

**‘Contextual Pentecostalism from a Classical Pentecostal Movement to a
Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement: A Study of the Assemblies of God
of Malaysia with Special Reference to Joel 2:28-32’**

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ABSTRACT

The significance of this research is to understand the changes of the universality of classical Pentecostalism in the process of contextualisation in the Malaysian sociocultural and religious context from a historical perspective; and how the Assemblies of God of Malaysia (AGM) from a Classical Pentecostal Movement (CPM) towards the new identity of a ‘Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement’ (CPCM) can continue to be the cutting edge movement in missions and Pentecostal spirituality in this twenty-first century. This research indicates that the espoused theology of the AGM is classical Pentecostal in nature being derived from Joel 2 – Acts 2 and field research analysis demonstrates its significance in their missiological, ecclesiological and ministerial practices. This study is on the contextualised Pentecostalism in AGM and the changing nature of the movement from a CPM to a CPCM through the different historical periods with respect to Joel’s prophecy and the implications on its theology, missiology, ecclesiology, and ministerial perspectives and practices. The overall goal of the research is to understand these changes and the current gap between the espoused Pentecostal theology and its practice over the six decades from AGM’s inception in 1957 to the present time.

The methodology employed is qualitative research on AGM’s historical and theological development as a Malaysian Pentecostal movement, with practical theology as the theoretical framework. It involves the identification of seven key theological themes of AGUSA’s main beliefs and practices from the foundational texts alluded to Joel 2 – Acts 2, in providing a backdrop of the development of Pentecostal pneumatology from classical understanding to the contemporary understanding as the theological framework/lens for the theological reflection on the contextualisation of the Pentecostalism in the Malaysian context. First of all, a study of the situation and its complexities over the periods; secondly, a contextual analysis and the main contextual factors; thirdly, a theological reflection and interpretation on AGM’s theological development from classical to contemporary to identify any discrepancy or change of dynamics; and finally, proposing objective ways forward based on the findings.

It is anticipated that this research will make several significant contributions to contextual Pentecostal research, and to the advancement of the gospel in Malaysia through AGM. This is a contribution of new academic knowledge of contextualised Malaysian Pentecostalism and invaluable insight on the significant element of Voice of the Spirit (VoS) in AGM’s growth and development. This original study fills the knowledge gap on the contextual analysis and theological interpretation of paradigm shifts in regard to the Pentecostal distinctives and the practical theology of AGM then and today. The research presents the need of a contemporary Pentecostal spirituality and suggests a future direction of missions for the next generation in this twenty-first century.

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of Malaysia with Special Reference to Joel 2:28-32’**

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in Middlesex University

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March 2022

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DECLARATIONS

[In absentia, sign, date, scan (preferably into .pdf), and e-mail; or post or fax]

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed  (Candidate)
Date 14 March 2022

STATEMENT 1


This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote.

Other sources are acknowledged by midnotes or footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Date 14 March 2022

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if approved, to be available for photocopying by the British Library and for Inter-Library Loan, for open access to the Electronic Theses Online Service (EthoS) linked to the British Library, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organizations.

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Date 14 March 2022

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to God who has called me in this journey of life and service in theological education, saying to me, ‘Walk in it.’, when I was invited to join

Bible College of Malaysia. All honour and glory to God.

Indeed, I rejoice with BCM for its 60th anniversary (1960-2020) and 60th graduation ceremony (9 April 2022). I also dedicate this research study to AG Malaysia pioneers, ministers, BCM alumni, and all who have contributed to this qualitative research.

May God’s love and blessings be upon you always!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- ABIM – Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia or Malaysian League of Muslim Youth
AG – Assemblies of God
AG – Assembly of God
AGK – Assemblies of God of Korea
AGUSA – Assemblies of God, United States of America
AGMS – The Assemblies of God of Malaya and Singapore
AGM – Assemblies of God of Malaysia
AGPC – Assemblies of God Prayer Commission
AGWM – Assemblies of God World Missions
AJPS – Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies
APTA – Asia Pacific Theological Association
APTS – Asia Pacific Theological Seminary
AsiaCMS – Asia Collaborative Mission Services
ATLA – American Theological Library Association
ATLASerials – American Theological Library Association Serials
BCM – Bible College of Malaysia
BEM – Borneo Evangelical Mission
BHS – Baptism in the Holy Spirit
BibSem – The Biblical Seminar
BIM – Bible Institute of Malaya
BSM – Bible Society of Malaysia
BZAW – Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CCC – Calvary Convention Centre
CCM – Council of Churches of Malaysia (an ecumenical fellowship of churches and Christian organisations in Malaysia)
CCR – Catholic Charismatic Renewal
CE – Common Era
CFM – The Christian Federation of Malaysia
CGI – Church Growth International
CPCM – A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement
CPM – classical Pentecostal Movement
CTJ – Calvin Theological Journal
DPCM – Burgess and van der Maas (eds.), New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements
EBSCOhost – Elton B. Stephens COmpany host
EXCO – Executive Committee
FFFM – Finnish Free Foreign Mission
FGA KL – Full Gospel Assembly Kuala Lumpur
GloPent – European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism
HSM – Harvard Semitic Monographs
IBMR – International Bulletin of Mission Research
IHOP – International House of Prayer
IJFM – International Journal of Frontier Missions
INC – Independent Network Charismatic
IFRAA – Journal of the Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture
ISA – Internal Security Act
JAIS – Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor or Selangor Islamic Enforcement Department
JAMS – Journal of Adventist Mission Studies
JEPTA – Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association

JJRS – Japanese Journal of Religious Studies
JPT – Journal of Pentecostal Theology
 JPTSup – Journal of Pentecostal Theology, Supplement Series
 JSPS – The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies
 JSOTSup – Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series
 KL – Kuala Lumpur
 KL-Eastern – Kuala Lumpur – Eastern District
 LHBOTS – Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies
 MAIS – Majlis Agama Islam Selangor or Selangor Islamic Council
 MCCBCHS – Malaysian Consultative Council of the Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism
 and Sikhism
 MT – Masoretic Text
 MTBC – Malaysia Tamil Bible College
 MTBI – Malaysia Tamil Bible Institute
 MUFW – Malaysia United Firewall
 NECF – National Evangelical Christian Fellowship
 NT – New Testament
 OT – Old Testament
 PAS – Parti Islam Se-Malaysia or Malaysian Islamic Party
 PDV – Prophecies, dreams, and visions
 PJ – Petaling Jaya
Pneuma – The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies
 Ps. – Pastor
 PU – Prayer United
 Rev. – Reverend
 RFM – Revival Fire Movement Malaysia
 RFN – Revival Fire Network Singapore
 SIB – Sidang Injil Borneo
 SIRD – Strategic Information and Research Development Centre
 SFT – Statement of 16 Fundamental Truths (Statement of Faith or Tenets of Faith)
 TE – Theological Education
 TNTC – Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
 UMNO – United Malays National Organisation
 USA – United States of America
 VoS – Voice of the Spirit
 WAPTE – World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education
 WBC – Westminster Bible Companion
WTJ - Wesleyan Theological Journal
 YAM – Youth Alive Malaysia
 YWAM – Youth With A Mission
 YES – Youth Enrichment School
 YFGC – Yoido Full Gospel Church

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Research Background: Pentecostal Aspect

The globalisation of Pentecostalism over the past century and its ongoing rapid growth from 981 thousand adherents in 1900, to 58 million in 1970, and to 635 million adherents in 2020 from all Spirit renewals worldwide has been phenomenal, from which 86% of all Pentecostals and Charismatics are in the Global South. The Spirit-filled movement represents the fastest-growing Christianity worldwide in the 21st century.¹ In the history of Pentecostalism and Assemblies of God² since the early twentieth century, the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 and its fulfilment on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 have featured prominently being the foundational scripture to the classical Pentecostal theology and its spiritual experientialism. The explosive growth of this global revival movement is dynamic in every nation as the Pentecostal faith and movement is uniquely contextualised and indigenised, gradually adapted to the local sociopolitical, economic, religious, and cultural landscape.

¹ Todd M. Johnson, 'Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity', Excerpt from Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3rd edn (Edinburgh, November 2019), by *International Bulletin of Mission Research*, 27 May 2020, <https://www.gordonconwell.edu/blog/pentecostal-charismatic-christianity/> and <https://www.gordonconwell.edu/center-for-global-christianity/publications/world-christian-encyclopedia/>, accessed 20 January 2022, this considered the most authoritative contemporary statistics. Also see Centre for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 'Status of Global Christianity, 2019, in the Context of 1900-2050', Pentecostal/charismatic, <https://gordonconwell.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2019/04/StatusofGlobalChristianity20191.pdf>, accessed 23 November 2019. On estimated proportion, World Council of Churches, 'Pentecostal Churches', 2019, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/church-families/pentecostal-churches>, accessed 23 November 2019, record based on World Christian Database (<https://www.worldchristiandatabase.org>), shows there were 588 million Pentecostals worldwide, consisting of 78 million classical Pentecostals, 192 million Charismatic, and 318 million Neo-Charismatic.

² Assemblies of God (AGUSA) established in 1914, has AG movements in 190 countries, 66 territories and provinces, 375,310 churches, 1,225 bible schools, 1,292 extension programmes, and 75 seminaries, 170,393 students, 409,500 ministers, and 69.2 million constituents/adherents worldwide, statistics as of 31 December 2018. Assemblies of God World Missions, AGWM Now, Vital Stats, 2019 Issue 2, <https://warehouse.agwm.org/repository/pdf/vital/agwm-vital-stats.pdf>, accessed 23 November 2019.

This Pentecostal study is prompted by my keen interest in the significance of Joel's prophecy 2:28-32 (and Acts 2:16-21) on the outpouring of the Spirit in Pentecostalism, i.e. Baptism in the Holy Spirit (BHS, hereafter) and its related practices, the tangible presence of God, the Person of the Holy Spirit, and God's revelation through the 'Voice of the Spirit' in prophecies, dreams and visions. Joel's prophecy rings loudly within my heart so deep and strong that I even named my baby girl 'beautiful rain' as her Chinese name 'Mae Yee', with the spiritual meaning of 'how beautiful is the outpouring of the Spirit' and my earnest prayer for the church and nation has always been 'Lord, pour out Your Spirit'. My favourite Scripture is Joel's prophecy. And so, to examine the significance of this spiritual phenomena in the context of Assemblies of God of Malaysia's (AGM, hereafter) beliefs and practices.

My main research interest is to understand the particularity of contextualised Pentecostalism in AGM. In particular, I try to understand the changes of the universality of classical Pentecostalism based on Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2 in the process of contextualisation in the Malaysian sociocultural and religious context from a historical perspective. I have the theological desire and sense of responsibility to investigate the theological understandings of contemporary Pentecostalism and its practices in AGM after several decades since its foundation.

1.2 The Research Problem

In the contextualisation process of Malaysian Pentecostalism, there is a research problem of changes and differences perceived by AGM leadership between the espoused Pentecostal theology and practice then and now in AGM context. Ong Sek Leang, the General Superintendent of AGM in an interview expressed his concern for the movement's identity at this present time, 'Can you actually be a true Pentecostal and yet be contemporary? Can you emphasise the baptism of the Holy Spirit and be very

contemporary?’³ The research problem steers the research focus and investigation based on the following academic and contextual reasons:

Firstly, the change of concept and practices of Pentecostal spirituality over six decades gives rise to the need to examine the changing nature of AGM from classical to contemporary and the contextual factors of the changes. This leads to the investigation whether the changes and differences are evolutions, valid enculturation, or drifts which create an increasing gap and tension between the espoused Pentecostal theology and its practice in the formative period and present.

Secondly, the significance of the outpouring of the Spirit (Joel 2 – Acts 2) has been experienced in the formation and growth of AGM but there is an increasing gap between the espoused classical Pentecostal theology and its contemporary perspectives and practices, particularly due to the shift in emphases and practices of Pentecostal distinctives.

Thirdly, in the last decade, there has been a strong focus on prayer for revival. Concurrently, there have been strong emphases on being contemporary, restoring the Pentecostal heritage, united prayer for revival in AGM as well as in Malaysian churches, the rise of prayer movements, and new understanding of prophetic prayers for revival, and so on. The shifts of focus and emphases of the movement in contemporary times demand a closer investigation.

Fourthly, there have also been changes in the nature and concept of VoS in contemporary practices compared to the conventional ways. As VoS is a significant element of the outpouring of the Spirit in Joel 2 – Acts 2 widely experienced and practised in AGM, the changes and influences over time become part of the research problem for examination.

³ Interview with Rev. Ong Sek Leang, 7 April 2017. Present and third General Superintendent.

The overview background and scenario to the research problem is demonstrated as follows:

1.2.1 Change in Concepts and Practices

The changes in concepts and practices in AGM over the six decades since its inception from 1957 to present indicated evolutions, enculturation, or drifts with an increasing gap between the espoused theology and the current practice, thus being the crucial part of this study.

The General Superintendent in the 52nd General Council Meeting held on 11-12 June 2018 introduces the new image of the movement and casts the direction of the fellowship in its current phase with the theme ‘A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement’ (CPCM, hereafter), to serve as a prophetic voice for our world as the movement navigates the ‘unchartered waters’ in our nation today. Ong’s report states:

We need to dream and envision a strong, growing, disciple-making and mission-minded church that will take the gospel to the urban and rural areas in Malaysia and also to other nations – “A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement”. It all begins when we allow the Holy Spirit to give us dreams and visions. I ask that our Prayer Movement today will pray for a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all our ministers and churches.⁴

The above backdrop provides the scenario for this research project. The qualitative research data shows the changing nature of AGM and the current gap between the espoused Pentecostal theology and its practice from its inception in 1957 to present. Thus, this research will seek to compare concepts and practices of the past and present, and to examine how concepts and practices change. Ong’s speech quoted above provides examples of change: An example of changing concepts is that in the past dreams and visions were taken more literally, but in Ong’s speech they are used metaphorically. An example of changing practices would be how mission and evangelism has changed. This

⁴ Rev. Ong Sek Leang, General Superintendent’s Report, ‘A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement’, 52nd General Council Meeting, Assemblies of God Malaysia, 11th and 12th Jun. 2018, Calvary Convention Centre, Bukit Jalil, p. 5, BR2016-2018-52-GS.

will be elaborated in a later chapter. This has further streamlined the research focus as I attempt to understand the major changes and their underlying theology in the movement.

1.2.2 Outpouring of the Spirit in Joel's Prophecy (2:28-32) and Acts 2:16-21

The outpouring of the Spirit is associated with Spirit-baptism.⁵ In the New Testament and in intertextual reading of the Scriptures, 'I will pour out my Spirit' in Joel's prophecy 2:28-32 signifies God pouring out the 'Holy Spirit' in Spirit-baptism, a new and powerful way, as adapted and affirmed by Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21; 2.1-2). The fulfilment of Joel 2 in Acts 2 is affirmed by NT scholars like Howard I. Marshall, David G. Peterson, C.K. Barrett, and others, as well as Pentecostal scholars namely French L Arrington, Stanley M. Horton, among others.⁶ The present day reference of revival and outpouring of the Spirit to the ongoing fulfilment of Joel's prophecy (and Acts 2) shows its centrality and theological importance as foundational scriptures in the classical Pentecostal theology and Pentecostalism. This has been the basis of AGM's theological position and is still being emphasised in the movement today.

BHS, 'the crown jewel of Pentecostal distinctives' as defined by Macchia,⁷ is a key doctrine of Pentecostals as the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy on the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 and the church era. BHS is the central doctrine from where all the other interrelated theological themes can be analysed, defined, and established. Today, BHS is understood as a theophanic experience of being filled with

⁵ The terms 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit' and 'Spirit-baptism' are used interchangeably in this research.

⁶ Howard I. Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. by T.V.G. Tasker, TNTC (Leicester, 1980), p. 73; David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. by D.A. Carson, PNTC (Grand Rapids, 2009), p. 40; Charles K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles: In Two Volumes, vol. 1: Preliminary Introduction and Commentary on Acts I - XIV*, The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, ed. (London, 2008), p. 135; French L. Arrington, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary* (Peabody, 1988), p. 27; Stanley M. Horton, *The Book of Acts* (Springfield, MO, 1981), p. 38.

⁷ Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, 2006), p. 20.

the presence of the God, a spiritual encounter and relationship with the triune God.⁸ Modern Pentecostal theologians like R.P. Menzies, French L. Arrington, Stanley M. Horton, Simon Chan, and Gordon Fee enlighten that the spiritual dimensions and roles of glossolalia in Christian spirituality is much broader than just ‘initial evidence’ of BHS.⁹ There is a need to develop coherent theological explanations for these central doctrines of Pentecostal distinctives.

The outpouring of the Spirit on ‘all flesh’ means BHS is a gift to all peoples, transcending age, marital status, gender, and social status, and that everyone can receive BHS and spiritual gifts, especially the nine gifts in 1 Cor. 12:8-10, and empowerment for life and service.¹⁰ Classical Pentecostals understand BHS as a prophetic community empowered for missions and many early Pentecostal women missionaries¹¹ being sent out and served in leadership roles as pioneers, preachers, educators, ministers, and missionaries worldwide. BHS a gift to ‘all flesh’ is an ongoing fire of worldwide Pentecostalism.¹²

⁸ Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* (Sheffield, 2003), p. 49; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*.

⁹ R.P. Menzies, *Speaking in Tongues: Jesus and the Apostolic Church as Models for the Church Today* (Cleveland, 2016), p. 16; Arrington, *Acts*, p. 23; Horton, *Acts*, p. 33; Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, p. 13; Gordon D. Fee, ‘Toward a Pauline Theology of Glossolalia’, in Wonsuk Ma and Robert P. Menzies, eds., *Pentecostalism in Context: Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies*, JPTSUP, 11 (Sheffield, 1997), pp. 28-29.

¹⁰ Studies related to this theme are: Ralph M. Riggs, *We Believe: A Comprehensive Statement of Christian Faith* (Springfield, MO, 1954); William W. Menzies and Stanley M. Horton, *Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield, MO, 1993); Robert P. Menzies, ‘Spirit-Baptism and Spiritual Gifts’, in Ma and Menzies, eds., *Pentecostalism in Context*; Roger Stronstad, *The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke’s Charismatic Theology* (Cleveland, 2010); French L. Arrington, *Encountering the Holy Spirit: Paths of Christian Growth and Service* (Cleveland, 2003); Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*; Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now* (Carlisle, 1996); William W. Menzies and Robert P. Menzies, *Spirit and Power: Foundation of Pentecostal Experience: A Call to Evangelical Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, 2000).

¹¹ Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Cleveland, 2010).

¹² The studies on this theme include works by: Riggs, *We Believe*; Ernest Swing Williams, *Systematic Theology: Pneumatology, Ecclesiology, Eschatology* (Springfield, MO, 1953); Peter Christopher Nelson, *The Baptism in the Holy Spirit: The Doctrine, The Experience, The Evidence* (Texas, 1942); Donald Gee, *Pentecostal Experience: The Writings of Donald Gee: Settling the Question of Doctrine versus Experience*, ed. by David A. Womack (Springfield, MO, 1993); Menzies and Horton, *Bible Doctrines*; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., ‘The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament’, in Ma and Menzies, eds., *Pentecostalism in Context*; Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts*, JPTSUP, 6, rev. ed. (Sheffield, 1994); Stronstad, *Prophethood of All Believers*; Wonsuk Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes: The Spirit of God in the Book of Isaiah*, JSOTSUP, 271 (Sheffield, 1999); Lloyd Neve, *The Spirit of God in the Old Testament*, (Tokyo, 1972); Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel’s Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts*, JPTSUP, 9

As Acts refers to BHS as occurring ‘in the last days’, early Pentecostals from the Azusa Street revival understood the ‘last days’ means they were living in the days of the imminent return of Christ. Their belief on the apocalyptic vision of the ‘last days’ spurred the eschatological fervour and missionary emphasis for worldwide evangelism before Christ’s return. The universal missionary endeavour led to the globalisation of the Pentecostal movement in following decades.¹³ Over time, the ‘crisis’ eschatology faded as some modern Pentecostals begin to understand ‘last days’ in terms of salvation-history.

In Pentecostal spirituality, BHS enables believers filled with God’s presence by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, to have direct communication and revelation from God through PDV or VoS. The Holy Spirit motivates and directs missions, thus the importance of BHS as the empowerment for witness and the sending Spirit as in Joel-Acts is the fundamental driving force of the Pentecostals.

The theological problem that I want to investigate is particularly on BHS, glossolalia, missions, and VoS, the changes in emphases and the increasing gap between the espoused classical Pentecostal theology and its contemporary perspectives and practices.

1.2.3 Prayer for Revival

In recent years, there has been a strong prayer movement for revival. Early Pentecostals understood revival as a new pouring of the Spirit in fulfilment of Joel 2 – Acts 2.¹⁴ The

(Sheffield, 1996); Rickie D. Moore, *The Spirit of the Old Testament*, JPTSup; 35 (Blandford Forum, 2011); Larry R. McQueen, *Joel and the Spirit: The Cry of a Prophetic Hermeneutic*, JPTSup; 8 (Sheffield, 1995); Larry R. McQueen, *Toward a Pentecostal Eschatology: Discerning the Way Forward*, JPTSup; 39 (Blandford Forum, 2012); Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, 1984).

¹³ The works related: Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*; Peter Christopher Nelson, *Bible Doctrines: A Series of Studies Based on the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs of the Assemblies of God* (Springfield, MO, 1981); Vinson Synan, *In the Latter Days: The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor, 1984); David W. Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought*, JPTSup; 10 (Sheffield, 1996); Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*; Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody, 1987).

¹⁴ Nelson, *Bible Doctrines*, p. 73; Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, p. 35.

first issue of *The Apostolic Faith* newsletter during the Azusa Street revival in 1906 reported in the headlines, ‘Pentecost Has Come: Los Angeles Being Visited by a Revival of Bible Salvation and Pentecost as Recorded in the Book of Acts.’¹⁵ There is a deep desire within AGM for a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit once again, a yearning for another wave of revival, and dependency upon the leading of the Holy Spirit through the VoS and the Spirit’s empowerment for the spread of the gospel. AGM leadership emphasises the need for a mighty outpouring of the Spirit, where the revival theme has been frequently preached and more revival meetings were being held in recent years.

The current prayer movement and focus on revival reflects a strong theological understanding and spiritual conviction on the essence of Pentecostalism being the outpouring of the Spirit as prophesied by Joel and its fulfilment on the Day of Pentecost and ongoing fulfilment in the church era. AGM uses the passage on Joel 2 to call for solemn assemblies, prayer and fasting, repentance and intercession before God on behalf of the land, seeking God that He would relent judgment upon the nation and pour out his Spirit and ‘heal our land’.¹⁶

1.2.4 Voice of the Spirit (VoS)

Joel prophesied that with the coming of the Spirit there will be prophecies, dreams and visions. I would use the Pentecostal parlance ‘Voice of the Spirit’ (VoS) as shorthand for the Spirit’s speaking through prophecies, dreams and visions (PDV).¹⁷

¹⁵ *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 1 (September 1906), p. 1, AF190609-1-1.

¹⁶ For example, the 3rd Chinese Pentecostal Zone Revival Rallies: End Time – Outpouring of Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-29), 18 May – 1 Jun. 2009, CLD-PC2009-3; The 3rd Chinese Pentecostal Zone Revival Rallies: End Time – Fire of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-29), 5-11 Oct. 2009 (Petaling Jaya, Setapak, Cheras, Miri, Johor Bahru, Kluang, Tawau), CLD-PC2009-4; AG Prayer Commission’s 31 March – 20 April 2019, 21 Days Fasting and Praying on the theme ‘New Season in His Presence’, makes reference to Joel 2:21-27 on Day 19 in the area of ‘Restoration’ for first love for God; personal, family, church, and territorial altars; and God’s redemptive plan for Malaysia. The Revival Prayer Rally on 21 March 2020 via Zoom (due to Covid-19 pandemic and Malaysia’s Movement Control Order) and 21 days fasting and praying also refers to Joel 2 on repentance, restoration, and revival (Joel 2:17, 18, 24, 28), AGPC20190420-L.

¹⁷ Although not directly related, there are certain works which provide some background to PDV: Richard Alfred West, *Stories of Visions, Dreams and Visions as Recorded in the Bible* (London, 1931); Ernst

Pentecostals did and perhaps still do believe that PDVs are significant in confirming one's calling to the ministry, and as guidance by the Holy Spirit. Field research reveals that in fact many AGM ministers are called to full-time ministry through VoS, and it has much practical implications in the growth of AGM. Hence, there is a need to study the significance of VoS in the calling of full-time ministers even from the pioneering period to present, and how VoS being Holy Spirit's guidance or more often expressed as 'being led by the Spirit' plays a major role in AGM's missiology, ecclesiology, and ministerial aspects, and in the growth of AGM through the six decades.

With this in mind, this study will also investigate the VoS through the PDV received by AGM ministers and the impact on the movement. The examination of Pentecostal perspective on the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 is instructive for examining how AGM interprets its understanding of the VoS in the current context.

All the above scenarios of research problem indicate major shifts of emphases and reflect changes in the movements. There seems to be a growing gap between the contemporary and the classical in terms of emphases and practice. This stirs my curiosity to find the answers to the underlying issues which have been emerging. This would require a study on the historical and theological development of AGM from its inception to present, from the classical formation to contemporary times. This leads me to retrieve

Ludwig Ehrlich, *Der Traum im Alten Testament* (BZAW, 73; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1953); Jean-Marie Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives in the Biblical World*, BibSem; 63 (Sheffield, 1999); Elizabeth R Hayes and Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, eds., *'I Lifted My Eyes and Saw': Reading Dream and Vision Reports in the Hebrew Bible*, LHBOTS; 584 (London, 2014); Susan Niditch, *The Symbolic Vision in Biblical Tradition*, Harvard Semitic Monographs; 30 (Chico, 1983); Claus Westermann, *Prophetic Oracles of Salvation in the Old Testament*, translated by Keith Crim (Edinburgh, 1991); David Edward Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, 1983); J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia, 1962); Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Interpreting Prophecy: An Essay in Biblical Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, 1976); Wayne A. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* (Westchester, 1988); David Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, Marshalls Theological Library (London, 1979); John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, The Biblical Resource Series, 2nd edn (Grand Rapids, 1998); Stephen L. Cook, *Prophecy & Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis, 1995); Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia, 1975); D. S. Russell, *Apocalyptic, Ancient and Modern*, The Hayward Lectures (Philadelphia, 1978); Leon Morris, *Apocalyptic* (Grand Rapids, 1972); James Robson, *Word and Spirit in Ezekiel*, LHBOTS; 447 (New York, 2006).

the espoused classical Pentecostal theology and Pentecostal distinctives derived from the foundational Scripture and to study how the emphases and practices have changed over time. This involves the study on the centrality of Joel's prophecy 2:28-32 (and Acts 2:16-21) on the outpouring of the Spirit in the espoused and practical theology of the movement in relation to the Pentecostal distinctives, the change in concepts and practices, the underlying theology of the present prayer for revival, and the significance of the VoS as God's guidance to the movement in the past, present, and future.

The research problem with the academic and contextual reasons stated above steer the main research focus to investigate the underlying theological and contextual factors underpinning changes within AGM for the last six decades in order to understand the shifts of emphases and practices of the classical Pentecostal distinctives of Joel 2 and Acts 2. The research focus leads to the research questions in the following section.

1.3 Research Questions

In view of the issues above, the present study is entitled 'Contextualised Pentecostalism from a Classical Pentecostal Movement to a Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement: A Study of the Assemblies of God of Malaysia with Special Reference to Joel 2:28-32.' My thesis is that AGM as a CPM is rooted in the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 (and Acts 2:16-21). Although its espoused theology¹⁸ has not changed officially, field research

¹⁸ Some earlier Pentecostal scholars and systematic theologians on the espoused Pentecostal theology includes: Nelson, *Bible Doctrines*; Williams, *Systematic Theology*; Horton, *Book of Acts*; W. Menzies and Horton, *Bible Doctrines*; Pearlman, M., *Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible*, rev. edn (Springfield, MO, 1981); Donald Gee, *A New Discovery (Formerly Published as Pentecost)* (Springfield, MO, 1932); Donald Gee, *Pentecost* (Springfield, MO, 1932); Donald Gee, *The Fruit of the Spirit: A Practical Approach to the Fruit of the Spirit by a Renown Charismatic Leader* (Springfield, MO, 1928); Donald Gee, *The Pentecostal Movement: Including the Story of the War Years (1940-1947)*, rev. and enl. edn (London, 1941); Donald Gee, *Concerning Spiritual Gifts*, A Series of Bible Studies, rev. and enl. edn (Springfield, MO, 1947); Donald Gee, *Upon All Flesh: A Pentecostal World Tour*, rev. edn (Springfield, MO, 1947); Donald Gee, *All With One Accord* (Springfield, MO, 1961); Donald Gee, *Fruitful or Barren?: Studies in the Fruit of the Spirit* (Springfield, MO, 1961); Donald Gee, *Spiritual Gifts in the Work of the Ministry Today* (Springfield, MO, 1963).

analysis demonstrates a fundamental change of image, outlook, methods, and practices through the different historical periods with respect to Joel's prophecy. These changes are reflected in its change of self-designation from being a CPM to a CPCM in 2018 and affect its theology, missiology, ecclesiology, and ministerial perspectives and practices as it embarks on new strategies and developments in the twenty-first century.

The research envisages an answer to the question: How the classical Pentecostalism has been contextualised in Malaysia, and what can be the future forms of Pentecostal distinctives and their practices for the next generation?

The main question entails overarching sub-questions listed below which will be analysed and interpreted in the four-stage model of practical theology and qualitative research by Swinton and Mowat as explained in Chapter Two on Methodology and Description of the Research Process.

1. How has AGM developed and transitioned from a CPM to a CPCM since its inception to the present, and what are the changes in emphases and practices of the Pentecostal distinctives and VoS?
2. What are the contextual factors triggering the development of interpretation and practices of the Pentecostal distinctives and VoS?
3. How do AGM ministers understand and evaluate on both the current theology and its practices and the changes and their contextual factors in light of the espoused theology and Scripture (Joel 2 and Acts 2)?
4. What will be AGM's transformative role and practices in the future as it continues to develop its theology and to shape the strategies of its mission for the next generation?

1.4 Key Terms

1.4.1 Classical Pentecostal Movement (CPM)

AGM was established by the missionaries from the Assemblies of God of USA, and inherited the espoused classical Pentecostal Theology, being a classical Pentecostal movement and subscribing to the AGUSA's Tenets of Faith – Statement of Fundamental Truths (SFT), the theology, doctrines, and practices.

1.4.2 A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement (CPCM)

AGM's new image and tagline 'A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement' was first discussed in EXCO in 2015 and subsequently used in its website and being the official theme of the biennial 52nd General Council Meeting in 2018. Subscribing to the AGUSA's SFT, the CPCM vision comprises winning the lost, making disciples, church planting, social concern, reaching all nations, having healthy Spirit-filled churches with strong leadership, Pentecostal fervour, nurturing the young generation, and having excellent facilities to serve the community.¹⁹

1.4.3 Pentecostal Distinctives

Pentecostal distinctives in this study on AGM context covers Baptism in the Holy Spirit, glossolalia, missions, and VoS. The first three are the main Pentecostal distinctives stated in the AG's Tenets of Faith and VoS being an implicit theology and practice shaped by Joel's prophecy. The key theological themes of Pentecostal theology derived from Joel 2 – Acts 2 are written in chapter three.

¹⁹ Assemblies of God of Malaysia, 'Our Vision', <https://ag.org.my/about/#1515246876960-6f5e72d0-c9d1>, accessed 9 February 2022.

1.4.4 Baptism in the Holy Spirit

The Assemblies of God believe that the experience of BHS is a distinct and subsequent experience of salvation or born again, as the normal experience in the early Christian church (Acts 8:12-27; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9) with the initial physical evidence of speaking in tongues (Acts 2:4), and the empowerment for missions (Acts 1:8). This Pentecostal view differs from the typical evangelical teachings that BHS happens during conversion when a person accepts Jesus Christ as Saviour. Most Charismatics (1960s – 1970s) also believe in BHS as subsequent to conversion but not necessarily with speaking in tongues as evidence but a spiritual gift, more for body edification. Third Wavers or Neo-Charismatics (1980s onward) emphasise on signs and wonders and spiritual gifts, but do not believe in BHS as the second work of grace subsequent to conversion, and speaking in tongues is not necessary. This thesis focuses on the AGUSA's position.

1.4.5 The 'Latter Rain'

The term 'latter rain' was used in the 'The Latter Rain' doctrine of the early Pentecostal belief in 1900s, derived from early hermeneutics on the 'lost and restored' imagery in Joel 2 – Acts 2 and the fulfilment of the 'Latter Rain' covenant (Joel 2:23 and James 5:7). Early Pentecostals believed it was the restoration of the apostolic faith with the nine-fold gifts of the Spirit in the last days with the urgency to save souls. This was different from the controversial 'Latter Rain Movement' or 'New Order of the Latter Rain' which emerged in the 1940s, which became one of the catalysts for the Charismatic Movements in 1960s and 1970s, and the restoration of the fivefold ministries. Today, Pentecostals with modern hermeneutics refer to the 'latter rain' theme as revival or God pouring out his Spirit.

1.4.6 'In the Last Days'

The early Pentecostals from the Azusa Street revival understood the eschatological theme 'in the last days' meant they were living in the days of in the imminent return of Christ. AGM's espoused theology and founding experience was heavily influenced by this apocalyptic vision. However, dispensationalism has waned in the second half of the twentieth century as the classical Pentecostals in the 1980s joined the evangelical family, who understands the 'last days' in Acts 2 as the period from the Incarnation of Jesus Christ to Parousia. Contemporary Pentecostal theologians also engage in integrated hermeneutical approach of the whole Scripture and have been developing holistic Pentecostal theology in recent decades.

1.4.7 Revival and Revivalism

The early and classical Pentecostals understood revival as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and continuous fulfilment of Joel's prophecy in the church era, like the Azusa Street revival and thereafter. Pentecostal revivalism is a continuous spiritual renewal in restoring the passion to engage in evangelism and missions. From 1990s to contemporary times, there has been a global Revival Movement particularly from the influences of John Wimber (1934-1997) and Peter C. Wagner (1930-2016) of the Third Wave which spur much revivalism among Malaysian Pentecostal and Charismatic churches through international network. Their revivalist spirituality emphasises on spiritual warfare, demonology, signs and wonders, apostolic and prophetic movement.

1.4.8 Paradigm Shifts

Paradigm shifts in the thesis relates to the changes in perspectives and practices, which began during the 'Movement Growth' period from 1980s onward.

1.5 Research Scopes

The research scope covers examining the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 (and Acts 2:16-21) with respect to the espoused Pentecostal theology, particularly on the Pentecostal distinctives and VoS as understood by Pentecostals. I will also examine the historical and theological development of the AGM, particularly the changes in emphases and practices through practical theology and qualitative research.

