwine these two themes. In Jesus' baptism, Peter's confession of Christ and the crucifixion, these threads are mutually interpretive, so that the kingdom is established through suffering and the cross is the means by which Israel's story is fulfilled.[589]

McKnight similarly wants to reframe the gospel in more expansive terms, focusing a little more on the gospel as the climax of Israel's story, but still emphasising the message as Jesus' inauguration of the kingdom through the cross.[590] He makes a stark claim for the implications of this in discipleship:

> Much of the soterian approach to evangelism today fastens on Jesus as (personal) Savior and dodges Jesus as Messiah and Lord. If there is any pervasive heresy today, it's right here. Anyone who can preach the gospel and not make Jesus' exalted lordship the focal point simply isn't preaching the apostolic gospel.[591]

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[587] McKnight, 130–36.
[588] Wright, *How God Became King*, 130.
[589] Wright, 138–58.
[590] Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2011).
[591] McKnight, 149–50.

McKnight articulates the concern of PA that a narrow crucicentric gospel can, in practice, become reductive and cognitive, avoiding the holistic claims of the apostolic gospel.

Union with Christ

The theme of union with Christ as a unifying concept, can bring together the gospel of the cross and the gospel of the kingdom. The phrase 'in Christ', was particularly noticeable in PE's preaching, but also common in PC and appeared in PA and in interview with PD. Some of the references were more incidental, for example a reference to 'brothers and sisters in Christ' (PDI2). Other examples included references to our blessings 'in Christ' (PAS1 and PES1), our identity 'in Christ' (PCS2) and our hope 'in Christ' (PES1, PCS1). These examples are taken specifically because, in context, the phrase is shorthand for our union with Christ. PC expanded this theme:

> You've died already in Christ, and in Him, you will appear in glory. Is there a reward for us? Yes. In Christ we will possess all things. We will possess the whole earth, the whole universe, it will be ours in Christ… In Christ, our reward is great. In Christ, we have it all (PCS2).

It is probable that some of the references to 'in Christ' are 'low-level turns of speech that could be discarded from the sentence without altering its meaning,'[592] and have become so familiar that the significance of the concept has been curtailed. However, for PC and PE particularly, it seemed that union with Christ was a key theme.

Grant Macaskill, like Wright, argues that Evangelicals have allowed some aspects of the gospel to fade, whilst taking good care to preserve others.[593] He critiques popular Evangelical formulations (of which the spiritual laws would be a good example), primarily because of its moral identity. 'Any account of the Christian moral life, any program of discipleship, that does not begin and resolve with Paul's words, "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me," is deficient and will eventually turn into a form of idolatry.'[594]

[592] Grant Macaskill, *Living in Union with Christ: Paul's Gospel and Christian Moral Identity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 43.
[593] Macaskill, 5.
[594] Macaskill, 39–40.

Similarly, Rankin Wilbourne observes a tension between crucicentric and kingdom-centered formulations of the gospel, which he describes as the message of 'grace' and the message of 'discipleship' respectively.[595]

> Union with Christ is the song we need to recover and hear today as the heart of the gospel. The song of grace without union with Christ becomes impersonal, a cold calculus that can leave you cynical. The song of discipleship without union with Christ becomes joyless duty, a never-ending hill that can leave you exhausted.[596]

Klyne Snodgrass' provocative title, *You Need a Better Gospel* likewise presents union with Christ as a more complete gospel story than the standard Evangelical fare.[597] He explains,

> Our participation means being joined to Christ in faith. That does not mean merely participating in doing things; it means participating in the life in Christ or in God, or, better, participating in the life of Christ and of God through the Spirit and being transformed by the participation. It is about drawing our identity from our close participation with the triune God.[598]

Participation with Christ has two particular features which resonate well with Charismatic themes. Firstly, participation with Christ requires the specific work of the Spirit: 'The activity of the Spirit in sanctification, then, is intended not to bring about a better version of ourselves but to realize in us the personal moral identity of Jesus Christ.'[599] Macaskill argues that this goes way beyond the common understanding of the Spirit's role in sanctification, in which the Spirit helps the believer to obey.[600]

For Charismatic pioneer Terry Virgo, this was a key aspect of his soteriology: 'Our union with Christ is the key to our salvation and sanctification.'[601] This was a theme he returned to frequently over his long ministry. In interview with Terry Virgo, he described the

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[595] Rankin Wilbourne, *Union with Christ: The Way to Know and Enjoy God*, 1st ed (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2016), 41–54.
[596] Wilbourne, 54.
[597] Klyne Snodgrass, *You Need a Better Gospel: Reclaiming the Good News of Participation with Christ* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2022).
[598] Snodgrass, 20.
[599] Macaskill, *Living in Union with Christ*, 39–40.
[600] Macaskill, 41.
[601] Terry Virgo, 'Excerpts from Romans', July 2011, https://www.terryvirgo.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/notes_on_Romans.pdf.

revelatory work of the Holy Spirit that brings the truth of union with Christ to life for the hearer.[602]

Secondly, union with Christ is an imaginative and experiential doctrine. Wilbourne argues that one reason this conception of the gospel has diminished is because it is in 'enchanted reality' in a disenchanted world.[603] Thus he argues for the central role of the imagination to know God and to know the gospel: 'Believing the gospel means having your imagination taken captive and reshaped by a new story.'[604] According to Moore, this is part of pneumatic interpretation, characteristic of Pentecostal hermeneutics.[605] Union with Christ invites believers to experience the gospel by means of the Holy Spirit and their imagination.

4.2.6 The Gospel in Charismatic Preaching

This section has considered operant and espoused conceptions of the gospel within five Charismatic preachers. This analysis has revealed a tension between forms of the gospel that stress the cross, and forms that stress the kingdom. Evangelicals have traditionally gravitated towards the cross as the locus of the gospel, and the redemptive hermeneutic provides a robust methodology to accomplish that goal. However, Charismatic theology has also been heavily influenced by the kingdom as a core theological theme, partly because it allows articulation of themes of supernatural power and social justice that sometimes get omitted otherwise.

Perhaps also, Charismatic theology is more attracted to the triumphalist tone that the gospel of the kingdom can provide:

> I want the testimony for everyone in this room to be where you walk, the kingdom comes, and lives get changed… Towns will be changed. Not just people getting saved, but businesses will thrive, schools will be changed. It's an atmosphere that changes the whole place, every part. That's the kingdom, that's kingdom at work (PBS1).

The notion of the kingdom in Charismatic theology draws on themes of ethical transformation seen in the social gospel, with an emphasis on signs and wonders

[602] I have already noted (section 2.1.4) that 'raised with Christ' became a key motif in renewal theology.
[603] Wilbourne, *Union with Christ*, 80–81.
[604] Wilbourne, 13.
[605] Moore, 'A Pentecostal Approach to Scripture', 11.

characteristic of Pentecostalism. However, if the gospel is not anchored in the redemptive work of Christ, the source of the kingdom is ignored. The doctrine of union with Christ is offered as a way to hold both declaration (of redemption achieved through the cross) and demonstration (of the kingdom in miracles and justice) in the gospel together.[606]

Union with Christ is entered into by means of the Spirit, in realising the identity of Christ in the life of the believer. Whilst I do not claim that union with Christ is a uniquely Charismatic approach, the pneumatological emphasis does resonate well with Charismatic theology. The next section focuses more explicitly on the distinctly pneumatic component within Charismatic sermons, by considering the nature and function of 'prophetic preaching.'

4.3. The Holy Spirit: Prophetic Preaching

4.3.1 Introduction

As I was listening carefully to the sermons in this research, I noted in my fieldwork journal that there was a particular style of rhetoric that seemed to be commonly used by the preachers. There was a sense in which the preachers were invoking a sense of divine authority in their speech. Some examples from various sermons illustrate these points:

'God is saying there's more assignments to be fulfilled down the mountain' (PAS1).
'Break off anxiety, I saw that this morning' (PBS2).
'Because this is the time, this is the season we're in right now' (PBS2).
'It is time to light the fire again, it's time to reignite, it's time to call down the power of God and say God will you fill me anew' (PDS1).
'But actually it's quite amazing that this passage of Scripture should be what we had planned for this week, that we thought we were planning it but really the Lord is planning things' (PCS1).
'But I'm trying to get us to understand that this culture, and what God is trying to do in this season is we need to be awake to His Spirit, we need to understand that he's called all of us' (PBS1).

[606] Wilbourne, *Union with Christ*, 183.

'But are you ready for battle? That's the real question that God is wanting to impress upon you this morning' (PES1).

In these examples are a few features that give a sense of divine authority. One of the characteristics of this style is a sense of timeliness, that God is speaking uniquely, in that moment, and that the preacher is accessing the words of God for today. In interview, the preachers made reference to the role of the Holy Spirit in directing and authorising this speech. For example, PB's insistence that he is 'just a mouthpiece' (PBI2).

Some of the examples are based on the Scriptural text, but given resonance for the contemporary situation, others stem from the preacher's direct sense of God's activity. This section considers the nature and function of 'prophetic preaching' and examines the preachers' self-understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in preaching.

4.3.2 A Taxonomy of Prophetic Speech

Before considering prophetic preaching specifically, it is first necessary to identify that nature of prophetic speech more generally. Jon Bialecki conducted ethnographic research in a Vineyard church, which is part of the neo-Charismatic movement.[607] He identifies three forms of operant prophetic speech in the church meetings:

1. Speaking on behalf of God. In this mode, the speaker is presented as speaking as God himself. Bialecki observes that this approach is more typical of classic Pentecostal methods and is on the wane in the newer, more informal Charismatic churches.
2. Reported speech. Speakers would recount what they believe God has spoken to them.
3. Reported images, visions and senses. In this third sense, the speaker would present a sense or picture which they believe has been given by God, and then supplement with their own interpretation.[608]

Bialecki notes that these modes of prophetic speech are distinguishable in the degree that authority is implicit. In the first, the speaker assumes the role of God, which clearly gives a

[607] Bialecki, *A Diagram for Fire*.
[608] Bialecki, 125–32.

sense of divine authority and presents the message as above reproach. Ironically, Bialecki observes that this can create a sense of inauthenticity in the more informal Vineyard churches, as preachers try to maintain a natural and informal mode of speech.[609] In the third mode, the human agent is more central to the prophetic speech, and therefore the message is less infallible.

We have already seen some examples of these different modes in the empirical research, particularly of the first two modes. PB addressed the church a number of times invoking the voice of God. PA reported his belief in what God was saying: 'I believe that God is encouraging each and every one of us to climb our mountain' (PAS1), or when he reported, 'I really felt like God wanting to give us as His people a greater revelation about who God is' (PAS2).

PC gave a report of a picture he had had of a port: 'This is a fresh prophetic impetus for us. For us to see more people coming in, entering the safe harbour—the port of God's presence and blessing' (PCS1). However, whereas Bialecki witnessed equivocation in those he observed, that was not the case here. That may be because Bialecki was observing speech in a range of contexts, including small groups in which people were encouraged to 'take chances' or to stretch themselves by having a go at prophecy in a kind of 'prophetic workshop.'[610] In contrast, PC seems more certain of the interpretation of his picture and hence provides a more authoritative tone.

In the prophetic workshops that Bialecki observed, there was a greater degree of uncertainty over the participants' prophecies, especially in the third mode of reported senses or visions. He observes a general template of (invitation):evidence:gloss:qualification.[611] The invitation is sometimes omitted, but often serves to frame the prophecy as a divine word and to seek consent to give the word, for example 'I think God may be saying…' In smaller settings, the speaker may ask for permission to disclose the word, although Bialecki does note the immense pressure that people feel under to respond positively.

[609] Bialecki, 124.
[610] Bialecki, 104.
[611] Bialecki, 128.

The evidence is the core of the message, whether it's a word or a picture or a more general impression of what God is saying. The gloss offers the speaker's interpretation of the message, and the qualification offers the caveat that the gloss is not as authoritative or may include the instruction to 'weigh' the prophetic words.[612]

An example of this template may be seen in PBS2:

> So this morning, I was gonna go on to Part Two about the kingdom, like I was speaking about last week, if you remember? But I was awoken in the week, and I keep having this picture of Elijah coming out of the cave. I just had this just mental [mind's eye] picture of him standing at the mouth of the cave. And so I kind of was obedient. And I thought, Okay, God, if you've put that in my mind, and I couldn't get rid of it. So I thought, Okay, I better go read about it. And I did. And I really feel that is word for today. So hopefully, with what I've got to share, it is about what God is doing in this season. And it is a time where we've been in the cave, perhaps, you know, metaphorically over this last few years. But a time is coming when God is drawing us to the front of the cave. And he's asking, 'What are you doing here?' So as a church, I'm asking the question, 'what are you doing here?'

In this example, we can see some of the elements that Bialecki describes, although the sermon context does modify them in some ways. Bialecki notes that in some churches, the absence of the invitation, and therefore consent, means that the hearers are unaware of their responsibility to approve the message.[613] That certainly seems to be the case here, in which the congregation are not required to judge the event, they simply accept the message (or not). However, the opening narrative around the picture does serve to frame the authoritative word ('I was going to do one thing but then God interrupted my plans') and adds gravitas to the message.