The research scope for qualitative approach involves empirical data collection from ministers trained and serving within AGM and is conducted via surveys and in-depth interviews. Although biblical studies are not part of this research, a study on how Pentecostals have understood the key theological themes derived from these key passages is fundamental to provide the historical-theological backdrop in understanding the changes and development in AGM. The research, while essentially theological in nature, will also examine the practices in the AGM in the period from 1957 to the present day, with respect to its missiological, ecclesiological, and ministerial practices.

Although AGUSA started missionary work in Malaya in the 1930s, 1957 was year of the official formation of the General Council. From 1930s to 1960s – a foreign missionary period – everything was sent from USA, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Archival materials as vital primary source are more available from the time of AGM's formation. Questions concerning the historical development of any modifications of the AGM interpretation of the Joel text will be dealt with when particular issues arise. In general, it can be said that AGM doctrine and teaching during the first 40 years from 1957 closely follow the Pentecostal teaching received from the pioneering American missionaries. AGM's teaching on espoused classical Pentecostal theology in the first four decades was also similar to, if not identical with, the AG missionaries.

The geographical scope of this research is focusing on the urban areas rather than rural areas in light of AGM's church planting strategy and mission endeavours had been

in major cities and towns since its inception. AGM churches in their multilingual contexts are mainly among the English-speaking races, Chinese and Indians in urban settings, and they are more connected to global Pentecostalism. The acceptance to changes and different patterns are more noticeable in the urban areas as people are more flexible and adaptable to global culture and following the trends based on their daily needs and faith journey. AGM's mission outreach in the rural areas among tribal communities are more recent and small scale since 1980s as compared to the long-established missions of other main Christian denominations since early 1900s.

This study will not deal with issues such as the dreams and visions of pagan kings; extra-biblical material, as, for example, dreams and visions in the Ancient Near Eastern literature; as well as scientific and psychological studies on dreams and visions.

1.6 Research Context: AGM in Malaysian Context

As I am studying the changes in practice of Pentecostal theology in AGM over six decades in this thesis, a brief history of the movement is necessary to provide the research context.²⁰ AGM is a Pentecostal fellowship.²¹

Malaysia is a multiracial, multicultural, and multireligious country.²² In 2020, the current Malaysian population is around 32.48 million,²³ of which 28.98 million are

²⁰ The AGM Constitution underwent a review recently as there had been proposals to change the identity of AGM from a fellowship to a denomination, but in the 51st General Council Meeting held on 30 May – 1 August 2016, AGM-CBLr20160531, it was decided by a majority vote to maintain the identity of AGM as a fellowship instead of as a denomination. Therefore, it is more accurate to maintain its original identity as a movement instead of as an ecclesiastical tradition.

²¹ The Constitution of the AGM Article 1. Preamble defines AGM 'as a Pentecostal fellowship comprised of credentialed ministers, local churches, groups, fellowships, ministries, institutions, agencies and other similar bodies/entities which voluntarily enter into its membership based on mutual agreements, shared objectives and beliefs as stated in our Tenets of Faith'. Assemblies of God of Malaysia, Constitution and Bylaws, adopted at the 51st General Council 31 May 2016, p.1, AGM-CBLr20160531.

²² For more information, see Commonwealth Secretariat 2017, *The Commonwealth, Malaysia: History*, <http://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/malaysia/history>, accessed 23 Jun. 2017.

²³ Countrymeters, 'Malaysia Population' clock (live) 13-01-2020, source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Population Division, <https://countrymeters.info/en/Malaysia>, accessed 13 Jan. 2020. According to statistics on 12 Jan. 2020, Malaysia population is 32.17 million based on Worldometer elaboration of latest United Nations data, <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/malaysia-population/>, accessed 13 Jan. 2020.

citizens.²⁴ Malaysia's ethnicity comprises of 68.6 percent Malay and indigenous, 23.4 percent Chinese, 7 percent Indian, and 1 percent others.²⁵ The religious demography is 20.5 million Muslim (63.7 percent), 5.7 million Buddhism (17.7 percent), 3 million Christianity (9.4 percent), 1.9 million Hinduism (6 percent), and 1 million others (3.2 percent).²⁶ Although predominantly Muslim, not all indigenous population are Muslims.

Christianity (9.4 percent of the population) is the religion of 3.05 million people, with a high concentration of 2.29 million or 75 percent in East Malaysia.²⁷ The main denominations in the country are Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodist. The Pentecostal had grown rapidly from 5,440 in 1960 to 61,500 adherents in 1985 which made up 13.6 percent of Christianity in Malaysia, whereas evangelical is 17.5 percent, others 15.2 percent, and the largest denomination being the Roman Catholic 53.7 percent.²⁸

AGM is a member of the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF),²⁹ one of the three component bodies of the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM),³⁰ along with the Council of Churches of Malaysia (CCM), and Catholic Bishops' Conference of

²⁴ Department of Statistics, Malaysia, <https://www.dosm.gov.my> accessed 21 May 2019.

²⁵ Nation Master, Malaysia Religion Stats, 2016, <http://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/profiles/Malaysia/Religion>, accessed 23 Jun. 2017.

²⁶ Countrymeters, 'Malaysia Population', <https://countrymeters.info/en/Malaysia>, accessed 13 Jan. 2020.

²⁷ 2010 Population and Housing Census Report, <https://www.dosm.gov.my/>; Countrymeters and Worldometer on Malaysia Population 2020, <https://countrymeters.info/en/Malaysia>, accessed 13 Jan. 2020.

²⁸ Robert A Hunt, Kam Hing Lee and John Roxborough, eds., *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History* (Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, 1992), p. 357.

²⁹ NECF Malaysia, National Evangelical Christian Fellowship Malaysia: An Evangelical Voice of the Malaysian Church, <http://www.necf.org.my/index.cfm?&menuid=7>, accessed 23 Jun. 2017. The member churches include AGM, Baptist Church, Brethren Church, Evangelical Free Church, Sidang Injil Borneo, some major independent charismatic churches, Bible seminaries, para churches, and individual churches from Methodist, Presbyterian, etc. NECF was formed in 1982.

³⁰ The Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM), <http://www.cfmmsia.org/About-CFM>, accessed 23 Jun. 2017. CFM comprises of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, the Council of Churches of Malaysia (CCM), and the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF). CFM was formed in 1985.

Malaysia.³¹ AGM churches claimed 49,810 adherents in 2020,³² that is, around almost two percent of the Christian population of some 3 million in Malaysia.³³

Christianity is a minority within a minority in a pluralistic Malaysian society where Islam became the national religion since Malaya independence in 1957. In the formation of Malaysia in 1963, the Federal Constitution states that ‘Islam is the religion of the Federation’.³⁴ Although there is ‘freedom of religion’, there are many restrictions that have shaped Christian mission and Pentecostal contextualisation in the country. Propagating religious faith to a Muslim is prohibited by law. The growth of Christianity in Malaysia is further constrained by the impact of the context of an increasing Islamic resurgence and Islamisation since 1970 to present.³⁵

1.6.1 The Early Missionary Period

The shaping of Malaysian Pentecostalism owes significantly to the early missionary period before 1950s, which pathed the way to a unique spirituality.

Missionaries from the mainline traditional Christian denominations had arrived in Malaya (now West Malaysia) and Borneo (East Malaysia) much earlier than the Pentecostals. Historians suggest that Nestorian missionaries from Syria had travelled

³¹ Council of Churches of Malaysia: An Ecumenical Fellowship of Churches and Christian Organisations in Malaysia, <http://ccmalaysia.org/index.php/about-ccm/history/>, accessed 23 Jun. 2017. CCM (formerly Malayan Christian Council) was formed in 1947.

³² Rev. Lawrence Yap, General Secretary Report, AGM 53rd Business General Meeting 2021, ‘For Such a Time as This – Esther 4:14’, 1 Jun. 2021, p. 11, BR2021-53.

³³ Countrymeters and Worldometer on Malaysia Population 2020, <https://countrymeters.info/en/Malaysia>, accessed 13 Jan. 2020.

³⁴ Judiciary Appointments Commission Malaysia, Law of Malaysia Federal Constitution, https://www.jac.gov.my/spk/images/stories/10_akta/perlembagaan_persekutuan/federal_constitution.pdf, accessed 11 February 2022. The formation of Malaysia took place on 16 September 1963 with the merger of the Federation of Malaya (includes Singapore), Sabah and Sarawak.

³⁵ Sadayandy Batumalai, *Islamic Resurgence an Islamization in Malaysia: A Malaysian Christian Response* (Ipoh, 1996); Salbiah Ahmad, *Critical Thoughts on Islam, Rights, and Freedom in Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya, 2007); Steven Wong, Lim Siew Foong, and Wong Kim Kong, eds., *The Realities of Christian Living in Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya, 2004); Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya, 1987); Ng Kam Weng, *Bridge-Building in a Pluralistic Society: A Christian Contribution* (Petaling Jaya, 1994); Robert Day McAmis, *Malay Muslims: The History and Challenge of Resurgent Islam in Southeast Asia* (Grand Rapids, 2002); J. Paul Rajashekar and H.S. Wilson, eds., *Islam in Asia: Perspectives for Christian-Muslim Encounter* (Geneva, 1992). See chapter five, section 5.4.4 Malaysian Social Influences.

through the Silk Road to the Malay Archipelago as there are signs of Nestorian settlements dated seventh century in the north-west of Malaya Peninsula and north Sumatra.³⁶ Since the sixteenth century, the rule of Portuguese (1511), Dutch (1641), and British (1786) opened doors to Roman Catholicism (1511) and Protestantism.³⁷ Christianity grew during the British rule in the nineteenth century, when prominent missionary works had begun mainly in the Straits Settlements and Borneo.³⁸ Pentecostal missionaries only came to Malaya in the twentieth century from AGUSA along with other streams mainly from Ceylon, China, Finland, and Hong Kong. The Australian missionaries started mission work in Borneo.

The first missionaries from the Assemblies of God of the United States of America, Cecil and Edith Jackson,³⁹ arrived in Singapore in 1928, and Malaya in 1932.⁴⁰ In 1930,

³⁶ John Roxborough, *A History of Christianity in Malaysia*, STM Series (Singapore and Malaysia, 2014), pp. 1-2. Cited John C. England, 'The Earliest Christian Communities in South East and North East Asia – an Outline of the Evidence Available in Seven Centuries before 1500 Ad', *East Asian Pastoral Review*, no. 2 (1982): 88.

³⁷ Worldatlas, Religious Beliefs in Malaysia, <http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/religious-beliefs-in-malaysia.html>, accessed 23 Jun. 2017. John Roxborough, An Outline History of Christianity in Malaysia, <http://roxborough.com/Area%20Studies/Malaysia%20www.htm>, accessed 23 Jun. 2017.

³⁸ The beginning of major missionary works and the Christian denominations have continued to grow over the centuries. This brief list is not exhaustive: French Catholic *Missions Étrangères de Paris* missionaries from Siam (now Thailand) established the Major Seminary in Penang (1809), Catholic missions in Sarawak (1841), and Mill Hill Fathers from London, Austria, and Holland in Borneo (1881); Anglican in Melaka (1741), Penang (1800) and Borneo Church Mission Institution to Sarawak (1848); the London Missionary Society in Melaka and Penang (1815) and Johor (1843); Open Brethren in Penang (1860) and Taiping (1880); American Methodist from India (1885), Presbyterian from Penang to Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur (1900), and Johor (1886); Basel Mission in North Borneo (1882); Lutheran to Kuala Lumpur (1907); Mar Thoma Syrian Orthodoxy brought by migrant Syrian Christians from Kerala, India (1930s). The key contributions of these early Christian missionaries were the establishment of churches, schools, hospitals, social concern, and Bible seminaries. Mission works among the diverse races continued to expand to other parts of Malaya and Borneo. For details, see Roxborough, *A History of Christianity in Malaysia*; Hunt, Lee and Roxborough, eds., *Christianity in Malaysia*. Straits Settlements was a British colony of the coastal islands and ports, namely Penang (1786), Melaka (1824), and Singapore (1819), under British East India Company. Borneo (Sarawak) was under the rule of James Brooke (1848), and North Borneo (Sabah) under the British North Borneo Company Charter (1878).

³⁹ Cecil Jackson, Mr. and Mrs., 'A Trip through the Malay States', *The Pentecostal Evangel*, (Springfield, MO, 18 Jan. 1930), p. 11, PE19300118; Fred G. Abeysekera, *The History of the Assemblies of God of Singapore 1928-1992* (Singapore, 1992), pp. 91-8; Assemblies of God of Malaysia 50th Anniversary 1957-2007 Souvenir Magazine, pp. 14, 19, AGM2007-50A. C. Jackson was instrumental in training Napitoepeoloe, a Batak young man, who became the first missionary to the *Orang Asli* (aboriginal tribal people) in Pahang in 1930s.

⁴⁰ Abeysekera, *History of the Assemblies of God of Singapore*, p. 93; Cecil M. Jackson, 'My First Missionary Journey to the Sakai', *The Latter Rain Evangel* (Chicago, Jun. 1933), p. 11, LE193306; 'Redeemed ... Every Kindred, and Tongue, and People and Nation', an article on Miss Katherine Clause, missionary to Federated Malay States, 23 February 1935, (n.p.), PE19350223; 'Souls Saved in the Malay States', *The Pentecostal Evangel* (Springfield, MO, November. 1933), p. 7, PE193311.

Esther Johnson and Carrie P. Anderson, followed by Katherine Clause in 1931, came to Singapore as their first station before starting their pioneering work in Malaya.⁴¹ Anderson was the first missionary to Malaya, and she began a Cantonese work among the Chinese at 4th Mile, Ampang Road, Kuala Lumpur in 1934, with two new Chinese converts, and founded the First Assemblies of God, Kuala Lumpur,⁴² the oldest existing AGM church. For two years, she was assisted by Leong Shik Ngon, a paid worker from Hong Kong.⁴³ Jackson visited and conducted baptismal service for the new converts, Ng Kam Foh and Lee Charn Yew.

In 1936, Arthur E. Sandhal and his wife Esther Johnson, arrived and pastored the church until 1949, (then) assisted by Tsang Toh Hang, Lee Chee Leong, Paul Lim, and two Bible Women⁴⁴, Lee Siew Ling, and Lee Sow Lan. Evangelists, Philemon⁴⁵ and his wife and some local youths formed a Tent Evangelistic Team and held evangelistic rallies in 1937-8 and many new believers were added to the church. In 1940, the church was officially registered and affiliated to the AGUSA.⁴⁶ The Assemblies of God of Malaya and Singapore (AGMS), was officially organised on the occasion of the first General Council in 1957, reformed in 1966,⁴⁷ and celebrated her Golden Jubilee in 2007. The early AG mission works were concentrated on the western coast of West Malaysia and

⁴¹ For details, see Abeysekera, *History of the Assemblies of God of Singapore*; AGM 50th Anniversary, p. 14, AGM2007-50A.

⁴² Formerly known as Jalan Brunei Chapel, then changed to Assembly of God Church (moved to several locations, from Lorong Brunei to Jalan Sungai Besi, Imbi Road, then to Jalan Sayor), Kuala Lumpur Assembly, and subsequently renamed as First Assemblies of God church (presently situated at Pudu).

⁴³ In 1936, Anderson returned home for furlough and Leong returned to Hong Kong due to illness.

⁴⁴ Chinese lady missionaries were known as Bible Women.

⁴⁵ There is no further record on Philemon, as such, his surname is unknown.

⁴⁶ The focus of historical period is from the beginning of the AG in Malaya. This is a brief note on some earlier missionaries. For details on pioneer missionaries to Malaya and Singapore since 1928, see Abeysekera, *History of the Assemblies of God of Singapore*; Denise A. Austin and Lim Yeu Chuen, 'Critical Reflections on the Growth of Pentecostalism in Malaysia', in Denise A. Austin, Jacqueline Grey and Paul W. Lewis, eds., *Asia Pacific Pentecostalism*, Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, vol. 31 (Leiden; Boston, 2019), pp. 198-202.

⁴⁷ Assemblies of God of Malaya and Singapore was formed on 6 February 1957. On 31 August 1957, Malaya gained independence from the British rule. In 1965, politically, Singapore had separated from Malaysia. This resulted in the formation of two new entities, Assemblies of God of Malaya and Assemblies of God of Singapore, in 1966. AGM, 'The History of the Assemblies of God Malaysia', <http://www.ag.org.my/ag-history.php>, accessed 16 May 2016.

only started limited church planting efforts on the eastern coast in 1977 in view of the Islamic dominance in the Malay states.⁴⁸

Besides AGUSA missionaries in Malaya, the Finnish Free Foreign Mission (FFFM) of Pentecostal Churches of Finland had started mission works in the eastern coast of Malaya after the WW2.⁴⁹ The Australian Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM) had played important role in extensive indigenous mission works since 1928 in the interior of Sarawak. Their 'Three-Self' indigenous church, Sidang Injil Borneo (SIB) was established in 1959 and became the fastest growing church in East Malaysia among the *Orang Ulu*.⁵⁰

The Ceylon Pentecostal Mission started mission work among the Indian and Ceylonese (now Sri Lanka) migrant workers in Malaya in 1930 by A.K. Titus in Ipoh, Mr and Mrs V.V. Samuel in Kuala Lumpur. The Pentecostal Church of Malaya was registered in 1952 and begun work among the Chinese in Penang in 1950s. In 2000, there were around 1,000-1,500 members with 13 centres.⁵¹

Notably, John Sung (1901-1944), an evangelist of the Methodist Church in Fujian, China, educated in America, conducted revival meetings in China and among the Chinese in Southeast Asia. He had phenomenal influence in major towns in Malaysia and Singapore from 1935-40. He formed evangelistic bands (groups for prayer and witness)

⁴⁸ Austin and Lim, 'Critical Reflections on the Growth of Pentecostalism in Malaysia', in Austin, Grey and Lewis, eds., *Asia Pacific Pentecostalism*, p. 202.

⁴⁹ Tan-Chow May Ling, *Pentecostal Theology for the Twenty-First Century: Engaging with Multi-Faith Singapore* (London, 2007), p. 19; Austin and Lim, 'Critical Reflections on the Growth of Pentecostalism in Malaysia', in Austin, Grey and Lewis, eds., *Asia Pacific Pentecostalism*, p. 202.

⁵⁰ Tan Jin Huat, *Planting an Indigenous Church: The Case of the Borneo Evangelical Mission* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 1, 2, 162. The *Orang Ulu* is the collective term for natives in Borneo, namely Lun Bawang (Lun Dayeh or Murut in North Borneo), Kelabit, Kayan, Kenyah, Penan, and Sekapan.

⁵¹ Tan Jin Huat, 'Pentecostal and Charismatics in Malaysia and Singapore', in Anderson and Tang, eds, *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*, eds. Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang, AJP Series, 3 (Baguio, 2005), pp. 282-4. Cited *The Biography of Pastor Paul*, Publication 15 (Chennai, 1998), p. 36; 'The Origin of the CPM work in Malaysia and Singapore', in *The Pentecostal Messenger*, April 2001, pp. 8, 20-1; Chris D. Thomas, *Diaspora Indians: Church Growth among Indians in West Malaysia* (Penang, 1978), p. 128.

which were still active in the 1980s.⁵² Spontaneous prayers in John Sung's revival meetings were common among the Chinese churches, mainly Methodist and Presbyterian, and created openness to Charismatic and Pentecostalism.⁵³ Kong Mui Yee (Kong Duen Yee), a Hong Kong actress, ministered in Malaysia and Singapore much later in 1963. Her evangelistic rallies and Pentecostal teaching on BHS and speaking in tongues had stirred some oppositions among the Chinese due to her condemning the Chinese religious practices. She was initially invited by AGMS but soon disassociated when she started her own churches under the New Testament Church movement.⁵⁴

These early missionaries from different countries had done some groundwork which had helped create the distinctiveness of Malaysian Pentecostalism. The AGUSA missionaries did not come into a spiritual vacuum. The early mission presence and Pentecostal revival ministries had attributed to the unique Malaysian Pentecostal spirituality and theology, which are not identical with the AGUSA's.

1.6.2 The Inception Period

The early Pentecostal foreign missionary community⁵⁵ of the Assemblies of God in Malaya led the movement for 40 years. Local leadership emerged in 1974 with the first

⁵² Levi Sung, trans. Thng Pheng Soon, *The Journal Once Lost: Extracts from the Diary of John Sung* (Singapore, 2008), pp. 289-457; Roxborough, *A History of Christianity in Malaysia*, pp. 54-6; Ka-Tong Lim, *The Life and Ministry of John Sung* (Singapore, 2012), pp. 194, 222-3, 229; Leslie T. Lyall, *Flame for God: John Sung and Revival in the Far East* (London, 1972); also see Leslie T. Lyall, *John Sung*, 1954, rev. and repr. (London, 1956); Timothy Tow, *The Asian Awakening* (Singapore, 1988); Daryl R. Ireland, 'The Legacy of John Sung', *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 40, no. 4 (October 2016): 349-57, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2396939316658409>, accessed 15 January 2022.

⁵³ Roxborough, *A History of Christianity in Malaysia*, p. 111; Tan, 'Pentecostal and Charismatics in Malaysia and Singapore', in Anderson and Tang, eds, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 286.

⁵⁴ Austin and Lim, 'Critical Reflections on the Growth of Pentecostalism in Malaysia', in Austin, Grey and Lewis, eds., *Asia Pacific Pentecostalism*, pp. 199, 204; Tan, 'Pentecostal and Charismatics in Malaysia and Singapore', in Anderson and Tang, eds, *Asian and Pentecostal*, pp. 287-9.

⁵⁵ The foreign missionaries to Malaysia include Carrie Anderson, Daniel and Anita Bogdan, Duane Dorsing, Daisy Fern Ogle, Frederick and Margaret Seaward, Dale Wisner, Lawrence Jayapalan, Dan Anglin, Glen and Kathleen Stafford, Ruby McMurray, Jack Willis, Leslie Martin, Lester and Betty Jo Kenney, Robert Stevenson, David and Alice Nyien, Katherine Clause, Arthur and Esther Sandhal (Esther Johnson), Vallance and Lula Baird (Lula Ashmore), Evelyn Iris Hatchett, Howard and Edith Osgood, Delmer and Eleanor Guynes, Garland Benintendi, Bonny Colleen Guinn, David Hugh Baker, Steven L. Nolin, Donald E. McMurray, and R.B. and Barbara Cavaness. AGM 50th Anniversary 1957-2007, p. 11, 14, 23, AGM2007-50A.

Malaysian General Superintendent Prince Guneratnam (1974-2000) followed by Vincent Leoh (2000-2008);⁵⁶ and Ong Sek Leang (2008 – present).⁵⁷

A very significant contributing factor to the expansion of the Pentecostal movement was the founding of the BCM (formerly known as the Bible Institute of Malaya),⁵⁸ AGM's own Pentecostal Bible college to train and raise up local credentialed ministers of a pioneering spirit who are engaged in local missions, church planting and church ministry in Malaysia and Singapore. Delmer and Eleanor Guynes, missionaries to Malaysia in 1952-1964 and first General Superintendent of the AGM, founded BCM at 99, Jalan Gasing, Petaling Jaya, in 1960. The first lecturers were American missionaries.⁵⁹ The first twelve students were recruited from Penang, Raub, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.⁶⁰

There were noticeable spurts of growth especially from the 1970's to 1980's,⁶¹ followed by slower but steady growth to present time. For example, from 1974 to 2000,⁶² the total number of churches increased almost sevenfold from 43 to 301, membership from around 2,000 to 33,662, and adherents from around 3,400 to 47,073 under the leadership of Guneratnam. There had been noticeable numerical growth and geographical expansion since the founding of BCM and the pioneering ministers who have graduated from the school. BCM former President Ng Kok Kee states, 'Many of our early graduates were pioneers who ... put into action what was learnt. Almost everybody in the national

⁵⁶ AGM 50th Anniversary 1957-2007, pp. 34-5, AGM2007-50A.

⁵⁷ AGM, 'The History of the Assemblies of God Malaysia'.

⁵⁸ The change of name to Bible College of Malaysia (BCM) took place in 1982 with the introduction of the Bachelor of Theology programme.

⁵⁹ Howard C. Osgood, the first principal, and his wife, Edith, Francis, and Chris D. Thomas, who served as the Dean. The Guynes joined the faculty in 1961 after their short furlough. 'BCM 50th Anniversary 1960-2010 Remarkable Journey Promising Future' Souvenir Magazine, pp. 8-15, BCM2010-50A. Derek Tan, 'The Assemblies of God', *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History*, eds. Lee Kam Heng and John Roxborough (Petaling Jaya, 1992), p. 235.

⁶⁰ Tan, 'The Assemblies of God', in Hunt, Lee, and Roxborough, eds., *Christianity in Malaysia*, p. 235.

⁶¹ At the same time, there were revivals and spiritual renewals in mainline denominational churches especially in the 1970's to 1980's. Chan Kok Eng, 'A Brief Note on Church Growth in Malaysia, 1960-1985', in Hunt, Lee, and Roxborough, eds., *Christianity in Malaysia*, pp. 354-78.

⁶² AGM 50th Anniversary 1957-2007, pp. 47, 53, AGM2007-50A.

Assemblies of God leadership is a graduate of BCM. Many church senior pastors, pastors and leaders of para-church organizations and missionary movements are BCM graduates.⁶³ In 1972, Malaysia Tamil Bible Institute, a sister Bible school was founded, and about 90 percent of the Tamil work were pioneered or led by ministers who graduated from here.⁶⁴

AGM's church planting were mainly in the urban areas using English, Chinese, and Tamil languages, and much later the Malay language in 1980s. The recent missions in the rural areas are small outreach works among the indigenous communities as compared to the long-established indigenous churches planted by BEM, largely SIB, and mission works by the Anglican Church's Society for the Propagation of the Gospel mission, Roman Catholic Mill Hill Mission, Methodist Episcopal Mission, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Seventh Day Adventist, Basel Mission in East Malaysia since the early 1900s.⁶⁵

The Pentecostal and (later) Charismatic Movement that swept across Malaysia has been strong on mission and church planting, and the new churches are identified as 'spirit-filled', 'charismatic' or 'Pentecostal'. It is a fact that the churches that emerged or were planted in these pioneer movements identify themselves with an emphasis on the Holy Spirit until the present day. Over half a century, many young people received Spirit-baptism in youth camps and crusade meetings, and these powerful moves of the Holy Spirit have brought many into full-time ministry.⁶⁶

⁶³ AGM 50th Anniversary 1957-2007, p. 73, AGM2007-50A. Some ministers have undertaken training from other seminaries.

⁶⁴ AGM 50th Anniversary 1957-2007, p. 74, AGM2007-50A. Malaysia Tamil Bible Institute has been renamed Malaysia Tamil Bible College in 2018.

⁶⁵ Tan, *Planting an Indigenous Church*, pp. 12-52; John Roxborough, *A History of Christianity in Malaysia*, STM Series (Singapore and Malaysia, 2014), pp. 53-4.

⁶⁶ AGM 50th Anniversary 1957-2007, p. 38, AGM2007-50A.

1.6.3 The Transition Period

In the larger surrounding context alongside the Pentecostal movement in Malaysia and the establishment of AGM, the Charismatic Movements and Spiritual Renewals were also happening simultaneously among all other denominations in Malaysia from mid-1970s to 1990s.

In early 1960s the charismatic renewal spread from the United States to the United Kingdom. However, not being accepted by the leadership of the traditional churches, many members left to join Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. The Fountain Trust⁶⁷ which was founded in 1964 in United Kingdom, was a vehicle in spreading the Charismatic Movement and Spiritual Renewal in Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak, and Peninsular Malaysia in the 1970s first among the Anglican denomination, as the diocese was under the metropolitanical jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The charismatic renewal in the Anglican Church in Malaysia came through an Anglican priest from England. Peter Young, who organized 'The Renewal Fellowship'⁶⁸ in 1974. The non-denominational fellowship attracted people from the Assemblies of God, Methodist, Lutheran, and Brethren from Petaling Jaya (P.J.) Gospel Hall.

In 1975, the Roman Catholic Church in Malaysia also joined this Renewal Fellowship Council, making all denominations in Malaysia fully represented as the Charismatic Movement swept across Malaysia. Many Spiritual Renewal Conferences were conducted in major state capitals throughout the country. 'The Renewal Fellowship Society of Selangor and Federal Territory' was registered in 1976. The Roman Catholic

⁶⁷ Archival document: J.S. Devaraj, 'Spiritual Renewal in Malaysia', Renewal Fellowship Society of Selangor and Federal Territory, n.d., pp. 2-3, RFSSFT001. The Fountain Trust was founded in 1964 by Rev. Michael Harper, an Anglican clergy, who experienced the Pentecostal blessing, with the aim, 'the renewal of spiritual life of the Christian Church' and 'to enable Christians to receive the power of the Holy Spirit and the full benefits of charismatic renewal whilst at the same time safeguarding these blessings from dangers such as fanaticism, schism and doctrinal error.'

⁶⁸ Devaraj, 'Spiritual Renewal in Malaysia', pp. 3-4, RFSSFT001. The inaugural meeting was held on 25 November 1974 with 22 persons led by Mr. Tan Jin Huat. The society was registered on 14 Jan. 1976 with Mr. J.S. Devaraj as Chairman.

Charismatic Renewal also had their version of ‘Catholic Charismatic Renewal’ (CCR) within the Catholic Church from 1978 onward. The CCR movement with ‘The Life in the Spirit Seminar’, a seven-week course of study, and CCR’s Charismatic prayer meetings on Fridays focusing on exorcism and healing were made popular by Father Marc Duplesis, a French priest, in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, and spread nationwide.⁶⁹ The Charismatic Movement peaked from mid-1970s through 1990s throughout Malaysia. AGM was an expanding Pentecostal movement, spreading and growing rapidly during this period of Charismatic Movement.

1.6.4 The Contemporary Period

In 2020, the AGM has 393 churches, 49,810 adherents and 823 credentialed members,⁷⁰ in geographically defined ecclesiastical groupings, the churches being organized into six Districts, namely the Northern District, Southern District, KL-Eastern District, Central District, Sabah District, and Sarawak District.⁷¹ On the occasion of the 51st General Council Meeting held on 30 May-1 June 2016, the former Central District was further divided into Central District and KL-Eastern District, in view of the concentration of memberships in the Central District.

It is in the specific context of these AGM churches that the present research will examine how the outpouring of the Spirit in Joel 2:28-32 been interpreted and practised by AGM ministers then and today, particularly the Pentecostal distinctives and their

⁶⁹ Devaraj, ‘Spiritual Renewal in Malaysia’, pp. 1-4, RFSSFT001. ‘The Life in the Spirit Seminar’ by the Catholic Church taught on all the gifts of the Spirit mentioned by St. Paul, i.e. ‘tongues, wisdom, knowledge, prophecy, healing, discernment of spirits, teaching, faith, miracles, interpretation of tongues’, with the emphasis on the gifts of tongues, healing and discernment of spirit being ‘CCR group’s expression of the power of the Holy Spirit.’

⁷⁰ Rev. Yap, General Secretary Report, AGM 53rd Business General Meeting 2021, p. 11, BR2021-53. Credentialed members consist of Christian Workers, Ministry Associates, Licensed Ministers (with the title Pastor), and Ordained Ministers (with the title Reverend), all of whom subscribe to the Pentecostal doctrine and practice stipulated in the Constitution and Bylaws of the AGM. Membership is on an annual renewal basis and requires the payment of dues and continuous active ministerial involvement. AGM’s New Constitution & Bylaws adopted at the 51st General Council 31 May 2016, pp. 73-4, AGM-CBLr20160531.

⁷¹ AGM, Constitution & Bylaws, pp. 45-6, AGM-CBLr20160531.

experiences of the VoS through prophecies, dreams and visions; and, in the light of that, how and to what extent the AGM has changed from being a CPM to being CPCM with (respect to its) practices which may reflect possible shifts in theology and perspective and impact its missiology, ecclesiology, and ministerial practices.⁷²

In the larger geographical context, there are other studies on AG mission works and the formation of AG particularly in Asia Pacific, Southeast Asia, and Oceania countries,⁷³ which also originated from or influenced by AGUSA, and have much similarities in sociopolitical context with the history of AGM.⁷⁴ The histories of Pentecostalism and AG of other countries provide a broader perspective and contexts of the work of the Holy Spirit in Pentecost revival and charismatic renewals in the region, mission endeavours, emphases on evangelism and church planting works, the establishment of theological education or Bible schools for ministry training, the adaptation to local settings, the

⁷² Some works on Pentecostal theology, missiology, and ecclesiology includes: Andrew Lord, *Spirit-Shaped Mission: A Holistic Charismatic Missiology* (Bletchley, 2005); John Christopher Thomas, ed., *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel* (Cleveland, 2010); Shane Clifton, *Pentecostal Churches in Transition: Analysing the Developing Ecclesiology of the Assemblies of God in Australia*, Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, v. 3 (Leiden, 2009); Neil Ormerod and Shane Clifton, *Globalization and the Mission of the Church*, Ecclesiological Investigations, v. 6 (London, 2009); Stephen E. Parker, *Led by the Spirit: Toward a Practical Theology of Pentecostal Discernment and Decision Making*, JPT, 7 (Sheffield, 1996); Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed*, JPT, 2 (Sheffield, 1993); Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life* (Downers Grove, 1998); Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*; Simon Chan, *Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshiping Community* (Downers Grove, 2006); Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology: An Essay on the Development of Doctrine*, JPTSup, 38 (Blandford Forum, 2011); Simon Chan, *Grassroots Asian Theology: Thinking the Faith from the Ground up* (Downers Grove, 2014); Donald G. Bloesch, *The Church: Sacraments, Worship, Ministry, Mission*, Christian Foundations (Downers Grove, 2002); Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Contextual Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, 2002).

⁷³ The studies on the history of AG in Asia Pacific and Southeast Asia countries are as follows: Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang, eds., *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*, AJPS Series, 3 (Baguio, 2005); Austin, Grey and Lewis, eds., *Asia Pacific Pentecostalism*; Dynnice Rosanny D. Engcoy, *Pentecostal Pioneer: The Life and Legacy of Rudy Esperanza in the Early Years of the Assemblies of God in the Philippines*, Pentecostalism around the World Series, volume 4 (Baguio, 2014); Chin Khua Khai, *The Cross Among Pagodas: A History of the Assemblies of God in Myanmar* (Baguio, 2003); Abeysekera, *History of the Assemblies of God in Singapore*; Tavita Pagaialii, *Pentecost "to the Uttermost": A History of the Assemblies of God in Samoa* (Baguio, 2006); Joshua J. Lovelace, *From Seedtime to Harvest: The History of the Assemblies of God in Cambodia* (Baguio, 2019).