The evidence in this case is the picture itself, of Elijah coming out of the cave. The continuing narrative presents the speaker as searching out the Scriptures in prayer and meditation, to discern the meaning, which he then expounds over the course of the message. A summary of the gloss is given here in the message that God is speaking to the church. Bialecki views the absence of invitation and qualification as a characteristic of older, more formal charismatic speech, as it presents a more authoritative tone, in contrast to the newer, Vineyard churches which generally adopt a more informal tone.[614] However, in the limited

[612] Bialecki, 129–30.
[613] Bialecki, 130–31.
[614] Bialecki, 131.

sample of this research, where I could identify prophetic speech, there was very little evidence of invitation or gloss. In Bialecki's analysis, this would lead to the conclusion that the preachers are adopting an older, more formal and authoritarian style of prophetic speech. In the trialectic of Word, Spirit and Community, it may well be that the Vineyard speakers in Bialecki's research are more attentive to the community, or the relationship between the Spirit and the community.

However, it may also be that the examples of prophetic speech I heard were more embedded in the sermon itself and so an increased level of authority is assumed. Although not part of this study, in some of the churches, there was time given for prophecy, tongues and interpretation, usually as part of the worship time. In these moments, there was a greater sense of qualification, with phrases such as 'responding if that's you' and 'if the Lord is speaking to you now.' Within the spontaneous times in these churches, there was a greater variety of assumed authority in the prophetic speech that was present.

There is a sense in which prophetic speech, when it is part of the sermon, is curated in advance, and so has already been through a process of testing in the preacher's own study and preparation. PC devoted almost half of a sermon to reviewing some of the prophetic words that the church had been given over the past 15 years (PCS1). It was clear that these words had been weighed by the preacher, and possibly the church elders, and so were presented to the church as authoritative. When I asked PC about the authority of these messages, he referred both to the track record of the person giving the message, but also a corporate discernment as the church considered the words given (PCI2). For PC, there was also a sense in which these words were rooted in Scripture:

> Prophetic insight into what we should be doing now is often birthed in soaking in the prophetic books. Biblical prophecy feeds contemporary prophecy… [In that message] I felt that it did feed into one another, in a way, which then caused me I hope not to stretch the Scripture, but to feed from it and apply it in a way which is relevant to our context (PCI2).

4.3.3 Defining 'Prophetic' Preaching

As has been demonstrated above, prophecy in sermon form differs from prophecy in other contexts, and so I turn now to address prophecy in preaching. However, 'prophetic

preaching' is a freighted term, and so it is necessary to examine various conceptions of the term, noting where they are observed in this research.

Prophetic Preaching as Social Critique

Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, as an example, has surveyed a number of definitions of prophetic preaching.[615] She notes that some churches define prophetic preaching as decoding apocalyptic texts, addressing themes such as the rapture or the end times.[616] Her own definition, whilst being future oriented, is not future predicting. Having surveyed other definitions, she notes that prophetic preaching is often used interchangeably with 'social justice preaching' or 'liberation preaching', and the theme of social critique runs through her definition. However, she is also keen to root this in a vision forward for the kingdom of God.

> To speak for God also means to be on the cutting edge of what is just and what is unjust in the local communities in which we find ourselves; to bring God's Word to bear on key events and at crisis moments in the life of the church, nation, and world; and to have a bias in our preaching toward the liberation of God and the upending of powers and principalities, thus bringing in a reign marked by peace and equality and justice for all.[617]

The element of social critique is central for many in the understanding of prophetic preaching. Walter Brueggemann in particular is associated with this description, associating contemporary preaching with the Old Testament prophetic tradition.[618] Prophetic preaching, in his construction, 'is an effort to imagine the world as though YHWH, the creator of heaven and earth, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ whom we Christians name as Father, Son, and Spirit, is a real character and a defining agent in the world.'[619] For Brueggemann, prophetic preaching requires the preacher to critique the social order in light of their imagination, rooted in the narrative of God's action.

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[615] Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Prophetic Preaching: A Pastoral Approach* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 3–9.
[616] Tisdale, 3.
[617] Tisdale, 6.
[618] Walter Brueggemann, *The Practice of Prophetic Imagination: Preaching an Emancipatory Word* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 1–2.
[619] Brueggemann, 23.

The Charismatic preachers I listened to demonstrated some awareness of social critique as a mode of prophetic preaching. PC, for example, in a sermon that was more prophetic in style, stated,

> And we're being called in a fresh way to serve the poor, the poor in spirit, the poor materially, the downcast who need a Saviour, and actually the nation, which, although rich in many ways, is poor in so many ways That were called again prophetically to speak the good news of the suffering servant who came to bear our equities and carry us into life (PCS1).

PB expressed something very similar to Brueggemann's prophetic imagination when he spoke about his vision of the kingdom:

> God starts to have his way. Towns will be changed. Not just people getting saved, but businesses will thrive, schools will be changed. It's an atmosphere that changes the whole place, every part. That's the kingdom, that's kingdom at work, isn't it? That's what I would like to see. (PBS1).

Despite some evidence of the preachers' willingness to address social and cultural concerns, envisioning a new reality, this did not seem to be the dominant mode of prophetic preaching.

Prophecy is Preaching

A further understanding of 'prophetic preaching' concerns the frequently held view that prophecy and preaching are indistinguishable. Pentecostal scholar, Robert Menzies notes that the conflation of prophecy and preaching is rooted in the reformation teaching of Calvin and Luther, who were particularly concerned to preserve the sole revelation of Scripture as authoritative for the church.[620] J.I. Packer is typical of this perspective, when he argues that 'any verbal enforcement of biblical teaching as it applies to one's present hearers may properly be called prophecy today, for that in truth is what it is.'[621] In this view, the regular proclamation, explanation and application of Scripture is viewed as synonymous with prophecy.

[620] Robert Menzies, 'Anti-Charismatic Bias in the Chinese Union Version of the Bible', *Pneuma* 29, no. 1 (2007): 98–99.
[621] James I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984), 215.

Dennis Lum summarises the Pentecostal debate concerning the extent to which charismatic exegesis, preaching and prophesy should be considered distinct.[622] He notes that whilst classic Pentecostal teaching has sought to distinguish between divinely revealed prophecy and the exposition of Scripture that comes from study and exegesis, some Pentecostal scholars view a less binary distinction.[623] However, in his quantitative survey, it is evident that most Pentecostals see a distinction between prophecy and preaching.[624]

Wayne Grudem, who is not located within Pentecostalism but who, nonetheless, has argued extensively for the continuation of spiritual gifts, argues for a distinction between teaching and prophecy.[625] Teaching, in his view, is the exposition or application of Scripture, whereas prophecy requires a spontaneous revelation.

> The thought that occurs to a prophet is pictured as coming to him *quite spontaneously*, for it comes while the first speaker is talking. So this prophecy does not seem to be a sermon or lesson that had been prepared beforehand; it comes rather at the prompting of the Holy Spirit.[626]

Grudem observes in Acts 15:35, Paul and Barnabas were 'teaching and preaching the *word of the Lord.*'[627] In his estimation, teaching and preaching are virtually synonymous and so the same distinction between preaching and prophecy applies.[628] Grudem quotes Charismatics Michael Harper and Dennis and Rita Bennett who also make the distinction between preaching and prophecy. Indeed, Alan Vincent, writing in *Restoration* argues that both distinct prophetic and teaching ministries are necessary for a healthy church.[629]

This issue is made complex by the preconceptions that are held about preaching, teaching and prophecy, so the nature and definition of the terms are often related to the theology and spirituality of the scholars and practitioners. Theologians can view the biblical function of prophecy through the lens of their contemporary practice, which shapes and reinforces their

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[622] Li Ming Dennis Lum and William K. Kay, *The Practice of Prophecy: An Empirical-Theological Study of Pentecostals in Singapore* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2018), 102–6.
[623] Lum and Kay, 102–6.
[624] Lum and Kay, 212.
[625] Wayne A. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, Rev. ed (Westchester, Ill: Crossway Books, 2000), 118.
[626] Grudem, 96.
[627] Grudem, 118.
[628] Grudem, 120.
[629] Vincent, 'Prophetic Preaching', 27.

interpretations. This is worth noting, as Charismatics and Pentecostals read the New Testament wanting to see a distinction between prophecy and teaching, whereas conservative scholars are more likely to see the two as synonymous. PA and PB maintained this distinction, both espousing a preference for prophetic preaching over what they deemed to be the more scholarly mode of teaching.

Speaking for God

Ryan Ahlgrim argues for a definition of prophetic preaching that goes beyond 'religiously motivated social criticism.'[630] In his usage, prophetic preaching is distinctive firstly because 'it presumes to speak for God, being a human embodiment of God's Word for us for now.' Secondly, 'it facilitates an existential encounter with God or Scripture.'[631]

This definition resonated more with the sense of prophetic preaching I was hearing from the preachers. For example, when I asked PB about his preparation process, he recounted that the most important thing was to hear from God: 'Number one aim is that I'm not speaking from me, I'm speaking from God… I don't want to get in the way of what God is wanting to share… It's just faithfully saying, "Okay, God, what is it in this time that you're speaking to me about?"' (PBI1).

This approach was clear in his sermon from 1 Kings 17 (PBS2):

'And what God got a hold of me this week is…'

'I was praying for fire this morning on me. And I don't know what it is, in this season, there's something stirring up in our hearts…'

'God is saying, "I have a plan. I have a plan in this season right now, in what's going on in the church, what's going on in this country, what's going on in the world right now, I have a plan."'

[630] Ryan Ahlgrim, *Not as the Scribes: Jesus as a Model for Prophetic Preaching* (Scottdale, Pa: Herald Press, 2002), 15.
[631] Ahlgrim, 15.

In these short examples, it is evident that PB recognises that his role as a preacher is to speak on God's behalf and then convey that to the congregation, for the purpose of facilitating an encounter between God and the congregation.

Charismatic Exegesis

Much of what I have identified as prophetic speech could be defined as 'charismatic exegesis', given its reliance on Scripture. Charismatic exegesis was probably the most common form of pneumatic speech that I heard in this research. PE, for example, discussed the battles the Israelites faced as a metaphor for our own spiritual battles; 'In Christ, you have been given everything you need for every battle that you will ever face. But are you ready for battle? That's the real question that God is wanting to impress upon you this morning' (PES1). In the sermons I listened to, PE had a few notable moments of making declarative statements like this. This style of speech is rooted in Scripture but carries an authoritative tone as the preacher appropriates it in the contemporary context.

When I asked PE about this approach, he believed that Scripture itself gave him the warrant to speak like that: 'I suppose I'd qualify this by saying you're only in authority if you're under authority… You've only got authority, if you're acting under the authority of Scripture' (PEI2). Similarly, PC described a process of biblical prophecy feeding contemporary prophecy (PCI2). His sermon on Hezekiah is a good example of this, in which an overview of sections of Isaiah feeds into contemporary prophecy for the church (PCS1). In this understanding, prophetic revelation is given as the preacher seeks the Spirit through the text.

PC described his preparation process, which involved a lot of study in Scripture and commentaries. But significantly, 'preaching is a spiritual process that involves the preparation as well as the delivery. So I would be very much looking for God's leading in terms of this is the emphasis-this is the now Word of God. This is how this part of Scripture speaks to us in our situation, at this moment' (PCI1).

Charismatic exegesis, according to David Aune, was a term first posed by H.L. Ginsberg as a description of the kind of Qumranic exegesis displayed in the Habakkuk commentary.[632] It differs, argues Aune, from prophecy in that prophecy involves direct revelation, perhaps through a trance or vision. In contrast, charismatic exegesis represents indirect revelation that requires some form of skill, knowledge or training of the exegete, even though it may still be dependent upon divine revelation. Aune notes that charismatic exegesis 'played a *functionally equivalent* role to prophecy' for the Qumran community.[633]

Although Aune is describing ancient Jewish exegesis, there is significant resonance with contemporary Charismatic interpretation. In this mode of prophetic speech, preachers can be exegeting and applying Scripture, but in their own self-understanding, there is a sense of divine revelation so that their words have specific and particular significance in that moment. This has not arisen spontaneously but may be seen as functionally equivalent in the sense of divine authority implied.

4.3.4 Operant Prophetic Preaching

These various ways of defining 'prophetic preaching' and of describing the activity of the Holy Spirit in the sermon demonstrate that there are a number of aspects to this task. From a Charismatic perspective, prophetic preaching carries the distinct connotation of pneumatic origin, and yet that can take place in the study as much as in the pulpit. Using the above definitions of prophetic preaching, it was possible to identify certain characteristics of the Charismatic preachers that were evidenced in their sermons.

Timeliness

One common theme that stood out in the data was the sense of 'timeliness' in the appropriation of Scripture. PA, for example, discussed the context of Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem as the background to 'the joy of the Lord is your strength' (PAS2). He then added,

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[632] David Edward Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, Mich: W. B. Eerdmans, 1983), 339.
[633] Aune, 342, emphasis added.

> And that's a word for some of you right now. Because some of you have felt miserable about some stuff and God's saying, 'there's a reason why there's that holy dissatisfaction, that righteous rising up on the inside of you that there needs to be justice that some things need to be put right' (PAS2).

PD, preaching on Ezra 4, structured his sermon around the theme of renewed worship that was part of the rededication of the temple. He concluded, 'What are you giving your attention to? It is time to light the fire again, it's time to reignite, it's time to call down the power of God and say God will you fill me anew' (PDS1).

In both examples, the sense of authority is heightened with the assumption that the text is speaking to the people in the particularity of that moment. This language suggests to the listener that the message is unique to that time and place. This contrasts with ahistorical approaches that seek to apply a timeless message. In these examples, the message itself is particular, and has been discerned by the preacher, which provides a sense of divine revelation.

Christopher Seitz argues that this style of timeliness stems from a restlessness with historicist readings.[634] Historicism, in this view, is a form of historical inquiry into the text that prioritises the human dimension and witness of the Scriptures. According to Seitz, historicism began as a valid theological task which accounts for the real human author, but evolved in a way that discounts the form and final shape of the canon. Historicism has developed a life of its own beyond the original theological justification.

> Historicism has given us a Bible that points beyond itself to a vast, complex, developmental, ever-changing continuum in time and space. Historicism insists the past becomes truly past, distinguished from the present, except by means of human analogy, ingenious application, or a piety resistant to historicism's acids.[635]

Seitz observes a sense of irony in historicism, that claims to preserve and value the history of the text but has the consequence of ignoring the church's location in time and history:

> Those readings most interested in historical references are the same ones that cannot make any accounting of the church's place in time and so resort to homiletical

[634] Christopher R. Seitz, *Figured out: Typology and Providence in Christian Scripture* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 8.
[635] Seitz, 9.

> analogies of the most spiritualizing and moralizing sort in order to let the Bible have some sort of say after all the historical heavy lifting is over.[636]

This explains well the concerns of Charismatic preachers that their sermons connect with the present reality of God in time, and not solely with a historical study and corresponding applications. PD, for example, argued that a Charismatic Evangelical homiletic insists on the present activity of Jesus to change people's lives. He was keen to present Jesus as more than a historical character but as one who is present with the church today (PDI1).

Richard Briggs discusses the praise song, *These are the days of Elijah*, noting that chronological location can often become blurred.[637] The Israelites sang 'the Lord brought us out of Egypt' and the church sings 'Christ is risen today,' illustrating a 'figural restructuring of time.'[638] He argues persuasively that for the reader to locate themselves in relation to the text requires a 'more complex dialectical and relational understanding of time.'[639] I have already noted that PB, when he preached, viewed Elijah coming out of the cave today, which is a good example of this kind of time restructuring (PBS2).

For PB, there was a distinct sense of temporality as I asked him about the purpose of preaching. The following extract has only been slightly redacted:

> The main purpose of preaching is to communicate God's heart to the people and revelation of what God's speaking to us at this *moment*, you know, where God's taking us at the *moment*… whatever God's revealing to our hearts, you know, at the *moment*… And I think that's where we come through with the preaching is communicating where we're at with God at the *moment* (PBI1, emphasis added).

The repetition of 'moment' in his answer here is significant, indicating the sense of timeliness and temporality of the preaching event. The implication is that Scripture need not have universal meaning or application, but that the meaning is related to the church's location. In the prophetic speech I heard, it was distinctive by a quality of urgency and in the sense that it was particularly timely for that moment.

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[636] Seitz, viii.
[637] Richard S. Briggs, '"These Are the Days of Elijah": The Hermeneutical Move from "Applying the Text" to "Living in Its World"', *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 8, no. 2 (2014): 168.
[638] Briggs, 168–69.
[639] Briggs, 169.

Affectivity

The emotions play a key role in prophetic preaching, as the *pathos* of God is embodied through the preacher. Lee Roy Martin asserts that 'prophetic preaching is the communication of both the joy and pain of God's pathos.'[640] Pentecostal scholar, Vincent Leoh has surveyed approaches to emotivism in Pentecostal preaching and argues that passion and zeal are hallmarks of Pentecostal preaching.[641] 'Forcefulness', enthusiasm and emotion have been highly regarded, but Leoh observes a caution amongst some Pentecostal homileticians, that preaching resist artificial emotionalism or self-serving sentimentalism.[642]

Emotivism was evident in some of the Charismatic preachers more than others. PB, for example, often spoke extemporaneously and enthusiastically: 'It's about passionate people, isn't it? That's what I want to see. I want to encourage you this morning, it doesn't matter what age you are, you can be a passionate person loving after Christ' (PBS1). Of all the preachers, emotive language was most evident in PB's sermons. In interview he described the activity of the Holy Spirit that made him 'come alive,' and get very excited (PBI2).

Prophetic passion finds its biblical example in the Old Testament prophet, perhaps more so than the New Testament office of prophet. Brueggemann describes Jeremiah's passion as 'the passion of this God who knows what time it is (Jer 8:7)', in contrast to the rulers who want to only ever live in the now.[643] He paints a picture of the deep grief and sorrow that Jeremiah experiences as the pain of Yahweh. Jeremiah calls for an affective response to his message, the right response of weeping and lament as God's pathos is laid bare.[644]

Pentecostal scholar, Rickie Moore describes the Old Testament prophet as messenger, minstrel, madman and martyr.[645] The madman (Hos 9:7) is applied both to Hosea and Jeremiah, and consumes the prophet with the zeal of the Lord. The madman appears to be

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[640] Lee Roy Martin, 'Towards a Biblical Model of Pentecostal Prophetic Preaching', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 37, no. 1 (2016): 7.
[641] Vincent Leoh, 'A Pentecostal Preacher as an Empowered Witness', *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 9, no. 1 (2006): 44–48.
[642] Leoh, 45–46.
[643] Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 2. ed (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 48.
[644] Brueggemann, 48–57.
[645] Rickie D. Moore, 'The Prophetic Calling: An Old Testament Profile and Its Relevance for Today', *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 24 (2004): 16–29.

crazy with a passionate zeal, but in a dramatic reversal it is the prophet who is in fact in touch with reality and the status quo is miserably abnormal.[646]

Authority

Prophetic exegesis of Scripture goes beyond application of a historical text. It assumes that God is speaking in a fresh way through the text, as it is preached. This gives the words a sense of authority, which the preachers were aware of. PA described a sense of 'passionate zeal' or urgency that sometimes comes when he preaches and provides a sense of authority that people respond to positively (PAI2). He saw Paul as a model for preaching with demonstration of the Spirit's power (1 Cor 2:3-4).

Similarly, PC, for a large part of sermon 1 was recapitulating and expounding on prophetic 'pillars' that the church had been given and which PC described as 'weighty' and 'helpful for us in navigating the seasons' (PCI2). Although PC admitted that this particular sermon was unusual, it still demonstrates the authoritative role that prophecy can have for the life of the church.

Despite the emphasis on the authority of prophetic words, the preachers were still committed to the ultimate authority of Scripture, and that prophecy needs to be discerned and 'sifted', which in Cartledge's view is the prevalent Charismatic view of judging prophecy.[647]

Mark Cartledge suggests that Charismatics draw a distinction between *rhema* words and *logos* words.[648] In this schema, *rhema* is understood to be 'particular, temporal and subjective' whereas *logos* is 'universal, eternal and objective.'[649] Both Greek words could be translated as 'word', but Charismatics use the distinction to refer to the temporal, prophetic word and the eternal, written word. PE expressed this kind of sentiment when he discussed prophecy in his church.

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[646] Moore, 26.
[647] Mark J Cartledge, 'Charismatic Prophecy: A Definition and Description', *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 2, no. 5 (1994): 114.
[648] Cartledge, 90.
[649] Cartledge, 90.

> In our worship time, we have lots of prophetic words normally, it's not uncommon for us to have three or four words... When you're coming to the Word of God though, you want to be making it clear: This is where we're getting our authority from (PEI2).

PE placed a high value on prophetic (*rhema*) words, giving significant time and space in the worship service for prophecy, but drew a clear distinction with Scripture, to which all other words must be subservient.

Aaron Edwards has argued that preaching involves a tension between clear univocal proclamation as a herald and the complex paradoxes or contradictions that can arise through 'theological dialectic.'[650] The notion of theological dialectic (that the message of Scripture can sometimes seem contradictory) creates a real challenge for the preacher, whose role is to proclaim truth clearly and authoritatively. Ambiguities that are often present in the apophatic mysteries of God can undermine the 'heraldic confidence' of the sermon. Edwards suggests that 'it is the prophetic dimension of preaching that enables the preacher to emerge through the dialectical process of Scriptural interpretation with a clear, decisive, Spirit-illumined message.'[651] The role of the Holy Spirit brings the preacher to conviction about the message to be proclaimed at that time. The preacher can be both 'dialectically astute' and 'prophetically decisive' through the work of the Spirit.[652] Thus tensions that arise in the hermeneutic process are resolved by a strong sense of the work of the Spirit, who brings the preacher to a conviction about meaning.

4.3.5 Prophecy and Preaching in the New Testament

In this section, I turn to normative and formal voices by exploring prophecy and preaching in the New Testament. This serves to further complexify and nuance an understanding of prophetic preaching and provides legitimacy for contemporary Charismatic practice.

A number of attempts to evaluate prophecy in the New Testament have been made and can be usefully summarised in this discussion. Both David Hill and E. Earle Ellis have

[650] Aaron Edwards, *A Theology of Preaching and Dialectic: Scriptural Tension, Heraldic Proclamation, and the Pneumatological Moment* (London ; New York: T&T Clark, 2018).
[651] Edwards, 178.
[652] Edwards, 180.

undertaken such projects, with similar conclusions.[653] Both pay attention to the word of encouragement/exhortation (παράκλησις), which they see as related to the prophetic ministry and the role of the Holy Spirit.[654] In 1 Corinthians 14:2-5, for example, part of the purpose of the word of prophecy is παράκλησις. Furthermore, Paul and Barnabas are among those identified as 'prophets and teachers' in Acts 13:1 and are later exegeting and applying the Scripture in response to a request for a word of παράκλησις.[655] This leads Ellis to conclude that 'the interpretation of Scripture was indeed regarded, under certain conditions, as prophetic activity. And it is likely that Luke does so regard it, even in such persons as Peter and Stephen who are not given the explicit appellation προφήτης.'[656]

Hill views Philip's communication with the Ethiopian Eunuch as prophetic, similar to Qumran pesher hermeneutics. He concludes that 'undoubtedly, this discovery of the "meaning" of Scripture belonged to the prophetic charism: at least part of the ministry of prophets in the New Testament was the interpretation of the Old.'[657]

Alistair Stewart-Sykes has traced the development of the homily up to the time of Origen.[658] His thesis is that early preaching constituted prophetic words and the interpretation (διάκρισις) of those words (particularly in light of Scripture) in household churches. Over time, Scripture, rather than prophecy became the subject of the sermon, thus 'by the time of Origen the relationship between exegesis and exhortation has changed. No longer is Scripture used to check the content of exhortation; rather exhortation derives from Scripture. Prophecy has become preaching, and ὁμιλία has become homily.'[659]

One example Stewart-Sykes considers in detail is John's apocalypse, which is self-described as prophecy, but which also contains sermonic forms.[660] This is particularly relevant for the

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[653] E. Earle Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity: New Testament Essays* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 2003); David Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1979).
[654] Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 103; Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, 132.
[655] Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, 132–33.
[656] Ellis, 138.
[657] Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 100.
[658] Alistair Stewart-Sykes, *From Prophecy to Preaching: A Search for the Origins of the Christian Homily*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, v. 59 (Boston, Mass: Brill, 2001).
[659] Stewart-Sykes, 280.
[660] Stewart-Sykes, 117–31.

current discussion regarding John's use of Scripture, which Stewart-Sykes describes as 'charismatic exegesis.'[661]

> The scriptures are of secondary importance in the light of the visions which are communicated, providing only a background against which the prophet may deliver the new message of God for the community; this new message is described in an unqualified manner as the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus, a testimony which is equated with the prophetic spirit.[662]

This description correlates closely with many of the examples of prophetic speech I heard in the Charismatic preachers. For example, most of PB's sermon could not be described as prophetic in the classic Pentecostal sense of spontaneous speech (although there were small instances). However, Scripture did not appear to be the primary authority for his message, rather it was used as the background and springboard for the new message.

Max Turner is unconvinced by the arguments of Ellis, Hill and others.[663] He argues that just because prophecy and Charismatic preaching can both encourage and exhort (1 Cor 14:2-5), does not mean that they are synonymous.[664] Teaching, prophecy and exhortation are listed (in Romans 12:6-8) to illustrate the diversity of gifts to the church.[665] Although he admits the possibility that Paul could define prophecy broader than supernatural oracles, he is keen to maintain a sharp distinction between 'prophecy proper' and Charismatic preaching and exegesis.[666] Similarly, Aune acknowledges the presence of charismatic exegesis throughout the New Testament, but argues that there is little to suggest it was understood in the same way as prophecy.[667]

Eugene Boring has examined the role of the prophet in first century Judaism and the early church and suggests that the prophet was an inspired and intuitive interpreter of Scripture.[668] He argues that, in continuity with Jewish hermeneutical models, early Christian stances towards Scripture could be categorised as either 'scribal-rabbinical' or

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[661] Stewart-Sykes, 128.
[662] Stewart-Sykes, 128.
[663] Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), 202–7.
[664] Turner, 206.
[665] Turner, 203.
[666] Turner, 207.
[667] Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World*, 345.
[668] M. Eugene Boring, *The Continuing Voice of Jesus: Christian Prophecy and the Gospel Tradition* (Louisville, Ky: Knox, 1991).