⁷⁴ Some related essays on AGM includes: Tan, 'The Assemblies of God', *Christianity in Malaysia*; Tan Jin Huat, 'Pentecostals and Charismatics in Malaysia and Singapore', in Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang, eds., *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*, Regnum Studies in Mission, rev. 2nd edn (Oxford, 2011); Austin and Lim, 'Critical Reflections', in Austin, Grey and Lewis, eds., *Asia Pacific Pentecostalism*.

raising of national leadership and local/indigenous ministers; the development and growth of Pentecostalism, social concern, and looking into the future of the next generation.

1.7 Justifications for the Study

This study is significant in terms of making contributions to both body of knowledge and God's mission. The academic reasons and knowledge gaps summarised as follows justify the importance of this research:

Firstly, this research is unique in terms of providing an academic account on contextualisation of the Classical Pentecostalism in the Malaysian context. The study of AGM's growth and development from a CPM to a CPCM over six decades from its inception in 1957 to present, and to understanding the changes taking place in the perceptible shift from the espoused Pentecostal Theology is an original academic research with the uniqueness of AGM context in its cultural social context.

Secondly, there is a knowledge gap on the study of the Pentecostal distinctives, namely BHS, glossolalia, missions, as well as VoS on the how the outpouring of the Spirit in Joel 2:28-32 been interpreted and practised by AGM ministers then and today, to compare concepts and practices of the past and present and to examine how concepts and practices change. The original study using qualitative research is key to understand AGM's local context on theological practice of the Pentecostal distinctives and VoS and the factors involved.

Thirdly, there is a knowledge gap in Malaysian Pentecostal literature on the subject. This is the first Ph.D. thesis on AGM's historical and theological development from classical to contemporary, with special reference to Joel 2 – Acts 2, where I develop the theoretical and conceptual framework and employ Mowat and Swinton's practical

theology model. There is scarcity of research and literature on contextualised Malaysian Pentecostalism and the available literatures on AGM are mainly articles.⁷⁵

Fourthly, this academic study will make a significant discussion of the essential element of the theological, missiological, ecclesiological and ministerial aspects of AGM throughout the movement's history.

Finally, it is crucial to research on a holistic and comprehensive pneumatology arising from a conviction that the VoS mediated by PDV is an essential spiritual element of the theological, missiological, ecclesiological and ministerial aspects of AGM. For this reason, some proposals and suggestions as to theological significances and transformative practices will be made, in the hope that these may prepare the way for a new CPCM for the twenty-first century.

1.8 Thesis Outline

Chapter One presents a general introduction and background, the research problem or gap, definitions of key terms, the research scope, the research context of AGM. The anticipated contribution of this study to our knowledge of practical theology of AGM in relation to the interpretation and practice of the central Pentecostal distinctives and PDV from Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2 (foundational texts) in Pentecostal understanding will also be clearly stated, followed by the thesis outline. This empirical study on the changing nature of the AGM movement from a classical Pentecostal movement (CPM) to a 'Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement' (CPCM) through the different historical periods with respect to Joel's prophecy and the implications on its theology, missiology,

⁷⁵ There is an unpublished D.Min. thesis by the late Rev. Dr Lim Yeu Chuen (1958-2016) in 2013 with a different trajectory. The thesis was his project in developing the Pentecostal Foundation course based on AG's historical and doctrinal literature reviews approaches, including archival sources and data analysis from a questionnaire. He emphasised the teaching of early American Pentecostal history from Topeka and Azusa Street and advocated the classical Pentecostal's Lukan theology as Pentecostal heritage as the course content. Three other theses are undergraduate studies.

ecclesiology, and ministerial perspectives and practices. The historical-theological development of the AGM and the increasing gap between the espoused theology and the current practice is a crucial part of this study.

Chapter Two is the description of the research process and methodology on the empirical study of the AGM using practical theology in generating theological themes and qualitative research methods in data collection on the theological, missiological, ecclesiological and ministerial thinking and practice of the AGM from 1957 to the present. The study encompasses three periods through the historical milestones of AGM: 1957-1974 period from the formation of General Council; 1975-2007 period under Malaysian leadership until fiftieth anniversary of AGM; and 2008 to the present.

The methodological framework of John Swinton and Harriet Mowat's *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* with the 4-stage model involves the systematic approach of examining the current praxis on the situation, contextual analysis, theological reflection, and formulating revised practice. The approach by Swinton and Mowat is a useful tool to form a conceptual framework which is related to the entire thesis structure. The research questions are relevant to these four stages. It is absolutely necessary to analyse data according to these four stages in the finding chapters.

The practical theology is the theoretical framework which provides a lens for data interpretation to make sense of the findings in relation to understanding the reciprocal relationship between what they believe and what they practice as their hermeneutical paradigm on the passages developed at different stages. 'One of the main critical tasks of Practical Theology' is to identify the practices, recognize any distortion, dysfunction or loss of dynamics, to address the Church to resume 'the theological significance of its practices' towards faithful and continual engagement in 'the practices of the triune God's

redemptive mission to the world.’⁷⁶ Primary sources will also include the written documents such as sermons and teaching materials, newsletters, archival materials and records from the AGM’s National Archive, the General Council Office, and the Bible College of Malaysia.

Chapter Three examines the foundational Scripture of AGM’s espoused classical Pentecostal theology, namely Joel 2 and Acts 2 on the outpouring of the Spirit. These two key texts play a significant role in shaping the understanding of traditional Pentecostal theology and practice and continues to be fundamental to the growth and development of the AGM. This chapter will identify some key theological themes and show how these two texts play a pivotal role in shaping these themes. The discussion in the various sections in this chapter will cover the importance of these two texts on which the early and modern Pentecostal views of the key theological themes are based, the similarities and differences of interpretation and understanding, as well as new developments on the related central AG doctrines from biblical-theological perspectives. These key theological themes are fundamental in the formation of the main beliefs and practices of AG in the Tenets of Faith and provide the historical-theological backdrop for understanding the AGM and its changes.

Chapter Four involves the empirical study focused on AGM in relation to Joel’s prophecy in an attempt to construct the historical development of AGM and identify the classical and contemporary emphases, and major changes in the AGM movement over six decades from its inception to the present. This chapter focuses on the first stage: the situation and its complexities concerning the growth, major developments and changing nature of the movement. The stage also probes the primary concerns of AGM leadership on the Pentecostal heritage, and on the fundamental change of image, outlook, methods,

⁷⁶ John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 2nd edn (London, 2016), pp. 23-4.

and practice through the different historical periods, and the challenges involved. This chapter seeks to examine what has happened over time.

Chapter Five is the second stage of the empirical study, providing main contextual factors which caused or triggered the paradigm shifts (perspectives and practices) and changes that created new trends at different periods. It addresses the internal and external factors causing the changes in AGM in the Malaysian context.

Chapter Six continues with the third stage on theological reflection, being a critical evaluation of the current theology and practices, and of the factors causing changes in light of the espoused classical Pentecostal theology and the foundational Scripture (Joel 2 and Acts 2). It will interpret AGM's theological development and the underlying theology of the major changes from a CPM to a CPCM impacting the emphases and practice of the Pentecostal distinctives.

Chapter Seven is the fourth stage, which will offer suggestions for the future direction of AGM in theology, missiology, ecclesiology and ministerial aspect of AGM's Pentecostal movement. This stage will propose a possible way forward, contemporary theological view of the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 on the doctrinal distinctives, and possible revised forms of practice which would aim to aid the AGM in developing its theology, its continuing desire to be led by the Spirit, both in missionary outreach to unreached people and in maintaining the Pentecostal spirituality.

Chapter Eight concludes that the Pentecostal interpretation and reading of Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:16-21 concerning the Pentecostal distinctives and VoS embodied the experiences of current AGM ministers in their missiological, ecclesiological and ministerial practices but that its change of self-designation from a CPM to a CPCM reflects significant shifts in their emphases and practice of these key texts.

1.9 Conclusion

The outpouring of the Spirit as prophesied in Joel 2 and fulfilled in Acts 2 has been phenomenal particularly in the global Pentecostalism, Spirit renewals, and revivals in past centuries. Although AGM's contextualised Pentecostalism, theological emphases, and practices change over six decades, the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 remains the essence of contemporary Pentecostal spirituality. This research explores the changes, whether they are evolutions, enculturation, or drifts that create tensions between the espoused classical Pentecostal theology and contemporary perspectives and practices. The study also offers suggestions for the CPCM in theological, missiological, ecclesiological, and ministerial aspects in this twenty-first century.

Chapter Two

Description of the Research Process and Methodology

2.1 Introduction

The methodology employed in this research is a case study within qualitative research with practical theology as the theoretical framework. This chapter describes the research process and methodology for a systematic study to generate new knowledge. Relevant tools and research methods have been applied throughout the research process from data collection and data management, to data analysis and interpretation. This empirical study is done with trustworthy and credible data in an objective and academic way, following the technique of the methodology, in the hope that it will contribute to knowledge and beneficial to AGM and the Pentecostal scholarship.

2.2 Qualitative Research

This empirical study is qualitative research on AGM's historical and theological development as a contextual Malaysian Pentecostal movement with special reference to centrality of Joel's prophecy from its inception to present times. The generic definition of qualitative research is as follows:

'Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible ... This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; cultural texts and productions; observational, historical, interactional and visual texts ...'¹

I choose qualitative research as it is most suited for the study of the movement's dynamism in different periods, theological emphases and practices, contextual factors for

¹ Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., 'Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research', *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edn (Thousand Oaks, 2005), pp. 3-4.

changes, AGM ministers' experiences, testimonies, and views. Quantitative research will not be able to generate or identify suitable primary data required for such analysis and interpretation.

I employ case study within qualitative research as this study is closely linked to its nature and methods namely research problem definition, data collection, data analysis, and so on. Case study also deals with a wide range of evidence such as archival documents, surveys, interviews, and suitable for analysing organisation or institution, and covering contextual conditions. Robert Yin defines a case study as 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.'² It is well-suited for this study as it covers a large number of variables, namely 'conditions over time, in-depth inquiry, and contextual condition.'³ This study on AGM covers a historical period, it is a contextual study, and uses a variety of primary sources. Gillham affirms that the case study researcher treats all evidence as having some value of trustworthiness in careful appraisal.⁴

The research adopts multiple methods of qualitative research data via surveys and in-depth interviews, and written documents particularly archival materials, and analysed manually as well as via NVivo11⁵ will provide useful data and significant evidences as to the actual practices in AGM, which will be processed and analysed from empirical, and theological-hermeneutical perspectives and related to AGM's practice.

The qualitative research is a broad area of inquiry which consists of five features:

1. Studying the meaning of people's lives under real-world conditions;

² Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Applied Social Research Methods Series, v. 5, 2nd edn (Thousand Oaks, 1994), pp. ix, 8, 12, and 13.

³ Robert K. Yin, 'Case Study Methods', in Cooper, H.M., and American Psychological Association, eds., *Research Designs: Quantitative, Qualitative, Neuropsychological, and Biological*, APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology, Harris Cooper, editor-in-chief; vol. 2 (Washington, 2012), p. 142.

⁴ Bill Gillham, *Case Study Research Methods*, Real World Research, 2000, repr. (London, 2005), p. 10.

⁵ Pat Bazeley and Kristi Jackson, *Qualitative Data Analysis with NVivo*, 2nd edn (Los Angeles, 2013).

2. Representing the views and perspectives of the people (...*participants*) in a study;
3. Covering the contextual conditions within which people live;
4. Contributing insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help *explain* human social behavior; and
5. Striving to use multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single source alone.⁶

However, in view of this empirical study is based on qualitative research, I have tried using NVivo to generate themes, but it has not been beneficial or effective in this research work. The best way that I find is still primary data being manually processed and analysed using codes, variables, and factors, which will be elaborated in section 2.4.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation.

2.3 Contextualisation and the Model of Swinton and Mowat's Practical Theology

This empirical study involves the understanding of contextualisation of the classical Pentecostalism of the AGUSA in Malaysia. The theological concept of contextualisation is closely connected to the model of Swinton and Mowat's practical theology as a methodological framework to handle the primary data in the four stages.

The Malaysian Pentecostalism is unique in its multiethnic, multireligion, and multicultural setting. The contextual study begins with the inception of AGM, involves the national leadership raised up to receive the baton from foreign AG missionaries, the growth and development of AGM in the local setting, and the contextual factors of the

⁶ Robert K. Yin, *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish* (New York, 2011), pp. 7-8.

changing natures and paradigm shifts in AGM's historical and theological development.

Theologians and scholars understand contextualisation of Pentecostalism as follows:

Allan Anderson explains:

“Contextualization” is more comprehensive and assumes that every theology and form of Christianity is shaped by its particular context, and that they must be so to be relevant and meaningful. It relates the Christian message to all social contexts and cultures, especially including those undergoing rapid change. In other words, contextualization is dynamic and not static, because it allows for constant change ... the Spirit in Pentecostalism gave Christianity new vitality and contextual relevance. The Holy Spirit causes people to worship, sing, prophesy, speak in tongues, heal, exorcise demons, have visions and dreams, live holy lives – and generally the Spirit directs the life and worship of these churches. Pentecostalism has made a vital contribution to a dynamic contextualization.⁷

According to Chan, ‘Contextualization may be defined as an attempt to bring the gospel message to a context in a manner that is relevant to that context.’⁸ Anderson states, ‘Asian Pentecostalism, like its counterparts in Africa and Latin America, has a distinctly different character moulded by the particular contexts of various Asian peoples.’⁹ He enlightens that church goes through ‘self-contextualizing’:

Pentecostal missionaries have supported the idea of a ‘three-self’ (self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating) church. But, the church must also be ‘self-contextualizing,’ because every theology is influenced by its particular context, and must be so to be relevant. Contextualization relates the Christian message to all contexts and cultures, especially including those undergoing rapid change.¹⁰

Having similar views on contextualisation and theologising process, W. Ma discusses ‘the interaction between the Pentecostal movement and its new-found environment, that is the Asian cultural religious “soil” on the one hand, and the contemporary “weather” (including the politico-economic) on the other.’¹¹

This academic quest is to study the contextual Pentecostalism in AGM and to unravel the major changes in emphases and practices of the espoused classical Pentecostal

⁷ Allan Heaton Anderson, ‘Contextualization in Pentecostalism: A Multicultural Perspective’, *IBMR* 41, no. 1 (January, 2017), p. 33-4, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2396939316674428>, accessed 15 January 2022.

⁸ Simon Chan, ‘Whither Pentecostalism?’ in Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang, eds., *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*, AJPS Series, 3 (Baguio, 2005), p. 580.

⁹ Allan Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, 2nd edn (New York, 2014), p. 138.

¹⁰ Allan Heaton Anderson, ‘Contextualization and Pentecostal-Charismatic Education in a Global Village’, in Teresa Chai, ed., *A Theology of the Spirit in Doctrine and Demonstration: Essays in Honor of Wonsuk and Julie Ma* (Baguio, 2014), p. 70.

¹¹ Wonsuk Ma, ‘Asian (Classical) Pentecostal Theology in Context’, in Anderson and Tang, eds., *Asian and Pentecostal*, p. 60.

theology and distinctives. This study will focus on the main theological themes of classical Pentecostalism, namely BHS, glossolalia, missions, revivalism, and VoS.

‘Practical theology’ is a vital interface sub-discipline to be utilised alongside the qualitative research methods in the data collection, processing and analysis of the data, reflection and formulation of the way forward for AGM in this empirical study. Practical theology provides a ‘critical, theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world with a view to ensuring faithful participation in the continuing mission of the triune God.’¹² The integration of two complementary disciplines and methods of practical theology and qualitative research is introduced by Swinton and Mowat. The theological reflection in practical theology works effectively with the qualitative research methods for researching personal experience, a local church, ministry, pastoral issues, participatory research and action research,¹³ and is therefore suitable for researching the AGM, as a local church movement. The practical theology enquires, evaluates and reviews the relationship between what is practised and what is professed.¹⁴

The model of practical theology which will be utilised is ‘within the hermeneutical/interpretative paradigm’, which ‘seeks to interpret a variety of dimensions – situations, scripture, and tradition, Christian practices – and it draws on various hermeneutical perspectives in its attempt to understand God and human experiences.’¹⁵ The overarching methodological framework in practical theology involves the hermeneutical, correlational of various perspectives (among them situation, tradition, theology and other sources of knowledge), and critical discipline.¹⁶ In the theological

¹² Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, p. 24.

¹³ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, p. 93.

¹⁴ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, p. 11.

¹⁵ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, p. 72.

¹⁶ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, pp. 72-3.

reflection key themes will emerge¹⁷ in regard to the practice of AGM, whether they be explicitly or implicitly expressed by the leadership and ministers in the surveys and in-depth interviews.

‘One of the main critical tasks of Practical Theology’ is to identify the practices, recognize any distortion, dysfunction or loss of dynamics, to address the Church to resume ‘the theological significance of its practices’ towards faithful and continual engagement in ‘the practices of the triune God’s redemptive mission to the world.’¹⁸ As such, adaptation of these aspects of practical theology¹⁹ is most suitable in relation to the study of AGM’s context. The interlinked and complementary methods of qualitative research and practical theology are fundamental for this study. The practical-theological reflection on AGM’s discourse, theological emphases, and practice will be conducted based on a model introduced by Swinton and Mowat in the following stages:²⁰

Stage 1. Current praxis/The Situation – Identifying a practice or a situation that requires reflection and critical challenge: What appears to be going on pre-reflectively?

Stage 2. Cultural/Contextual Analysis – Application of qualitative research methods – asking new questions: What is actually going on here? Excavation of the complex matrix of meanings within the situation.

Stage 3. Theological Reflection – Critical reflection on the practices of the church in the light of scripture and tradition: How are we to understand this situation from the perspective of critical faithfulness to the beliefs and traditions?

Stage 4: Formulating revised practice – Revised forms of faithful practice.

The four stages of this model present a systematic approach which will be applied in this empirical study on AGM as in section 2.4.3 on Data Analysis and Interpretation, as a useful tool to form a conceptual framework which is related to the entire thesis structure the finding chapters.

¹⁷ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, pp. 139, 226.

¹⁸ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, pp. 23-4.

¹⁹ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, pp. 24-6.

²⁰ Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, pp. 90-4.

Practical theology provides a theoretical framework which provides a lens for data interpretation to make sense of the findings in relation to understanding the reciprocal relationship between what they believe and what they practice as their hermeneutical paradigm on the Joel 2 – Acts 2 on Pentecostal distinctives and VoS at different stages.

2.4 Methods

The methodology begins with the collection of data, followed by data management, analysis, and interpretation. The other aspect of this thesis involves the generating theological themes by means of an empirical study of the AGM using qualitative research methods in data collection on the theological, missiological, ecclesiological and ministerial thinking and practice of the AGM from 1957 to the present.

2.4.1 Data Collection

2.4.1.1 Sampling Method and Criteria

The data collection²¹ of this empirical study on AGM are mainly from the combination of primary sources from the archives of AGM and BCM, the primary data from in-depth interviews and surveys, as well as other written materials which affirm and complement the overarching historical timeline and theological development, emphases and practice of six decades.

The sampling or ‘process of choosing actual data resources’ is from the ‘population’ or ‘sampling frame’²² of AGM ministers. The two methods I have employed in approaching participants for interview and survey samples are mainly ‘purposive sampling’ with specific criteria of data sources,²³ and a small pool of ‘snowball sampling’

²¹ Michael W. Firmin, ‘Data Collection’, in Lisa M. Given, ed., *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, vols. 1 and 2 (Los Angeles, 2008), pp. 190-2.

²² David L. Morgan, ‘Sampling’, Given, ed., *Qualitative Research Methods*, pp. 799-800.

²³ Ted Palys, ‘Purposive Sampling’, Given, ed., *Qualitative Research Methods*, pp. 697-8.

for more references.²⁴ The purposive sampling is to create a balanced representation of ministers who joined full-time ministry from different historical periods and districts. As such, the selection criteria for ‘recruiting participants’²⁵ is to have representatives from the pioneering period, the movement growth period, and present times. There is a balanced number of senior ministers from the formative period to the junior ministers including ministers-in-training, and selection of participants from various districts, departments, ministries, and positions. In order to increase representation from earlier decades, I have conducted some snowball samplings by requesting a few pioneers to nominate other pioneers and senior ministers as participants at the end of the initial interviews. They have indeed recommended some of their comrades in ministries whom I have not met or known personally before this. A total of 95 participants consisting of AGM leadership, pioneers, church planters, pastors, missionaries, church workers, and current Bible College full-time residential students contributed to this research.

2.4.1.2 Data Collection Methods

2.4.1.2.1 In-depth Interviews

In-depth interview is a qualitative interviewing method with the approach of ‘responsive interviewing’ where researchers are more relational. They respond to and probe further as they listen to the interviewees. Researchers ask three types of related questions to obtain depth and detail: ‘main questions, probes, and follow-up questions.’²⁶ The main questions are mostly prepared beforehand, while the probes are to encourage the interviewees to speak and share more with examples and details. Follow-up questions request for elaborations from interviewees, especially on ‘key concepts, themes, ideas, or

²⁴ David L. Morgan, ‘Snowball Sampling’, in Given, ed., *Qualitative Research Methods*, pp.815-6.

²⁵ Phyllis J. Eide, ‘Recruiting Participants’, in Given, ed., *Qualitative Research Methods*, pp. 743-5.

²⁶ Herbert J. Rubin and Irene Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, 3rd edn (Thousand Oaks, 2012), pp. xv, 6.

events' that they have talked about. As such, there is a requirement for 'intense listening' and engagement for 'clarity and precision'.²⁷ The three characteristics of in-depth interviews are rich and detailed information, open ended questions for flexibility in sharing, and questions may vary for different interviewees (may be semi-structured or unstructured.)²⁸

The qualitative research involves in-depth interviews conducted from 21 March to 26 May 2017 with 45 leaders and pastors (initial target was approximately 40 leaders). The selection criteria for the participants were based on having a balanced representation from the Executive Committee, District Committee members, Senior Pastors, and associate/assistant pastors of churches nationwide who joined full-time ministry in the three different periods under review. There were representations of pioneers, senior ministers, young pastors, and leaders. I also targeted the survey participants who have written that they were willing to be interviewed for this research and have given me their preferred date and time of interview at the end of the survey form. I contacted potential participants via email to ask if they would be willing to participate in the in-depth interview and to contribute to this research. Recording devices were used. The first interview was on the significance of the key text of Joel's prophecy (2:28-32) on the outpouring of the Spirit, in relation to Pentecostal distinctives mainly Spirit-baptism and glossolalia, missions, gifts of the Spirit, and VoS in the growth of AGM movement according to the interviewees' understanding of the classical Pentecostal theology and its importance in missions, church growth, and ministries.

The second interview was specifically targeting the leadership as more data was needed to learn about the contemporary vision, direction, issues, challenges, views, and plans forward. In this case, the selection criteria for the participants was limited to the

²⁷ Rubin and Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing*, p. 6.

²⁸ Rubin and Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing*, p. 29.

national leadership of AGM. From 21 July to 28 August 2019, second interviews were conducted with nine leaders, i.e. six from the Executive Committee and three senior ministers to learn of the changes of AGM from CPM to CPCM and its designated new image of a CPCM.²⁹ There were specific and concerted view of how they perceive the movement has been growing and developing from a CPM to CPCM from inception to present. The main empirical study of this dissertation is AGM's historical and theological development from a CPM to a CPCM.

The interview questions are a mixture in terms of structure: standardised; semi-structured which are open-ended where more follow-up questions can be asked to probe further; and also unstructured, which are more conversational depending on the respondents replies and views.³⁰

See Appendix One: Consent Form; Appendix Two: Second Interview Questions; Appendix Three: List of Interviewees; and Appendix Four: Samples of Data Collected by In-depth Interviews.

2.4.1.2.2 Surveys

Surveys are purposed to systematically collect information from a wide spectrum of participants. Some main benefits of survey method are as follows. It complements other methods of gathering data, provides a generalisation of results, and enables statistical

²⁹ Second interviews with leaders (Kuala Lumpur and Selangor: July-Selangor, 2019): SI-2: Rev. Ong Sek Leang; SI-1: Rev. Dr Samuel Ng Teng Beng; SI-3: Rev. Wong Yin Ming; SI-4: Rev. Ronnie Chin Choong Tet; SI-5: Rev. Lawrence Yap Kwee Thong; SI-9: Rev. Dr Victor Lee Tat Yan; also contributed in interviews are leaders, namely – SI-6: Rev. Dr Chan Nam Chen; SI-7: Rev. Lisa Chin Yoon Lee; and SI-8: Rev. Connie Chan Poh Yin.

³⁰ Judith Bell and Stephen Waters, *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers*, 6th edn (Maidenhead, 2014), pp. 177-94. Chapter ten on 'Planning and Conducting Interviews'; Kathryn Roulston, 'Qualitative interview reconsidered,' Qualitative Research Program, University of Georgia, IIQM-ATLAS.ti Webinair series, April 14, 2016, pdf; Andrea Fontana and James H. Frey, 'The Interview: From Neutral Stance to Political Involvement,' in Denzin and Lincoln, eds, *SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, pp. 695-727; Andrea Fontana and James H. Frey, 'Interviewing: The Art of Science,' in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, SAGE (Thousand Oakland, 1998), pp. 47-78; Johnny Saldaña, *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research*, Understanding Qualitative Research (New York, 2011), pp. 36-44.

representative samples. In qualitative research, the questions are mostly open-ended which gives researchers freedom to frame the questions and respondents the self-expression in comments, explanations, testimonies, and views for richer data. Survey research's structured design directs focus on the research scope with easier sequencing, categorisation, systematic coding, and analysis. The data generated also provide identification of potential in-depth interviewees who can add deeper contributions to the research.³¹ This is a straightforward way to obtain participants' willingness and permission to contribute to the survey research as well as indication of interest for an interview appointment at the end of the form.

From 21 March to 26 May 2017, I have conducted surveys (via hard copy and emails) with 93 leaders and pastors, (initial target was approximately 120 credentialed members from all the districts and divisions represented nationwide. The survey covered the areas described earlier. A total of 93 surveys were returned,³² and as mentioned earlier, 45 in-depth interviews conducted in the first round. The selection criteria for the survey participants was to have wide representation from different levels of leadership (pioneers, senior ministers, young pastors, and leaders) throughout the three periods, and representative of all districts in the nation and of the multilingual ministries of the movement.

2.4.1.2.3 Archival Documents

Archival records are artifacts that provide primary rich source of historical data, demographic and information of persons, society, culture, and people, which details cannot be obtained from interviews or surveys. Archival records are written texts such as memoirs, diaries, reports, letters, memos, minutes of meeting, newsletters, as well as

³¹ Heidi Julien, 'Survey Research', in Given, ed., *Qualitative Research Methods*, pp. 846-8.

³² A total of 120 survey forms have been distributed. Two interviewees did not participate in the surveys.

other sources of artifacts like photographs, audio recordings, videos among others.³³ Archival documents are valuable primary source in this case study of AGM as they generate invaluable information on the history, details of events, stories, news, theology, doctrines, practices, emphases, settings, and thick descriptions which surveys and interviews are unable to provide. At the same time, archival documents are also used for confirmation and support of other sources.

In this study, one vital primary data source is the archival documents, records, and materials from the AGM's National Archive, the General Council Office, and the Bible College of Malaysia. Other written documents include primary sources such as sermons and teaching materials, newsletters from the movement and Bible colleges. The selection criteria of archival documents and materials is the coverage of the historical period of six decades from the earlier missionary years, the inception to present: archival literature, official documents, minutes, reports, newsletters, annual and biennial general meetings, yearbooks, magazines, pamphlets, and etc.³⁴ These archival documents provide essential information on the formative period of AGM, particularly the espoused classical Pentecostal theology and practices as well as the focus on contemporary times. I have collected useful archival documents of more recent decades and done self-coding of all artifacts used in this research.

2.4.2 Data Management

I have done data management on labelling, coding, and storing data. J. Saldaña has written a comprehensive coding manual for qualitative research.³⁵ The data collected are

³³ Karen E. Norum, 'Artifact Analysis', in Given, ed., *Qualitative Research Methods*, pp. 23-4.

³⁴ Some invaluable digital copies of the early Pentecostal literature, newsletters, and documents have been collected and stored in AGM's National Archive by the late Rev. Dr Lim Yeu Chuen. The documents are uncatalogue due to his demise after a tragic road accident in December 2016.

³⁵ Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 2nd ed. (London, 2013), pp. 1-31; Louise Corti, 'Data Management,' in Given, ed., *Qualitative Research Methods*, pp. 193-5; Saldaña, *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research*, pp. 98-108.

organised by sources, manually labelled individually, and coded by category and content type. The successful collection of 93 surveys mostly done manually in handwritten form and some returned via emails shows higher effectiveness in face to face approach and personal contact, rather than sending out a mass survey via google form or electronic form which would lack personal contact and proven to be less effective or lesser response rate by researchers. Hard copies of surveys will have the code labels of SV followed by the participant number and survey numbering set, e.g. SV-38-C4e. Interview participants are labelled with FI for first interview and SI for second interview, followed by the participant number. Raw audio recording of interviews are transcribed and the second interviews are transcribed and edited.³⁶ The data collection and management goes through primary and secondary labelling. The following table 2.1 demonstrates an example of primary labelling of data collection from interviewees and survey participants:

Data collection: Primary labelling			Interviewees and Survey Participants	Main AG Positions Served/Serving (Info at time of field work)
			Begun Ministry 1957-1974 to present	
FI – 1			Tan Sri Datuk Rev. Dr Prince Guneratnam	1 st Malaysian AG General Superintendent, EXCO, Pioneer, Church Planter, Senior Pastor
FI – 6	SI – 1	SV – 5	Rev. Dr Samuel Ng Teng Beng Begun Ministry 1975-2007 to present	Present AG General Treasurer, EXCO, Former Central District Superintendent, Pioneer, Senior Pastor
FI – 18	SI – 5	SV – 14	Rev. Lawrence Yap Kwee Thong Begun Ministry 2008 to Present	Present AG General Secretary, EXCO, District, Pioneer, Senior Pastor
FI – 41		SV – 50	Pastor Lee Mei Young	Ministry staff

Table 2.1 Demonstration of data labelling

The secondary labelling would be the categorisation of the data contents. Key points are highlighted, sorted, and organised by categories. The contents of the interviews are then

³⁶ Saldaña, *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research*, pp. 48-9.

coded according to the many categories based on key items or descriptive codes. For example, some code labels for interviews' description of items by category are as follows:

- SP – Situation in Pioneering Days
- SC – Situation in Contemporary Days
- CA – Contextual Analysis
- CS – Church Sermon Focus
- CD – Contextual Analysis – Discontinuity
- TE – Theological Reflection – External Changes
- TC – Theological Reflection – Contemporary Issues
- TI – Theological Reflection – Internal Issues

The data itemised and coded then go through the process of further sorting and analysis as explained in next section 2.4.3. An example of data itemisation, first the listing, then the sorting by themes is illustrated in Table 2.2 and Appendix Five: Analysis Table: Codes, Variables, and Factors.

As for the archival documents, AGM does not have an archivist and the documents are without catalogue and code. Hence, I have manually coded all the primary sources used in this research. Some code label samples of archival documents by category are as follows:

- AN – AG News
- AR – Annual General Council Report
- BR – Biennial General Council Report
- FMR – Foreign Missions Report
- L – Letter
- M/GC – Minutes of the Annual General Council
- MR – Missionary Report
- NZ – Newzette
- SCR – Social Concern Report
- YC – Annual Pentecostal Revival Youth Camp

These archival documents are pivotal supporting evidences and primary sources complementing the overarching historical period.

2.4.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation

There are three steps in data analysis. Firstly, the first round of sorting by descriptive code and reducing the data. The data is then sorted the second time by subcategories or variables. This is followed by the process of synthesizing the data. The data and variables

are analysed and interpreted by themes or factors.³⁷ See Appendix Five on ‘Analysis Table: Codes, Variables and Factors’, which presents the code labels, itemisation in descriptive codes, analysis and interpretation by themes. It illustrates the identification of variables and factors through conceptualisation process of AGM’s various emphases, complexities, changes, and issues from classical formation through the movement growth period to contemporary times.

Code Labels	Items (Descriptive Codes)	Variables (Subcategories)	Factors (Categories) THEMES
	Stage 1 – The Situation and Its Complexities		
	Practices in Classical Formation:	CPM is rooted in the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 (and Acts 2:16-21) and classical Pentecostal theology.	Classical to Contemporary: There are various changes in the emphasis and practice of Pentecostal theology over the six decades from AGM’s inception in 1957 to present times.
SP – 14	Emphasis on Second coming of Christ and Full Gospel	Espoused Classical Pentecostal Theology: Joel 2 – Acts 2 Foundational Scriptures (Strong emphases on early classical Pentecostal practices)	a) Classical to Contemporary: The growth and development of AGM from the pioneering days to the contemporary days encompasses certain strong emphases and practices in conformity with the spiritual atmosphere then and now, but the core beliefs remains, especially at the leadership level:
SP – 18	Preaching signs and wonders		
SP – 21	Healing and miracles		
SP – 7	Baptism in the Holy Spirit		
SP – 5	Tarrying meeting, long services in the presence of HS		
SP – 6	Revival Services/Meetings		
SP – 22	Altar Call ministry		
SP – 13	Bible School (AG’s DNA, missionaries establish Bible school) to raise national leadership to pastor churches.	Early traits and practices of AGUSA (Classical Formation): AGM and Bible School (Early missionaries brought in the AG traits and practices of early American Pentecostalism.)	b) Theological Significance of Joel’s Prophecy 2:28-32 in AGM’s Espoused Classical Pentecostal theology and Pentecostal Distinctives which is AGM’s spiritual heritage:

³⁷ Saldaña, *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research*, pp. 94-5, 111-8.

			i. Baptism in the Holy Spirit (BHS) ii. Evidence of BHS (glossolalia) iii. Missions (BHS's purpose in mission emphasis)
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Table 2.2 An example of code labels, itemisation in descriptive codes, analysis and interpretation by variables and factors

The above table shows an example of identifying variables and factors through conceptualisation process of the classical emphases during the classical formation period. The subcategories interpreted from the data during the classical formation period are: Espoused classical Pentecostal theology: Joel 2 – Acts 2; Pentecostal distinctives and fervour; Early traits and practices of AGUSA (Classical Formation); AGM and Bible School; and etc. The theoretical framework is the interpretation of themes such as: Classical to Contemporary; Classical Pentecostal Movement (CPM); Classical Formation; Classical Emphases; Pentecostal Heritage: BHS, glossolalia, missions; and so on. The conceptual and theoretical framework is then illustrated by a diagram as follows:

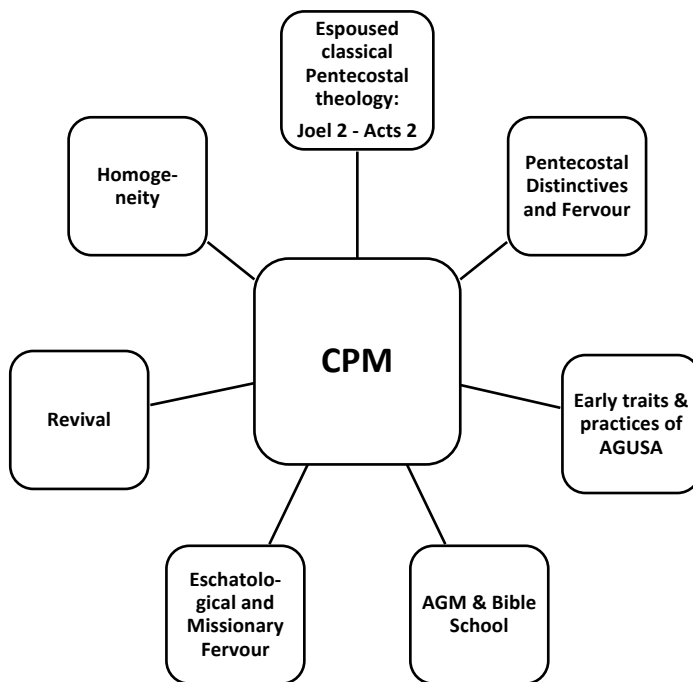


Figure 2.1 Classical Formation 1957-1974 – classical emphases

See Appendix Six: Themes – Theoretical and Conceptual Framework.

The approach suggested by Swinton and Mowat is a useful tool to form a conceptual framework which is related to the entire thesis structure. The research questions are relevant to these four stages. It is absolutely necessary to analyse data according to these four stages in the finding chapters as follows:

AGM Stage 1: Firstly, the qualitative research data via surveys and in-depth interviews, and written documents, will provide important data and significant evidence as to the actual situation, discourse, emphases, and practices in the AGM movement of present date. It will also provide personal testimonies on the spiritual experiences of AGM ministers and how the VoS has been instrumental in God's calling of full-time ministers; how PDVs have been a significant means of spiritual guidance in mission and church growth. The situation and its complexity are derived from personal experiential and ministerial testimonies, biblical and theological views, the knowledge and experience in the growth of AGM over the different periods down to the present day, current issues, shifts of emphases, and practice in AGM.

Stage 1 is a construction of a chronological narrative of AGM's historical development from classical to contemporary as representation of the primary data, highlighting the changing nature, and difference in emphases then and now. Identifying the themes and constructing a chronological narrative of a story or history is part of data analysis and representation in narrative research approach.³⁸ The data analysis and interpretation involves the conceptual and theoretical framework of major themes in each period, derived from the variables and factors. See Appendix Six on Themes from Theoretical and Conceptual Framework.

³⁸ John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, SAGE, 4th edn (Los Angeles, 2017), p. 199. Chapter eight on 'Data Analysis and Representation'; Saldaña, *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research*, p. 33.

The situation and its complexities covers: Firstly, how AGM has grown and developed from a CPM to a CPCM through the historical milestones, encompassing the changing nature and paradigm shifts from classical emphases to contemporary emphases, which impacted the changes in practices of the Pentecostal distinctives and in particular the VoS.

Secondly, how, when, and where God called the AGM ministers to full-time ministry; what the teaching and practice of the AGM is as to the VoS and Joel 2:28-32; whether the VoS or gift of the Holy Spirit in PDV is still being emphasised and practised in the churches and ministries of the AGM; whether the power of the Holy Spirit through prophetic word, dreams and visions is in fact understood by the leaderships of the AGM (at national, district/division and local church levels) to the point of being a fundamental aspect of God's guidance and direction towards mission and church growth; how the emphasis on Spirit-baptism (or lack of it) has impacted the growth and development of AGM in the different periods. See Appendix Seven: Testimonies on VoS.

AGM Stage 2: The data collected and processed will be subjected to contextual analysis. In this case, the process of interpreting AGM's contextual situation and complexities emerged from the primary data analysis and representation in Stage 1, and the main contextual factors (historical, theological, sociological) for the changes in emphases and practices of the central Pentecostal distinctives and PDV from Joel 2 – Acts 2 in AGM's development from classical to contemporary. It also analyses and interprets how paradigm shifts have impacted AGM's theological, missional, ecclesiological and ministerial aspects.

The evaluation of testimonies, teachings, emphases and practice, and evaluating the reasons of changes that take place over the decades is crucial in understanding how AGM has grown and transitioned from a CPM to a CPCM over time, and how the emphasis on

Pentecostal distinctives has impacted the growth and development of AGM in the different periods.

AGM Stage 3: A theological reflection and interpretation on how has AGM's theological development from classical to contemporary impacted the emphases and practice of its doctrinal distinctives derived from Joel 2 – Acts 2. Chapter three on the foundational Scripture and key theological themes of the classical Pentecostal theology provides the historical-theological backdrop to understanding AGM and its changes. This stage interprets the underlying theology of the changes in emphases and practice impacting the AGM's Pentecostal distinctives and heritage analysed in Stages 1 and 2, in the light of AGM's doctrinal beliefs, i.e. Tenets of Faith – SFT, specifically No. 7 on 'The Baptism in the Holy Spirit', No. 8 on 'The Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit', and No. 10 on 'The Church and Its Mission' as listed in Appendix Eight.

The evaluation of the shift in emphases and practice involves studying the currently operative pneumatology. A reflection on the current practice will show how AGM has developed theologically. This stage will also evaluate the areas of concerns, changes, developments, and dynamics of the movement. Such reflection is crucial to a clear discernment of the Pentecostal spirituality, as well as the hybridisation of external theological influences over the periods, for it will aid in the examination of AGM's Pentecostal heritage and its contemporary image, nature, situation and overall dynamic.

The theological reflection and interpretation includes: interpret how the operative pneumatology or underlying theology of the theological development impacted AGM in the theology, ecclesiology, missiology, and ministry; how the outpouring of the Spirit in Joel 2:28-32 has been interpreted, emphasised, and practised over time; how ministers view PDV in today's context; some major concerns of AGM ministers on the Pentecostal heritage and the contemporary issues; the reasons for the AGM's call for united prayer and the focus on revival; how the leadership understands 'contemporary'; and what

external theological influences are influencing their understanding of being ‘contemporary’.

AGM Stage 4: Following the data processing, analysis, and theological reflection, this stage involves the formulation of revised practice, proposing objective ways forward for AGM to advance and thrive in the twenty-first century that is to advance in the preaching of the gospel. The way forward suggests ways for AGM in preserving its holistic Pentecostal spirituality from which flows the new generations of vibrant Pentecostal community, robust Pentecostal ecclesiology, missiology, and ministry in the twenty-first century and beyond. The revised forms of faithful practice will involve: the major roles and transformative practice of National Bible College and institutions; leadership and ministers; church members and individuals.

2.5 Researcher’s Positionality

The researcher’s positionality as an insider within AGM needs to be addressed in light of objectivity in data collection and the data handling process and any possible power dynamics. I hereby clarify my position and role of the researcher in qualitative research. I am an AGM licensed minister and full-time faculty member of BCM. Although seemingly I am an insider, I am careful to conduct this research in an objective manner and academic way. The data collection, processing, analysis, and interpretation is a heavy responsibility, as the topic covered is a historical period of six decades, to understand the historical and theological development of the movement, particularly with special reference to Joel’s prophecy of the espoused classical Pentecostal theology, distinctives, and practice.

As AGM is a fellowship of churches and members practising autonomy more than a top-down denomination and being a huge movement of almost 400 churches and outreaches nationwide to date, there is certainly some churches are more vibrant in their

Pentecostal fervour than some others, or more actively engaging in missions than some others. There would also be different levels of passion and convictions on the Pentecostal distinctives from the classical formation period to contemporary times. This research is not intended to make any judgement or comparison on any particular church, but the research focus is to understand the changing nature, emphases, and practice of AGM as a Malaysian Pentecostal movement over the historical milestones.

I am also aware that I am not covering every aspect of the movement over the six decades, but only specially focusing on the major changes, emphases and practice of the Pentecostal distinctives with special reference to the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2. This is purely an academic study of the historical and theological development of AGM from classical to contemporary.

2.6 Trustworthiness and Reliability of the Data

The triangulation of data sources applied in this study is crucial in determining trustworthiness and reliability of the data, which are the variety of data sources, data collection strategies, different evidences and insights.³⁹ The large pool of data sources are the variety of participants from the young ministers, full-time Bible school students in training of this contemporary period back to the earlier pioneers and senior ministers since the inception of AGM and BIM. Rich data are also collected from ministers of various seniority from different historical periods, different districts, different language groups, as well as wide age range of ministers. Just the primary data of survey and in-depth interviews provide a balanced representation of views, feelings, and convictions.

The data collection strategy of having different kinds of data is that these primary data from surveys and interviews are also confirmed as well as complemented by written

³⁹ Paulette M. Rothbauer, 'Triangulation,' in Given, ed., *Qualitative Research Methods*, pp. 892-4; Yin, *Qualitative Research*, pp. 81-2.

documents, archival materials, and secondary sources. The trustworthiness and reliability of the kinds of data is also based on the participants' honesty as well as the leadership's openness, support, trust, confidence, and invaluable concerted input from the current EXCO members on the CPM and CPCM emphases and vision for the future.

The credibility of the primary data collection, processing, analysis, and interpretation has been upheld throughout the qualitative studies, and as a researcher, I am evaluating the data objectively and academically without prejudice, bias or distortion. Primary data is also reflected upon with the Pentecostal theologians' scholarship views of the past, present, and future. There is also a scholarship coverage of western Pentecostalism, global movements and influences, as well as an honest reflection on the contextualisation of the Malaysian Pentecostalism.

For the clarification of voices, views and assertions: All data from surveys and interviews are clearly specified with code labels in the footnotes. Archival documents are cited with detailed descriptions followed by the respective codes. The finding chapters are the researcher's data analysis and interpretation, which are mostly supported by archival documents and scholarships. All supporting secondary sources are also clearly cited.

2.7 Research Ethics

The process of this research has been conducted with high regard to any possible ethical issues and I have made efforts to mitigate any possible risks. Creswell has developed a comprehensive list on ethical issues and I have observed the types of ethical issue and addressed them throughout the research process as follows:⁴⁰

⁴⁰ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th edn (Thousand Oaks, 2014), pp. 132-3, pdf. See chapter 4, Table 4.1 Ethical Issues in Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Research. [Cited sources: Adapted from American Psychological Association, *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th edn (Washington, 2010); John W. Creswell, *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*, 3rd edn (Thousand

- a) ‘Prior to conducting the study’, there was no need for seeking approval from any professional association or local permission from any gatekeepers as this research is not under high risk category.
- b) ‘Beginning the study’, I have informed all survey participants and interviewees the general purpose of the study. Participants willingly gave their consent in contributing to this research either verbally or mostly individual written consent with meeting appointment arrangements via emails as there was no pressure to sign any standard consent form. Many have also indicated on the survey forms their willingness for a follow-up interview. The second interviewees in their continuous support had willingly signed a blanket consent form as the purpose of interview and information gathered may be deemed official involving the leadership’s contemporary vision, views, and direction of the movement, as well as current issues and challenges.
- c) In ‘collecting data’, there is a sense of trust, ministerial relationship, comradeship, and mutual respect in the sharing of testimonies, data, and information by participants. I value the participants’ genuine conversations, information, kindness, and relationships.
- d) In ‘analyzing data’, I have been very objective and reported on multiple perspectives. I avoided siding with participants or only disclosing positive results. I have objectively reported contrary findings and mixed responses equally.
- e) Lastly, in ‘reporting, sharing, and storing data’, I report honestly. I report fairly and equally both the positive and negative findings. I communicate clearly in a straightforward manner and appropriate language, avoiding any bias. This

Oaks, 2013); Y.S. Lincoln, Ethical practices in qualitative research, in D.M. Mertens and P. E. Ginsberg, ed., *The handbook of social research ethics* (Thousand Oaks, 2009), pp. 150–69; D.M. Mertens and P. E. Ginsberg, *The handbook of social research ethics* (Thousand Oaks, 2009); and J. Salmons, Online interviews in real time (Thousand Oaks, 2010).]

research will be shared with the participants. In terms of storing data, the raw data and materials will be kept at least for five years and more for the future.

Overall, these ethical issues have been anticipated and measures duly taken in the course of this study.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explained the research process and methodology of practical theology and qualitative research in a logical and systematic approach. I have upheld the trustworthiness and credibility of the data as well as the whole research process from collection to analysis and interpretation, to produce reliable and credible findings and results. I anticipate that this research will provide the historical-theological foundation on AGM's espoused classical Pentecostal theology and distinctives, as well as upholding the robust Pentecostal spirituality as a CPCM in this twenty-first century and beyond for the future generations.

Chapter Three

Key Theological Themes of Pentecostalism: Joel 2 and Acts 2

The main beliefs and practices of AG¹ originated from two foundational texts which are often cited or alluded to, namely Joel 2 and Acts 2. These two key texts play a significant role in shaping the understanding of traditional Pentecostal theology and practice. In this chapter I will identify seven key theological themes (based on primary data analysis and interpretation, the theoretical and conceptual framework with supporting Pentecostal scholarship) which are significant in AGM context and show how these two texts play a pivotal role in shaping these themes. Although these texts are basic to Pentecostal theology, there are other related texts which provide fuller support to their claims.

There are two selection criteria of the key theological themes from Joel 2 and Acts 2: Firstly, their direct relation to the outpouring of the Spirit which are fundamental to the formation of Pentecostal theology and spirituality. BHS is the primary Pentecostal experience and doctrine, from which other key Pentecostal distinctives are derived. The second criterion is based on the interpretation of early Pentecostals in the Pentecostal scholarship² discussed in this chapter and the classical emphases by the AG missionaries during AGM's formative period. There is continuation of these themes through the contemporary times, though some have taken on new forms and concepts.

The discussion in the various sections in this chapter will cover the importance of these two texts on which the early and contemporary Pentecostal views of the key theological themes are based, the similarities and differences of interpretation and

¹ AGM subscribes to the Statement of 16 Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God or Tenets of Faith.

² The key theological themes are intertwined under the overarching centrality of BHS which form the Pentecostal spirituality as the many reports in the early Pentecostal news like *The Apostolic Faith*, *The Latter Rain Evangel*, and the writings of early Pentecostals namely Parham, Seymour, Myland, and Gee. These themes from Joel's prophecy are affirmed in the writings of Pentecostal historians and scholars include Dayton, Anderson, Hunter, Robeck, Synan, Faupel, Land; and classical Pentecostal theologians like Stronstad, R.P Menzies, W. Menzies, Riggs, Nelson, Williams, among others.

understanding, as well as new developments on the related central AG doctrines from biblical-theological perspectives.

The purpose of this chapter is to understand the classical Pentecostal pneumatology and its theological themes based on the foundational texts, and the continuity and discontinuity of the themes within the contemporary pneumatology. This will provide a backdrop of the development of Pentecostal pneumatology from the classical understanding to the contemporary understanding of the theological themes in order to have a theological framework (or lens) for the theological reflection on the contextualisation of the Pentecostalism in the context of Malaysia in the finding chapters. The discussion on the contemporary understanding in this chapter does not include the Malaysian case.

The early Pentecostals had a living reality of the outpouring of the Spirit from Joel's prophecy and Acts 2 particularly in the Azusa Street revival in the early twentieth century and theologized their spiritual experiences from these texts. In using Scripture to form theology, Israel suggests the term 'prismatic' to describe 'the function which Scripture texts performed in the theologizing of the New Testament.'³ But what is significant about the classical⁴ Pentecostal theology is that it is strongly based on overwhelming spiritual experiences likened to living in the book of Acts, especially the BHS, glossolalia, spiritual gifts, and zeal in witnessing. The early Pentecostals were 'biblicists' and believed that their experience was based solidly on Scripture. As such, the key theological themes experienced and interpreted from these foundational texts by the early Pentecostals, namely the BHS, glossolalia, 'all flesh', the return of Christ, the missionary emphasis, revivalism, and PDV, formed the early Pentecostal spirituality and root of the classical

³ Richard D. Israel, 'Joel 2:28-32 (3:1-5 MT): Prism for Pentecost', in Cecil M. Robeck Jr., ed., *Charismatic Experiences in History* (Peabody, 1985), p. 1.

⁴ Classical Pentecostal has its roots in the Holiness Movement since 1901 and America's revivalism from the Azusa Street revival in 1906, which later brought about the formation of the Assemblies of God and other Pentecostal churches.

Pentecostal theology. These seven chosen theological themes from the foundational texts among others are principal in AGM context as they formed AGM's espoused classical Pentecostal theology and continue to be fundamental to the growth and development of the AGM. The present research will be limited to issues directly relevant to classical Pentecostal theology as practised by AGM.

3.1 BHS

3.1.1 Definition

BHS is synonymous with Spirit-baptism or filled with the Holy Spirit, which means 'to be immersed in the Holy Spirit. This signifies a total submergence within the reality of the Holy Spirit so that whoever is so baptized has a vivid sense of the Spirit's presence and power.'⁵

For Pentecostals, BHS is the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy: 'I will pour out my Spirit' on the Day of Pentecost as explained by Peter (Acts 2).⁶ In the New Testament and in intertextual reading of the Scriptures, 'I will pour out my Spirit' in Joel's prophecy 2:28-32 signifies God pouring out the 'Holy Spirit' in Spirit-baptism, a new and powerful way, as adapted and affirmed by Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21; 2.1-2). After being baptised by the Holy Spirit, Peter preached to the people that what had just happened was indeed the fulfilment of Joel 2. Thus, we cannot properly understand the Pentecostal experience without locating it in their doctrine of BHS. It is the foundational doctrine from which other Pentecostal distinctives are derived. This point is argued by Frank Macchia when he calls it 'the crown jewel of Pentecostal distinctives'.⁷

⁵ Stanley M. Burgess, Gary B. McGee and Patrick H. Alexander, eds., *DPCM* (Grand Rapids, 1988), s.v. 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit', p. 41.

⁶ Williams, *Systematic Theology*, p. 50; Arrington, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 27; Horton, *Book of Acts*, p. 38.

⁷ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p. 20.

In a contemporary definition, Macchia's view about BHS as 'crown jewel' is supported by his linking Spirit-baptism to the concept of the kingdom of God. He understands BHS as a theophanic experience of God⁸ which is theologically related to the eschaton and the whole process of soteriology.⁹ Macchia expands the boundaries of BHS to include regeneration (Acts 2:39; 11:18) and being in Christ (Rom. 5:5; 1 Cor. 12:13),¹⁰ sacraments (Acts 2:38; 19:5-6; 1 Cor. 12:13),¹¹ clothing of power from on high (Lk. 24:49) with empowerment for witness, life and service (Acts 1:3-8, 2:4; 2:12; 2:37-47; 15:8),¹² sanctification (Acts 15:8-9),¹³ koinonia (Acts 2:42),¹⁴ and eschatological (Act 2:17-21; 2:1-4).¹⁵ Macchia relates, 'Spirit baptism gave rise to the global church and remains the very substance of the church's life in the Spirit, including its charismatic life and mission.'¹⁶

BHS is a distinct Pentecostal and charismatic doctrine, of critical importance, and stated as AG's Tenets of Faith no. 7. Hocken (1932-2017) viewed 'the spiritual event called the baptism in the Holy Spirit' being the common factor in the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements¹⁷ though their respective theological emphases differ. BHS serves as the interpretive lens for understanding Pentecostal faith and practice, particularly for AGM.

⁸ Frank D. Macchia, 'Sighs Too Deep for Words: Toward a Theology of Glossolalia', *JPT* 1 (1992), pp. 55-60; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp. 64-72. BHS to include regeneration may not represent the typical Pentecostal position. James Dunn views the function of BHS as God's act in establishing the Christian identity. See James D.G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-Examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (London, 1970).

⁹ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, chps. 3 and 4.

¹⁰ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp. 14-5, 64.

¹¹ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp. 72-3.

¹² Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp. 14-5, 75-9.

¹³ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp 79-80, 87.

¹⁴ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p. 79.

¹⁵ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p. 86.

¹⁶ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p. 155.

¹⁷ Peter Hocken, *The Glory and the Shame: Reflections on the 20th-Century Outpouring of the Holy Spirit* (Guildford, 1994), p. 39.

3.1.2 Classical Understanding

In the case of BHS doctrine, both early and contemporary Pentecostals link it to Joel's prophecy on the outpouring of the Spirit in Joel 2 and its fulfilment in Acts 2, and ongoing fulfilment in the church era. Synan (1934-2020) wrote that the message proclaimed at Azusa Street revival 1906-1909 and its missions 'Apostolic Faith' by William J. Seymour, which attracted the multitudes, was that 'modern Christians could receive a baptism in the Holy Spirit just as the apostles did on the Day of Pentecost.'¹⁸

Gee (1891-1966), an early Pentecostal AG minister in the 1930s, affirmed BHS as being key and 'central to the Pentecostal experience is Jesus Christ', and out of this spiritual experience, flowed the emphases of the early twentieth century Pentecostals on personal experience, evangelistic preaching, revival meetings, full-gospel as it were on the day of Pentecost, explosion of spiritual power, and zeal on 'total world evangelization'.¹⁹

BHS being a central doctrine and Pentecostal distinctive is formulated as AG's Tenets of Faith – SFT No. 7.²⁰ Pentecostals often connect this fulfilment as 'the promise of the Father' in Lk. 24:49, as stated in the Statement of Faith. Jesus Christ declared that the Father would send the Holy Spirit and that the disciples should wait for the Father's promise in Jerusalem as they will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from Jesus' ascension (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 8).

Pentecostals believe that BHS results in empowerment (as stated in the AG Statement of Faith) based on Acts 1:8, correlating to Acts 2. The power for service

¹⁸ Vinson Synan, *An Eyewitness Remembers the Century of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, 2010), p. 21. Seymour had learnt this Pentecostal message from his mentor, Charles Fox Parham, in Houston, Texas, in 1905, and brought it to Los Angeles where he pastored a small black Holiness church and started the Azusa Street revival services in April 1906.

¹⁹ Gee, *Pentecostal Experience*, p. 32. See chapter one fn. 18 on Gee's writings.

²⁰ AGM, Annex 1: Tenets of Faith –SFT, Pursuant to Articles 1 & 3.1 (13), Constitution and Bylaws, p. 94, AGM-CBLr20160531. See Appendix Eight.

includes the gifts of the Spirit (especially the ‘nine gifts’ in 1 Cor. 12).²¹ The classical Pentecostalism views BHS, as termed by Bonino (1924-2012), the ‘receiving’ of the Spirit involving empowerment.²² Dayton (1942-2020) discovered the phrase ‘BHS’ is used for a number of different experiences among Pentecostals over history including ‘soul-winning power’, ‘empowerment for service’, and ‘endowment of power’.²³

The added phrase in the tenet, ‘With the baptism in the Holy Ghost come such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; Acts 4:8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Heb. 12:28)’ is the after-effects of BHS. The mission aspect seems to be more strongly emphasised both in the past and today as the phrase, ‘an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:42), and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost (Mark 16:20).’

3.1.3 Contemporary Understanding

Contemporary Pentecostals also affirm BHS is linked with the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2 as fulfilment of Joel 2. Iverson relates that the fulfilment of the Spirit’s outpouring continues on through the BHS.²⁴ Stronstad views the prophecy of Joel as a pivotal biblical event which not only stands in continuity with both the charismatic activity of the Spirit in Old Testament times and with the ministry of Jesus, but also with the ongoing activity of the Spirit among the people of God.²⁵

²¹ The nine gifts are the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, increased faith, the gifts of healing, the gift of miracles, prophecy, the discernment of spirits, diverse kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues.

²² José Míguez Bonino, ‘Changing Paradigms: A Response’, in Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen, eds., *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel* (Oxford, 1999), p. 118.

²³ Dayton, *Theological Roots*, pp. 87-108.

²⁴ Dick Iverson, *The Holy Spirit Today: A Concise Survey of the Doctrine of the Holy Ghost* (Portland, 1976), p. 38. References include Acts 8:17; 9:17; 10:44; 11:15-17; 19:6; 1 Cor. 12:13; 1 John 2:20, 27; Rom. 8:15; 1 Cor. 2:12; 3:16; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13; 1 Thess. 4:8.

²⁵ Stronstad, *Charismatic Theology*, p. 61.

Although both early and contemporary Pentecostals believe in the central doctrine on BHS, based on Joel 2 and Acts 2, some contemporary Pentecostals disagree with the classical Pentecostal view of BHS being narrowly defined as ‘an endowment of power for life and service’, and limited to the understanding of Acts. Advocates of the early Pentecostal view, Stronstad and R.P. Menzies focus on the bestowal of the prophetic gift (Acts 2:15-21, 33) and the Spirit’s empowering for witness (Lk. 24:47-49; Acts 1:8).²⁶ Chan argues against Stronstad’s and R.P. Menzies’ limited scope of Lukan pneumatology of BHS and empowerment for missions which does not represent the entire NT teaching on the doctrine.²⁷ Pentecostals need a wider and more integrated biblical understanding of BHS than mere focus on Lukan narrative.²⁸

In the development of a more holistic understanding of BHS, the central doctrine in Pentecostal theology, contemporary theologians, namely Macchia, Chan, and Turner, using the integrated approach on Scripture, NT pneumatology, especially the importance of Pauline pneumatology and trinitarian theology, argue that BHS has a broader meaning and theological significances than empowerment for service in Luke-Acts.

The spiritual experience of BHS is intense, overwhelming, both penumatological focus and Christocentric since early Pentecostal understanding to present. Macchia testified his personal experience of being filled by the Spirit:

I felt God’s powerful presence embrace me, and while accepting my calling to the ministry, I made promises to God that have accompanied me throughout my life ... I came to cherish the awareness of God’s presence anew, on occasion to change us, fill us with the divine presence anew, and move us toward meaningful experiences of self-giving and ministry in the power of the Spirit ... powerful experience of the divine presence, love, and calling is involved, one that loosens our tongues and our hands to function under the inspiration of the Spirit.

He began to pray in tongues and sensed the calling from God when on his knees praying; he later found himself laid on the floor with his eyes fixed on the cross.²⁹

²⁶ R.P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*.

²⁷ Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, p. 21.

²⁸ Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, p. 46.

²⁹ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp. 13-4.

As mentioned in the definition, Macchia calls BHS the ‘crown jewel’ as he extends the boundaries of BHS to encompass regeneration, sacramental, empowerment, sanctification, koinonia, and eschatological. Macchia’s view of BHS covers the concept of the kingdom of God in trinitarian perspective, ecclesiology, and Spirit-baptised life. Macchia stresses, ‘The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost has broad boundaries, though empowerment for witness seems to represent the overall goal of the effects of Spirit baptism for Luke,’³⁰ it is more than prophetic speech and charismatic gifting, but it is ‘empowerment for Christian life and service’, both functional and experiential as well.³¹ He emphasises that BHS should be understood from the Pauline pneumatology in salvation, ‘*being* in Christ’, and the source of empowerment in living witness is ‘*functioning* in Christ in the power of the Spirit’.³²

Chan discusses BHS in relation to glossolalia as initial evidence and suggests the integrated or canonical approach of the whole of Scripture³³ and New Testament pneumatology of both Lukan and Pauline to develop and establish the fuller meaning of the central Pentecostal doctrines, namely BHS and glossolalia.³⁴ Chan’s contribution is taking the Pentecostal beliefs and experiences to the broader ecclesial context. He touches on the nature of BHS as more than empowerment for service. Among other things, BHS is about a certain kind of relationship with God. Chan stresses, ‘[A]ny doctrine about Spirit-baptism must deal ultimately with the relationship with the God who reveals himself in Jesus Christ through the illumination of the Spirit. Power is only the result of that revelational encounter with the triune God.’³⁵ Chan views the trinitarian narrative in Scriptures which speak about the ‘second sending’, the coming of the Spirit where BHS

³⁰ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p. 86.

³¹ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p. 14.

³² Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp. 14-5.

³³ Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, p. 49.

³⁴ Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, pp. 44-6. Glossolalia will be discussed in the next section.

³⁵ Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, p. 49.

significantly transpires a new reality in the ‘last days’ and the age of the Spirit. The fulfilment of the outpouring of the Spirit prophesied in Joel (2:28, Acts 2:17) and Ezekiel (36:26, 27; 37:14; 39:29) reveals Jesus as Spirit-baptiser, sent by the Father (Lk. 24:49; Jn. 15:26), and Holy Spirit as the third person in the trinitarian relationship is made explicit. This development provides the church the full-scale trinitarian doctrine.³⁶ And Turner, who engages Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal scholars, also examines other broader emphases of the Spirit which include the Spirit is given after conversion or salvation (Acts 2:38, 39, 41; 8:36-38; 16:15, 33; 18:8); as charismatic empowering of the church (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37); the Spirit in John (1-12; 14-16); and Pauline pneumatology.³⁷ Therefore, BHS being the central Pentecostal doctrine based on Joel 2 and Acts 2, has much broader theological ramifications than just ‘power for life and service’ as understood by the classical Pentecostals. As Chan aptly puts it, ‘Lukan pneumatology will have to be integrated with Pauline pneumatology and this integrated pneumatology will have to be interpreted within the larger framework of theology.’³⁸

3.1.4 Centrality of BHS

Pentecostals uphold the centrality of BHS, but the theology and purpose of BHS varies among theologians depending on the Scripture texts emphasised. The pneumatology in the NT covers several emphases such as Lukan, Johannine, and Pauline. The early Pentecostals’ view on BHS was narrowly focused on Acts or Lukan pneumatology.

Reinforcing the argument on the centrality of BHS for Pentecostals are the new hermeneutical developments of this central doctrine. Contemporary Pentecostals and theologians, like Macchia, Chan, and Turner advocate the broader and fuller biblical-theological perspectives on BHS, which enlarges and deepens the understanding of this

³⁶ Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, pp. 55-6.

³⁷ Turner, *Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, pp. 37-56, 110.

³⁸ Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, p. 12.

Pentecostal's distinctive. As BHS is the central doctrine of AG and many other Pentecostal-charismatic denominations alike, its fullest meaning has to be examined, understood, established, and the 'theophany' of the Trinity experienced by all.

3.2 Glossolalia

The early Pentecostal understood it as xenolalia, but contemporary Pentecostals understand it symbolically as glossolalia. This section discusses on how the early Pentecostals linked speaking in tongues to mission which spurred worldwide Pentecostal movement; how the belief in xenolalia shifted to the nature of glossolalia (unknown tongues), as the initial evidence of BHS and the distinguishing mark of classical Pentecostals; and how contemporary Pentecostal theologians reveal that glossolalia has much broader spiritual dimensions than just 'initial evidence' of BHS. Ultimately, there is a need to develop a coherent theological explanation for this central doctrine of glossolalia.

3.2.1 Definition

Glossolalia is usually 'the religious phenomenon of making sounds that constitute, or resemble, a language not known to the speaker.'³⁹ Glossolalia is the 'initial evidence' (initial physical sign) of the BHS in AG's Tenets of Faith no. 8. R.P. Menzies affirms, 'In Acts 2.17-18 (cf. Acts 2.4) speaking in tongues is specifically described as a fulfilment of Joel's prophecy that in the last days all of God's people will prophesy' and are 'end-time prophets that Joel anticipated.'⁴⁰ Paul terms glossolalia as 'speaking in tongues' in 1 Corinthians 12 – 14, as 'unintelligible utterances inspired by the Spirit' (12:30; 13:1; 14:2, 4, 6, 13, 18, 23, 27, 39) and not known human languages as tongues need interpretation

³⁹ Burgess, McGee and Alexander, eds., *DPCM*, s.v. 'Glossolalia', p. 335.

⁴⁰ R.P. Menzies, *Speaking in Tongues*, p. 158.

(14:6-19, 28; 12:10, 30). Glossolalia is ‘inspired speech associated with worship and prophetic pronouncements.’⁴¹

In a broader perspective, contemporary theologians like Gordon Fee examines that the book of Acts and Pauline theology provides a twofold understanding of glossolalia which is a ‘sign’, ‘initial physical evidence’ of BHS, and ‘spiritual gift’, ‘prayer language’, or ‘a message in tongues’.⁴²

3.2.2 Early Pentecostal Understand – xenolalia

Early Pentecostals linked speaking in tongues to mission which had directly spurred worldwide Pentecostal movement.⁴³ Early Pentecostals like Seymour and early American Pentecostals believed in Parham’s doctrine on speaking in tongues as xenolalia (gift of foreign language) to preach the gospel to the world in the ‘last days’, through which the recipients’ mission fields were identified.⁴⁴ Synan related, speaking in tongues served as the ‘Bible evidence’ of BHS in the Azusa Street mission.⁴⁵ In the Azusa Street revival in 1906, *The Apostolic Faith* reported on the gift of tongues (xenolalia) after receiving BHS, ‘Many have spoken in the languages of India, China, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the islands of the sea, as well as the learned languages of Greek, Latin, etc. The Holy Ghost speaks

⁴¹ R.P. Menzies, *Speaking in Tongues*, p. 16.

⁴² Fee, ‘Toward a Pauline Theology of Glossolalia’, p. 24.

⁴³ The key theological themes are intertwined under the overarching centrality of BHS.

⁴⁴ Anderson, *Introduction*, pp. 29, 182-3. Doctrine of ‘subsequence’ was from the Holiness movement. There were three distinct groups of Holiness adherents with different positions on BHS: Wesleyan-Holiness position where BHS was called ‘second work of grace’, ‘second blessing’ as ‘entire sanctification’ or ‘perfect love’. Keswick position believed that BHS is an endowment with power for service; The ‘third blessing’ position’ was both ‘second blessing’ of sanctification and ‘third blessing’ of ‘baptism with fire’, also endowment with power, with evidenced with speaking in tongues. Also called the ‘third work of grace’. See Dayton, *Theological Roots*, p. 18.

⁴⁵ Synan, *Eyewitness*, p. 21.

any language He chooses.’⁴⁶ God was calling new-tongued missionaries to different parts of the world and the Spirit giving utterance were signs to the heathen of God’s message.⁴⁷

The Azusa Street revival was the beginning of worldwide revival in the last days with signs and wonders following the preaching of the full gospel, as many missionary accounts were reported, such as missionaries to Liberia, Africa, Monrovia, China, Spokane, Japan, and etc. where they preached or wrote with the gift of tongues in the native languages.⁴⁸ ‘In the power and demonstration of the Spirit’ through BHS, gift of foreign language and other gifts like healing, signs and wonders, missionaries were ‘sent by the Spirit’ for universal missions to the ends of the earth.⁴⁹ Just within two years, Azusa Street revival missions had reached 25 nations.⁵⁰ Approximately, more than 200 Pentecostal missionaries had been sent abroad by 1910.⁵¹ According to Faupel, the practice of glossolalia was crucial in proclaiming ‘The Everlasting Gospel’ to the nations, and glossolalia was ‘the seal of the Spirit providing the assurance of membership in the Bride of Christ.’⁵² The direct role of glossolalia in mission was the belief that new Spirit-missionaries did not have to go through language-learning.⁵³

⁴⁶ *The Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 4 (Los Angeles, December 1906), p. 1, AF190612-1-4; *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 3 (November 1906), p. 4, AF190611-1-3.