'pneumatic-apocalyptic.'[669] The scribal-rabbinical model makes a clear distinction between the historical horizon of the text and the now horizon of proclamation. With this approach, 'one's interpretation may be evaluated as to its methodological correctness by more-or-less objective criteria.'[670] In contrast, the pneumatic-apocalyptic interpreter 'seems to have meditated on scripture as illuminated by the history of his or her own time until the text spoke its own word to the present.'[671] In Boring's schema, he allows that prophecy does not necessarily always involve the interpretation of Scripture (e.g. Acts 11:28),[672] but he argues that prophecy in the New Testament can be frequently described as charismatic interpretation.

Catholic Charismatic, George Every, suggests that Scriptures are brought into fresh light as Christians consider the presence of Christ in the Bible, in history, in the world and in their own life.[673] This 'prophetic interpretation' is modelled by Matthew, for example, in the fulfilment quotations that populate the early chapters of his gospel.[674] For Charismatics, prophetic speech is rarely completely extemporaneous, but rather occurs through Spirit-inspired reflection on the presence of Christ in contemporary experience in relation to the Scriptures.

This brief analysis of prophecy in the New Testament suggests that the Pentecostal insistence that prophecy is spontaneous, unprepared divine speech may need to be more nuanced, and in fact I suggest that the Charismatic preachers are aware of this. Whilst there is some evidence of spontaneous prophecy (e.g. PBI2 'there's just an inspiration of God in the room in that moment'), there was much more evidence of Boring's pneumatic-apocalyptic interpretation. The preachers generally viewed their inspired, prepared, exegesis of Scripture in light of contemporary events as prophetic speech.

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[669] Boring, 138–39.
[670] Boring, 139.
[671] Boring, 139.
[672] Boring, 145.
[673] George Every, 'Prophecy in the Christian Era', in *New Heaven? New Earth? An Encounter with Pentecostalism*, ed. Simon Tugwell (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1976), 163.
[674] Every, 163–64.

4.3.6 Operant Pneumatic Hermeneutics

This section has considered the role and function of the prophetic in contemporary Charismatic preaching. The Charismatic preachers might occasionally speak spontaneously and prophetically, but more often they saw the work of the Spirit as enabling them to speak authoritatively with the divine Word of God into the present life of the church. This is distinct from contemporary application of timeless principles. Rather, the Word is embodied in a particular time, when it speaks to the congregation in that moment. The prophetic preacher is not dispassionately studying the Scriptures to draw applicational instruction, but is rather seeking to discern what the Spirit, through the Word, is uniquely saying *today*.

A brief summary of prophecy in the New Testament and the early church demonstrates resonances with contemporary Charismatic preaching, in which the pneumatic interpretation of Scripture speaks into the present context with timeliness, affectivity and authority.

4.4. The Community: An Analysis of Pragmatism in Preaching

4.4.1 Introduction

As I have shown in section 2.1, the Charismatic church has shown a particular interest in the church growth movement, which can be evidenced in 'seeker-sensitive' approaches to church. This section explores the 'Community' corner of the triangle, thinking about the way that Charismatic preachers attend to the listeners. The 'new homiletic' is offered as an interpretive tool to help explain preaching practice. The normative voice in this section comes from Evangelical voices who can see merits in aspects of the new homiletic, but are also wary of indiscriminately embracing some of its tenets.

Context

As the church started to emerge from the pandemic, PD sensed a need to refocus the church's attention on discipleship. This sparked a long series on the sermon on the mount, which began with one of the sermons I analysed from Matthew 5:1-3. In this sermon on the beatitudes, PD introduced the series as equipping us 'to live our best life, to live life the most successful way that we can' (PDS2). This was a phrase he repeated as a way to appeal to

the felt needs of the congregation. He told me later that 'it might sound cynical, but people want to be successful, they're looking for ways to succeed in life' (PDI2). Interestingly, after he had gotten their attention with this hook, PD expounded on Matt 5:3, and led them towards his main point: To succeed in life we have to recognise our utter helplessness and dependence on God (PDS2). He described this as a deliberate setup, where success is flipped around and the punchline of the sermon points people to Jesus (PDI2).

PD described one of his preaching influences as Andy Stanley's *Communicating for Change* (PDI2). In this popular book, the megachurch Pastor, voted as one of the 10 most influential living pastors in America,[675] seeks to persuade preachers that in order to be effective, they need to demonstrate how their sermons are meeting people's felt needs. 'My goal is to create a felt need with as many people in the audience as I can.'[676] A needs-based approach to preaching can trace its roots to Harry Fosdick, who has been described as the godfather to the megachurch movement.[677] Although Fosdick came from a liberal tradition, his homiletic approach gained traction in many parts of the church, particularly among megachurches who paid attention to issues of relevance and style.

'What's the matter with preaching today?' Harry Fosdick famously asked in 1928.[678] Answering his own question, he concludes that expositing the Bible fails to address the practical interests or needs of the people.[679] Fosdick had been greatly influenced by pedagogical models that sought to place the student at the centre of learning (the project method) and attempted to apply that to the sermon.[680] He argued against the use of expository preaching (starting with Scripture), against topical preaching (starting with a subject), instead favouring therapeutic preaching that starts with the listeners.[681]

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[675] Paul J. Pastor, 'Andy Stanley: The Agile Apologetic-Part 1', *Outreach Magazine* (blog), February 2017, https://outreachmagazine.com/interviews/21383-andy-stanley-2.html.
[676] Andy Stanley and Lane Jones, *Communicating For A Change* (Sisters, Or: Multnomah Publishers, 2006), 47.
[677] Thomas G. Long, 'No News Is Bad News', in *What's the Matter with Preaching Today?*, by Mike Graves (Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 147.
[678] Harry Emerson Fosdick, 'What Is the Matter with Preaching?', in *What's the Matter with Preaching Today?*, by Mike Graves (Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 7–19.
[679] Fosdick, 8.
[680] Fosdick, 9.
[681] G. Lee Ramsey, *Care-Full Preaching: From Sermon to Caring Community* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012), 14.

Fosdick's project method finds resonance in many sermons today, and his influence can be seen in the development of homiletic theory and also in the ordinary practices of preachers. He has been described as an early pioneer of the 'new homiletic', a movement that followed Fosdick in turning to the listener.[682] Fosdick argued that the sermon should not be an academic exercise: 'By nature and by habitual use, this Book belongs to the preacher, and unless by him [or her] it can be made to meet the spiritual needs of the generations as they come, its glory has departed.'[683]

Although the new homiletic can no longer be described as 'new', many of its characteristics are emphasised through popular preaching books such as Andy Stanley's and practiced in pulpits today.

4.4.2 The New Homiletic

O. Wesley Allen, Jr. traces the early development of the new homiletic to Charles Rice, Henry Mitchell and Fred Craddock.[684] These homiletical theorists simultaneously developed the key themes that came together as the new homiletic, although it was Craddock's 1971 book, *As One Without Authority* that was particularly influential.[685] It is not surprising that the new homiletic came together from different sources at the same time, as the cultural revolution of the 1960s started to undermine the authority of the church and therefore of the pulpit too.[686] Particularly significant was the influence at this time of the new hermeneutic. Craddock had spent time in Germany in the late 1960s, where he had been greatly impacted by the new hermeneutic scholarship of Gerhard Ebeling and Ernst Fuchs.[687]

The new hermeneutic drew on Bultmann's hermeneutics and linguistic theory and emphasised the power of language to shape reality: 'Each speech-event communicates its

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[682] O. Wesley Allen, 'The Pillars of the New Homiletic', in *The Renewed Homiletic*, ed. O. Wesley Allen and David Buttrick (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 4.
[683] Harry Emerson Fosdick, *A Modern Preacher's Problem in His Use of the Scriptures* (New York: Union Theological Seminary, 1915), 17.
[684] Allen, 'The Pillars of the New Homiletic', 10–13.
[685] Allen, 12.
[686] Kwang-hyun Cho, *Paul's Community Formation Preaching in 1 Thessalonians: An Alternative to the New Homiletic* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers, 2017), 40–42.
[687] Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm, 'New Hermeneutic, New Homiletic, and New Directions: An U.S. – North American Perspective', *Homiletic* 35, no. 1 (June 2010): 19.

own unique truth—and this is the crucial point—in light of the hearer's own experience.'[688] Building upon this, Craddock and others applied these principles to preaching in important ways outlined and explored below. This section explores the characteristics of the new homiletic in relation to the Charismatic sermons in this research. Each trait is evaluated using Evangelical formal voices to bring critique and nuance.

Preaching as 'Event'

'Ultimately it's about transformation,' argued PA when I asked him about the primary purpose of preaching. 'It's not just about becoming more intellectually advanced, it's… helping people to become more Christlike, that should be the goal' (PAI1). I asked PA how important it was that the congregation would be able to remember the sermon, but for him the emphasis was on the moment of encounter and transformation when the sermon itself was preached (PAI1). In this conversation, PA is reflecting a conviction concerning the 'eventfulness' of preaching, in that the goal is not primarily the transfer of information but an event of encounter or transformation. This concept builds on the new hermeneutic by considering the power of language to shape reality in the moment of the sermon.

The emphasis of the new homiletic on the eventfulness of preaching is a shift 'from what sermons *say* to what they *do*.'[689] Thus for PA (and others who expressed a similar sentiment), they are less concerned with the sermon's content and more concerned with the sermon as an experience of encounter and transformation. For Ebeling, 'the sermon as a sermon is not exposition of the text as past proclamation, but is itself proclamation in the present-and that means, then, that the sermon is *execution* of the text.'[690] This approach, based in the new hermeneutic, views the locus of meaning in the event rather than the text and so the reception of the message holds more importance.

Craddock argued that '*how* one preaches is to a large extent *what* one preaches.'[691] He had been influenced by Fuchs and others of the new hermeneutic who had argued that the

[688] Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 61.
[689] Ottoni-Wilhelm, 'New Hermeneutic, New Homiletic, and New Directions', 19.
[690] Gerhard Ebeling, 'Word of God and Hermeneutics', in *The Company of Preachers: Wisdom on Preaching, Augustine to the Present*, ed. Richard Lischer (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2002), 210.
[691] Fred B. Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, 4th edition (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2001), 44.

parables uniquely communicate because of their rhetorical form.[692] The form of the parable is part of its message; method and meaning are intertwined. In fact, for Craddock, the method was more theologically loaded than the content of a sermon.[693] If a congregation is formed by a logical, argument-driven homiletic style, the congregation will likely learn the discipleship is a matter of dogmatic doctrine.[694] In this way, Craddock's ideas accord with a feature of Pentecostal hermeneutics noted earlier, that the Bible becomes the Word as the Holy Spirit enlivens it.[695]

PD expressed a similar sentiment when he suggested that the congregation 'catch what you carry, they don't catch what you tell them,' meaning that delivery of correct doctrine and ideas, even if done really well, may not have transformative impact unless he embodies those ideas (PDI1).

Charismatic homiletics is resistant towards models of preaching that are primarily concerned with the correct presentation of doctrinal and biblical information. Or, to use Aristotelean categories, Charismatic preachers don't want to prioritise *logos* at the expense of *ethos* and *pathos*. A large empirical study of listeners in preaching looked specifically for the importance of these three categories and revealed that all are at work to varying degrees among listeners in their reception of the sermon.[696] Indeed, listeners in that study echoed PD's emphasis that the preacher has to 'carry' what they preach, referring to the importance of both logos and ethos.[697]

Paradigms of Preaching

Glenn Packiam has proposed three paradigms for understanding the purpose of congregational worship.[698] These paradigms are worship as mission, worship as formation and worship as encounter.[699] Packiam argues that whilst most churches operate in more than

[692] Craddock, *44*.
[693] Craddock, *44*.
[694] Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching*, 25th anniversary edition (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 125.
[695] See section 2.1.3, 'Sanctification.'
[696] John S. McClure et al., *Listening to Listeners: Homiletical Case Studies* (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2004), *7*–8.
[697] McClure et al., *137*.
[698] Glenn Packiam, *Worship and the World to Come: Exploring Christian Hope in Contemporary Worship*, Dynamics of Christian Worship (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2020), 28–29.
[699] Packiam, 28–29.

one paradigm, there is usually a bias towards the priority of one of these paradigms.[700] In his ethnographic study, paradigm preference is demonstrated through the order of service, the place of sung worship and the choice of songs, amongst other factors.[701]

This taxonomy can also apply to preaching as an aspect of the worship service. For example, when I asked PC about the purpose of preaching, he unequivocally stated 'it's to edify the saints and to speak to the unconverted' (PCI1), clearly representing the mission and formation paradigms. When I probed further about the encounter paradigm, he agreed with its importance, although it seemed that formation was the dominant paradigm.

Similarly PB articulated the importance of different paradigms, but at his church, the priority depended on the character or gift of the person preaching. Some operated within a teaching/formation paradigm and others preferred a prophetic/encounter paradigm (PBI1). His own style resonated much more with an encounter paradigm, as was demonstrated in his preaching and the expectancy that the church would meet with God through the preached word. The 'event' of preaching was evident in some of the preachers who preferred an encounter paradigm, although it was also clear that other paradigms were employed.