⁴⁷ *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 1 (September 1906), p. 1, AF190609-1-1; *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 3 (November 1906), p. 2, AF190611-1-3; *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 3 (November 1906), p. 4, AF190611-1-3.

⁴⁸ *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 4 (December 1906), p. 3, AF190612-1-4; *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 5 (Jan. 1907), p. 4, AF190701-1-5; *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 6 (February-March 1907), p. 1, AF190702/03-1-6; *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 9 (June-September 1907), p. 1, 4, AF190706/09-1-9; *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 10 (September 1907), p. 1, AF190709-1-10; *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 11 (October-January 1908), p. 1, AF190810/01-1-11.

⁴⁹ Anderson, *Introduction*, pp. 199, 232. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, pp. 59-63; Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 21-22. The eschatological fervour to preach the full gospel to the whole world hastening the return of Christ in the last days in fulfilment of Matt. 24:14 was the early Pentecostals’ missionary zeal.

⁵⁰ Anderson, *Introduction*, pp. 36, 42-43, 182. Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 182-6, 208-9, 212-6. The doctrine of BHS and xenolalia was taught by Parham. He played an important role in the formation of the classical Pentecostal doctrines of BHS and initial evidence. He denounced the later majority of Pentecostals who shifted to belief in glossolalia.

⁵¹ Gary B. McGee, ‘To the Regions Beyond: The Global Expansion of Pentecostalism’, in Vinson Synan, ed., *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901-2001* (Nashville, 2001), p. 73.

⁵² Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, p. 42.

⁵³ Wonsuk Ma, ‘The Theological Motivations for Pentecostal Mission’, in Lee, Younghoon and Wonsuk Ma, eds., *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity: An Edinburgh Centenary Reader*, Regnum Studies

3.2.3 Classical Understanding – glossolalia

In the turning of the first decade, the belief in xenolalia soon changed over to the doctrine of glossolalia as the initial evidence of BHS and affirmed as the distinguishing mark of Pentecostals. Majority of Pentecostals abandoned the belief of xenolalia and switched to the belief in glossolalia (unknown tongues) as the ‘evidence’ of BHS in early American Pentecostalism, after missionary failures when hearers could not understand the foreign tongues.⁵⁴ As the focus on crisis eschatology and xenolalia waned, the emphasis on the doctrine of speaking in tongues repositioned to glossolalia as the initial evidence of BHS.⁵⁵ AG’s distinctive doctrine as stated in Tenets of Faith no. 8 believes in glossolalia being the initial physical evidence of BHS and this becomes the Pentecostal distinctive which differentiates AG from other denominations.⁵⁶

Pentecostals believe that glossolalia is the initial evidence of BHS based on Acts 2 and other related passages in Acts. The normative model for classical Pentecostal’s doctrines on ‘subsequence’ (BHS is subsequent experience to conversion) and ‘consequence’ (speaking in tongues as initial evidence of BHS) are Acts 2:4; 8:4-19; 10:44-8; and 19:1-7. These accounts support the classical Pentecostal’s doctrines of ‘consequence’ or ‘initial evidence’ of BHS, and ‘subsequence’. Classical Pentecostals claims the normative pattern of BHS and glossolalia being the ‘initial physical evidence’,

in Mission series (Oxford, 2018), p. 35. Cited ‘Russians Hear in Their Own Tongue’, *TAF* 1 (September 1906), 4, col. 3.

⁵⁴ Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 182. *Confidence*, vol. II, no. 8 (Sunderland, England, August 1909), p. 181. In 1909, it was reported by The Pentecostal Missionary Union for Great Britain in *Confidence*, ‘In spite of what seemed to be disappointment when they found they could not preach in the language of the people, and in spite of mistakes made chiefly through their zeal, God has blessed, and now more than ever the Pentecostal Movement is truly a Missionary Movement.’

⁵⁵ Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 182.

⁵⁶ See McGee, ed., *Initial Evidence*; and Menzies and Horton, *Bible Doctrines*; AGM, Annex 1, p. 95, AGM-CBLr20160531.

thus believing there is a distinction between tongues as a ‘sign’ or initial evidence of BHS as well as a ‘gift’ (1 Cor. 12:30; 14:5, 18) in relation to Paul’s epistles to the Corinthians.⁵⁷

3.2.4 Contemporary Understanding – Distinguishing Mark

Contemporary scholars like R.P. Menzies, Arrington, Horton, Chan, and Fee, have studied other spiritual dimensions of glossolalia, which give a broader understanding of this Pentecostal distinctive that are not restricted to ‘initial evidence’ of BHS, but also include other dimensions of Christian spirituality.

The contemporary developments involve: the broader function and dimensions of glossolalia in prayer and sacrament; glossolalia is the inaugural signs of the prophetic Spirit, where the Spirit of prophecy is significantly linked to PDV as prophesied by Joel that believers do receive revelation from the Spirit through prophecy, dreams, and visions; the broader understanding of glossolalia is derived from other related Scriptures which reveals that glossolalia plays prominent roles in Christian spirituality; and the significance of glossolalia is not just found in classical Pentecostalism as they claim discontinuity with the larger Christian tradition, but actually both BHS and glossolalia have roots in the larger Christian spirituality and Christian tradition even centuries earlier. Chan clearly identifies, ‘Initial evidence and not Spirit baptism as such as in fact the Pentecostal’s distinguishing mark.’⁵⁸

The contemporary developments on the Pentecostal distinctives of BHS and glossolalia show the way forward to the preservation of the Pentecostal spirituality and heritage.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 183. ‘The disciples [they] were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4).’ This is followed by similar experiences by the Samaritans, Cornelius, and the believers in Ephesus.

⁵⁸ Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, p. 3.

⁵⁹ These contemporary theologians’ contribution will be discussed in chapter seven on Stage 4 – The Way Forward.

3.3 'All Flesh'

3.3.1 Definition

The outpouring of the Spirit on 'all flesh' on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 as fulfilment of Joel 2 means the universality of the BHS on 'all flesh', a gift of the Holy Spirit for all peoples. In Acts and the church era, God extends His saving grace to all, both Jews and Gentiles. Salvation is for all peoples and generations, and for all who are far of, all who call upon the name of Jesus (Acts 2:37-39). Early Pentecostals believed the full gospel that in the same way as Jesus is saviour for all, Jesus is the Spirit baptizer for all and BHS is the 'second work of grace', subsequent experience to conversion.⁶⁰ W. Ma speaks of Joel's prophecy (3:1-3 MT) as the Spirit achieving His full democratization effect in the age of salvation when the Spirit will be poured out on coming generations and not restricted to Israel.⁶¹ According to Horton (1916-2014), 'all flesh' means 'all mankind', in Genesis 6:12, just as the utterance of many languages shows God's purpose to pour his Spirit on all flesh,⁶² or 'whole human race'. Therefore, the Day of Pentecost when 120 believers received BHS, the enduement of power from on high, marks the beginning of missions to the Gentile world and to fulfil the Great Commission.

3.3.2 Classical Understanding

BHS a gift to 'all flesh' as prophesied by Joel and fulfilled in Acts. Joel 2:28-29 and Acts 2:17-18 is the basis for biblical equality in Pentecostalism where everyone can receive BHS, gift of the Holy Spirit. 'All flesh' means all believers (either Jews in Joel or Jesus' followers in Acts 2). Both early and contemporary Pentecostal theologians, like Horton and Arrington, refer to the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy in Acts that the Spirit is poured out on 'all flesh' means the gift of BHS is for all peoples. The breaking down of 'all flesh'

⁶⁰ See fn. 44.

⁶¹ Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes*, pp. 135, 207.

⁶² Horton, *Acts*, pp. 38-9.

to sons and daughters, young men and old men, male and female servants, where there is no distinction of sex, age, and social differences.⁶³ The promise cuts across all barriers, for God does not differentiate or segregate when He extends his presence. His Spirit is no respecter of human traditions, ethnic, cultures, hierarchy, status, socio-economic barriers, discriminations, prejudices or biases.

Early and classical Pentecostals believed BHS to be a gift to all means the endowment of Holy Spirit and the empowerment with the bestowal spiritual gifts are for all believers, based on the Lukan pneumatology or Luke-Acts charismatic empowerment for life and service. Early Pentecostals viewed BHS as ‘door’ or ‘gateway to the gifts’, referring to the nine gifts in 1 Cor. 12:8-10.⁶⁴ W. Menzies and Horton stated, ‘The baptism is the gateway into the manifold ministries in the Spirit called gifts of the Spirit, including many spiritual ministries.’⁶⁵

Neve and Ma emphasise that, in contrast to the charismatic Spirit in earlier times, Joel 2:28-29 promises a visitation of the Spirit of prophecy regardless of age, marital status, gender, and social status.⁶⁶ Advocating the classical Pentecostal stand on the charismatic empowerment, Stronstad points out this community of 120 disciples’ outburst of prophecy on the day of Pentecost is the fulfilment of Joel’s oracle announced ‘all humankind’ or ‘all flesh’, means sons and daughters (John, Mary), the young and the old (John, Zechariah, Simeon, Anna and Elizabeth) and bondslaves (Mary, Simeon) became the prophetic precursors to Pentecost. It was the inauguration of the ‘prophethood’ or prophetic ministry of all believers an ever-growing company of prophets in the forward movement of the history of salvation. This fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy is related to vocation for the Spirit baptizes and empowers the community of God’s people to witness

⁶³ Arrington, *Acts*, p. 28.

⁶⁴ Riggs, *We Believe*, pp. 28-9.

⁶⁵ Menzies and Horton, *Bible Doctrines*, p. 126.

⁶⁶ Neve, *Spirit of God*, p. 60; Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes*, p. 134.

as prophets about the Messiah.⁶⁷ BHS a gift to ‘all flesh’ and charismatic empowerment along with the understanding on living in ‘the last days’ and ‘crisis’ eschatology had spurred expansive missionary endeavour of the early Pentecostal toward worldwide missions and worldwide Pentecostalism.⁶⁸

Pentecostals understood BHS as a gift to ‘all flesh’ with the bestowal of Pentecostal gift in the power and manifestation of the Spirit as empowerment for missions formed the basis of many early Pentecostal women missionaries being sent out. Pentecostal women in ministry were seen as the fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy. The Azusa Street revival in 1906-1909 birthed the early Pentecostal movement as a missionary movement with BHS as the empowerment for missions. Seymour (1870-1922) preached at the Azusa Street mission on the egalitarian interpretation of the fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy 2:28-32 as preached by apostle Peter in Acts 2:14-21, as exactly the same phenomena as was happening in Azusa Street revival.⁶⁹

Seymour, leader of Azusa Street revival, believed that the breaking of racial, social strata, and gender boundaries in receiving BHS and the exercising of spiritual gifts by women were signs of the Pentecost.⁷⁰ *The Apostolic Faith* reported on the Azusa Street revival, many women with the gift of tongues were anointed preachers and missionaries, namely Mrs. Lucy F. Farrow whom God used mightily in BHS; Louise Condit and Lucy M. Leatherman who left for Jerusalem; Sister Hutchins and niece given the gift of Uganda language were sent to Africa; and Sister Lizzie Fraser to India⁷¹ and many others. Jennie Evans More (1883-1936), wife of Seymour, was one of the first to receive the BHS in

⁶⁷ Stronstad, *Prophethood of All Believers*, p. 70.

⁶⁸ The widespread of Pentecostalism will be discussed in the next section 3.4 ‘In the last days’ on ‘The Return of Christ’, ‘The Missionary Emphasis’, and ‘Revivalism’ themes.

⁶⁹ Harold D. Hunter and Cecil M. Robeck, *The Azusa Street Revival and Its Legacy* (Eugene, 2009), p. 22. Egalitarian interpretation of all flesh is equality on all persons, male and female, rich and poor, old and young, slave or free.

⁷⁰ Harvey Gallagher Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Reading, 1995), pp. 78-9.

⁷¹ *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 1 (September 1906), pp. 1, 4, AF190609-1-1; *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 2 (October 1906), p. 1, AF190610-1-2.

1906, an evangelist, and pastored the Azusa Street mission after Seymour's death in 1922. The Wesleyan-Holiness spirituality encouraged women to be included in ministries, such as prophetic ministry and in missions as well⁷² before the turn of the twentieth century. The Holy Spirit had anointed, empowered, and bestowed charismatic gifts on women the same as on men as leaders, pioneers, preachers, and missionaries worldwide, especially the early years of Pentecostalism in North America, USA, and majority world. Many women were called and commissioned and played significant and prominent roles in the widespread of Pentecostalism in missionary movement, and were involved as elders, pioneers, evangelists in healing movements, preachers with signs and wonders, and educators in Pentecostal Bible schools.⁷³

AG granted full ordination to women in 1935. However, in the second half of the century, women's roles in leadership began to decline drastically and be minimised, due to the reality of patriarchalism, sexism, promotion of subordination to men, and cultural oppression women have to struggle and endure in many countries.⁷⁴

⁷² Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, p. 43.

⁷³ Some prominent women missionaries, ministers, and leaders in the early 1900s include Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922), Agnes Ozman (1870-1937, evangelist), Aimee Semple McPherson (1890-1944, founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel), Florence Crawford (1872-1936, founder of the Apostolic Faith Church in Portland, Oregon), Carrie Judd Montgomery (1848-1946, trans-denominational minister, teacher, writer, and social worker), Maria Woodworth-Etter (1844-1924, healing evangelist), Lucy F. Farrow (1851-1911), Lucy Leatherman (1870-1925), Marie Burgess (1880-1971), Ellen Hebden (1865-1923), and many others. Early women missionaries were Lucy Leatherman to Middle East and Egypt, Lillian Trasher (1887-1961) who ran an orphanage for half a century in Egypt, Minnie Abrams (1859-1912) to India, Alice E. Luce (1873-1955, church pioneer and educator) led missions in India and Bible school among Mexicans, Mary Rumsey (1881-1934) to Korea, and so on. After World War II, Kathryn Kuhlman (1907-76, healing evangelist) was the world's most widely known female evangelist.

⁷⁴ Anderson, *Introduction*, pp. 266-9. Also see Susan C. Hyatt, 'Spirit-Filled Women', in Synan, ed., *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 231-63; Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, 2005), pp. 190-4; Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, pp. 123-38. Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 269, cited Poloma's study that 'By 1983, only 1.3 percent of the AG's pastors were women,' Margaret M. Poloma, *Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas* (Knoxville, 1989).

3.3.3 Contemporary Understanding

Contemporary Pentecostals are becoming more aware in promoting women's rights, sexual equality, and a more egalitarian practice, thus expressing a truer freedom in the Spirit. Saracco understands that the 'voiceless, second-class human beings, both men and women (Joel 2:29) ... now have a voice.'⁷⁵ Birch confirms that 'Joel's text has been cited often by modern Christians who seek more inclusive patterns of participation in church and society. The text has been turned to for support especially by those who have advocated the ordination of women in this century.'⁷⁶ This text has also 'become foundational for the development of Pentecostalism as a variety of Christian experience and expression,' where God's Spirit and manifestation of the gift is central.⁷⁷

BHS as the fulfilment of the outpouring of the Spirit on 'all flesh', understood as BHS a gift to all with the bestowal of spiritual gifts and empowerment for life and service had spurred worldwide missions and Pentecostalism. Joel 2 and Acts 2, with these spiritual experiences of BHS, gifts and empowerment formed the basis to classical Pentecostal theology and practice and will continue to be the Pentecostal fires for the Spirit-filled Christian life, Spirit-baptized church, ministry, service, and missions.

3.4 'In the last days' – The Return of Christ, The Missionary Emphasis, and Revivalism

The early Pentecostals understood BHS occurring 'in the last days' in Acts 2 as fulfilment of Joel's prophecy and that they were living in the last days and Jesus is coming back soon. This apocalyptic vision on the imminent return of Christ shaped the eschatological messages which stirred a crisis eschatological fervour for global missions and spawned

⁷⁵ Norberto Saracco, 'I will pour out my spirit on all people: a pastoral reading of Joel 2:28-30 from Latin America', *CTJ* 46, no. 2 (2011), p. 271.

⁷⁶ Bruce C. Birch, *Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, WBC (Louisville, 1997), p. 155.

⁷⁷ Birch, *Hosea, Joel, and Amos*, p. 155.

Pentecostalism into a worldwide revival movement. The understanding of ‘in the last days’ involved three interwoven key Pentecostal themes on the return of Christ, the missionary emphasis, and revivalism. These themes formed the Pentecostal theology, spirituality, and practice until present though the concepts have undergone some changes in contemporary times.

3.4.1 The Return of Christ

3.4.1.1 Definition

Acts refers to BHS as occurring ‘in the last days’, so for early Pentecostals, their experience of BHS was a sign that they were living ‘in the last days’ when Jesus was coming back soon. The importance of eschatology as understood by the early Pentecostals had directed their central message on the ‘Second Coming’, which was fundamental in shaping the Pentecostal theology particularly the classical Pentecostal. Faupel states, ‘the prophet Joel held most significance for the emerging Pentecostal theology.’⁷⁸

Early AG theologians in the 1940s-1950s such as Nelson (1868-1942), Riggs (1895-1971), and Williams (1885-1981) also echoed the eschatological understanding of the early Pentecostals. They believed that Joel 2 and Acts 2 finds continuous fulfilment in the last days, the church era and they were living in the last days. Nelson emphasised, ‘Is the baptism in the Spirit for believers in our time? Yes, for our time and for all time till Jesus comes for His own.’⁷⁹ Riggs stated, ‘The day of Pentecost immediately following the ascension of Christ was the birthday of the Church’ and present times as the last days.⁸⁰ And Williams ascertained, Joel’s prophecy is being fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost as explained by Peter (Acts 2:15, 16) and that ‘the promise made unto the

⁷⁸ Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, p. 31.

⁷⁹ Nelson, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, p. 11.

⁸⁰ Riggs, *We Believe*, p. 115.

fathers through the prophet Joel was finding fulfilment in those who were believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.’⁸¹

3.4.1.2 Early Pentecostal Understanding

These eschatological messages formed the belief for many early Pentecostals, that the coming of the Spirit ‘in the last days’ meant that they were living near the time of the second coming of Christ. In more structured ways, these eschatological messages formed the early Pentecostal thought and worldview which initiated movements such as Full Gospel, Latter Rain, Apostolic Faith, and Pentecostal, and became their earlier doctrinal themes.⁸² The following were the central eschatological messages of the early Pentecostals.

3.4.1.2.1 ‘Full Gospel’

Dayton, Land, and Synan, showed one of the central themes in the early Pentecostal messages was the return of Christ. Dayton discussed on the importance of the ‘common four-fold pattern’ or ‘fourfold gospel’ of Jesus Christ as Saviour (John 3:16), Spirit Baptizer (Acts 2:4), Healer (James 5:14-15), and Coming King (1 Thess. 4:16-17) by the Wesleyan-Holiness movement since the late nineteenth century, which contributed directly to the overall theology of the AG, particularly in North America, distinguishing classical Pentecostalism.⁸³ The Wesleyan Pentecostals’ ‘full gospel’ or ‘fivefold gospel’,⁸⁴ which was similar to that of Seymour’s messages in the Azusa Street revival

⁸¹ Williams, *Systematic Theology*, p. 50.

⁸² Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 27-8.

⁸³ Dayton, *Theological Roots*, pp. 21-2. Preached by Aimee Semple McPherson, founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel.

⁸⁴ Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, p. 6. There is a difference between the ‘common four-fold pattern’ from the Wesleyan Pentecostals’ ‘full gospel’ or ‘fivefold gospel’ which includes ‘sanctification by faith as a second definite work of grace’ as follows: Justification by faith in Christ; Sanctification by faith as a second definite work of grace; Healing of the body as provided for all in the atonement; The premillennial return of Christ; The BHS evidenced by speaking in tongues. AGUSA’s position is sometimes called ‘Baptistic’ because it sees salvation and sanctification as one.

also included the premillennial Second Coming ‘Rapture’ of the sanctified church.⁸⁵ Whether it was the fourfold, fivefold or full gospel, Jesus Christ as coming King was one of the key messages, thus the return of Christ was a central theme in early Pentecostalism.

3.4.1.2.2 ‘The Everlasting Gospel’ and ‘This Gospel of the Kingdom’

The early Pentecostals’ understanding on ‘the last days’ in Acts 2 relating to the imminent second coming of Christ, and the impending judgment, directed their message to be based on the eschatological passages in the Bible. Faupel discusses the importance of eschatology as the central Pentecostal message was driven by two main eschatological passages, firstly on ‘The Everlasting Gospel’ taken from Revelation 14:6-7⁸⁶ and the second message used interchangeably was ‘This Gospel of the Kingdom’ from Matthew 24:14.⁸⁷ In relation to ‘This Gospel of the Kingdom’ and eschatological fervour, Land highlights the early Pentecostal’s understanding of the outpouring of the Spirit being the fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy ‘in the last days’ had to do with the imminent return of Christ. This apocalyptic vision formed the spirituality of the eschatological community and became the primary motivation for evangelism and universal mission empowered by the Spirit. Thus, believing that evangelization would hasten Christ’s return as fulfilment of Matt. 24:14.⁸⁸ Land’s study shows the eschatological significance of the Kingdom in the early Pentecostal’s belief, conviction, passion, motives, and dispositions in the early years were driven by their ‘longing for the Lord and the salvation of the lost’ and the ‘soon to be consummated kingdom of God’.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Synan, *Eyewitness*, p. 29.

⁸⁶ Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, p. 20. ‘And I saw another angel flying through the heavens, carrying the Everlasting Gospel to preach to those on earth – to every nation, tribe, language and people. “Fear God”, he shouted, “and extol His greatness for the time has come when he will sit as Judge.”’

⁸⁷ Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, p. 20. ‘This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached to all the world for a witness unto all nations and then shall the end come.’

⁸⁸ Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, pp. 59-63. Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 21-2.

⁸⁹ Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, pp. 22-3.

3.4.1.2.3 The Wedding Imagery

The central Pentecostal message on the return of Christ was also supported by the wedding imagery. The early Pentecostal movement was directed by the Lord's last call to preach the gospel to the world, and heralding the 'midnight cry', 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.'⁹⁰ The two-fold mission was the warning to awaken the church to join the wedding preparation set the early Pentecostal expectations for evangelising the world before it was too late, as Faupel emphasises, 'The belief in the imminent premillennial return of Christ proved to be the primary motivation for evangelization and world mission.'⁹¹ A creative link about joining the wedding preparation was that believers must receive the 'wedding ring' or 'seal of the Holy Spirit' which was BHS with the evidence of glossolalia or 'speaking in unknown tongues',⁹² thus the simultaneous emphases on BHS and glossolalia as receiving the gifts and empowerment for witness and missions.

Parham (1873-1929), father of the Pentecostal movement, taught on BHS with evidence of speaking with tongues as the 'sealing of the Holy Spirit of promise' (Eph. 1:13; 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:22; Lk. 24:49; Acts 2:33) for deepened assurance of salvation which 'the living membership of the Bride must receive' to be ready for rapture or 'when the Bride swings up from the wilderness habitation, and together with the meet the Lord in the air' (1 Thess. 4:16).⁹³ Also, from the early years, Pentecostals believed in the premillennial return of Christ⁹⁴ and Land considers it an essential part of classical

⁹⁰ Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 24-5. The wedding imagery, the Bride of Christ, the Bridegroom, from the two texts, Rev. 14:6-7 (John's Revelation of the angel announcing 'The Everlasting Gospel' while 144,000 stood before God's throne in Rev. 14:3-5) and Matt. 24:14 ('This Gospel of the Kingdom' from Jesus' Olivet discourse, related to the ten virgins meeting the Bridegroom in Matt. 24:1-25:46), were the early Pentecostal movement's two-fold mission.

⁹¹ Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, p. 21.

⁹² Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, p. 27.

⁹³ Charles F. Parham, *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*, 2nd edn (Baxter Springs, 1910), pp. 86-7. The original book was written in January 1902. Parham was evangelist, projector of the Apostolic Faith Movement, editor of the *Apostolic Faith*, and founder of the College of Bethel.

⁹⁴ Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 29-30. The source of premillennial teaching was from John Nelson Darby, founder of the Plymouth Brethren, based on 1 Thess. 4:16-17 on the 'rapture' of the church. Darby

Pentecostal's spirituality.⁹⁵ He describes the testimonies among other Pentecostal spirituality in worship and witness, in songs, articles, pamphlets, and books were driven by the urgent fervency of Parousia and 'last-days, global missionary mandate, and witnesses of the power of the Holy Spirit. These were the 'signs of the times' emphasised by the Apostolic Faith and Holiness movement in the early twentieth century.⁹⁶ Many of the early publication and periodicals issued by the early Pentecostals contained the Pentecostal spirituality, practices, and central messages on the return of Christ.⁹⁷

Faupel relates the early Pentecostal message also awakened the church to participate in the 'wedding preparation', as the Bride of Christ must be ready before the arrival of the Bridegroom as 'Jesus is coming!' Believers must be Spirit baptised as the 'wedding seal' and receive the 'wedding ring' with the evidence of speaking in unknown tongue in order to be counted in for the coming rapture.⁹⁸

3.4.1.2.4 'The Latter Rain' Doctrine

The Pentecostal revival began as the restoration of the apostolic faith and had its roots in 'The Latter Rain' doctrine of the early Pentecostal belief. The early Pentecostal understood that the original Pentecost in Acts 2 was the early rain, and the outpouring of the Spirit in Pentecostalism as the latter rain would restore the church to how it was in the early apostolic church as in the book of Acts. Just as in the apostolic era, there was the restoration of the nine-fold gifts of the Spirit in the last days and the supernatural elements

taught that the rapture of the church would happen prior to a seven-year tribulation period during the times of the Antichrist. After which, Christ would return with his saints, and defeat Satan in the great battle of Armageddon, followed by 1000 years of Christ's reign on earth with his saints. Satan would be released to test those not raptured. The great white throne judgement will send the righteous to Heaven and the unrighteous to Hell.

⁹⁵ Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, pp. 222-3.

⁹⁶ Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, pp. 49-51.

⁹⁷ Periodicals such as *The Apostolic Faith*, *Confidence*, *The Latter Rain Evangel*, *The Midnight Cry*, *Christ's Ambassadors*, *Gospel Gleaners*, *Glad Tidings Herald*, and Parham's books: *The Everlasting Gospel*, *The Life of Charles F. Parham*, *Voice Crying in the Wilderness*, and *Selected Sermons of Charles Parham*, G.F. Taylor, *The Spirit and the Bride*; B.F. Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith Restored*, and etc.

⁹⁸ Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 20-7.

of the New Testament, such as signs and wonders, miracles, divine healing, and ‘supernatural gifts of the Spirit’, in preparation for the harvest and the return of Christ.⁹⁹ Early Pentecostals justified that God is unchanging and therefore the nature of the apostolic church was claimed to be normative at all time.¹⁰⁰ The Apostolic faith was based on the early Pentecostal hermeneutics on the ‘lost and restored’ imagery in Joel 2 – Acts 2. As it were in the last days of the latter rain, there was the restoration of gifts and miracles, signs and wonders after a long drought where the supernatural elements had ceased for a long period in post-apostolic times before this Pentecostal revival.¹⁰¹

Pentecostalism from the beginning, has its theology, understanding, and practice rooted in Joel 2, specifically Joel’s prophecy and its relation to the ‘latter rain’ theme. Faupel writes, ‘In one sense, Pentecostals believed that the Day of Pentecost fulfilled both Joel’s prophecy and the Latter Rain covenant.’¹⁰² The latter rain concept was the culmination of salvation history, which provided a framework for Pentecostals to focus on their critical role in the ‘last days’ to save souls.¹⁰³ That was why the ‘Pentecostal Movement’ had two other common names in the early years, namely the ‘Apostolic Faith’ and the ‘Latter Rain Movement’¹⁰⁴ based on their distinct hermeneutics yet

⁹⁹ Dayton, *Theological Roots*, pp. 25-7, 33. Cited Aimee Semple McPherson, *Lost and Restored* (Montwait, 1921); Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 38-9.

¹⁰⁰ Dayton, *Theological Roots*, pp. 25-6.

¹⁰¹ Dayton, *Theological Roots*, pp. 27-8; Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 45.

¹⁰² Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, p. 35.

¹⁰³ Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 33-6.

¹⁰⁴ Dayton, *Theological Roots*, p. 22. The restoration understood by the more orthodox classical Pentecostals is different from the Latter Rain Movement which emerged in the 1940s. In other strands of Pentecostalism, however, the concept of ‘latter rain’ took on different directions, like the aberrant the ‘Latter Rain’ movement. See Burgess, McGee and Alexander, eds., *DPCM*, s.v. ‘Latter Rain Movement’, pp. 532-4. The ‘New Order of the Latter Rain’ movement being part of the evangelical awakening in the mid-twentieth century after the WW2 became highly controversial though it was one of the catalysts for the Charismatic Movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Their emphases were on the restoration of the 5-fold ministries, particularly ‘apostles’ in the NT sense which included the apostolic doctrines, power, authority and practice. They emphasised on the restoration of the nine-fold gifts, spiritual gifts impartation by laying on of hands instead of ‘tarrying’ for the Holy Spirit, mighty signs and wonders, practiced heavenly singing by congregation, and so on.

fundamentally from Joel 2 on ‘The Latter Rain’ doctrine. Dayton recorded, ‘Pentecostals were, therefore, immediately attracted to the Book of Joel.’¹⁰⁵

Pentecostal revival and understanding on the ‘latter rain’ are related to the dispensational interpretation of history, impetus to the imminence of Christ’s return which motivated early Pentecostal missionary emphasis. ‘The Latter Rain’ doctrine was found in the *Latter Rain Covenant* by Myland (1858-1943), who expounded on Joel’s prophecy among other OT and NT texts, including in Joel 2:23 and James 5:7 on the ‘early’ and ‘latter’ rain motif linked to the return of Christ in a dispensational setting.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, it was ‘The Latter Rain’ doctrine which indicated Jesus is coming soon, and how early Pentecostals developed their eschatological themes: to prepare the ‘bride’, the church to meet her Lord, and the eschatological fervour to preach the full gospel to the whole world before Jesus’ return.

Dayton examined the distinctive ‘constellation of motifs’ throughout the Pentecostal tradition, and found that ‘The Latter Rain’ doctrine from the interpretation of Joel’s prophecy seemed to have provided an ‘inner logic’ and basis for early Pentecostals to explain their beliefs. It served as an apologetic asset which legitimised the faith and practice of the movement. ‘The Latter Rain’ doctrine gave the early Pentecostals a coherent explanation to link together their understanding on ‘the last days’, revival, the outpouring of the Spirit or the spiritual emergence of ‘Pentecostalism’, the restorationist

¹⁰⁵ Dayton, *Theological Roots*, p. 27.

¹⁰⁶ D. Wesley Myland, *The Latter Rain Covenant* (Springfield, MO, 1910, reprinted 1973), pp. 80-8, 111. See pp. 6-7, 22-3, 30, 83-4, 100. Myland stated that Pentecost as the last days, anticipating ‘*the Return of God’s Ancient People - the Jews - to their native land,*’ Palestine, which would mark ‘*the Beginning of Christ’s Millennial Reign,*’ thus ‘*The Evidence of Christ’s near return and the preparation of His body, the Bride, for that event.*’ Myland interpreted the prophetic or dispensational in God’s plan through the ages to prepare for the end time harvest when Christ would return in ‘the perfect millennial age: “the days of heaven on the earth.”’ It showed that the end is near and affirmed the imminent return of Christ, ‘Now we are in the Gentile Pentecost, the first Pentecost *started* the church, the body of Christ, and this, the second Pentecost *unites* and *perfects* the church into the coming of the Lord.’ Myland urged believers that the Pentecost they were receiving was indeed the fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy on the Latter Rain Covenant. Myland related the latter rain to the outpouring of the Spirit and ‘spiritual emergence of Pentecostalism’ in the late 19th century. He even used the chart of physical rainfall in Palestine from 1860 to 1900 to show the increase in rainfall to develop this latter rain doctrine. See Dayton, *Theological Roots*, p. 27, and Nelson, *Bible Doctrines*, p. 73.

of ‘Apostolic Faith’, ‘God’s dispensational plan for the ages’, and the expectation of the imminent return of Christ, all expressed in the four elements of the ‘fourfold gospel’ (salvation, healing, BHS, and return of Christ) or ‘full gospel’.¹⁰⁷

3.4.1.3 Contemporary Understanding

Over time, there are doctrinal issues in the Pentecostal eschatology, where contemporary Pentecostals scholars do not agree with some eschatological perspectives taught by the early Pentecostal writers. In this new century, contemporary Pentecostals understand ‘last days’ very differently as they do not believe that the ‘last days’ should be taken in a chronological sense, but from the perspective of salvation history, which is the last age of salvation history beginning with the Incarnation and ending with the Parousia. ... Contemporary Pentecostals believe that Peter’s phrase ‘the last days’ (Acts 2:17) means ‘the entire period between the first and second advents of Christ.’¹⁰⁸ Dayton viewed, ‘The Latter Rain’ doctrine and its eschatological theme on dispensational setting has waned over the years in the second half of the century.¹⁰⁹

3.4.2 The Missionary Emphasis

3.4.2.1 Definition

The Pentecostal movement is a worldwide evangelistic force with strong Pentecostal mission theology and urgent missiology for world evangelization driven by a strong conviction of the imminent Christ’s return.¹¹⁰ Kärkkäinen affirms the common agreement

¹⁰⁷ Dayton, *Theological Roots*, pp. 20-8. See Stanley Horton, *Into All Truth: A Survey of the Course and Content of Divine Revelation* (Springfield, MO, 1955), p. 13; Charles F. Parham, *The Life of Charles F. Parham, Founder of the Apostolic Faith Movement* (Baxter Springs, 1930, 4th reprint 2000), Chapter VII, ‘The Latter Rain: The Story of the Origin of the Original Apostolic or Pentecostal Movements’, pp. 51-6.

¹⁰⁸ Burgess, McGee and Alexander, eds., *DPCM*, s.v. ‘Book of Joel’, p. 495. Despite a different understanding of ‘last days’ Pentecostal missionary emphasis is not diminished.

¹⁰⁹ Contemporary Pentecostal theologians disagree with the early Pentecostal’s limited view of BHS just as a component of the full gospel and limited to empowerment for life and service. This has been dealt with in the first section on BHS.

¹¹⁰ Burgess, McGee and Alexander, eds., *DPCM*, s.v. ‘Missiology’, p. 607.

of the formative factors and nature of Pentecostal mission being attributed to the eschatological fervour in the ‘last days’ and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17).¹¹¹ Anderson reviews the history of early Pentecostalism being a missionary movement originated from the Azusa Street revival in 1906, within one century, has become a major part of the multidimensional global missionary movement.¹¹² J. Ma attributes the empowerment theology of Pentecostal mission to ‘baptism in the Holy Spirit’ leading to witnessing (Acts 1:8), effective evangelism in verbal proclamation, the accompaniment of ‘supernatural manifestation of God’s power’ in miracles and healing, signs and wonders (Acts 5:12-16), and *missio Spiriti*, Holy Spirit being the initiator of missions and birthing of churches, where the presence of the Spirit is experienced in the ‘preaching, teaching, healing, or casting out of evil spirits.’¹¹³

Mission endeavours and evangelistic zeal with ‘passion for the kingdom’ is a Pentecostal distinctive stated in AGUSA’s Tenets of Faith no. 10. As Pentecostalism grows and develops, there are new paradigms and frontiers of missions ahead.

3.4.2.2 Early Pentecostal Understanding

The central eschatological messages of ‘The Return of Christ’ as mentioned earlier had stirred the strong missionary emphasis and launched the universal mission. Land finds ‘a passion for the kingdom’ was evident in their missionary and spiritual zeal reflecting a strong conviction that the church was living in the last days, the Lord was coming soon, and the church ought to witness to all nations.¹¹⁴ As such, there was strong emphasis for

¹¹¹ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, ‘The Pentecostal Understanding of Mission’, in Wonsuk Ma, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, eds., *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series, volume 20 (Oxford, 2014), p. 27.

¹¹² Allan Heaton Anderson, ‘The Emergence of a Multidimensional Global Missionary Movement: A Historical Review’, in Ma, Kärkkäinen and Asamoah-Gyadu, eds., *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, pp. 12, 23.

¹¹³ Julie C. Ma, ‘Pentecostal Evangelism, Church Planting, and Church Growth’, in Ma, Kärkkäinen and Asamoah-Gyadu, eds., *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, pp. 88-9.

¹¹⁴ Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, p. 43.

Christians to be Spirit-baptised as power for witness and to be equipped for their task, to receive ‘the gift of languages of the world’ (xenolalia) to proclaim the gospel to the nations, and nine-fold gifts to perform divine healing, miracles, signs and wonders to authenticate their message from God.¹¹⁵ Anderson, Kärkkäinen and J. Ma affirm the early Pentecostals’ eschatological fervour in the ‘last days’ mission emphasis was received through BHS with Spirit’s empowerment (Acts 1:8; 2:17; 5:12-16).¹¹⁶ For Pentecostals, the world is seen as the huge harvest field for witnessing, and receiving the Spirit-baptism is being filled with and empowered by the ‘Missionary Spirit’, and receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit is receiving the ‘Missionary Gift’, with the intense purpose to fulfil the Great Commission.¹¹⁷ Eschatology and pneumatology were two main theological motives for Pentecostal mission.

The missionary emphasis had made Pentecostal a global movement. One of the main Pentecostal mission strategies was church planting which left long lasting legacy in many nations. Many AG missionaries sent to foreign countries planted churches, started Bible schools, and raised up national leadership resulting in many indigenous three-self churches (self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating).¹¹⁸ Anderson attributes this to BHS which give gifts of ministry to common people that has impacted the expansion of worldwide missions and indigenous churches around the world.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 22-3. Faupel cited Elizabeth Sisson, *A Sign People* (Springfield, MO, 1918), pp. 9, 15, 67; T.H. Nelson, ‘Healing in the Latter Days’, *The Way of Faith* 14 (14 April 1904), p. 5; and Faupel, ‘Glossolalia as Foreign Language: An Historical Survey of the Twentieth Century Claim’, *WTJ* 31 (1996), pp. 95-109.

¹¹⁶ Kärkkäinen, ‘The Pentecostal Understanding of Mission’, p. 27; J. Ma, ‘Pentecostal Evangelism, Church Planting, and Church Growth’, pp. 87-93.

¹¹⁷ Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, 2007), p. 65.

¹¹⁸ Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 201. AGUSA missions also spread to Asia and Asia Pacific countries. This missionary endeavour was mainly the heritage of the classical Pentecostals from the Azusa Street revival, including AGM.

¹¹⁹ Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 202.

3.4.2.3 Contemporary Understanding

Although the Pentecostal mission is no longer motivated by a crisis eschatology especially after the World War II in the second half the twentieth century, the fundamental texts on Joel 2 and Acts 2 are still key to missions particularly the importance of BHS and the Spirit's empowerment and gifts of the Spirit for evangelism and missions. The unchanging missionary mandate of the church is to fulfil the Great Commission until Christ's return. The missionary emphasis is still a strong Pentecostal distinctive as the current AG's Tenets of Faith no. 10 on 'The Church and Its Mission' shows that Pentecostals and AG continues to see BHS as the means to fulfilling the mission of the church.¹²⁰

After the WW2 in the second half of twentieth century, there were substantial shifts from the early Pentecostal's crisis eschatology missionary fervour to other theological motivations for missions. Billy Graham became a prominent evangelical evangelist in 1948. At the same time, the 'prosperity gospel' based on 3 John 2, or the 'Word of Faith Movement' became a widespread theology of hope of for America's post-war society as the post-Depression economy improved with a new prosperity trend. Oral Roberts also became a prominent evangelist and started TV evangelism in 1953 and his salvation-healing crusades had drawn many Pentecostals. After which, many prosperity gospel preachers have sprung up.¹²¹ However, AGUSA had taken the position against many

¹²⁰ AGM, Annex 1, pp. 95-6, AGM-CBLr20160531. See Appendix Eight. Assemblies of God (USA) Official Web Site, Assemblies of God 16 Fundamental Truths, <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Statement-of-Fundamental-Truths#10>, accessed 30 May 2019. See Glenn W. Gohr, 'The Historical Development of the Statement of Fundamental Truths', *AG Heritage*, 2012, p. 65, http://ifphc.org/Uploads/Heritage/2012_08.pdf, accessed 20 April 2019. The church's 'divine appointments for the fulfilment of her great commission' and the Spirit-baptised body of believers being God's agency for evangelizing the world (Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 6:15-16) requires continuing emphasis on the NT apostolic pattern, BHS and the Spirit's empowerment for evangelism with accompanying supernatural signs (Mk. 16:15-20; Acts 4:29-31; Heb. 2:3-4), exercising the gifts of the Spirit, and to 'demonstrate God's love and compassion for all the world'. Missions is a Pentecostal distinctive as the classical Pentecostals view BHS as Spirit-empowerment for missions and evangelism based on Luke-Acts pneumatology. AG has been a world missionary movement, therefore missions is not just a feature but a distinctive.

¹²¹ Synan, *Eyewitness*, pp. 114-6, 121-5. Anderson, *Introduction*, pp. 217-8. 3 John 2 undergirds the prosperity teachings, 'Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.' TV ministry of Oral Roberts followed by American prosperity televangelists namely Benny Hinn, T.L. Osborn, Joyce Meyer, Joel Osteen, T.D. Jakes, and others grew in popularity, and in 1965, Oral

teachings of prosperity gospel and advised believers to consider the total teaching of Scripture.¹²² There has also been increasing missionary emphases on cultural change, social and economic transformation, and diversified social action or social concern ministries.¹²³

The missionary emphasis and primary motivations from how Pentecostals interpret and understand Joel 2 and Acts 2 and relate to Scriptures have changed over the century. Missional approaches have also evolved and diversified into new frontiers. Although crisis eschatological fervour has waned, the missionary zeal has not waned as BHS remains the central doctrine and practice of Pentecostalism, where the Spirit's empowerment and gifts enable the church and believers to witness, preach the gospel, and evangelise the world in new methods to suit the changing political, cultural, social, and economic climates in contemporary contexts. Anderson sees Pentecostalism as a missionary movement which is Christocentric and pneumatological focus and finds 'the presence of Jesus Christ as Lord' being the core of Pentecostal worship and proclamation.¹²⁴ He asserts, 'The old "full gospel" message of "Jesus Christ the Saviour,

Roberts University became the epicentre of the healing-prosperity movement. Kenneth Hagin, father of the Faith Movement popularised E.W. Kenyon's teachings on 'the positive confession of the Word of God.' Soon the worldwide spread of prosperity gospel movement led by Kenneth Copeland in USA, David Yonggi Cho in South Korea and Reinhard Bonnke in Africa, attracted millions of followers, inspired the largest churches and evangelistic crusades with the 'salvation, health, and prosperity' message which was very attractive to the poor. Cho incorporated the prosperity gospel or 'threefold blessing of salvation' into his AG church which became the largest church in the world, Cho had strong influence on Malaysian's Pentecostal-charismatic churches from the late 1970s to 1990s with the prosperity gospel (soul prospering, prosperity in all things, a healthy life), word of faith, prayer, and cell church or home cell groups.

¹²² Assemblies of God (USA) Official Website, General Presbytery of the Assemblies of God, 'The Believer and Positive Confession', Position Paper, 19 August 1980, <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/The-Believer-and-Positive-Confession>; 'Divine Healing (Official A/G Position Paper), 9-11 August 2010, <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/Divine-Healing>, 'The Kingdom of God', 9-11 August 2010, <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/Kingdom-of-God>, 'Spiritual Warfare and the Believer', July 2019, <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/Spiritual-Warfare-and-the-Believer>, accessed 6 April 2020. Particularly 'positive confession', 'divine healing', 'Kingdom of God', 'spiritual warfare' and etc.

¹²³ Anderson, *Introduction*, 2nd edn, pp. 220-90. Besides prosperity gospel and Word of Faith Movement, there were also the spreading of a 'pragmatic gospel' addressing practical needs like 'sickness, poverty, unemployment, loneliness, evil spirits and sorcery', the 'gospel for the poor', 'healing and exorcism', 'realized eschatology' where prosperity is available now for the poor, the oppressed and the dispossessed, or 'vision of the disinherited'.

¹²⁴ Anderson, *Introduction*, pp. 197-8.

Healer, Baptizer and Soon Coming King” still rings loud and clear in Pentecostal churches throughout the world, even when couched in new forms.’¹²⁵

Ultimately, it is the Holy Spirit that motivates missions, thus the importance of BHS as the empowerment for witness and the sending Spirit as in Joel-Acts is the fundamental driving force of the Pentecostals. Anderson relates, ‘The Holy Spirit poured out at Pentecost is a missionary Spirit, the church full of the Spirit is a missionary community by nature and the church’s witness is the release of an inward dynamic.’¹²⁶ He reaffirms, ‘The centrality of the Spirit in mission has been a consistent theme in Pentecostal studies. The Pentecostal movement was a missionary movement made possible by the Spirit’s empowerment.’¹²⁷ Synan resolved, ‘The future is limitless as long as we keep the Pentecostal fires burning, the gifts of the Spirit in operation and the evangelization of the world as our ultimate goal.’¹²⁸

3.4.3 Revivalism

3.4.3.1 Definition

Revival is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon God’s people in vast measure just as Joel has prophesied in Joel 2:28-32 and fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, and continuous fulfilment in the church era, where people are receiving the BHS and empowerment of the Spirit for witness, service, and holy Christian living, with the bestowing of the gift of tongues and spiritual gifts. Thus, revival is the Pentecostal phenomenon of supernatural encounters and spiritual experiences as people are being filled with the Holy Spirit, clothed with power from on high, and the Spirit works in

¹²⁵ Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 308.

¹²⁶ Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 199.

¹²⁷ Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 199.

¹²⁸ Synan, *Eyewitness*, p. 206.

birthing forth communities of faith, and missions all around the world. Early Pentecostal, Gee defined, 'The Pentecostal movement is a revival.'¹²⁹

Revivalism is a crucial and recurring theme of Pentecostals ever since Azusa Street revival until present. For Pentecostals, revivalism is a continuous spiritual renewal and maintaining the passion to engage in preaching the gospel.

3.4.3.2 Early Pentecostal Understanding

In relation to earlier themes which are intertwined, Pentecostalism is seen as a 'revival movement'. BHS at Azusa Street revival was essentially the fulfilment of God's promise of a fresh outpouring of the Spirit to restore and revive the church to its Apostolic faith as it were in the book of Acts. Nelson and Faupel described the former rain (early rain) as the partial fulfilment of Joel 2:28-29 at Pentecost in Acts 2 and thereafter during the establishment of the early church, while the 'latter rain' is now being fulfilled globally 'at the end of church age, to ripen the harvest before Christ's return.'¹³⁰

As discussed, 'The Latter Rain' doctrine and its related themes became the core beliefs of the classical Pentecostal beliefs.¹³¹ The faith and practice of early Pentecostals in early Pentecostal revivals were reported as follows: The first issue of *The Apostolic Faith* newsletter during the Azusa Street revival in 1906 reported in the headlines, 'Pentecost Has Come: Los Angeles Being Visited by a Revival of Bible Salvation and Pentecost as Recorded in the Book of Acts.'¹³² Many received BHS, gift of tongues, healing, miracles, messages on 'Jesus is coming soon', 'The Millennium', 'Ascension robes' (rapture), and so on. There were reports on believers receiving BHS and gift of

¹²⁹ 'The Spirit of God Who Abides,' General Council, Philadelphia, 21 October 1933, cited in Womack, ed., *Pentecostal Experience: The Writings of Donald Gee*, p. 246.

¹³⁰ Nelson, *Bible Doctrines*, p. 73; Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, p. 35.

¹³¹ Dayton, *Theological Roots*, pp. 27-28; Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 45.

¹³² *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 1 (September 1906), p. 1, AF190609-1-1.

languages who went out as missionaries to foreign lands to fulfil the Great Commission.¹³³

The fresh outpouring in the early twentieth century was the ‘latter rain’ to bring in the ‘harvest’. There had been extensive missionary endeavours around the world to preach the full gospel motivated by the dispensational setting. It was declared, ‘This is a world-wide revival, the last Pentecostal revival to bring our Jesus. The church is taking her last march to meet her beloved.’¹³⁴ Gee attempted to demonstrate the literal fulfilment of the prophecy in Joel 2:28 in many different parts of the world as he described the world panorama of Pentecostal revival, ‘It is a WORLD-WIDE revival.... THE COMFORTER HAS COME.’¹³⁵ The latter rain and dispensational setting focusing on the imminent return of Christ became the main thrust of early Pentecostals to fulfil the mandate to evangelise the world.

3.4.3.3 Contemporary Understanding

Contemporary Pentecostals view revival in relation to God reviving the church to fulfil her missionary task in evangelism and church growth. For contemporary Pentecostals, the ‘latter rain’ or revival is understood to be an ongoing fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy on

¹³³ *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 1 (September 1906), p. 1, AF190609-1-1. It was urged, ‘The gift of languages is given with the commission, “Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” The Lord has given languages to the unlearned Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, German, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Zulu and languages of Africa, Hindu and Bengali and dialects of India, Chippewa and other languages of the Indians, Esquimaux the deaf mute language and, in fact, the Holy Ghost speaks all the languages of the world through His children.’

¹³⁴ *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 1 (September 1906), p. 4, AF190609-1-1. Other significant reports include: Joel 2:23 was also cited in the news which stated, ‘He gave the former rain moderately at Pentecost, and He is going to send upon us in these last days the former and latter rain. There are greater things to be done in these last days of the Holy Ghost.’, in *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 1 (September 1906), p. 4, AF190609-1-1; The second issue’s headlines read, ‘The Pentecostal Baptism Restored: The Promised Latter Rain Now Being Poured Out on God’s Humble People’ and also filled with many testimonies from the revival and many missionaries went out to foreign field in the world preaching the full gospel in the power of the Spirit, in foreign languages received through BHS’, in *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 2 (October 1906), p. 1, AF190610-1-2. Also, it was declared, ‘The fire is spreading ... We expect to see a wave of salvation go over this world ... There is power in the full Gospel ... Awake! Awake! There is but time to dress and be ready, for the cry will soon go forth, “The Bridegroom cometh.”’, in *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 2 (October 1906), p. 1, AF190610-1-2.

¹³⁵ Gee, *Upon All Flesh*, pp. 6-7.

the outpouring of the Spirit and it will be in wider measure before Christ's return. The 'latter rain' motif or theme is still used by contemporary Pentecostals when referring to revival and Joel's prophecy, but the contemporary understanding does not include the crisis eschatological belief of the early Pentecostals on the imminent return of Christ in the former Latter Rain doctrine. Kaiser views prophecies on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit being a continuous fulfilment in history at a micro-level in the present as there is a 'now' and 'not yet' fulfilment.¹³⁶ So, for Pentecostals, revivalism is a continuous spiritual experience of spiritual renewal and empowerment to engage in God's kingdom and preach the gospel to the unreached.

Contemporary Pentecostal spirituality continues to emphasise on revivalism so that the spiritual vitality of Pentecostal community is constantly renewed. The missionary zeal has not waned but being renewed by revivalism from time to time. In a way, the issue, therefore, is not when Christ will return; what is needed is for the church to be revived so that it can continue to carry on its mission and fulfil the Great Commission.

In the last 50 years, there were several revivals including Brownsville Assembly of God (1995-2000), Toronto Airport (1994), healing crusades by Reinhard Bonnke and Benny Hinn in Africa, India and other parts of the world,¹³⁷ as well as Hillsong and Bethel today, which are all Pentecostal or Charismatic. In this twenty-first century, contemporary Pentecostals globally continue to yearn for revival from time to time when the Pentecostal spirituality begins to plateau or dampen and the church is losing her spiritual vitality and mission emphasis. Chan describes certain contemporary Pentecostal 'restorationist' view

¹³⁶ Kaiser, 'The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament', pp. 46-7. Kaiser finds similarities of Joel's prophecy on the 'Day of the Lord' with that of Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's prophecies on the New Covenant, where Joel's prophecy has inaugurated eschatology of both essence of a 'now' and a 'not-yet' fulfilment in one prophecy. The 'not yet' fulfilled is Joel 2:30-31 on the cosmic effects which will be at a macro-level or eschaton. While Ezekiel 39:29 sees the fulfilment restricted for Israel, Joel prophesied a democratization, an outpouring of the Spirit 'on all flesh'.

¹³⁷ Synan, 'Streams of Renewal at the End of the Century', in Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 379-80.

on the need for revival.¹³⁸ However, some contemporary Pentecostal scholars would think that it is not fully possible to rely on past theology, as doctrines develop over time with new hermeneutical methods, findings, understanding, shaping processes, challenges, social contexts, and practices of community.¹³⁹

Revivalism, whether in early or contemporary Pentecostalism is crucial to the life of the believers and the community/church to remain faithful to God in carrying out the missionary tasks in the power of the Holy Spirit. Revivalism always restores intimate relationships with the triune God and ignites the missionary zeal. Pentecostalism continues to grow and expand globally until the end of church age as Joel 2 and BHS remain central to Pentecostalism and until every people group in the world is evangelised before Christ shall return.

3.5 Prophecy, Dreams, and Visions (PDV)

This section will show how early and contemporary Pentecostals hear the VoS, and how PDV plays a significant role in the Holy Spirit providing direction to early and contemporary Pentecostals in missions, churches, ministries and personal lives.

3.5.1 Definition

Spirit-given PDV is part of God's promise in Joel's prophecy that all people regardless of age, gender, and social status can be filled with his presence and have direct

¹³⁸ Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, p. 1. For example, the Assemblies of God National Evangelist Office sponsored a major conference called 'Empower 2006: Back to Pentecost'. Chan states, 'The Pentecostal movement as a revival movement has always been concerned with maintaining its spiritual vitality, or in Pentecostal parlance "keeping the fire alive and burning". If the fire has somewhat died down, the time-honored way is to rekindle it and recapture the original spiritual impulses through revival meetings. The felt need for revival has given rise to the many restorationist movements that emerge from within their ranks from time to time whose strategy for renewal is neatly encapsulated in an oft-repeated slogan "Back to Pentecost". The restorationist approach presupposes that the "rediscovered" truth of the book of Acts at Azusa Street in 1906 is timeless and unchanging. What is needed is faithfully to apply the same truth to new situations.'

¹³⁹ Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, p. 1.

communication and revelation from God by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In Acts and church era, Spirit-baptised believers receive gifts of the Holy Spirit, most prominently the gift of prophecy as all can prophecy, dream dreams, and see visions.¹⁴⁰ In the OT, dream and vision were elements of prophecy. Stronstad views the prophecy of Joel 2:28-29 promises the outpouring of the Spirit, as a result of which every person will be able to prophesy: its fulfilment in Acts 2 marks a significant change from the endowment of the Holy Spirit on only a few chosen individuals in the Old Testament, to the prophethood of all believers, as the Holy Spirit comes upon all flesh.¹⁴¹

The parlance ‘Voice of the Spirit’¹⁴² is used since early Pentecostalism in 1900s and by Gee, Pentecostal AG minister and theologian in the early 1930s, to describe the ways of divine revelations and message inspired by the Holy Spirit, in the various forms of prophecies, visions and dreams, audible voice of God, and inward witness.¹⁴³ In other words, VoS is the Pentecostal understanding of God’s Spirit speaking through prophecies, dreams and visions and is synonymous with PDV.

3.5.2 Classical Understanding

Early Pentecostals viewed BHS as the presence of the Holy Spirit given to all, with distribution and manifestation of gifts of the Spirit (particularly the nine gifts in 1 Cor. 12), and PDV as fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy, as published in the first issue of *The Latter Rain Evangel*¹⁴⁴ magazine in 1908. PDV was viewed as one of the evidence of the latter rain and most prominently being the gift of tongues, prophecy, dreams, and visions, as it was declared, ‘God has set His seal that this is true: that the speaking in tongues is an

¹⁴⁰ Acts 9:10; 10:3,17,19; 11:5; 11:28; 16:9-10; 18:9; 21:10; 1 Cor. 12:10; 2 Pet. 1:20-21.

¹⁴¹ Stronstad, *Prophethood of All Believers*, pp. 66-8.

¹⁴² Pentecostal parlance ‘VoS’ and PDV are used interchangeably in this dissertation.

¹⁴³ Gee, *Pentecost*, pp. 52-65.

¹⁴⁴ *The Latter Rain Evangel*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Chicago, October 1908), LRE190810-1-1. Perhaps the term ‘VoS’ has been used in even earlier times.

evidence of the latter rain; that the latter rain is poured out upon all flesh, that they may glory God by speaking in the known tongue and speaking in the unknown tongue, prophesying, dreaming dreams and seeing visions.’¹⁴⁵

Since the early Pentecostal revival, VoS in a broader sense, was practically expressed through the gift of tongues followed by interpretation, word in known language, in Scripture, sermon, prophecy, vision, dream, song, prayer, and benediction. Many other phrases with similar meaning to VoS are used as well, such as ‘Spirit of God speaking’, ‘Spirit’s message’, and ‘voice of the Saviour’. However, the messages through the ‘ministry of the Spirit’ ought to be tested by Scripture without contradiction to its teachings as published in early periodicals.¹⁴⁶

Early Pentecostals viewed the gifts of tongues and Spirit-given PDV as part of the evidences of the latter rain, ‘Christ is making up His jewels quickly. O how the “latter rain” is falling.’¹⁴⁷ Florence Crawford, a missionary, recalled, ‘I can’t forget how, kneeling at the dear old board in Azusa street ... I am filled with wonder love, and praise that God would permit me to see the workings of His mighty power in these last days. O to think we have lived to see the return of the apostolic power and to see the gifts restored back to the church.’¹⁴⁸ *The Apostolic Faith* newsletters during the Azusa Street revival reported many messages from God were given through prophecies spoken in unknown tongues with interpretation, many PDV received by many who were Spirit baptised regardless of age, gender, nationality, and social background. Most prophecies were given through interpreted message spoken in tongues and visions were apocalyptic, about the premillennial returning of Christ, the end is near, the missionary urgency, healing,

¹⁴⁵ *The Latter Rain Evangel*, vol. 1, no. 1 (October 1908), p. 15, LRE190810-1-1.

¹⁴⁶ *The Latter Rain Evangel*, vol. 1, no. 1 (October 1908), p. 14, LRE190810-1-1. Early Pentecostals were aware of fanaticism and counterfeit and words of caution were published in their periodicals from time to time.

¹⁴⁷ *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 10 (September, 1907), p. 1, AF190709-1-10.

¹⁴⁸ *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 9 (June-September, 1907), p. 4, AF190706/09-1-9. The expression ‘wonder love, and praise’ are words in a Wesleyan hymn, ‘Love divine, all loves excelling’ or ‘Lost in wonder, love, and praise’ by Charles Wesley (1707-88).

ministries, and personal life.¹⁴⁹ And the visions received were mostly apocalyptic visions of Jesus, end times, hell, and heaven, among others, which drove the eschatological fervour and missionary emphasis in early Pentecostalism.¹⁵⁰

The power of the Holy Spirit has been working and manifesting powerfully bringing divine healing, deliverance to addictions, convicting many to repentance, salvation, and BHS. The innumerable BHS, gifts of tongues, signs and wonders, PDV and many works of the Spirit happening in the new Pentecostal revival was seen as the ‘latter rain’ outpouring of the Spirit in the ‘last days’ and fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy.¹⁵¹

Since early Pentecostalism, PDV has been a significant channel through which God calls missionaries to foreign nations and how the Holy Spirit provides direction to the missionary endeavours and ministries. Gifts of the Holy Spirit and PDV received have always been mission directing or mission oriented. Early Pentecostals believed BHS is ‘God’s way of qualifying’ them for service¹⁵² or empowering them for missions, as it was proclaimed in *The Latter Rain Evangel*, ‘baptism in the Holy Spirit, is given solely for the purpose of extending the Kingdom of God.’¹⁵³

The Azusa Street revival was acknowledged as, ‘The wonderful sign in 1906 is the restoration of tongues, which foretells the preaching of the pure gospel to all nations, which must be done before the Gentile Times end. (Matt. 24:14) – The Prophetic Age.’¹⁵⁴

The first issue of *The Apostolic Faith* reported:

Many are the prophesies spoken in unknown tongues and many the visions that God is giving concerning His soon coming ... One prophecy given in an unknown tongue was interpreted, “The time is short, and I am going to send out a large number in the Spirit of God to preach the full gospel in the power of the Spirit.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 8 (May, 1907), p. 3, AF190705-1-8. It was reported, ‘The interpretation of many of the messages in nearly every language spoken by the Holy Ghost in unknown tongues is that Jesus is coming.’

¹⁵⁰ *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 3 (November, 1906), p. 4, AF190611-1-3; *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 5 (January, 1907), p. 3, AF190701-1-5.

¹⁵¹ *Apostolic Faith*; Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, p. 20; Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 232.

¹⁵² *The Latter Rain Evangel*, vol. 1, no. 1 (October 1908), p. 19, LRE190810-1-1.

¹⁵³ *The Latter Rain Evangel*, vol. 1, no. 1 (October 1908), p. 9, LRE190810-1-1.

¹⁵⁴ *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 8 (May, 1907), p. 1, AF190705-1-8.

¹⁵⁵ *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 1 (September, 1906), p. 1, AF190609-1-1.

Lucy M. Leatherman, an early missionary to the Arabia, received her ‘Macedonian cry’ to the Arabs, through the gift of tongues (Arabic) and PDV, ‘God has been speaking to me and asks me if I would be willing to go with Him to the wild Arab of the desert. Anywhere with Jesus I will gladly go.’¹⁵⁶ There were many other accounts of PDV which were mission oriented and mission directed to foreign nations in Europe, China, Africa, and so on.¹⁵⁷

The early Pentecostals had a strong dependence on receiving God’s revelation in PDV. Land affirms that in the early days, dreams and visions were also very much practised in personal and public worship, especially in the black spirituality, or among the African-American Pentecostals.¹⁵⁸ Gee wrote on the VoS from the context of church era in the book of Acts (Acts 13:1-4; 14:26) where the church, apostles, and disciples in Antioch received the ‘direct voice and leading of the Holy Spirit’. Gee affirmed Holy Spirit speaks in PDV, some in audible voice but most-often ‘through inward witness or quiet voice’, leading in decision or warning, specific ministry and missions.¹⁵⁹

The universal missionary endeavour of the Azusa Street mission has spread widely into many nations in the world over the past century, and PDV has played a significant role in God’s calling of missionaries and directing them to the countries where the Spirit sends them. Anderson affirms the Holy Spirit often directs missions through PDV.¹⁶⁰ In fact, early AG missionary to Singapore and Malaya, Lula Ashmore (Mrs Lula Baird) received Christ in 1928, was praying and speaking in tongues for three hours. She was touched by the Holy Spirit and received a specific call to Singapore. She heard the VoS

¹⁵⁶ *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 3 (November, 1906), p. 4, AF190611-1-3.

¹⁵⁷ *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 8 (May, 1907), p. 2, AF190705-1-8; *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 7 (April, 1907), p. 2, AF190704-1-7; *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 1 (September, 1906), p. 4, AF190609-1-1; *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 8 (May, 1907), p. 1, AF190705-1-8.

¹⁵⁸ Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, p. 43.

¹⁵⁹ Gee, *Pentecostal Experience*, pp. 192 and 195.

¹⁶⁰ Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 198. He states, ‘Pentecostals place primary emphasis on being “sent by the Spirit” and depend more on what is described as the Spirit’s leading than on formal structures. People called “missionaries” did that job because the Spirit directed them to do it, often through some revelation like a prophecy, a dream, or a vision, and even through an audible voice perceived to be that of God.’

and cried out over and over, ‘Singapore, Singapore, Singapore ...’, and was convicted that she was called for mission to the Chinese. She learned Mandarin and Cantonese in Hong Kong and arrived at Singapore in 1939 and Malaya in 1940.¹⁶¹

3.5.3 Contemporary Understanding

PDV continues to play an essential role in contemporary Pentecostal spirituality, and the Holy Spirit providing direction to contemporary Pentecostals in missions, churches, ministries and personal lives. Contemporary Pentecostal scholars like W. Ma, Kärkkäinen, Menzies, and Stronstad also see the importance of PDV in Pentecostal spirituality. Ma emphasises that Joel’s prophecy on the outpouring of the Spirit speaks of ‘the universality of the prophetic gift’ that is the ‘democratization of the spirit to the people’ in the age of eschatological salvation.¹⁶² According to Ma, ‘the coming age of salvation is envisaged as a time when prophecy is given to everyone in the community.’¹⁶³ Ma affirms the Pentecostal experiences in hearing the VoS¹⁶⁴ and makes two salient theological conclusions on Pentecostals especially in their experiences as follow:

¹⁶¹ ‘Rev. Dr. Lula Baird: Truly A Woman of God,’ AG Voice, The Assemblies of God of Malaysia, Issue 5, July 2009, pp. 10-11, AV200907-5. Rev. Lula Baird had done AG mission work in Kuala Lumpur and pioneered the first Assembly of God chapel at 6 Jalan Khoo Cheng Cheow, Housing Trust, Kampar Road, Ipoh, which now are two churches known as First Assembly of God, Ipoh at 94 Kampar Road (established in 1962) and Emmanuel Assembly of God, Ipoh at 127 Treacher Road, Ipoh (established in 1963). She was missionary to Asia, Hong Kong, mainly in Singapore before and after the World War II, while shortly in Cuba during the war, and started the pioneering work in Ipoh, Malaya in 1959. Mrs Baird wrote in her autobiography, ‘My Journey’, LB001, that she fervently prayed for the young people especially the Saturday Christ Ambassadors services and youth camps that they would be ambassadors for Christ and go tell the gospel to the world. There was one camp where 23 youths responded to God despite objections from parents who were idol and ancestral worshippers. Baird passed away on 11 December 2008, aged 100.

¹⁶² Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes*, p. 134.

¹⁶³ Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes*, p. 135.

¹⁶⁴ Wonsuk Ma, ‘The Theological Motivations for Pentecostal Mission’, in Lee and Ma, eds., *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, pp. 31-2. Ma states, ‘The Pentecostal appropriation of the biblical narratives occurs in two ways: they transport the ancient stories to contemporary life (existentialisation), they also “slip” themselves into the ancient story of action (identification). The logic is simple: if the God of the Bible acted then, he could do the same today. For this reason, Pentecostals love to affirm that God is “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). This mindset promotes an expectation of having a tangible encounter with God through worship, prayer, sermons, Bible reading and the like. The nature of such encounters varies, but Pentecostals expect to “hear from the Lord”. Hearing from God is a common feature of Christianity. The distinctiveness of the Pentecostal experience of hearing is rather concrete and tangible, even if one can argue that tangibility is a subjective notion. Pentecostals are quite open to various channels of such revelation, including dreams, visions, and audible or “inner” voices, mental impressions,

- (1) The Holy Spirit interacts with God's people through a wide range of religious experiences, including prophecy (Acts 11:22-23; 19:6; 21:9), dreams and visions (9:10; 10:3), hearing voices (10:19; 16:9; 18:9), healings (3:1-8; 4:30), and the like; and
- (2) such experiences embolden believers in their faith and lead them into opportunities to witness to the risen Lord.... with their literalistic reading of the Bible, religious experiences have a definite role in strengthening their sense of call and commitment to sacred vocation, as baptism in the Spirit¹⁶⁵

Kärkkäinen also agrees on the significant role of PDV in missions, describes the mission ethos is spirituality which upholds 'the importance of visions, healing, dreams, dance, and other archetypal religious expressions.'¹⁶⁶

In the more classical Pentecostal view, Stronstad and Menzies view the Spirit poured out on the Day of Pentecost as the Spirit of prophecy and as empowerment for service based on Luke-Acts pneumatology. The Holy Spirit comes upon all flesh is the inaugural prophethood of all believers, where every person will be able to prophesy.¹⁶⁷ Menzies interprets it as the 'restoration of the Spirit of prophecy' where the Spirit grants inspired speech, prophetic inspiration, and special revelations (prophecy, vision)¹⁶⁸ and that Luke sees the believers' reception of the Pentecostal gift or BHS as a prophetic community empowered for missions.'¹⁶⁹ However, their views do not represent the overall position of contemporary Pentecostals who understands BHS more holistically, and prophecy being one of the many spiritual gifts (Eph. 4, Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12, 14). The typical Pentecostal view on prophecy is that in the Church era prophecy is no longer an office but a spiritual gift as the Holy Spirit speaks to the believers for the 'edification, exhortation, and comfort' of the Body of Christ.¹⁷⁰

or a passage "being lifted from the page". Such "voices" are not limited to matters of spirituality but apply almost to any issue in life.'

¹⁶⁵ Ma, 'The Theological Motivations for Pentecostal Mission', p. 32.

¹⁶⁶ Kärkkäinen, 'The Pentecostal Understanding of Mission', in Ma, Kärkkäinen and Asamoah-Gyadu, eds., *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, p. 27.

¹⁶⁷ Stronstad, *Prophethood of All Believers*, pp. 66-8.