Evaluation

Thomas Long captures the danger of an experiential focus when he argues that seeking religious experience alone has connotations of Baal worship: 'One could always count on Baal for a religious experience, but not so Yahweh.'[702] PB expressed this sentiment to the congregation: 'It's nice to come into this environment and sing songs and worship God. It's nice. I enjoy it. But I want more' (PBS1). This expresses the sentiment that experience alone can be shallow, and so formative elements should not be ignored in the encounter paradigm.

In contrast, the primacy of the sermon as formation appeals to a predominantly *logos* presupposition in which the content of the sermon overshadows rhetorical concerns. Long observes a Barthian emphasis in this approach, in which the preacher is acting as herald, largely unconcerned with reception of the sermon, focusing instead on faithful proclamation

[700] Packiam, 29.
[701] Packiam, 29.
[702] Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, Third Edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), 48.

of the message.[703] This model values highly the content of the message, and emphasises the 'transcendent dimension of preaching.'[704]

The 'experience' of the sermon was a feature that some of the respondents identified with, viewing the sermon as an event to facilitate an encounter with God. This is a feature of the new homiletic, but it is doubtful that these Charismatic preachers would fully share the epistemological foundations which are based on the new hermeneutic and the conviction that the word is only truly the word when it is received. When PE said that 'there is power in the actual written word' (PEI2), he is referring to a sense of truth in the text and not just an experience of Scripture. Charles Campbell notes the danger that an emphasis on experience and individual response in the sermon can result in the biblical text becoming secondary to the authority of the individual hearer's subjective experience.[705]

Charismatic preachers may emphasise the encounter paradigm, viewing the sermon as an encounter with the divine word that leads to transformation. They can hone their rhetoric craft, paying attention to the ways in which pathos and ethos are embodied in their preaching. However, these aspects need not distract from an Evangelical focus on the objective logos and the importance of the message itself within preaching.

Authoritarianism

The atmosphere at PB's church is quite casual and informal, so when he shares part of his own testimony, describing his own spiritual journey as 'a bit messy because I'm an idiot,' the congregation laugh but also object to his self-deprecation. 'No no, I was, honestly you don't even know!' (PBS1). This was fairly typical of PB's preaching style, interacting with the congregation and building a rapport with them through his openness. Not only does this approach help to engage the congregation, but it also serves to minimise the power dynamic between the preacher and the listeners. This is as significant feature of the new homiletic.

[703] Long, 23–24.
[704] Long, 25.
[705] Charles L. Campbell, 'Inductive Preaching', in *Concise Encyclopedia of Preaching*, ed. William H. Willimon and Richard Lischer (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 271.

Craddock argues that listeners are refusing to accept the authoritarian stance of the preacher: 'The vigorous processes of democracy are undermining high places, including pulpits.'[706] The removal of power distance between preacher and congregation has been a key motivator in the new homiletic. David Day notes that the demand for participatory preaching is not primarily a communicative strategy but a way of 'dismantling the privileged position of the preacher.'[707]

Troeger observes that whilst the ethos of the preacher is not a new concern, the expression of good character has shifted with the new homiletic.[708] Traditional discussions of the preacher's ethos typically centre on formation, holiness and authority but 'psychological culture' and the abuse committed by some religious leaders have stimulated a reappraisal of the classical virtues.[709] In the new homiletic, authenticity and vulnerability become the primary virtues that are expected from the preacher.

Some of the preachers interviewed were clearly aware of this dynamic. PD particularly, mused on the role of the preacher as guide, describing the preacher's role as a 'big brother type character that helps take you on that journey of learning to be more like Jesus' (PDI1). When discussing the role of illustrations, he argued that the best illustrations are funny stories *at your own expense*: Furthermore, 'when you put yourself in the place of the hero you take all the power of the listener' (PDI2). As Alvin Rueter observes, arrogance increases the distance between sender and receiver in communication and negatively impacts an ability to proclaim the humble Saviour.[710] PD was particularly concerned about the power dynamic and repeatedly emphasised the need for vulnerability and authenticity in the pulpit. In the sample of preachers I listened to, I found little evidence of arrogance or superiority in the pulpit, but some of the preachers did demonstrate a more authoritative tone in their preaching.

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[706] Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, 14–15.
[707] David Day, 'Six Feet Above Contradiction? An Overview', in *A Reader on Preaching: Making Connections*, ed. David Day, Jeff Astley, and Leslie J. Francis (Aldershot: Ashgate Pub, 2005), 2.
[708] Thomas H. Troeger, 'Emerging New Standards in the Evalulation of Effective Preaching', in *A Reader on Preaching: Making Connections*, ed. David Day, Jeff Astley, and Leslie J. Francis (Aldershot: Ashgate Pub, 2005), 119.
[709] Troeger, 119–20.
[710] Alvin C. Rueter, 'Ethics in the Puplpit', in *A Reader on Preaching: Making Connections*, ed. David Day, Jeff Astley, and Leslie J. Francis (Aldershot: Ashgate Pub, 2005), 135–36.

PE, for example, frequently made declarative and authoritative statements in his preaching. 'The Bible is clear…' 'You do realise that…' These kind of statements are examples of the more authoritative and unequivocal tone that PE took in his preaching. When I asked him about this, he said that 'as a preacher… you've only got authority if you're acting under the authority of Scripture.' When PE trusts that Scripture is unambivalent, he believes he has a responsibility to state that clearly, but he did also give examples (the millennium) where he is prepared to publicly provide different interpretations of particular passages (PEI2). In doing this, PE expresses a self-imposed limit to the authority he expresses from the pulpit.

PA also felt that the Holy Spirit enabled a preacher to exercise authority in the pulpit. His own sense of authority came from a sense of calling ('this is what I was born to do') and a Spirit-inspired conviction, following Paul's example (1 Cor 2:4) that powerful preaching is not with wisdom and persuasion but with a demonstration of power (PAI2).

Evaluation

David Buttrick also views Paul's arguments in 1 Corinthians 1-3 as essential in establishing a nuanced view of the preacher's authority.[711] However, he concludes that Scripture cannot be a locus of authority (contra PE and others), assuming that Paul is debunking all structures of authority and replacing them with the foolishness of Christ crucified.[712]

For Buttrick and other advocates of the new homiletic, authority is not in the written word but in the experienced word. This comes into conflict with an Evangelical understanding of Scripture, and so for Charismatic preachers who wish to hold on to classical Evangelical doctrine of Scripture, they must balance the rhetorical and ethical demand for authenticity with a right sense of authority that is not self-generated but that comes from God.

The conversations with these preachers reflect a conflict between the old homiletic and the new that can be expressed as a tension between authenticity and authority. Whilst the two poles are not mutually exclusive, preachers do tend to gravitate to one or the other. Reducing the distance between preacher and listener aids communicative effectiveness, but if Scripture is the divine word there is an innate authority in communicating that word. The

[711] David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Pr, 1987), 245–48.
[712] Buttrick, 245–48.

preacher has an 'authority which resides not in him or her but in the biblical revelation and authority.'[713]

Craddock has argued that the distinction between objective and subjective thinking is artificial, as the objective truth does not exist without the subjective reception.[714] 'It is therefore, pointless,' he argues, 'to speak of the gospel as Truth in and of itself; the gospel is *truth for us*.'[715] Some Evangelicals, however, are unconvinced: 'Whereas Evangelicals regard the Bible as the revelation from God, the God-inspired book, advocates of the New Homiletic emphasise the preached word as event/experience with the listener encountering God in the spoken word.'[716] Similarly, Shawn Radford has argued that the emphasis on experience and authenticity has undermined Scriptural authority, as the church is less certain of the message it is trying to communicate.[717]

Whilst Evangelicals have concerns about the epistemological assumptions of the new homiletic, they can certainly learn from the methods and principles. Beverly Zink-Sawyer notes that 'preaching is not some kind of "zero-sum" game.'[718] In turning to the listeners with vulnerability and authenticity, the preacher does not have to relinquish the authority that derives from standing under Scripture's authority. PE's insistence that the preacher's authority does not come primarily from something inherent in the preacher but in the object of that which is preached follows John Stott's tension between courage and humility in the pulpit founded upon the authority of Scripture.[719]

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[713] Cho, *Paul's Community Formation Preaching*, 62.
[714] Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, 58–59.
[715] Craddock, 59.
[716] Scott M. Gibson, 'Defining the New Homiletic', *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* 5, no. 2 (September 2005): 25.
[717] Shawn D. Radford, 'The New Homiletic within Non-Christendom', *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* 5, no. 2 (September 2005): 7.
[718] Beverly Zink-Sawyer, 'The Word Purely Preached and Heard: The Listeners and the Homiletical Endeavor.', *Interpretation* 51, no. 4 (October 1997): 355.
[719] Stott, *I Believe in Preaching*, 299–337.

Narrative Preaching

Roland Allen has described different ways the term 'narrative preaching' has been understood.[720] It can refer to treating the entire sermon as a narrative, with little or no explanation. In this sense, the story itself communicates the message of the sermon.[721] It can also refer to a homiletical engagement with narrative theology, which effectively means an epistemological position grounded in the story of the Bible.[722] However, the most common understanding within the new homiletic refers to the structure of a sermon that moves like a story. Whilst there may be conventional aspects to the sermon (propositions, exposition, illustrations etc.), they are convened to give the shape and experience of a story.[723]

Eugene Lowry's *The Homiletical Plot* outlined this understanding of narrative preaching when he argues for the importance of 'plot' in preaching.[724] Lowry, dissatisfied with Aristotelean models of sermons, argues for a sermon that follows a plot model, rather than a logic-driven argument. The plot should lead listeners through a process that 'upsets the equilibrium,' hints towards a resolution and experiences the gospel.[725] In this way, the structure and presentation of the sermon is story, even if the content contains propositions, illustrations and other conventional sermon material.

Again, PD demonstrated the most awareness of this aspect of sermon craft:

> I think often what we do is preach, we go in with this great idea that we've discovered in the Bible, we've researched, we've studied, we're prepared. And we're telling you we've got an answer to a question that they're not even asking... So stories about hooking people in, making people realise you're as vulnerable and real as they are. (PDI2).

PD wants to structure the sermon, introducing stories and ideas so that the listeners are also asking the question that the sermon content is designed to answer. Following Andy Stanley's

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[720] Ronald J. Allen, 'Theology Undergirding Narrative Preaching', in *What's the Shape of Narrative Preaching? Essays in Honor of Eugene L. Lowry*, ed. Mike Graves, David J. Schlafer, and Eugene L. Lowry (Saint Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2008), 27–28.
[721] Allen, 27.
[722] Allen, 28.
[723] Allen, 27–28.
[724] Eugene L. Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form*, Expanded ed (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 12.
[725] Lowry, 26.

approach in *Communicating for Change*, he argued that each sermon should just have one key point, whether it was one change to make or one question to think through.

PA also discussed the importance of starting with a 'hook', which could be a problem to resolve, a shocking statistic or story to connect with them and demonstrate the importance of the content he's about to bring (PAI2).

These are narrative movements that reflect an inductive rather than deductive shape to the sermon. Craddock describes deduction in preaching as 'stating the thesis, breaking it down into points or subtheses, explaining and illustrating these points, and applying them to the particular situations of the hearers.'[726] In contrast, the inductive approach starts with the concrete experience of the listeners and moves from there to general truth.[727] The inductive movement is central to narrative preaching and leads the listeners from their experience to general truth.

To return to PD's example from his sermon on Matthew 5:1-3, the twist (that living your best life is actually to realise your utter helplessness) was an inductive movement in which the 'punchline' is revealed towards the end after drawing people in: 'I deliberately kind of pull people in with that kind of like, "how do you want to succeed at life?"' (PDI2).

Evaluation

In contrast to the narrative, inductive approach of PD, PE preferred to preach deductively, exegeting a Scripture, arriving at a main theme and applying it to his listeners. By preaching deductively, PE saw part of his role as demonstrating good hermeneutical methods for the listeners to follow (PEI1). His focus was more on the objective content of the sermon. Cho is similarly critical of aspects of narrative preaching: 'It is evident that the general decline in biblical literacy nowadays is partly due to excessive interest in the various sermon forms that appeal to the listener and narrative preaching, and the lack of interest in the substance of preaching.'[728]

[726] Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, 45.
[727] Craddock, 47–49.
[728] Cho, *Paul's Community Formation Preaching*, 66.

Proponents of the new homiletic follow the new hermeneutic emphasis on parables, which clearly have an inductive shape.[729] PD picked up on this, emphasising that Jesus told stories and the implications are still being felt (PDI1). However, as Cho notes, plenty of sermons in the New Testament are deductive, and even Jesus explained Scripture.[730]

James Thompson has observed that narrative methods surfaced during a time when congregants were largely overly familiar with the stories and language of the Bible, and so they were apathetic towards preaching that seemed to cover the same well-worn paths.[731] In that context, the drama of narrative methods can be useful to reawaken listeners to the impact of the message.[732] However, that is no longer the world we live in, and 'narrative preaching by itself cannot bear the burden of shaping a common moral vision in this climate.'[733]

As forms of sermon structure, narrative and inductive methods can and do work well, and yet the new homileticians may be overstating their case if they assume it is the only valid approach for the sermon. Robinson notes that inductive sermons are 'particularly effective with indifferent or even hostile audiences.'[734] He sees the sense of discovery as the plot is unveiled being useful in certain contexts, but also notes that deductive or 'semi-inductive' arrangements can also be useful.[735] Similarly, Michael Quicke observes that the choice between inductive and deductive approaches should not be seen as binary but ends of a spectrum in which there are a range of possibilities.[736] The models of teacher, herald, pastor and story-teller represent a range of approaches from more deductive, formal and linear methods to inductive, informal and dialogical methods.[737]

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[729] Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, 50.
[730] Cho, *Paul's Community Formation Preaching*, 67–68.
[731] James Thompson, *Preaching Like Paul: Homiletical Wisdom for Today* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 9.
[732] Thompson, 9.
[733] Thompson, 10.
[734] Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, Third edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2014), 88.
[735] Robinson, 77–91.
[736] Michael J. Quicke, *360-Degree Preaching: Hearing, Speaking, and Living the Word* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003), 110–11.
[737] Quicke, 110–11.