¹⁶⁸ R.P. Menzies, 'Spirit-Baptism and Spiritual Gifts', in Ma and Menzies, eds., *Pentecostalism in Context*, pp. 55-6.

¹⁶⁹ R.P. Menzies, 'Luke's Understanding of Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Pentecostal Dialogues with the Reformed Tradition', *JPT*; 16 (Leiden, 2008), p. 100.

¹⁷⁰ Burgess, McGee and Alexander, eds., *DPCM*, s.v. 'Gift of Prophecy', p. 732.

The early and contemporary Pentecostals believe in the significant role of PDV in Pentecostal spirituality, which is closely related to the prophetic revelation given in the utterance of the unknown tongues and interpreted message of tongues, and mostly in association with praying in the Spirit as well as visions and dreams received while seeking and waiting on God. PDV plays a significant role in God's calling of missionaries and believers for service, and a prime revelatory means to receiving the Spirit's message and God's missional plans, directions, and kingdom purposes.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter achieved its aims to explain how the seven key theological themes have been developed in the Pentecostal study by comparing the classical and contemporary understanding and practices of them. This chapter plays two critical roles: one is to provide a theoretical backdrop in terms of the general development of Pentecostalism in the global context, and the other is to provide a dialogical platform to compare them with the empirical findings (especially in chapter six) in the Malaysian context.

There are several notable and general trends detected in the development of the seven key theological themes. Joel's prophecy and its fulfilment in Acts 2 have been the foundational Scriptures for the Pentecostal movement since Topeka Pentecost in 1901 and Azusa Street revival in 1906 followed by the worldwide revivals over the past century until present. Pentecostals receive the spiritual experience of the outpouring of the Spirit and 'Bible evidence' of the BHS and gift of tongues, the supernatural power and manifestation of the Holy Spirit. The key theological themes derived from Joel 2 and Acts 2 are pivotal in shaping the Pentecostal theology, spirituality, and practice from early years to present.

There has been an increasing trend of women's role in missions, leadership, and ministries, and the 'all flesh' theme has made Pentecostalism the most widespread and

contextualised Christianity worldwide. In terms of missions, the early Pentecostal's missional motivation driven by crisis eschatology which made Pentecostals the worldwide missionary movement, has gradually faded with the development of new eschatological perspective of salvation history. BHS as empowerment for missions remains core to Pentecostal spirituality, with new missional frontiers and approaches. Prosperity gospel and the 'Word of Faith Movement' have become popular in the second half of last century in the growth of Pentecostalism globally. Nevertheless, Holy Spirit is the missionary Spirit and contemporary Pentecostal spirituality continues to emphasise on revivalism to renew the spiritual vitality of Pentecostal community to carry on its mission to fulfil the Great Commission and world evangelism. PDV remains core in Pentecostal spirituality in missions, churches, ministries, and personal lives.

The new developments and expansions of Pentecostal pneumatology and theological interpretations by contemporary theologians, particularly on the Pentecostal distinctives and the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 broaden, enrich and strengthen the core beliefs of Pentecostal theology and Pentecostal spirituality. The world continually needs the outpouring of the Spirit promised in Joel's prophecy. Ultimately, people need the BHS, 'the crown jewel of Pentecostal distinctives,'¹⁷¹ as it is a theophanic experience of being filled with the presence of the God, a spiritual encounter and relationship with the triune God.¹⁷² The centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 remains the ultimate core of Pentecostal theology, thus BHS and glossolalia remain intrinsic, indispensable, and the 'most distinguishing marks'¹⁷³ of Pentecostalism.

¹⁷¹ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p. 20.

¹⁷² Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, p. 49; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*.

¹⁷³ Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, p. 13.

Chapter Four

Stage 1 – The Situation and Its Complexities

AGM has grown and developed from a Classical Pentecostal Movement (CPM) to a Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement (CPCM). This chapter aims to analyse and construct the historical development of the AGM through the historical milestones, encompassing the changing nature and paradigm shifts from classical emphases to contemporary emphases, which impacted the changes in practices of the Pentecostal distinctives and in particular the VoS. It envisages to answer the sub-question: How has AGM developed and transitioned from a CPM to a CPCM since its inception to the present, and what are the changes in emphases and practices of the Pentecostal distinctives and VoS?

In Stage 1 data analysis and critical interpretation, I will design the theoretical and conceptual framework of major themes identified from the variables and factors of primary data, to present AGM's situation and its complexities over three periods corresponding with the changes in emphases and practices.¹ The chapter structure has two sections. The first section is the construction of a chronological narrative of AGM's historical development from classical to contemporary, based on the interviews, surveys, and archival sources. The themes illustrated in the various diagrams or figures depict the classical emphases, complexities in shift in emphases, and contemporary emphases. The second section is on VoS, being a significant theme of Joel's prophecy throughout the growth and development of the movement from classical to contemporary. The Holy Spirit's guidance plays a vital role in the calling of AGM minister, as well as in missiology, ecclesiology, and ministerial aspects. It contains testimonies of PDV in

¹ See Appendix Five: Analysis Table of Codes, Variables, and Factors, where themes emerge from the primary data; and Appendix Six: Themes in Theoretical and Conceptual Framework, from data interpretation. The themes are highlighted by specific headings and sub-headings in the finding chapters.

different periods with analyses and critical interpretations of the changes of nature and influences over time.

4.1 Classical to Contemporary

AGM's historical development from a CPM to a CPCM analysed in this chapter is depicted by the following figure 4.1. This diagram implies that the movement's growth has occasioned or facilitated the move from CPM to CPCM.

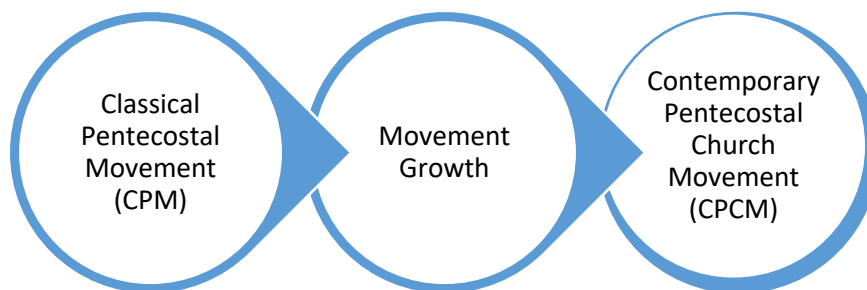


Figure 4.1: Classical to Contemporary

The historical development of the AGM movement with the rationale behind the periodization used (AGM's milestones) is presented alongside the classical emphases, the changing nature and gradual shifts in emphases, moving toward the contemporary emphases. The homogeneity of the early classical Pentecostal movement in terms of theology and practices are seen in the classical formation years through the growth of the movement under national leadership until around mid-1980s before the movement underwent the changing nature (physical changes and natural processes) by contextualisation, expansion, diversification, external influences, paradigm shifts (perspectives and practices), modernisation, and morphed into a contemporary Pentecostal movement.

4.1.1 Classical Formation (1957-1974)

Minutes of meetings inform that the fellowship of the Assemblies of God of Malaya and Singapore was officially organised on 6 February 1957 with the formation of the General Council,² and separated into two entities in 1966 following the political separation of Malaysia and Singapore in 1965.³ AGM is a contextualised Pentecostal movement and it is fundamental to examine its classical roots in order to understand its historical formation, development, theology, and practices being a CPM. This section begins with the study on AGM's classical emphases with the espoused classical Pentecostal theology particularly on the distinctives and Pentecostal fervour, early traits and practices inherited from the early AG missionaries, AGM and Bible schools, the eschatological and missionary fervour, spiritual atmosphere of revival and homogeneity in AGM's formative period.⁴

4.1.1.1 Classical Emphases

The classical emphases during the formation period as shown in the following figure 4.2 are themes emerged from the primary data analysis and supported by archival documents. It is characterised firstly by the espoused classical Pentecostal theology with the foundational texts on Joel's prophecy and Acts 2 on the outpouring of the Spirit or BHS.

² Delmer Guynes, 'Minutes of the Assemblies of God Field Fellowship of Malaya Conference', 6 February 1957, M/FF19570206; Minutes of the Constitutional Convention of the Assemblies of God of Malaya and Singapore, 6 February 1957, M/CC19570206. The venue was at Elim Assembly of God in Serangoon Road, Singapore. From 1930 to 1957, there were two churches planted in Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur. Constitution and By-Laws of the Assemblies of God of Malaysia, 1957; revised 1984; new revision adopted at the 51st General Council 31 May 2016, AGM-CBLr20160531.

³ Minutes of the 9th General Council of the Assemblies of God of Malaysia and Singapore, 12-14 April 1966, p. 5, M/GC196604-9. In 1965, politically, Singapore had separated from Malaysia (the merger with the Federation of Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak in 1963). This resulted in the formation of two new entities, Assemblies of God of Malaya and Assemblies of God of Singapore, in 1966. AGM, 'The History of the Assemblies of God Malaysia', <http://www.ag.org.my/ag-history.php>, accessed 16 May 2016.

⁴ 'Rev. Lula M. Ashmore (Baird), an Extraordinary Missionary, Played a Significant Role in the Early Era of the History of the Assemblies of God Mission in Malaya & Singapore from 1939-1941, 1947-1952, 1957-1962', 70th Anniversary, First Assembly of God Church Kuala Lumpur, FAG2004-70A.

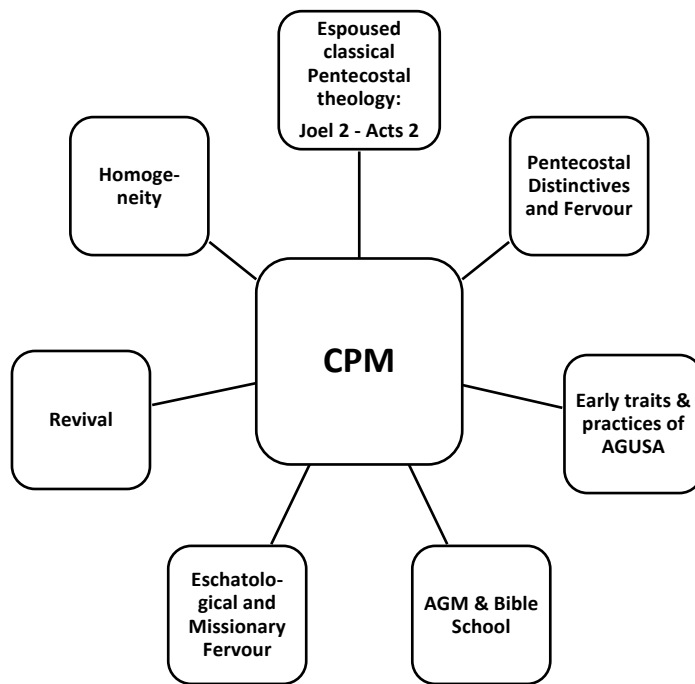


Figure 4.2: Classical Formation 1957-1974 – classical emphases

The central Pentecostal distinctives are the BHS, glossolalia, and missions, which were strongly emphasised especially in the early traits and practices brought in by the AG missionaries. The AGUSA general council and the Bible schools are formal organisations and platforms to perpetuate its theology and practice in raising workers for the field, especially with the eschatological and missionary fervour. The homogeneity in theological emphasis and practice in the midst of revival accelerated AGM’s growth and development from the formation period through the movement growth period.

4.1.1.1 Espoused Classical Pentecostal Theology: Joel 2 – Acts 2

AGM has inherited its espoused classical Pentecostal theology and practices from early missionaries of AGUSA.⁵ The theological themes derived from Joel 2 – Acts 2 are

⁵ Collective interview data from analysis: SP-13, SP-1, SP-14, SP-18, SP-21, SP-7, SP-5, SP-6, SP-22, SP-23, SP-12, SP-11, SP-10, SP-16, SP-2, SP-3, SP-9, SP-4, SP-20, SP-15, SP-19. See chapter three. The key theological themes derived from the foundational Scriptures of Joel 2 – Acts 2 shaped the classical Pentecostal theology as held by the early American Pentecostalism. They were preached, taught, practised, and passed on to AGUSA’s widespread indigenous mission fields including AGM.

fundamental to understand AGM’s theology and practices particularly in the formative period as illustrated in the following figure 4.3, where from the central Pentecostal distinctive of BHS flows other distinctives, emphases, and practices:

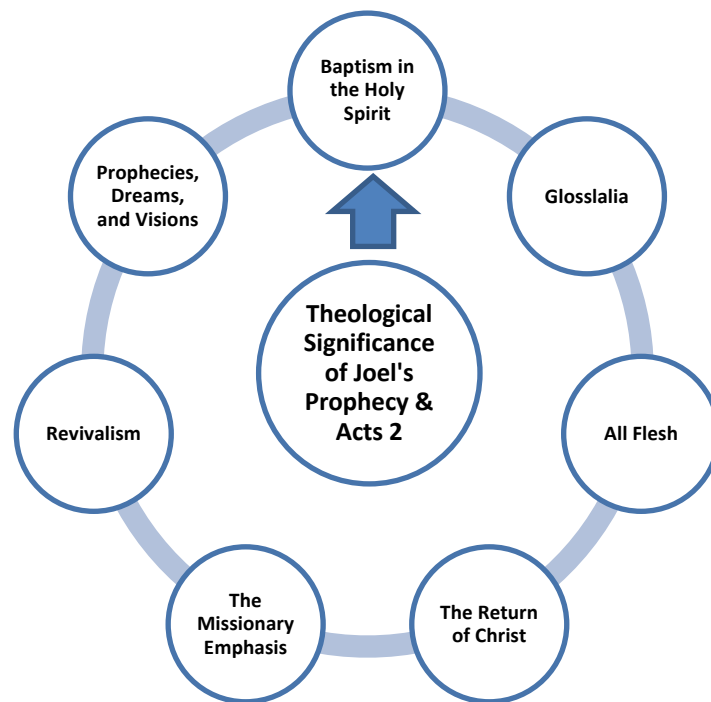


Figure 4.3: Key Theological Themes of Joel 2 – Acts 2

4.1.1.1.2 Pentecostal Distinctives and Fervour

AGM’s theological position and doctrine is rooted in the Statement of 16 Fundamental Truths of the AGUSA.⁶ AGM’s Pentecostal distinctives are fundamentally Spirit-baptism, speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of Spirit-baptism, and the empowerment for life, missions and service for Christ.⁷ Ng defines Spirit-baptism as ‘the second work of the Holy Spirit, and after conversion, evidenced of speaking in tongues ... Baptism of the Spirit means fullness of the Spirit and it is total immersion of the Spirit

⁶ Collective interview data: SP-13, SP-14, SP-7, SP-11, SP-3, SP-8. See Gohr, ‘The Historical Development of the Statement of Fundamental Truths’, *AG Heritage*, 2012, pp. 61-6, http://ifphc.org/Uploads/Heritage/2012_08.pdf, accessed 20 April 2019. 16 Fundamental Statements of Assemblies of God, also known as ‘Statement of Fundamental Faith’ means the doctrinal statement of faith. This is the classical Pentecostal beliefs of AGM, wholly imported from the Assemblies of God, USA. See Appendix Eight on AGM’s Tenets of Faith no. 7 on ‘BHS’, no.8 on ‘Evidence of the BHS’, and no. 10 on ‘The Church and Its Mission’. AGM, Annex 1, pp. 94-5, AGM-CBLr20160531.

⁷ This distinctive is found in most classical Pentecostal denominations. The Association of Pentecostal Churches of America representing more than 30 classical Pentecostal denominations has the initial evidence doctrines as one of its statements of faith.

... overwhelmed by the Spirit. This is what Jesus is saying, “You will be baptized”, immersed completely, “in the Spirit.”⁸ The classical Pentecostalism views Spirit-baptism or, as termed by Bonino, the ‘receiving’ of the Spirit involving empowerment.⁹ AGUSA holds on to glossolalia being the initial physical evidence of BHS, which Pentecostal theologians affirm is the distinctive belief.¹⁰ In fact, a pioneer, Florence Teh, testified speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues were common practice in worship services.¹¹

4.1.1.1.3 Early Traits and Practices of AGUSA

AGM inherited the early traits and practices of early Pentecostalism from AGUSA missionaries which influenced AGM’s formative period, such as BHS, tarrying meetings, revival services, full gospel,¹² as these are similar to Dayton’s record.¹³ AGM’s experiences of BHS are consistent to that of the earlier Pentecostal testimonies.¹⁴ AGM’s early practices like ‘tarrying meetings’ during the pioneering period can be traced to the Wesleyan-Holiness revivals in the late nineteenth century Pentecostals inherited both this and other revival practices from their immediate spiritual forebears as Synan recorded.¹⁵

⁸ Interview with Rev. Ng Kok Kee, 24 April 2017. Pioneer, former AG General Secretary, and former president of BCM.

⁹ Bonino, ‘Changing Paradigms: A Response’, in Dempster, Klaus and Petersen, eds., *Globalization of Pentecostalism*, pp. 118, 120. The Pentecostal interpretation is that tongues, healing, and an empowered witness are clear signs of empowerment of the Spirit.

¹⁰ See McGee, ed., *Initial Evidence*; and Menzies and Horton, *Bible Doctrines*.

¹¹ Interview with Rev. Florence Teh, 28 March 2017. A pioneer, pastor, retired BCM faculty member, presently itinerant minister.

¹² Collective Interview data: SP-7, SP-5, SP-6, SP-14, SP-11, SP-22, SP-15. Practices include speaking in tongues, altar call ministry, and evangelistic meetings among others.

¹³ Dayton, *Theological Roots*, p. 21. The late nineteenth century Wesleyan-Holiness movement on the ‘common four-fold pattern’ contributed directly to the overall theology of the AG, particularly in North America, distinguishing Classical Pentecostalism. The ‘four-fold gospel’ can be summarised as Jesus saves (John 3:16), Jesus baptises with Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4), Jesus heals (James 5:14-15), and Jesus is the coming King (1 Thess. 4:16-17). Preached by A.S. McPherson, founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. BHS, the common pattern in early Pentecostals until the 1960s (with the rise of the Neo-Pentecostals) was being saved, filled with the Spirit, and spoke in tongues.

¹⁴ For archival resources, visit J.R. Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center at <https://ifphc.org/>, accessed 16 Jan. 2020.

¹⁵ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd edn (Grand Rapids, 1997), pp. 25, 31. For more historical information on Wesleyan-Holiness Movement, visit IPHC Archives and Research Center at <https://iphc.org/gso/archives/>, accessed 16 Jan.

In the formative period of AGM in 1960s and 1970s, there were many revival meetings and ‘tarrying meetings’. The members would have long hours of praying and waiting upon God in the expectation of receiving Spirit-baptism, the empowerment by the Spirit; waiting for God’s revelation and listening to the Spirit’s leading. These were long services in the presence of the Holy Spirit where many received the BHS and spiritual gifts, with the evangelistic zeal and passion. As Anderson describes, ‘Early Pentecostals spent days, sometimes weeks and even years, waiting in prayer for the “promise of the Father”. Coupled with the overwhelming desire for power was a conviction that the only way to receive the promise was through prolonged, constant and persistent prayer, sometimes called “tarrying” or “waiting” upon God. There was no other way.’¹⁶ This was the same practice as that of early AGM leaders like Guneratnam’s testimony, ‘It was in those “tarrying meetings” that I received my call through a vision of seeing Jesus.’¹⁷

On the other hand, in the early days, AGM had also inherited some western baggage¹⁸ which led to some down-side and were later disengaged with such as legalistic holiness.¹⁹

4.1.1.1.4 AGM and Bible School

Interviews, minutes, and missionary reports confirm AG general council, that is, the establishment of national church/movement and its leadership, and Bible schools was the

2020. ‘Tarrying’ is a quasi-technical term in Holiness and Pentecostal parlance. It originated from the Wesleyan Holiness’ camp meetings and holiness crusades for the ‘work of entire sanctification’.

¹⁶ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, p. 66.

¹⁷ Interview with Tan Sri Datuk Rev. Dr Prince Guneratnam, 4 May 2017.

¹⁸ Collective interview data: SP-1.

¹⁹ Interview with Rev. Dr Chan Nam Chen, 21 July 2019. For example, western garb of how to dress as a minister, men cannot have long hair, women cannot wear slacks and sleeveless clothes; anti-intellectualism, ‘you leave your brains at the door when you come to church’. Other negative influences include undue emphasis of ‘lifting up of the man of God’, leadership abuse, malpractice, lack of Bible depth or contextual interpretation of Scripture, some ‘weirdos’ and ‘loose canons’ were aberrations in trying to be led by the Spirit, as well as certain western culture on how church should be practised and how missions should be done.

main missional strategy of the AG missionaries.²⁰ Alongside church planting,²¹ revival meetings,²² evangelistic rallies,²³ and so on, Bible schools is said to be one of the AGUSA's 'DNA'.²⁴ Ronnie Chin remarked, 'That is the practice in the "AG DNA" that has served us well, even in Malaysia ... it's in the Bible school that "Pentecostal DNA" is perpetuated.'²⁵ As the AG missionaries detected the need to train and send local workers, and Bible Institute of Malaya (BIM) was established on 3 January 1960. BIM started with a three-year diploma programme and first enrolment of 12 youths from Malaya and Singapore. The first graduating class was in 1962 with seven graduates. At that time, there were six faculty members and around 19 students.²⁶ Many youths enrolled over the years. Many of the AG missionaries were church planters as well as educators in the Bible schools.²⁷ The AG's Bible school is one of the most successful, fruitful, and lasting Pentecostal missionary work established by the early missionaries.²⁸ Most AGM

²⁰ Collective interview data: SP-13.

²¹ Lula Ashmore Baird, 'Dedication Day for New Assembly at Kuala Lumpur, Malaya', missionary report, 21 Jan. 1951, MR19510121; Delmar R. Guynes, 'Lost...A Church in Malaya!', *Foreign Missions*, 1 Dec, 1958 (n.p.), FMR19581201; 'Ipoh, Malaya, Has a New Assemblies of God Church', 31 Jan. 1960 (missionary report, n.p.), MR19600131; 'Malaya: New Church Formed in Raub', Aug. 1960 (missionary report, n.p.), MR1960008; Baird, L., Missionary to Malaya, 'Church Dedicated at Ipoh, Malaya', *Foreign Missions*, 24 Mar. 1963, FMR19630324; Letter from Wong Soon Lee, Chartered Architect, to Rev. David H. Baker, on 'Proposed Church Building & Pastorage on Lots 351 & 352 T.S. 4, MacAlister Road, Penang for the Assemblies of God', 22 Aug. 1963, L19630822.

²² Vallance Baird, 'Revival in Ipoh, Malaya', 11 Jan. 1960 (missionary report, n.p.), MR19600111.

²³ 'Ipoh First Assembly Holds Evangelistic Meetings and Sacred Concert', *Assemblies of God Voice*, 1962 (n.p.), AGV1962.

²⁴ Collective interview data: SP-2, SP-6, SP-9, SP-15, SP-13.

²⁵ Interview with Rev. Ronnie Chin, Assistant General Superintendent, 27 August 2019.

²⁶ Letter from D.G. Foote, Assistant to the Secretary, to Delmar R. Guynes, Secretary of the Field Fellowship, Kuala Lumpur, on the development of Bible School, 8 Nov. 1956, L19561108; Letter between Guynes, Assembly of God Church, Kuala Lumpur, and Office of Administrator, Petaling Jaya, on the process of development for the Assemblies of God Bible School of Malaya, 1 Sep. 1956, L19560901; 12 Sep. 1956, L19560912; Howard C. Osgood, 'Dedication of the Bible Institute of Malaya', 1960, BIM1960-HO; Letter from Delmar R. Guynes, The Assemblies of God of Malaya and Singapore, to Petaling Jaya Development Corporation, 5 Jan. 1961, regarding the 97 and 99 Jalan Gasing (BIM property) be held in the name of The General Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc. USA, L19610105; Constitution and ByLaws for Bible Institute of Malaya, n.d., L19610105; B.I.M. Annual 1962, BIMA1962; Howard C. Osgood, Principal's Report for 1961-2, 9 April 1962, BIMPR1961-2; B.I.M. Newzette, vol. 2, no. 11, Nov. 1962 BIMNZ196211.

²⁷ Another AGM national Bible school, Malaysia Tamil Bible Institute (MTBI) was established in 1972. There is a new sister Bible seminary Borneo Bible School begun in the 2010s.

²⁸ General Council of the AGM, Policies made by the Executive Committee 1965-1966 on Publications Committee; Required Courses of Study for Credentials (Non-Bible School Students); Home Missions Department and Director (for the establishment and supervision of pioneer works), GC1965-1966.

pioneers, church planters, ministers, and leaders were being trained here and sent out into the field over six decades, and BIM,²⁹ renamed Bible College of Malaysia in 1982, had her sixtieth anniversary in 2020.³⁰ Pentecostal theological education plays a vital role in the process of contextualisation.

4.1.1.1.5 Eschatological and Missionary Fervour

The eschatological and missionary fervour was a strong classical emphasis in relation to BHS and glossolalia based on Acts 2 and 1:8. The theological link between Spirit-baptism and missions had been transpired, received and lived out by the early AG missionaries and pioneers of AGM movement in the formative and pioneering period until the mid-1980s.³¹ This primary theological focus was also transmitted to the nationals so that they became mission-oriented from the outset. Macchia explains that the Pentecostal movement first began from holiness movement moving on to empowerment for global witness with the significance of speaking in tongues.³² The early Pentecostal emphasis was on eschatology, thus the sense of passion for the kingdom.³³ Abeysekera asserts that during the 1930s, ‘all the Assemblies of God Bible Schools became centres of thorough Bible training, evangelistic zeal, and missionary vision’, which ‘have established stability

²⁹ Letter from Selangor State Development Corporation to The General Council of the AG, Inc., USA, on the approval of title transfer of BIM property, 2449 and 2450, Section 10, Petaling Jaya, to ‘Registered Trustee of The Assemblies of Malaysia’, 27 Nov. 1978, L19781127.

³⁰ BCM conferred at least 1,371 certificates, diplomas and degrees from 1960 to 2020, and produced more than 1,000 graduates, whom most are in the ministry. 1960-1969 (43 graduates), 1970-1979 (119), 1980-1989 (209), 1990-1999 (195), 2000-2010 (415), ‘BCM 50th Anniversary 1960-2010 Remarkable Journey Promising Future’, pp. 14, 24, 36, 48, 61-2, BCM2010-50A; 2011-2017 (260 graduates), Student Information Report, BCM, 27 October 2017, GPS2017; 2018 (47 graduates), Graduation Programme Sheet 2018, GPS2018; 2019 (41 graduates), Graduation Programme Sheet 2019; GPS2019; 2020 (42 graduates), Graduating Student List 2020, GSL2020. The actual number of graduates are lesser than the number of diplomas and degrees conferred due to some alumni returned to pursue higher degree programmes over the years, and some students had graduated with double programmes concurrently.

³¹ Collective interview data: SP-14, SP-7, SP-23, SP-12, SP-11, SP-16, SP-2, SP-3, SP-9, SP-4, SP-20, SP-15, SP-8.

³² Frank D. Macchia, ‘The Struggle for Global Witness: Shifting Paradigms in Pentecostal Theology’, in Dempster, Klaus and Petersen, eds., *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, p. 16.

³³ Macchia, ‘The Struggle for Global Witness’, p. 23. See Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*; and Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*.

and growth of the Assemblies of God, worldwide.’³⁴ The understanding of ‘mission’ by early AGUSA missionaries is not the same as now AGM practices.

Missionary reports, newsletters, and souvenir magazine show mission emphasis was very strong in the pioneering years and many who responded were youths in their teens and early twenties. Those were the times of enrolment to Bible school and the beginning of active church planting, missions and evangelism. There were regular ‘open air meetings’, evangelistic and healing crusades or rallies, national and youth camps.³⁵ A youth camp testimony reads, ‘the service was full of life and I was made to feel the presence of God ... I decided to accept ... Christ ... Then coming to camp I saw wonder working power of the Holy Spirit and was challenged to serve my Master ...’³⁶ Another reads, ‘I yielded to the Lord and the Holy Spirit shook me up. The mighty force of God sent me humbly to the floor ... I was still in the spirit of prayer and subsequently speaking in a heavenly language for a long time’ and his life was transformed.³⁷ The message to BIM students was the urgent call to answer the Great Commission, and be reapers of God and save souls (Matt. 8:36; 9:37; 10:37; 28:19-20).³⁸ The messages at that time were about divine healing, salvation, BHS, glossolalia, second coming of Christ, evangelism, preach the gospel, Christian life, the word of God, prayer, and etc.³⁹ In fact, AGM started

³⁴ Abeysekera, *History of the Assemblies of God of Singapore*, p. 47.

³⁵ AGM 50th Anniversary 1957-2007, pp. 32, 48-49, AGM2007-50A; ‘A Youth Camp for Singapore C.A.’s’, 25 Oct. 1959 (missionary report, n.p.), MR19591025; ‘Ipoh, Malaya’, *Global Conquest*, Nov. 1960 (missionary report on youth camp, n.p.), MR196011; Mrs. Lula Baird, Missionary to Malaya, ‘After Youth Camp’, *The Pentecostal Evangel*, Springfield, MO, 30 Jul. 1961, p. 7, PE19610730; ‘Loren and Darlene Cunningham write from Malaya’, missionary report on youth camp in Penang, Sep. 1963, MR196309; The 8th Annual Pentecostal Revival Youth Camp of The Assemblies of God Malaysia, registration forms of Ipoh and Penang participants, 1964, YC-1964-8; Youth Rally Pamphlet 1972, YR1972-P. Cho Yonggi and Jim Anderson preached the gospel in the stadium in the formative and pioneering period. In these rallies and meetings were the tangible presence of God, Jesus so real, manifestation of the power of Holy Spirit, healing, salvation, BHS followed by speaking in tongues, and call to changed life, and serve the Lord. Youth camps contributed to the growth of AGM as many youths were filled with evangelistic fervour to reach out to the lost souls, pray for salvation for their family and friends, and challenged with new visions for full-time ministry.

³⁶ David Achutan, ‘Youth Camp Testimony’, *AG Voice*, vol. II, no. 1, 1965-66, p. 10, AV1965-66-II-1.

³⁷ David Cheng, ‘Youth Camp Testimony’, *AG Voice*, vol. II, no. 1, 1965-66, p. 11, AV1965-66-II-1.

³⁸ Phoebe Lee, ‘Echoing for God’; Eileen Tan, ‘Reaping for God’, BIM 1972 magazine, p. 27, BIM1972.

³⁹ Divine Healing Issue, *Assemblies of God Voice*, vol. 1, no. 5, 1964, AGV1964-1-5; Rev. D.H. Baker, ‘Baptism of the Holy Spirit’, *AG Voice*, vol. II, no. 1, 1965-66, pp. 5-6, AV1965-66-II-1; R. Paul Miller, ‘The New Birth’, *AG Voice*, vol. II, no. 2, 1966, pp. 3-4, AV1966-II-2. Pentecostal Issue (on salvation, fire,

as a youth movement and many early church planters and their church members who were mostly young people, were filled with zeal and boldness to go ‘house-to-house evangelism’ or ‘door-to-door evangelism’.⁴⁰ Teh recalled their evangelistic fervour:

And because of the Holy Spirit, missions was very strong. We did not just plant churches. Every Sunday, after service, we would go out to different places to do tracting and witnessing. I also joined in at that time [1970s-1980s]. We would go to the Samping Flats, Pekeliling Flats, and also Loke Yew Flats. Because of the move of the Spirit, members were so on fire for God. We wanted to go out and witness, and do evangelism. I believe this was the main reason why AG Malaysia had grown so fast. It was because of the power and the move of the Spirit of God in the hearts of the believers, and also in the church leadership to see the need to plant churches, to pioneer and to do missions, whether local missions or foreign missions.⁴¹

There was urgency, zeal, and passion in missions and evangelism, with the eschatological fervour, to save souls for heaven before Christ’s return.

One significant practice of AG in its services and meetings is the altar call ministry.

Lisa Chin emphasises that altar call ushers the people into real spiritual experiences of God’s presence and power of the Holy Spirit as they respond to God.⁴² I see the widespread of global Pentecostalism is due to the spiritual experiential faith of the power and work of the Holy Spirit, and personal encounters with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is during altar calls that salvation and healing take place, when many are convicted by the Holy Spirit, Spirit baptised and respond to God’s call for service, missions, and ministry.

4.1.1.1.6 Revival

AGM was strongly impacted by the waves of revival that was sweeping across the region during the formative period, which heightened the eschatological and missionary

tongues, etc.), *AG Voice*, vol. II, no. 3, 1966, AV1966-II-3; Christian Life Issue, *AG Voice*, vol. II, no. 4, 1966, AV1966-II-4; Second Coming Issue, *AG Voice*, vol. II, no. 5, 1966, AG1966-II-5; Evangelism Issue, *AG Voice*, vol. II, no. 6, 1966, AG1966-II-6; Read Your Bible Issue, *AG Voice*, vol. III, no. 1, 1967, AV1967-III-1; Prayer, *AG Voice*, vol. III, no. 2, 1967, AV1967-III-2.

⁴⁰ Collective interview data: SP-2, SP-3, SP-4, SP-20.

⁴¹ Interview with Rev. Teh.

⁴² Collective interview data: SP-22, and interview with Rev. Lisa Chin, pioneer, 27 August 2019. In response to preaching in healing rallies, revival meetings, and church services, altar call ministry is another ‘AG’s DNA’, being a distinct feature of AGM services where people are called to respond to God’s word and it is a time where the preacher will lay hands to pray for those who come up to the front, and allow the Holy Spirit to minister. The altar call ministry is still being practised.

emphasis.⁴³ Missionary reports and magazine confirm the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit throughout Malaysia and Singapore as witnessed and reported by Guynes was around 1957.⁴⁴ BIM Principal, Howard Osgood wrote about the Youth Camp in 1960, ‘[I]t was the biggest ever with well over two hundred young people registered. Over twenty were saved. Over forty received the Baptism in the Spirit. Several made the consecration for full-time service and are planning on entering the Institute this coming year.’⁴⁵

In the 1960s and 1970s, the revival swept across Malaysia and surrounding countries as well. AGM’s pioneering years were revival times where ‘people were spiritually hungry’ and responsive to God and the work of the Holy Spirit. People were more receptive to the gospel.⁴⁶ There was harvest of souls and revival among the youths as many gathered to pray and seek God. Many were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to evangelise and to serve God zealously. The spiritual atmosphere of the outpouring of the Spirit in various parts of Malaysia had impacted AGM with tremendous growth spurts in the next decade.

4.1.1.1.7 Homogeneity and Critical Interpretation

Overall, there was a homogeneity in doctrinal beliefs, theological emphases and practices. Owing to the foundational work laid by early AG missionaries in these formative years, AGM has been well-structured and organised, with the espoused classical Pentecostal theology and Bible schools set in place. Ministers and workers were well-equipped to

⁴³ Collective interview data: SP-23, SP-12, SP-6, SP-14, SP-16, SP-2, SP-3, SP-9, SP-4, SP-20, SP-15.