Furthermore, a focus on narrative plot, which draws listeners to a neat and tidy conclusion, can be inappropriate with texts and themes that do not resolve easily. Margaret Cooling observes that whilst Lowry does allow for living with mystery, this sermon structure does not adequately reflect the mystery and ambiguity that is often present in faith and life.[738]

Preaching to Felt Needs

PD's sermon is a good example of the needs of the listeners and the biblical theme coming together. Lowry outlines this move as a key part of narrative preaching. Preaching, according to Lowry, should invoke both the scratch and the itch![739] This accords with the idea of the homiletical plot in which the tension is established and then resolved throughout the sermon. Lowry gives the example of a sermon on the Trinity: 'If, for example, I am considering the possibility of a doctrinal sermon on the Trinity, the preliminary question to be asked is: What problem or bind does the trinitarian formula resolve?'[740]

It is easy to see how this approach can build rapport with the listeners since the key content is addressing an issue that they are interested in.

> You have to connect with your audience around a real need in their lives. Something they *feel*. You have to raise in them an awareness of a past, present, or future need in their lives that makes them want to listen to you and follow you to the answer. It's not enough to say, "I have the truth of God's Word up here and it's your job to listen." That might have worked years ago, but not today. No way. Today you have to show people how the truth impacts their lives.[741]

PA discussed having a preference for thematic preaching rather than expositional. When I asked him how he chose the theme to preach on, it was a combination of prayer and thinking through the state of the church and what he felt they might need or benefit from, or even suggestions from the church of topics that might be helpful (PAI1). In fact, to varying extents, most of the preachers considered the needs of the church in some way or other when deciding preaching themes and series.

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[738] Margaret Cooling, *Preaching That Shows* (Norwich: SCM Press, 2022), 10–11.
[739] Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot*, 18.
[740] Lowry, 18.
[741] Stanley and Jones, *Communicating For A Change*, 59.

Evaluation

Gibson is not alone among Evangelicals when he states the concern that this emphasis can cause a misdirected focus for the preacher.[742] PE generally preferred to preach expositional, deductive sermons, using Bible books as a basis for each sermon series. I asked him what he thought about preaching themes that would more obviously meet people's felt needs and whether the congregation might find it easier to invite others if they knew he would be speaking about life issues. He thought about it and could see the merit in that approach but was concerned about allowing culture to dictate the agenda of the church. He believed in the ongoing relevance of Scripture, and saw his task as demonstrating the significance and applicability of the timeless message (PEI2).

A danger with preaching to the felt needs of the congregation is that the response may not get to the heart of the Christian message. 'Whenever preaching spends all of its time solving problems, the inevitable conclusion is that the Christian faith is a completed set of answers to life's dilemmas.'[743] There is a danger that preaching becomes utilitarian, concerned with what works for the congregation.[744] The experiential focus of narrative sermons, starting with felt needs, can 'result in a theological relationalism that makes God too dependent on immediate human experience.'[745] Here, Campbell wants to make space for preaching that is not directly utilitarian.[746] Within Charismatic preaching particularly, there is scope for the prophetic herald who announces the reign and rule of God over principalities and kingdoms, even if it is not directly applicable to the felt needs of the congregation.[747] 'The faithful preacher cannot always speak a pastoral word that makes life healthier and more manageable but may only declare the trustworthiness of Christ, celebrate the signs and wonders in the present, and point to the future, which belongs to God.'[748]

Although largely endorsing a needs-based homiletic, PD reflected on the limits of that approach. He described an awareness that he would be held to account (by God) for his ministry, and so he would need to ensure that both his message and methods are scriptural,

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[742] Gibson, 'Defining the New Homiletic', 26.
[743] Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 36.
[744] Long, 36.
[745] Charles L. Campbell, *Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei's Postliberal Theology* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 142.
[746] Campbell, 142.
[747] Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 25.
[748] Long, 36.

and that his personal life is authentic to his message (PDI2). He talked about using the skills of the world to market the gospel, but was aware of the potential for the methods to change the message and the need to be clear about the content of the gospel.

Emphasis on Listeners

Beverly Zink-Sawyer has sketched a history of preaching and argues that attentiveness to the listener in preaching is not a new phenomenon.[749] She notes, however that the new homiletic marked a deliberate 'turn to the listener' that was motivated by various concerns among new homileticians.[750] For Craddock, the devolution of authority from the pulpit necessitates a shift to the listener, as the listener completes the sermon by drawing their own conclusions.[751] The preacher is to avoid the temptation to exert control over the meaning of the sermon, following the example of Jesus' parables: 'The effectiveness of much of Jesus' preaching depended not simply on the revelatory power of his parables but also upon the perceptive power of those who attended to them.'[752]

Of all the preachers I listened to, PB had the most dialogical approach in the sermon itself, welcoming interruptions from the congregation: 'I do like them being part of it because I don't want to be on my own in this. God's wanting to give a message and when you get that interaction with people, or with a congregation, it draws them in' (PBI2).

For Craddock, the turn to the listener is an essential theological move that reflects the priesthood of all believers.[753] He argues that if this is a belief the church takes seriously, the method of preaching ought to reflect the listener's priestly authority. Craddock is suspicious that preaching arrangements can sometimes give the appearance of democracy in the pulpit, but rarely is the preacher willing to cede control, and so often the impact is muted because the preacher is only paying lip-service to the priesthood of all believers.[754]

[749] Zink-Sawyer, 'The Word Purely Preached', 343–50.
[750] Zink-Sawyer, 352–53.
[751] Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, 54.
[752] Craddock, 54.
[753] Craddock, 18.
[754] Craddock, 17–18.

The turn to the listeners represents in part, a desire that preaching is relevant and not obtuse to the congregation. As Fosdick famously quipped, 'only the preacher proceeds still upon the idea that folk come to church desperately anxious to discover what happened to the Jebusites.'[755] Most of the preachers I spoke to were very aware of the challenge to be relevant in their preaching. PC argued that every text is relevant because of the intrinsic, God-breathed nature of Scripture, but it is a preacher's task to demonstrate that relevance (PCI1). PC expresses the tension between relevance to the listener and faithfulness to the text, how to exegete the text with integrity but also helping the listeners to see that the message is 'meaningful, relevant and powerful for their lives' (PCI1).

As Zink-Sawyer contends, 'we can be relevant in order to confirm congregational complacencies and meet our listeners in their comfortable places of pride and prejudice. Or we can be relevant to provoke transformation according to the vision of Christian obedience set forth in the gospel.'[756] I have already shown in section 2.3 that Evangelicals read Scripture with an expectation of relevance to their needs, and this is demonstrated in the tension of desiring to be faithful to the text, whilst also needing the Bible to relate to the listeners.

Evaluation

Again, there is a tension between the old homiletic and the new in relation to how the listeners are perceived. Some Evangelicals are concerned that in elevating the listener, the sermon loses its ability to confront or convict: 'Advocates of the new homiletic believe that the indirect method does not threaten the listener rather it invigorate [*sic*] the voluntary participation and involvement of the listener in preaching.'[757]

It is not difficult to imagine that a listener-centred hermeneutic can skew interpretation of the text and thus loses the prophetic edge of Scripture.[758] An anthropocentric focal point in preaching can easily mitigate the effectiveness of the sermon. Furthermore, empirical research has demonstrated that listeners don't want the preacher to avoid challenging topics:

[755] Fosdick, 'What Is the Matter with Preaching?', 10.
[756] Zink-Sawyer, 'The Word Purely Preached', 356.
[757] Cho, *Paul's Community Formation Preaching*, 59.
[758] Helge Stadelmann, 'The Role of Exegesis and Biblical Texts in Preaching the New Testament: Engaging with the "New Homiletic"', in *'We Proclaim the Word of Life': Preaching the New Testament Today*, ed. Ian Paul (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2013), 228.

> The listeners we interviewed issue a strong word that commands our attention, a word that resonates with the gospel itself and calls forth the prophetic voice in preaching. If the church is to lead rather than follow others in addressing both the personal and public controversies that confront us, then preachers need to speak about challenging issues in the light of the Christian faith and the biblical witness.[759]

If preachers try to soften a message in order to be more attractive to listeners, they may end up actually being less appealing. For PE, one of the reasons he preferred to preach expositional series is that it forced the church to wrestle with the difficult passages of Scripture as well as the easy ones. He argued that the church can be culturally blind to certain things, or we can ignore 'things that are culturally unpopular about God,' but expositional preaching allowed him to gently confront some of these things (PEI1).

A further critique of the turn to the listener is that in the new homiletic, this can often result in an individualist orientation:

> The individual hearer—and not the church—"makes" the sermon. It all sounds vaguely democratic and therefore good to our ears. The danger is that the sermon will renounce its genuine authority as the church's language and merely entertain the hearer with emotionally gratifying stories. Craddock's method may inadvertently undergird something that needs to be torn down, namely, our already-unshakable devotion to personal choice and experience.[760]

Cho argues that the turn to the listener is *not* synonymous with the turn to the church, since it should better be expressed as 'the turn to the individual listener.'[761] When PB preached, he had in view the corporate formation of the community, so he talked about 'how we're moving forward as a *church* in this season,' 'looking at who we are; we are people who are sent,' 'when I come together with my brothers and sisters, we are family' (PBS1).

Craddock's emphasis on the priesthood of all believers has been observed to contribute to an individualistic orientation in preaching.[762] Following Kierkegaard's indirect method of communication, which stresses inspiration over information, Craddock argues that indirect speech is necessary to impact the inward self.[763] Thus Craddock's emphasis is on the

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[759] Mary Alice Mulligan et al., *Believing in Preaching: What Listeners Hear in Sermons* (St. Louis, Missouri: Lucas Park Books, 2014), 109.
[760] Richard Lischer, 'The Interrupted Sermon', *Interpretation* 50, no. 2 (1996): 173.
[761] Cho, *Paul's Community Formation Preaching*, 72.
[762] Campbell, *Preaching Jesus*, 133.
[763] Fred B. Craddock, *Overhearing the Gospel*, Revised and Expanded Edition (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2002), 71.

individual and inward response. As Campbell notes, 'experience for Craddock… is less behavioural and more private and affective.'[764]

This focus on the community as a common whole may be a little idealistic. Even in the same congregation, empirical research demonstrates that there are 'clusters or patterns of listening' and that no congregation is a monolithic entity.[765] Furthermore, Mulligan *et al* found that in cases where the preacher focused primarily on individual listeners, the congregation had a narrower sense of the communal nature of preaching.[766] Whilst the church community is not one uniform body, preaching is reductive if it only attends to the inward life of individual believers.

4.4.3 Old and New in Charismatic Preaching

This section has considered some of the primary features and presuppositions of the new homiletic. It is clear that this approach is evident in the preaching styles of Charismatic preachers. By examining and evaluating these approaches, I hope to encourage Charismatic preachers to look carefully at some of the tensions between the 'old' and 'new' homiletic. Often, preachers can pick up rhetorical and hermeneutical practices without questioning the presuppositions behind them. It is also worth noting that once preachers are aware of some of the dangers, they can adopt practices without subscribing to the epistemological foundations.

For example, a Charismatic preacher does not have to cede prophetic authority in order to be authentic and relatable. Preachers can consider the pastoral needs of the congregation whilst also preaching with the transcendent voice of the herald on other occasions. A holistic homiletic will resist the temptation to a one-size-fits-all approach. The Bible contains multiple examples of approaches that can be helpful in different contexts.[767] The discerning Charismatic preacher should learn from the new homiletic but exercise caution in applying some of its methods, lest preaching loses its prophetic ability to shape individuals and communities.

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[764] Campbell, *Preaching Jesus*, 135.
[765] Mulligan et al., *Believing in Preaching*, 2.
[766] Mulligan et al., 149.
[767] Thompson notes that the new homiletic has largely neglected Pauline preaching. Thompson, *Preaching Like Paul*, 15.

5 Conclusions and Synthesis

5.1 Introduction

I began this research with a desire to investigate and critically reflect on the operant hermeneutics in Charismatic preaching. As a preacher within the Charismatic movement, I was aware that Charismatics are typically not self-reflective concerning the hermeneutical approaches we are using as we proclaim the gospel.

In section 2.1, I provided a survey of the Charismatic movement, identifying key themes that are relevant in preaching. In section 2.2, I reviewed Craig Keener's *Spirit Hermeneutics* as an example normative voice of pneumatic interpretation, from which I could ascertain some of the key questions to consider in this project. My own research is most naturally situated in the field of congregational hermeneutics, in which the actual practice of interpretation is considered and reflected upon. Section 2.3 gave an overview of that field, which situates my own research and section 2.4 provides examples of prior empirical sermon analysis that has informed this research.

My initial hypothesis, that Charismatic preachers attend to the Word, the Spirit and the Community, was challenged and complexified through the process. To examine this claim, I identified five Charismatic preachers who were chosen to represent a range of Charismatic perspectives, and whom I hoped would emphasise either the Word, the Spirit or the Community in their preaching.

In chapter 3, I gave a descriptive analysis of the five preachers and identified four themes to pursue further. The priority of Scripture was considered in section 4.1 and 4.2, in which I first considered the hermeneutical practices and fusion processes of the preacher in 4.1 and then the nature and content of the gospel in 4.2. The initial triangle diagram (of Word, Spirit and Community) is nuanced in the observation that horizon fusing processes span the Word and the community emphases. In sections 4.3 and 4.4 I consider the role of the Holy Spirit and the needs of the community respectively. In chapter 4, the operant and espoused voices of the preachers is brought into conversation with normative and formal voices, to deeply reflect on their practice. These reflection chapters demonstrate the distinctive hermeneutic priorities of Charismatic preachers by providing a nuance to the Word-Spirit-Community triad. Preachers of all faith tribes may well attend to these three dimensions, but I have

argued that Charismatic spirituality brings a distinctive flavour to the triad, as demonstrated through the theological reflection in the four themes of chapter 4.

5.2 Charismatic Preaching and Evangelicalism

The Charismatic movement, as I have defined it in this project, is located within Evangelicalism, and yet has also been heavily influenced by Pentecostal themes, particularly in pneumatology. A key part of this research has involved the tension that Charismatic preachers face as they hold both Evangelical principles and Pentecostal practices together. Therefore, it was useful to consider Bebbington's Evangelical priorities,[768] and the extent to which they are complexified and challenged by Charismatic pneumatology and practice. Bebbington's schema of biblicism, crucicentrism, activism and conversionism have historically been understood as key distinctives of Evangelicalism, but the Charismatic movement has stretched and refined these priorities.

Charismatic Biblicism

This project has shown that within Charismatic hermeneutics, there exists some level of unease with the primary place of historical-grammatical approaches to biblical interpretation. Critical interpretation is often understood in correlation with enlightenment thinking, which prioritises reason and cognition. Charismatics view the understanding of meaning primarily in non-cognitive terms. In fact, in continuity with Pentecostal spirituality, they are quite suspicious of an intellectual faith which leaves affections and actions untouched.

A consistent refrain from the preachers in this project was the desire that successful preaching results in transformation and life change. This is significant since it shifts the focus from the object to the subject. For these preachers, it is not enough that they preach the right texts in the right way if there is no discernible impact. They are concerned not only with the right content and delivery of the sermon but the right reception of the sermon.

[768] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*.

This sample has shown that Charismatic preachers are dissatisfied with interpretation that is solely cognitive, but that does not mean that there should be no objective criteria to judge interpretation. In practice, some Charismatics reject authorial intention, as discovered through critical inquiry, to be the sole arbiter of interpretation. However, there is little consensus as to how to discern interpretation that is valid and profitable. Craig Keener's own pneumatic approach is still thoroughly dependant on historical-grammatical analysis.[769] In practice, Charismatic preachers tend to rely heuristically on the guidance of the Spirit, and to a lesser extent, their study of the author's intention to determine right interpretation. They intuitively demonstrated some alignment with a theological interpretation of Scripture, with Christ as a central rule of faith to guide their interpretation. A more deliberate engagement with theological interpretation will shape Evangelical biblicism positively and offers a framework that Charismatics will find beneficial.

I have further argued that 'charismatic exegesis' is a fruitful way to describe and reflect on hermeneutic approaches to Scripture. In practice, operant Charismatic hermeneutics resists being categorised as either spontaneous prophetic speech or prepared exposition. In contrast, Charismatic preachers approach Scripture expecting fresh revelation and anticipating the Spirit to speak as they study and prepare. Charismatic exegesis offers a mode of approaching the Bible that is timely, authoritative and affective.

Charismatic Crucicentrism

As I listened and coded the sermons in this project, I had expected the cross of Christ to be a consistent theme. For Evangelicals, this has traditionally been a major plank of orthodox doctrine.[770] However, in this limited sample, there was a noticeable absence of crucicentrism. Whilst most of the preachers espoused a traditional Evangelical crucicentric gospel in their interviews, it did not seem to be a homiletical priority for most of the preachers.

However, this was not necessarily uncritical neglect of an important doctrine. It seems possible that a gospel of the kingdom has eclipsed a more central focus on the cross for some of the preachers. There is some evidence that traditional Evangelical crucicentrism is viewed as an individual and privatised in a way that does not accord well with Charismatic activism.

[769] Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics*.
[770] See for example, Stott, *The Cross of Christ*.

Charismatic preachers want to preach the gospel in a way that leads to holistic transformation and change.

Charismatic Conversionism and Activism

Rob Warner argues that a bifurcation arose in Evangelicalism as a result of the Charismatic movement, in which the entrepreneurial activist-conversionist Evangelicals distinguished themselves from the conservative biblicist-crucicentric Evangelicals.[771] Warner has demonstrated that the British Evangelical movement in the late twentieth century started to become more entrepreneurial, experimenting with marketing and advertising techniques to increase their numbers.[772] It is naïve to assume that the methods and approaches can change without impacting the message, and indeed Warner notes the changing Evangelical identity as pragmatism takes root in Evangelicalism.[773]

Matthew Guest has similarly noted a more organised Evangelical approach to social action in the same time frame, combined with an increased openness to ecumenism.[774] In the U.S. context, Webber describes this movement as 'pragmatic Evangelicalism,' noting the influence of the church growth movement, the megachurch movement and the contemporary worship scene.[775] The entrepreneurial activist bias that is characteristic among many Charismatics has resulted in a pragmatic approach to preaching that correlates with many of the features of the new homiletic. Charismatics, with an eye towards conversion and growth have been influenced by the communication styles and methods of mega-church pastors such as Andy Stanley.

This is a key area for Charismatic preachers to consider. Whilst there are considerable positive features of the new homiletic, uncritical adoption of these principles can be problematic. The experience and reception of the sermon clearly matters for Charismatics, but that doesn't need to eclipse the content of the sermon; a pragmatic emphasis on the felt needs in the congregation can obscure the sense of transcendence and mystery in preaching.

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[771] Warner, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism*, 15–16.
[772] Warner, 144–45.
[773] Warner, 144–45.
[774] Guest, *Evangelical Identity*, 35–41.
[775] Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals*, 41.

To a greater or lesser extent, preachers are aware of the need to be relevant and applicable to the congregations. Harry Fosdick's argument that sermons should attend to the real needs of the congregation[776] has clearly affected the consciousness of a wide-range of preachers. This is particularly the case for Evangelicals in the conversionist-activist pole, for whom transformation and growth are high homiletical priorities.

It is undoubtedly the case that an analysis of Charismatic Evangelicalism cannot rest solely on what is preached from the pulpit. In all the churches in this research, there was ample evidence of operant conversionism and activism, such as Alpha courses, food banks, debt advice services and more. However, a shift towards pragmatism does have significant implications for hermeneutics and homiletics. In the entrepreneurial emphasis on needs, conversionism and activism have morphed, compared to earlier Evangelical standard-bearers such as John Stott and J.I. Packer. Stott's activism, for example, was deeply established in an Evangelical theological agenda.[777] In contrast, Tidball questions whether pragmatic Evangelicals have jettisoned some of their theological moorings.[778]

The UK Charismatic movement, as I have defined it, emerged from within Evangelicalism in the 1960s, and most Charismatics are evangelical in their beliefs.[779] However, Charismatic belief and practice provides a distinctive flavour of Evangelicalism. I have argued that Charismatic distinctives are evident in preaching in their approaches to the Word, the Spirit and the Community. These distinctions are evident in the way preachers fuse horizons, the way they conceive of the Gospel, their understanding of the role of the Spirit and their adaptations to the Community.

5.3 Implications for Practical Theology

A brief survey through the homiletics section in the library reveals that most books on preaching are normative and assertive. In contrast, practical theology attends to the lived experience of actual preachers and preaching. Careful treatments of the hermeneutics within pulpits are rare but can provide vital insight into the operant and espoused hermeneutics.

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[776] Fosdick, 'What Is the Matter with Preaching?'
[777] John R. W. Stott, *New Issues Facing Christians Today*, Fully rev. ed (London: Marshall Pickering, 1999), 19–31.
[778] Tidball, *Who Are the Evangelicals?*, 194–95.
[779] Anderson, 'The European Protestant Reformation and Global Pentecostalism', 148.

Operant homiletical hermeneutics is an under-researched area, but necessary to aid the church's reflection on its practices. My hope is that this current project will provoke more research in this area. Empirical research can expose areas of practice that are missed when theology is purely normative.

Part of the role of practical theology is to complexify existing categories of theology, by listening to experience. This study has emphasised the complex tension that exists within the Charismatic movement, in terms of its relationship to Evangelicalism and classic Pentecostalism. I have demonstrated that categories such as 'prophetic preaching' and 'the gospel' are more complex in the lived experience of Charismatic preachers than formal sources suggest. Their congregational hermeneutics often defy simple categories as they live in the tensions created by a commitment to the Word, the Spirit and the needs of the community.

Charismatic Practical Theology

Critical theological reflection is, with a few notable exceptions, quite rare in the Charismatic movement. In the early days of the movement, leading Charismatic theologian, Tom Smail argues that British Charismatics 'have been at best a-theological, indifferent to the theological issues the renewal raises, and at worst anti-theological, suspicious of the questions and the questioners that would complicate the experiential simplicities in which they were rejoicing.'[780]

Charismatic spirituality can offer unique contributions to practical theology, particularly by attending to pneumatology. Mark Cartledge[781] and Helen Collins[782] have both offered contributions to this field that emphasise the work of the Holy Spirit. Both Cartledge and Collins note the neglect of Pentecostal/Charismatic perspectives in practical theology.[783]

My own contribution to this field offers a worked example of practical theology from a Charismatic perspective that takes seriously the specific pneumatology in Charismatic and

[780] Thomas Smail, quoted in Cartledge, 'Theological Renewal (1975-1983)', 89.
[781] Mark J Cartledge, *The Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, Pentecostal Manifestos (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publ. Co, 2015).
[782] Collins, *Reordering Theological Reflection*.
[783] Cartledge, *The Mediation of the Spirit*, 58–59; Collins, *Reordering Theological Reflection*, 92.

Pentecostal perspectives. Charismatic pneumatology is partly distinguished by the revelatory gifts of the Holy Spirit, and in this project I have demonstrated an epistemology that takes seriously the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Practical theology values experience as a source of authority, and this project has demonstrated the value in listening deeply to the experience and practice of these five preachers.

Practical Theology, Hermeneutics and Homiletics

Practical theology has paid some attention to preaching, and I have noted some of the empirical research that has analysed sermons and listeners (section 2.4). However, preaching has not often been examined as a form of congregational hermeneutics. Analysing sermons for hermeneutical approaches is therefore largely unexplored terrain. The methodology outlined in this thesis has sought to provide some tentative steps forward in sermon analysis. As I have shared initial sermon coding strategies with preachers, it has revealed that a simple descriptive task can help them to think deliberately about what they are doing with the Bible when they preach. To use Osmer's phrase, the descriptive task is 'a spirituality of presence' that involves patiently attending to experience.[784]

My own observation was that by listening carefully to these preachers and describing their practice, a light is shined that can aid other practitioners in navigating their own preaching. Coding sermons according to their hermeneutical practices, and describing the horizon-fusing techniques is a tool that I hope will be improved upon in the future.

Areas for Further Research

This particular research has highlighted some of the benefits of qualitative sermon analysis, in conversation with normative and formal voices. There is a lot of potential for this kind of research, both in the Charismatic movement and beyond.

Comparative Studies

I have focused exclusively on preachers from the Charismatic movement. It would be interesting to use similar sermon analysis to consider different factors. For example, all of

[784] Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 33–34.

the preachers in this study were white British men. It would be useful to hear the voices of women and people from different ethnic or social backgrounds, and to pay more attention to their social location as a factor in interpretation.

In Warner's analysis, Evangelicalism split into two poles, of which I have only considered the entrepreneurial Charismatics, represented in the conversionist-activist pole. A more nuanced picture may well emerge if I had undertaken a similar study with conservative Evangelical preachers. Similarly, listening to Pentecostal preachers or Charismatic voices in the global church would yield fruitful data.

Longitudinal Studies

Limited time restricted the quantity of sermons I could listen to from each preacher. Although I believe the data I collected was representative of the preacher, more sermons over time would enable a further depth and thicker description of the hermeneutics and use of the Bible of these preachers. I am also aware that I have not analysed the wider context of the worship service, which could provide a more thorough background to the research. For example, I discussed with PC a potential discrepancy between his espoused and operant crucicentrism (PCS2). In interview, the centrality of redemption in Christ was clearly significant, but it did not come through clearly in the two sermons I listened to in detail. In response, he suggested that in the context of the worship service, in which the eucharist was a core component, his crucicentrism was more evident (PCS2). It is also very possible that a longitudinal study would help to shed light on some of these kind of issues.

5.4 A Way Forward for Charismatic Preaching

Throughout this research, I have drawn in normative and formal voices in order to interrogate the empirical data. And yet, as I have argued, there is another role of the normative voice, which is to stand outside of practice and provide a prescription for transformed practice. Here I note two significant areas that Charismatic preachers ought to consider for renewed practice.

Theological Interpretation

As I have argued, the theological interpretation of Scripture can provide an approach that Charismatics may be more comfortable with, allowing for polyvalence of meaning and emphasising transformation and obedience, whilst still providing limits, particularly through the rule of faith. Whilst theological interpretation is not a particularly Charismatic approach, it does correlate well with many of the features identified in the Charismatic preaching revealed in this project.

Theological interpretation provides a framework for multivocal meaning and for emphasising the importance of orthopraxis. It argues that the church, rather than the academy, is the proper location for reading and interpreting Scripture, and it encourages pre-critical exegesis. However, the caricature that 'anything goes' in pneumatic exegesis will be unwarranted if Charismatics can get a more secure grip on their theological priorities. In precritical exegesis, the rule of faith acted as a limit on interpretation and a guide for determining meaning.[785] 'Reading with explicitly theological presuppositions' requires clarity about theology, and reading with that explicit purpose in mind.[786]

One of the reasons an explicitly Charismatic rule of faith is challenging is because 'to be Charismatic is an issue of spirituality, not theology.'[787] Therefore, Charismatic preachers lack a uniquely Charismatic doctrine, and so they either rely on Evangelical or Pentecostal doctrines, or adopt a more intuitive and ad hoc theological interpretation of Scripture. There is scope then, for the development of a distinctive Charismatic rule of faith, that can act as a limit to interpretation, but also as a hermeneutical guide for theological interpretation. I suggest below that Charismatic conceptions of the gospel can fill this void. Reading with a redemptive hermeneutic can provide an explicitly theological approach to interpretation that is appropriate for Charismatic interpretation.

[785] Trimm, 'Evangelicals', 315.
[786] Derek Rishmaway, 'Theological Interpretation of Scripture? Three Dimensions', *Reformedish* (blog), October 2015, https://derekzrishmawy.com/2015/10/26/theological-interpretation-of-scripture-three-dimensions/.
[787] Bonnington, *Patterns in Charismatic Spirituality*, 5.

The Centrality and Definition of the Gospel

This limited sample does suggest that among Charismatics, there may be a hesitancy to underscore the centrality of the gospel in their preaching. This is partly as a result of prioritising pragmatic and subjective concerns, such as relevance and applicability, but it may also represent a dissatisfaction with an individual and narrow conception of Evangelical crucicentrism. PA and PD both reflected a frustration with crucicentrism; it appeared to them to be a limited and individual approach to salvation ('say a prayer, accept the work of Christ and you're in'). In contrast, they emphasised a vision of the kingdom, which was corporate, holistic, and required the ultimate allegiance of the listener.

Scot McKnight expresses the same frustration when he writes, 'In short, I find the narrowing of atonement to penal substitution, double imputation, and propitiation to be the result of an unfortunate zeal to protect Reformed theology instead of believing what the New Testament explicitly teaches.'[788]

As I have argued, a key area for Charismatic theologians to consider is an explicitly Charismatic conception of the gospel, that is social *and* individual, pneumatologically empowered, Christocentric, kingdom-orientated and which emphasises holistic discipleship and obedience. I suggest that participation with Christ is hospitable to a distinctively Charismatic rule of faith that is pneumatological, Christocentric, social and ethical.

I began this project with the conviction that, for all its strengths, the Charismatic church is not particularly reflexive about its practice. This partly reflects an orientation towards activism and conversionism that has characterised the pragmatic approach of Charismatics. However, as I have argued, this is in tension with a commitment to Scripture and a desire to hear the present voice of the Holy Spirit. I have argued that the triangle of Word, Spirit and community is a helpful heuristic tool to aid reflection on the priorities of preachers, and I have demonstrated how operant and espoused voices are complexified through interrogation with normative and formal voices. My hope is that this research will foster thoughtful reflection on how preachers can be faithful to Scripture, prophetically attuned to the Holy Spirit, and relevant to the congregation.

[788] McKnight, 'Atonement and Gospel', 128.

Appendix 1: Sermon Outlines

Pilot Project: Sermon Outline

CODE	DURATION
Introduction	00:03:24
Illustration	00:02:01
Application (therapeutic)	00:01:06
Digression	00:00:19
Application (therapeutic)	00:00:02
Digression	00:00:19
Application (therapeutic)	00:00:20
Exposition	00:01:45
Reading the Narrative	00:01:41
Exposition	00:04:33
Digression	00:00:16
Application (therapeutic)	00:02:02
Exposition	00:01:49
Application (therapeutic)	00:00:22
Exposition	00:00:28
Reading the Text	00:00:13
Application (moral)	00:00:59
Exposition	00:00:17
Application (moral)	00:00:12
Exposition	00:00:20
Application (therapeutic)	00:00:13
Illustration	00:00:51
Exposition	00:00:05
Application (moral)	00:00:07
Exposition	00:00:08
Application (moral)	00:00:09
Reading the Text	00:00:16
Application (moral)	00:01:03
Exposition	00:00:19
Application (moral)	00:05:51

Preacher A Sermon 1

	Intro and background to Pentecost	00:00:00
Lessons from Pentecost	Importance of patience	00:01:28
	Importance of unity	00:02:49
	Kindness of God (divided tongues - unique yet united)	00:03:46
	Spoke in tongues (gift available to all)	00:04:52
	Analogy of giving computer	00:06:41
	Have to learn how to use gifts - practice	00:07:43
	When we get it wrong (using gifts)	00:08:41
	Summary - Christ in you	00:09:40
Lessons from the mountain	Pentecost was a transformation like Jesus' transfiguration	00:10:01
	Context of Matt 17 (Jesus' transfiguration)	00:10:44
	Application - can have revelation and then operate in different spirit	00:12:22
	Matt 17:1-9[789]	00:13:03
	Summary of the passage	00:14:54
	Link Jesus' transfiguration with change in disciples and Pentecost	00:16:32
	Mountains representing adversity and transformation.	00:17:32
	Mountains representing perspective (inc. illustration of Shard)	00:20:32
	Mountains give us a better vision of Jesus	00:20:32
	Mountains representing authority	00:22:30
	By ourselves' Need to get away with God	00:24:11
	Matt 17:3 - Jesus fulfils law and prophets, need to come down the mountain	00:25:09
	Matt 17:5 - God speaks on the mountain	00:28:31
	Matt 17:9 - timing	00:30:59
	Conclusion summary	00:31:44
	Prayer	00:33:02

[789] Read from NKJV, with some flourishes (e.g. 'everyone say "tabernacles"').

Preacher A Sermon 2

Intro	Intro	00:00:00
Part 1	David story	00:03:24
	Application to us - we are chosen as David was chosen.	00:04:47
	Ps 68:5-6[790]	00:05:42
	Feeling loved, not just cognitive knowledge	00:06:47
	Illustration of royal family, no such thing as perfect family	00:08:53
	He's a God of inclusion into family	00:10:16
	Psalm 68:6b[791], introducing joy	00:11:55
	Joy in the midst of circumstances - David, Paul, Nehemiah	00:12:42
	Adoption	00:14:51
	Put your trust in Jesus	00:17:06
Part 2	Honour spiritual fathers (Eph 6:2-3[792])	00:18:07
	Excursus - need to be challenged by hard sayings! (Honour Father and Mother)	00:19:54
	Importance of honour parents - identity	00:22:12
	Honour, in order to release promise	00:24:18
	Honour involves forgiveness (like Jesus)	00:26:49
	Matt 18 - honour is resolving conflict	00:29:25
	Illustration of resolving conflict honourably	00:32:54
Conclusion	1 Cor 4:15 Shortage of Fathers and Mothers in the church	00:37:11
	We are all called to father and mother others.	00:39:23
	Closing prayer	00:41:46

[790] Read from NLT.
[791] Read from NLT.
[792] Read from NKJV.

Preacher C Sermon 1

Intro	00:00
Historical context	01:02
Literary Context, that demonstrates importance of the passage	03:20
Root down and fruit up	05:14
4 Prophetic pillars	05:18
Pillar 1: Gateway	05:41
Pillar 2: Living Water	06:51
Pillar 3: 'More'	07:51
Pillar 4: Root and fruit	08:41
Prophetic relevance of the timing	09:21
Overview of Hezekiah/Isaiah narrative, with commentary and application	10:27
Intro to selective Isaianic prophecies and their importance today	14:36
Isaiah 41	16:22
Isaiah 43	17:25
Isaiah 49	18:43
Isaiah 51	20:11
Isaiah 52 - Worship, warfare, identity	20:11
Isaiah 53 - Suffering servant	23:14
Jesus the fulfilment	24:18
Prophetic, contemporary application	26:02
Conclusion - root and fruit, lean into prophetic impetus	29:19
Closing Prayer	30:20

Preacher C Sermon 2

Intro	00:00
Canonical and historical context	01:13
Intro to theme of exiles in the Bible (1 Pet 1:1)	03:39
Bridge to us today as exiles	04:41
Example of pride month - sexuality as point of conflict	05:19
Overview of Daniel	07:47
Overview of Esther	10:17
Similarities and differences between Daniel and Esther	13:29
Contemporary bridge	16:42
Similarities and differences between Daniel and Esther	16:53
Contemporary bridge	19:11
Daniel and Esther differences re: presence of God	19:20
MAIN POINT: How should we respond to the world?	22:58
Application 1: Remember we are exiles	23:49
Application 2: Know who we are in Christ	24:42
Application 3: Live faithfully and wisely	26:55
Application 4: Don't be surprised by trouble	27:58
Application 5: Remember the rewards	29:12
Eschatological conclusion	30:29
Closing Prayer	32:24

Preacher D Sermon 1

INTRO	00:06
Intro to rekindle our worship	00:56
Illustration of fire	01:57
Examples / Challenge to the congregation about worship and attention	03:29
Historical context / background to Ezra	04:27
Ezra 1:1-2 and commentary inc Isaianic prophecy	05:10
Application - hold on to prophetic	07:11
Intro to main theme - rekindling worship	09:15
Ezra 3:3	09:34
Key point - altar before temple	10:04
Example of key point for church building	10:24
Definition and exposition of worship	11:03
The who not the how	12:54
Ezra 3:10-12	14:15
Combination and diversity of joy and sorrow	15:41
Ezra 4 - enemies offer to help	17:40
Be careful who you build with	19:08
Conclusion - Worship is attention	20:29
Prayer	22:40

Preacher D Sermon 2

Intro to series and rationale	00:06
Context	01:38
Matt 5:1-2 (MSG)	02:23
Are we committed to going a bit further?	02:46
Jesus 'sat' to teach	04:02
Leaning in' to hear what Jesus says	04:46
Summary of Sermon on the Mount - kingdom living	06:45
Intro to beatitudes	08:38
Matt 5:3 (MSG and NLT)	09:40
Importance of the opening beatitude	10:13
Sam Polk illustration	10:13
Blessed because you recognise God is everything	13:31
Isaiah 57:15, Isaiah 66:1-2	14:39
Key point: God wants to bless those who recognise they have nothing and God is everything.	15:38
Example of Gideon, Moses, Jesus.	15:48
Misunderstandings of the successful life	17:44
We realise our emptiness and desperation	19:32
Conclusion: only way to succeed is to hand over the reigns	22:33

Preacher E Sermon 1

Recap of series	04:48
Salvation Prayer	07:45
Intro to theme	08:52
Exodus 13:17-22	09:26
Equipped for battle but not ready for battle	10:32
Managing temptation (1 Cor 10, Heb 2)	12:29
Example of facing Goliath, are you ready for the battle?	14:53
Different applications of the spiritual battle	16:53
Example of Joseph	18:07
What about you?	18:49
Ex 14:1-31, 15:22-27	19:57
Summary of the passages	26:56
Should have inspired faith (Rom 15:4)	28:10
Illustration of crane (faith magnifies what we can do)	29:25
Praise and thank him to build faith (1 Pet)	30:23
Importance of investing in eternity	31:43
Overcome tests by faith and obedience (inc NT examples)	32:44
God is not a genie	34:41
Conclusion - in faith and obedience, keep in step with the Spirit.	35:44
Response and ministry	35:59
Closing Prayer	37:46

Preacher E Sermon 2

Intro re: Sabbatical	00:00
God wants to speak afresh	00:50
Intro to 10 commandments, their importance	01:28
Ex 19:1-9	03:34
Summary of Ex 19:10-25	05:25
49 days after leaving Egypt (significance with Pentecost)	06:05
Ex 19:4-6 as key (Israel's mission statement)	07:20
Grace precedes law	08:44
Christ makes us righteous	09:37
Gospel invitation	11:13
Israel rescued to be treasured possession	12:20
1 Pet 2:9-10 - fulfilment in Christ	13:20
What is the purpose of the law then? Gal 3	15:54
Commandments not just external morality	17:12
They drive us to Jesus	17:38
Ancient laws were principles	18:21
Ex 20:1-21	18:46
Joke - Moses downloading from the cloud!!	21:38
Israelites were terrified, but in Christ we don't need to be	21:58
The ten commandments, one-by one. Applied and redefined by Jesus	22:22
Summed up by Jesus in Matt 22.	30:52
New covenant is internal transformation to obedience	31:47
Conclusion	33:01

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