⁴⁴ Delmar R. Guynes, missionary report on Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the revival spread throughout Malaysia and Singapore, circa 1957, MR1957; ‘25th Anniversary Assemblies of God Malaysia’, *Souvenir Magazine*, Apr. 1982, p. 16, AGM1982-25A.

⁴⁵ Christmas Greetings and Missionary Report Letter by Rev. Howard and Edith Osgood, BIM Principal, Kuala Lumpur, Malaya, 24 Oct. 1960 BIMHO19601024.

⁴⁶ Collective interview data: SP-23. There were revivals in other parts of Malaysia and a strong manifestation of the power and works of the Holy Spirit as groups of missionaries and young people prayed and sought the Lord.

contain and sustain the revival which was impetus to the rapid growth of AGM in the following period under the national leadership.

There had been strong emphasis on the theological understanding on Joel 2 – Acts 2 and the centrality of BHS, glossolalia, and missions as the core Pentecostal distinctives. BHS has been the central teaching and practice since the classical formation period as the empowerment for life and service, especially empowerment for missions, evangelism, and church planting. BIM annuals and newsletters record that the early Bible school students were trained mainly by foreign missionaries in 1960s and early 1970s and their students adhered to this classical Pentecostal theology on Spirit-baptism and missions. The pioneers had burning conviction of the core beliefs, their purpose and calling. Most of these main classical emphases were being carried on strongly into the movement growth period under national leadership.⁴⁷

4.1.2 Movement Growth (1975-2007)

This next period was marked by AGM's historical milestones of the handover of leadership from AG missionaries to national leadership in 1974 and AGM's fiftieth anniversary in 2007. This movement growth period classified by historical milestones under national leadership comprises of two stages of growth and development; the homogeneity (1975 to mid-1980s) and changing nature (1980s to 2007).

4.1.2.1 Homogeneity (1975 to mid-1980s)

Ng recalls the earlier part of AGM's movement growth was the pioneering period. The homogeneity of the classical emphases on the espoused theology and practice continued strongly under the national leadership from 1975 until the mid-1980s.⁴⁸ Since the

⁴⁷ B.I.M. Annuals and B.I.M. Newzette, 1961-1981, BIMA, BIMNZ.

⁴⁸ Interview with Rev. Ng.

transition of leadership from AG missionaries to national leadership of Guneratnam as the first Malaysian AG General Superintendent in 1974, the major missional strategy for growth under his leadership was the intensity of Bible school's mission in raising local pioneers and ministers for church planting endeavours. The tremendous growth spurts had resulted in AGM becoming a strong influence in spearheading the Spirit-filled Christian landscape in the nation. The Pentecostal had grown rapidly from 5,440 in 1960 to 61,500 adherents in 1985 which made up 13.6 percent of Christianity in Malaysia, whereas evangelical is 17.5 percent, others 15.2 percent, and the largest denomination being the Roman Catholic 53.7 percent.⁴⁹

AGM's national leadership under Guneratnam was a smooth transition from the AG missionaries as souvenir book records.⁵⁰ In the interview, he shared his passion and vision in church planting ever since his early years:

Somehow, I felt church is the key factor of the spreading of the gospel. If there is no church the gospel cannot succeed or cannot be effective. That's why I believe very strongly in local churches and planting churches. That's why even from very young in the ministry, my desire was not so much as in saving souls which is necessary, but seeing churches being planted so that people that get saved have a home to go to. So it is more of a strong passion to serve God that these things began to surface.⁵¹

The spiritual atmosphere of revival was still ongoing. The strong Pentecostal fervour and missions, evangelism and church planting since the classical formation period continued to thrive as AGM went through explosive growth and development in the next two decades. There was a stronger and more intense focus on Bible school training of local youths who responded to God's call during the 'youth revival' in the late 1970s and early

⁴⁹ Hunt, Lee and Roxborough, eds., *Christianity in Malaysia*, p. 357.

⁵⁰ Calvary Church (Assembly of God Kuala Lumpur), '30 Years of Faithful Service: Committed to His Call, Compelled by His Love', 2002, pp. 9-11, 27, CC2002-30A. Guneratnam graduated from BIM in 1966, pioneered Glad Tidings Assembly in Klang in 1967 and Calvary Church in 1972 during the classical formation period. He was already an Executive Committee member in General Council since 1969, National Youth Director in 1970, Home Missions Director in 1974, Foreign Missions Director in 1988, and Assistant General Superintendent in 1973-1974 in the formative period. Tan Sri Guneratnam is presently Pioneer/Senior Pastor of Calvary Church (1972), the largest AGM church. 'Tan Sri' is the second highest honorary federal title granted to recipients of Malaysian Federal Awards namely the PMN (*Panglima Mangku Negara*) being the seventh rank, and the PSM (*Panglima Setia Mahkota*) the eighth rank. 'Datuk' is the most common honorary title conferred to recipients who have contributed to the nation or state.

⁵¹ Interview with Tan Sri Guneratnam.

1980s,⁵² and raising of many local pioneers, pastors, missionaries, and evangelists for the field. Pioneers remember that BIM was full and there was a surge in evangelism and church planting endeavour. BIM started with only 12 students in 1960, the number increased to 33 in 1965, 46 in 1970, 86 in 1976, 75 in 1977, 94 in 1979 including part-time students. BIM Update 1976 reported, ‘Due to our limitations of facilities, faculty and budget, we were only able to accept about one-half of the 47 new applicants’, which was 28 freshmen. In 1979, there were 82 requests, 42 applications received, but only 23 were interviewed. In 1981, BIM started to build a new dormitory building.⁵³

Vincent Leoh and Ronald Ooi were among those who started serving God in 1975 in their youths.⁵⁴ Wong Yin Ming recalled, ‘That time was the revival time ... Bible school was overflowing and had to turn down students during those times.’⁵⁵ There was continuous high enrolment to Bible school, and the most active church planting, missions and evangelism endeavours, ‘open air meetings’, evangelistic and healing rallies were common features, even in big scale at the Stadium Negara with Cho. Many early church planters and their church members who were mostly young people, would go ‘house-to-house evangelism’ or ‘door-to-door evangelism’.⁵⁶ There was such urgency, zeal, fervency, and passion in winning the lost for God’s kingdom, and saving souls to heaven.

In the 1970s and 1980s, every Bible school student was passionate about pioneering and church planting while studying in BIM/BCM or immediately upon graduation even though that was not a prerequisite for ordination. Such was the passion and drive for evangelism and missions. There were few churches in the nation and it was relatively easy to begin a church anywhere. Most of the students served as student pastors in small

⁵² Collective interview data: SP-2; SP-3. AGM 50th Anniversary 1957-2007, p. 38, AGM2007-50A.

⁵³ B.I.M. Newzette May 1965; Jan.-Mar. 1970; Jan-Mar 1977, Sep.-Nov. 1979; B.I.M. Update 1976, 1979; B.I.M. Key 1981, BIMNZ, BIMU.

⁵⁴ Interviews with Rev. Dr Vincent Leoh, 18 April 2017; and Rev. Ronald Ooi, 27 April 2017.

⁵⁵ Interview with Rev. Wong Yin Ming, 24 July 2019.

⁵⁶ Collective interview data: SP-10, SP-11, SP-12, SP-2, SP-3, SP-4, SP-9, SP-20.

townships and villages, especially during the weekends.⁵⁷ Christopher Pak shared his experience, ‘Those were the days when we would go out and knock on doors ... Baptised in the Holy Spirit, we felt burdened for souls, we heard preaching from pulpit, we went and did it. There was no fear in us.’⁵⁸ Clement Wong shared, ‘Many of us were young. When we came out [from Bible College], our only goal was to start a church or plant a church.’⁵⁹ Samuel Ng comments, ‘AGM has always been seen and known as people who practice bold faith, miracles, speaking in tongues, and church planting. There is a need to hold on to these core, especially BHS and the sense of holiness.’⁶⁰ These characteristics form the spiritual atmosphere in the pioneering period.

The intense emphasis on evangelism and church planting from the labour and fruits of Bible schools were evident in the exponential growth in pioneering work and church planting endeavours as consistent batches of pioneers and ministers were launched out into the harvest field. There were noticeable growth spurts especially from the 1970s and 1980s,⁶¹ followed by slower but steady growth to the present time. As documented, from 1974 to 2000, the total number of churches increased almost sevenfold from 43 to 301, membership from around 2,000 to 33,662, and adherents from around 3,400 to 47,073.⁶² Indeed, Guneratnam’s vision has been successfully and effectively implemented for the movement throughout his 26-year tenure of leadership as the General Superintendent from 1974 until 2000. It was reported as of June 2000, AGM grew to 325 churches and outreaches with 45,000 adherents and members, 615 credential members, 8 overseas

⁵⁷ B.C.M. Student Outreach Assignment listing, 1980s (n.d.), BCM/SO1980; Collective interview data: SP-11, SP-16.

⁵⁸ Interview with Rev. Christopher Pak, 21 April 2017.

⁵⁹ Interview with Rev. Clement Wong, 27 April 2017. Words added in bracket for clarification purpose.

⁶⁰ Interview with Rev. Dr Samuel Ng, 8 August 2019.

⁶¹ At the same time, there were revivals and spiritual renewals in mainline denominational churches especially in the 1970’s to 1980’s. Chan K.E., ‘A Brief Note on Church Growth in Malaysia, 1960-1985’, in Hunt, Lee, and Roxborough, eds., *Christianity in Malaysia*, pp. 354-78.

⁶² AGM 50th Anniversary 1957-2007, pp. 47 and 53, AGM2007-50A.

missionaries and active social ministries of six drug rehabilitation centres and 18 social homes.⁶³

The explosive growth of the AGM in the 1970s peaked in the mid-1980s made it the fastest growing church movement in the country⁶⁴ and Lawrence Yap testifies that AGM became a strong influence spearheading the Spirit-filled Christian landscape in the nation.⁶⁵

4.1.2.2 Complexities in Changing Nature (1980s to 2007)

Complexities begin during the latter part of movement growth period from the mid-1980s onward, when the changing nature of the movement became more prominent with the shift in emphases. In the 1980s through the fiftieth anniversary in 2007, AGM has grown large and strong, and has stabilised in the outward expansion. The pioneering period with its homogeneity until mid-1980s began to shift in emphases during the maturing years for the churches and the movement.

Major shifts were beginning to take place after mid-1980s resulting in AGM gradually morphs into its contemporary state. The movement's vast expansion inevitably resulted in the process of AGM's changing nature (physical changes and natural processes) and shifts of emphases as the movement progresses from classical to contemporary as illustrated in figure 4.4 below:

⁶³ 'A Tribute to Twenty Years of Leadership (1974-1994)', Book of Tribute in Appreciation of General Superintendent, Rev. Dr Prince Guneratnam for 20 years of Superintendency, The General Council Assemblies of God of Malaysia, 1994, GS1994-PG20A; Calvary Church, '30 Years of Faithful Service: Committed to His Call, Compelled by His Love', 2002, p. 57, CC2002-30A.

⁶⁴ The AGM movement had become almost as large as the total Evangelical Christian population of the country. Roman Catholicism is the faith of half the Christian population of Malaysia due to the influence brought in during the earlier Portuguese and Dutch colonial rule in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, before the coming of the British.

⁶⁵ Interview with Rev. Lawrence Yap, 22 August 2019.

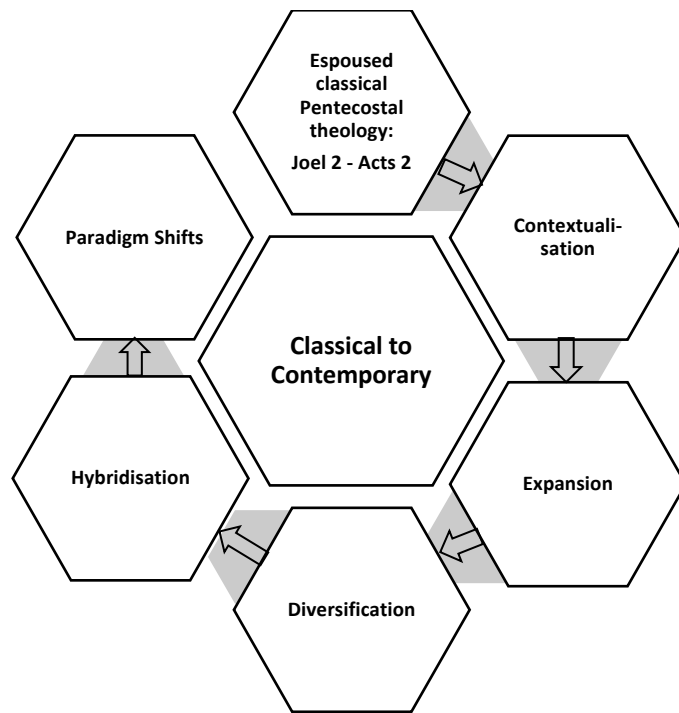


Figure 4.4: Classical to Contemporary – complexities in changing nature and shifts in emphases (CPM homogeneity until mid-1980s)

The process of changing nature starts from the espoused classical Pentecostal theology to contextualisation from American Pentecostal to Malaysian Pentecostal. Gradually, the movement’s growth and expansion were followed by the consolidation of churches, shifting of focus to church building, diversification of ministries; generational growth and multilingual congregational growth which naturally led to diversification of emphases in theological, missional, church, and ministerial aspects; and hybridisation of theological influences (evangelicalism, Charismatic, Third Wave, and etc.), resulting in paradigm shifts that shape AGM’s current perspectives and practices, thus impacting changes in theological emphases and practices of the Pentecostal distinctives.

4.1.2.2.1 Contextualisation

The first changing nature in the establishment of AGM is the contextualisation of the Pentecostal movement from a Western American Pentecostal to Malaysian Pentecostal

over the decades, when the early missionaries had returned to their home countries, and AGM came under national leadership from 1974 onward. One aspect of shifts was the difference between the perspectives that were learnt and perspectives in grassroots realities. There were shifts in the learned practices and missionary perspectives to actual practices when engaging with grassroots realities, especially when it comes to local or native cultures, traditions, way of life, socio-economy, animistic religious beliefs and so on.⁶⁶ Therefore, interviews and surveys affirm local contextualisation of the classical Pentecostal beliefs and practices was very much assimilated into the Malaysian's multicultural and multireligious setting which had become more visible from the 1980s onward.⁶⁷ As mentioned earlier, Pentecostal theological education is fundamental in the process of contextualisation.

4.1.2.2.2 Expansion

Secondly, the growth and expansion of the movement (in church planting endeavours) brought most churches to a time of building up and strengthening the church, and to cater to the needs of multilingual congregational growth and generational growth.

Pioneers testified that AGM reached the new phase where churches had begun to grow larger, were more organised and more structured. It was a season of maturing, with a growing need to nurture the spiritual growth of the members and build spiritual foundations and ministries within the churches in general. As a result, there was more focus on building up the church and members in more holistic aspects of Christian living. Gradually, churches became wealthier and more established, leaders and pastors became more widely accepted by society and by other evangelicals,⁶⁸ the preaching and teaching in churches covered a wider range of topics instead of revolving only around Spirit-

⁶⁶ Collective interview data: CA-8, CA-11.

⁶⁷ The Malaysian Pentecostal context will be discussed in Stage 2 Contextual Analysis.

⁶⁸ Interviews with Rev. Ong and Rev. Pak.

baptism⁶⁹ and missions as was the case in the 1970s. Many churches were planted in most towns and adherents grew in numbers.

Souvenir magazines of churches show that from mid-1980s, the main focus and emphases shift to church building, structure, internal organisation and administration, church programmes, establish new ministries to cater to the congregational growth; nurturing the church members and cater to their needs and spiritual growth, wide range of teaching materials on Christian living, and etc.⁷⁰ As Ong puts it:

By mid-1980s, there were a lot of mega churches ... so the focus was not so much on church planting ... the focus was on building the bigger church. ... It was also a period of consolidation [building up and strengthening the church by diversification of ministries] ... theological education was also coming to the forefront ... the consciousness of other expressions of ministry, and we were also involved in other things like social ministry. So all those things contributed to a slowdown of church planting.⁷¹

The shift in focus to church growth was good and necessary as that was a natural process after church planting. The movement also grew in multilingual congregation, particularly Chinese, Tamil, and National Language.⁷² The national leadership of AGM recognises the vital role of Pentecostal theological education as the movement grows and expands.

Another significant growth of AGM is the generational growth over the six decades, to second and third generation, where the first generation were youths in the pioneering

⁶⁹ Interview with Rev. Philip Sung, 11 May 2017.

⁷⁰ Selected souvenir magazines of churches: First Assembly of God Kuala Lumpur, Calvary Church (Assembly of God) Kuala Lumpur, Subang Jaya Assembly of God, Metro Tabernacle A/G, Glad Tidings Assembly of God, Agape Community Church, etc. The movement growth period was also a time of forming specialised ministries and departments such as pastoral, worship, cell ministry or life groups, youth, children, men, women, family life, Christian education, missions, prayer and intercessory, publication, finance, administration, maintenance, and etc

⁷¹ Interview with Rev. Ong. Words in bracket for clarification purpose.

⁷² AGM yearbook 1998, AR1998; BCM 50th Anniversary 1960-2010, BCM2010-50A. In 1982, BCM started the Chinese department, and so from the mid-1980s onward, more Chinese language ministers were raised and sent into the field. The Chinese churches and Chinese language services or English-Chinese bilingual services began to increase in numbers, and there has been a steady growth in the Chinese congregation in the movement. The Tamil work has been growing steadily since the establishment of MTBI in 1972 although the number is not as large as the English and Chinese congregations. In 2003, BCM started the National Language Department to raise more native leaders to reach out and evangelise their natives and tribal communities mostly in the interior parts of the country.

period.⁷³ Towards contemporary period from 2000s, national leadership saw the need to pass on the Pentecostal heritage to the next generation.⁷⁴

4.1.2.2.3 Diversification

The third main changing nature of AGM is the diversification of theological,⁷⁵ missional,⁷⁶ church, and ministerial focus and emphases.⁷⁷ There are many aspects of diversification, most consequential would be external theological influences, as Pentecostalism had been powerfully influenced by the rise of Charismaticism. Many preaching and teaching resources which can be easily accessed are not purely Pentecostal. There is also diversification in missional emphases in terms of strategies, methods, and approaches;⁷⁸ church programmes; and ministerial aspects. For example, in the church growth process, churches have become more organised with a corporate style of leadership and management, with specific ministerial departments and a missions department. Although church planting efforts have declined, there are more diversification in social concern works and other forms of missions and evangelism, like having more organised mission outreach teams locally and abroad. Reports and interviews show that from mid-1980s to 2000s, there have been shifts in missional approach in some AGM churches such as social concern ministries like homes for orphans and underprivileged children, drug rehabilitation centres, and senior citizen home⁷⁹ and

⁷³ Calvary Church, 40th Anniversary, p. 26, CC2008-40A. In the 1970s, the Christ's Ambassadors were the first generation of youths filled with Pentecostal fervour, who did 'door-to-door tracting', evangelistic musical concerts, and 'Speed-the Light' fund raising programmes to support local churches. In the early 1980s, the uniformed youth ministries, Missionettes and the Royal Rangers were established.

⁷⁴ AGM, Biennial Report, 2014-2016, pp. 29, 42-3, 48-9, BR2014-2016-51. Thus, the establishments of Youth Alive Malaysia (English) and Elisha Youth (Chinese) and youth ministries of the Indian and national language divisions play important roles in nurturing the new generations.

⁷⁵ Collective interview data: CA-1, CA-52, CA-13, CA-17, CA-12, CA-22, CA-37.

⁷⁶ Collective interview data: CA-48, CA-6, CA-50. CA-30, CA-10.

⁷⁷ Collective interview data: CA-9, CA-38.

⁷⁸ Collective interview data: CA-50, CA-30, CA-10, CA-7, CA-23, CA-24, CA-29, CA-49, CA-43, CA-15, CA-14, CA-31, CA-32.

⁷⁹ Social Concern Report, Assemblies of God Malaysia 2001, SCR2001.

kidney dialysis centre.⁸⁰ Racial diversity is part of this diversification, such as Chinese, Tamil, and national language ministries, congregations, and programmes at Bible schools.

4.1.2.2.4 Hybridisation

The fourth main changing nature is the hybridisation of theological influences from the evangelicals, charismatics, Third Wave, and the Independent Network Charismatic.⁸¹ Generally, Pentecostals do consider themselves as part of the evangelicals and AGM is well received among the Malaysian Church and an active member of the National Evangelical Christian Federation (NECF). At the same time, because of the common spiritual experiences of BHS or being Spirit-filled, AGM is also closely affiliated with the Charismatics. In a melting pot of Christianity in Malaysia, there has been a lot of crossovers and blending of Pentecostal-charismatic Movements in terms of membership, preaching, teaching, and practices ever since the widespread of Charismatic Movement in the 1980s and 1990s, as consistent interview data confirms.⁸² In a way, there is also a sense of unity among Malaysian churches as the distinctions are getting more blended.

Hybridisation of external theological influences (evangelicalism, Charismatic and Third Wave influences) have already started since the mid-1980s and in the 1990s, when missions and church planting continued but at a slower pace than in earlier decades. In fact, the single-focus of AGM on missions and church planting in the pioneering decades has shifted over time mainly under the charismatic influence due to a different emphases on the purpose of BHS and spiritual gifts more for the edification of the body of Christ.

⁸⁰ Interview with Rev. Yap.

⁸¹ Collective interview data: TE-1, TE-7, TE-20, TE-5, EC-6, TE-2, TE-16, TE-17, TE-18, TE-31, TE-21, TE-3, TE-4. There have been occasions of churches sharing the same Evangelical and Pentecostal-charismatic preachers, conferences, teachings, worship styles, and other resources. Basically, whatever programme or method which works well with one church is being adopted by many others and often times it is interdenominational.

⁸² Interviews with Rev. Dr Ng, Rev. Ong, Rev. Teh, Rev. Dr Chan N.C., Rev. Yap; Rev Alexander Soh, 17 April 2017; and Rev. Peter Lee, 28 April 2017.

Ng has observed more homogeneity in the relationship between Spirit-baptism and God's mission in the earlier decades and suggests that the focus has changed over the years.⁸³

One impactful changing nature in this movement growth period is the beginning of the new prayer and intercession ministry in 1980s, followed by prayer movement in later decades, in late 2000s and 2010s. The Prayer Tower Ministry was established in Calvary Church in 1984, offering prayer hotline, prayer rooms, intercessory training, which becomes the heartbeat of the church.⁸⁴ Glad Tidings Assembly of God started 6.30 a.m. morning prayer in mid-1980s and raised many 'prayer warriors' and intercessors.⁸⁵

Many Pentecostal-charismatic churches also started Prayer and Intercessory Department or ministry in 1980s. At the national level, the Assemblies of God Prayer Commission (AGPC) was formed in July 2007, the Jubilee year of AGM. AGPC was commissioned by Leoh, the second national AG General Superintendent then, to Teo Kwee Keng, as Prayer Commission Chairperson, in view of the need for a prayer movement within the AGM and in the nation. AGPC's motto is 'Creating a Spirit-empowered prayer movement that will impact lives and transform nations.'⁸⁶ The AGPC initiating the prayer movement in AGM is a very huge shift in theology and practice from the classical Pentecostal distinctives. During the leadership of Dr Leoh, there had been strong emphasis on the 'power' of the Holy Spirit with a number of 'power conferences' and 'power encounter rallies' from Ghana with more contemporary blends of global culture of the Third Wave influence.⁸⁷

This main factor of hybridisation of external theology has impacted and shifted from AGM's classical Pentecostal distinctives and practices to a blend of theology from

⁸³ FI-2.

⁸⁴ 'Calvary Church 40th Anniversary', p. 30, CC2008-40A.

⁸⁵ Glad Tidings Assembly of God, Celebrating 50 Years of God's Empowering 1963-2013, p. 52, ATAG2013-50A.

⁸⁶ AGPC, '24-7 Prayer Initiative: Come let's join our hearts together for Malaysia!' AG InTouch app, 14 June 2020, AGPC20200614-IT.

⁸⁷ See chapter five, section 5.2.2.3 Contemporary Blends of Global Culture.

hyper-charismatic Third Wave and even certain aspects of NAR theology such as the new apostolic and prophetic movement, spiritual warfare strategy, ‘territorial altar’. The Third Wave beliefs and practices have made inroads into AGM over time especially from mid-1980s onward. The role of AGPC in initiating the prayer movement and 24/7 prayer altars has been more intense especially from 2010 to present in prayer rallies for revival for the nation. The fruits of the global Third Wave spiritual renewal also resulted in the emerging Fourth Wave in present times.⁸⁸

4.1.2.3 Paradigm Shifts

The complexities of the changing nature in the growth and development of AGM inevitably comes with shifts and diversification of emphases. This shapes AGM’s current perspectives and practices as it morphs to being contemporary, thus impacting changes in theological emphases and practices of the Pentecostal distinctives. The implications include some continuity and discontinuity in practices, particularly due to the shifts in theological and missional emphases, church and ministerial methods and approaches. AGM’s paradigm shifts and implications will be discussed in Stage 2 Contextual Analysis, along with the contributing historical, missiological, and sociocultural factors of the changes and shifts.

4.1.3 Contemporary (2008-present)

The conceptualised themes in ‘Movement Growth’ period have impacted the practices of contemporary Pentecostalism in the Malaysian context. The impact of contextualisation, expansion, diversification in emphases, hybridisation of external theological influences, and paradigm shifts during the ‘Movement Growth’ period is the morphing of AGM from

⁸⁸ More in-depth analysis on the theological development and changes in theological emphases will be discussed in Stage 3 Theological Reflection.

a CPM toward modernisation and being contemporary. Churches build more modern church buildings with modern facilities and technology. Ministers and leaders embrace contemporary trends in preaching, teaching, theological education, church growth methods, programmes, modernised missions and evangelism, and so on.

In the 'Movement Growth' period, the movement has been drifting from its earlier classical emphases and practices in the 'Classical Formation' period of eschatological and missionary fervour, church planting, to a gradual tapering of Pentecostal distinctives and fervour. Besides, the theological education at Bible school has also diversified much with more evangelical influences and expansion of programmes to meet the growing ministerial skillsets needed in the modern churches.

Gradually, there is no longer homogeneity in the emphasis of the espoused classical Pentecostal theology as the churches embrace many contemporary trends and influences that are widely available locally and abroad. Although the movement has grown and developed much during the movement growth period, the leadership and many ministers sense a kind of plateauing in the post-growth period, particularly in the English congregations, and some churches are constantly keeping up with different trending programmes to be relevant to the changing society and younger generation. In the midst of the morphing in nature to be contemporary in the worship service with modern technology and contemporary music, there is a growing desire for a spiritual revival.

AGM began a new season in 2008 right after its Jubilee celebration, with the newly elected and present third General Superintendent, Ong. The most significant emphasis in this contemporary period is on revival throughout the whole decade, which includes: seeking revival for the nation, as well as to revive AGM's Pentecostal fervour, with more revival meetings, evangelistic and healing rallies, church planting, and a strong prayer movement with Third Wave influence at the forefront led by AGPC. Ong and the EXCO are instrumental in the birthing of the new vision and image 'A Contemporary Pentecostal

Church Movement’ and officiating it in 2018, rallying concerted effort to preserve AGM’s Pentecostal heritage.

4.1.3.1 Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement (CPCM)

AGM’s newly self-designated official tagline, ‘A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement’ (CPCM) marks the beginning of AGM’s new contemporary image. These are the concerted view of the AGM General Council Executive Committee (and several leaders) on the new vision and direction for CPCM and the contemporary emphases.

The theme ‘A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement’ is a formalised statement or tagline from the EXCO, officially introduced in the 52nd Biennial General Meeting in 2018.⁸⁹ It was the AGM ministers retreat theme on 20-23 March 2017 and already on the website design and printed on AG News in July 2016.⁹⁰ Ong defines CPCM as follows:

AG Malaysia is growing and wish it could be even faster. Churches are becoming more contemporary in sharpening their communication tools to be relevant in reaching the present generation. Four reasons we are contemporary because we engage the generation, we employ different methodology and necessary tools in bringing the message (gospel) across, we engage different ways how people hear the message, and maintain our Malaysian culture.⁹¹

The EXCO embraces this new identity of AGM movement to bring a sense of freshness, new outlook, and moving with times to engage the present generation, employ modern methodology, up-to-date technology, and different ways in bringing the gospel message, to be relevant to the society and young generation, and being Malaysian Pentecostal.

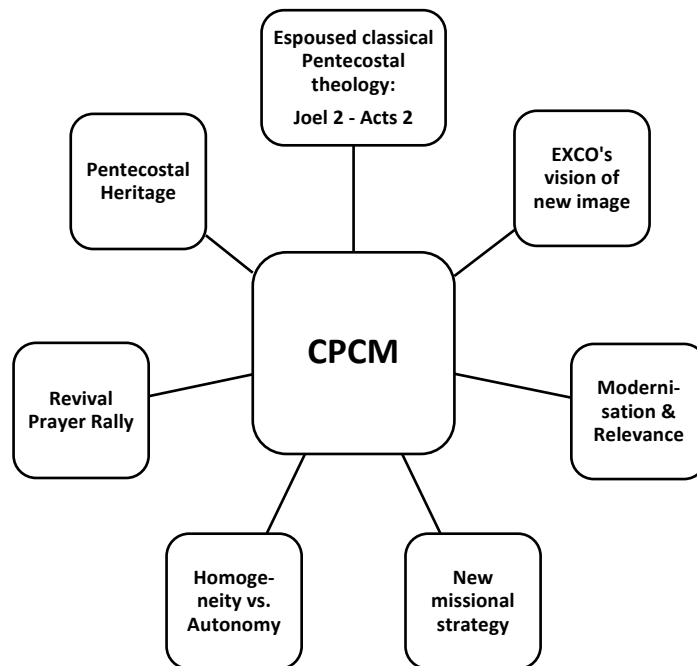
⁸⁹ Rev. Ong Sek Leang, ‘Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement’, 52nd General Council, Assemblies of God of Malaysia, 11 Jun. 2018 and 12 Jun. 2018, message (audio m4a), BR2016-2018-52-aud.

⁹⁰ AGM Ministers Retreat application form, 20-23 March 2017, at Swiss-Garden Hotel and Residences, Malacca, AGMR2017032023-F; AGM, AG News, July 2016 issue, AN201607. According to Rev. Ong, he had proposed this new image of a ‘contemporary’ church to the leadership in 2015, hence discussions and more intentional transformation had begun since.

⁹¹ Interview with Rev. Ong.

4.1.3.2 EXCO's Vision

AGM leadership affirms that the CPCM's espoused theology has not changed, but demonstrates fundamental change of image, outlook, methods, and practices. The EXCO's vision and desired contemporary emphases involves the movement's new contemporary image, the centrality of the espoused classical Pentecostal theology (based on Joel 2 – Acts 2), modernisation and relevance to society and present generation, new missional strategy in re-emphasising missions and evangelism, addressing homogeneity vs. autonomy of churches, restoring the spiritual atmosphere with revival prayer rally, and preserving the Pentecostal heritage, as illustrated in the following figure 4.5:



**Figure 4.5: ‘A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement’
AGM’s official tagline 2018
(EXCO’s desired contemporary emphases)**

4.1.3.2.1 EXCO's Vision of New Image

In present times, a contemporary outlook is vital in modern society, and AGM seeks to be relevant to the current generation and young people, which is in contrast with historic churches. A new image and tagline being a CPCM and making the necessary changes to

be contemporary is far-reaching for the movement to continue to be relevant and impactful to the present community and younger generations. One of the most visible changes would be modernisation and following the trends of technology and society for the effective proclamation of the gospel message in this modern age.

The new image 'CPCM' has got to be embraced by all AGM churches in order to be effective as a contemporary movement while maintaining a Malaysian Pentecostal identity and flavour instead of copying the cultures from other nations. The General Council realises that this is the time for changes and transitions and had adopted a new AG Constitution and ByLaw in 2016. The movement is currently looking into succession plans, to rope in younger ministers and younger people into the ministry. Modernisation in terms of using modern tools, methods and technology is essential for sharpening communications and to have global publicity and accessibility via internet and social media. This would be easy for connections and accessibility for seekers.⁹²

4.1.3.2.2 Modernisation and Relevance

New transformation of the movement begins with a new public image and the obvious change in nature in AGM to CPCM is modernity. In keeping up with the trend, there is a shift in outlook, up-to-date methods, modernised church to be appealing to the society and younger generation. There is also the shift in the church setup for more modern and contemporary feel. Churches now have more modern church settings, auditorium, modern facility, equipment, tools, and etc. One practical shift is in the practices and methods from the traditional way of doing things to using modern technology.⁹³ Being a contemporary church focuses on relevance to society, reaching out to present generation, and focusing

⁹² Collective interview data: SC-36, SC-37, SC-40, SC-41, SC-44, SC-45, SC-50, SC-61.

⁹³ Collective interview data: CA-3, CA-20, CA-26, CA-35, CA-36. For example: the change in public image particularly having a new trendy logo, upgrading the website, launching an online portal, InTouch AG application, and using online tools for administrative processes especially online registrations, renewal of credential, and etc., towards a paperless setting and administration.

on the millennials through modern methods and approaches as this is crucial to draw people to Christ.⁹⁴ The church has to be relevant to the people and not being perceived as outdated, old fashioned, too traditional, unattractive to the point of being irrelevant and unrelatable to them.

4.1.3.2.3 Re-emphasising Espoused Pentecostal Theology

The leadership's aspiration of the CPCM is that although being contemporary, the core beliefs and doctrines remains the centrality of the espoused classical Pentecostal theology as stated in the AG's Statement of Faith, emphasising on Jesus saves, Jesus heals, Jesus baptises with the Holy Spirit, and Jesus is coming again. The significance of AGM is the power and work of the Holy Spirit through BHS with empowerment for missions, evangelism, church planting, ministries, and services. AGM seeks to preserve the fundamental Pentecostal doctrines and practices, which are BHS, believing in the power of the Holy Spirit, miracles, signs and wonders, exercising of spiritual gifts, emphasis on preaching and declaring the word of God, and the altar call ministry (and laying on of hands). These are the strong Pentecostal features of the AGM movement.⁹⁵

4.1.3.2.4 New Missional Strategy

In the pioneering period, AGM movement has been strong in missions and evangelistic endeavours, and the leadership sees the importance of the emphases to revive church planting efforts and evangelistic fervour in new areas with new strategies and approach. As a movement, the General Council once again is encouraging church planting especially in smaller towns, villages, and new neighbourhood areas.

⁹⁴ Collective interview data: SC-24, SC-25, SC-26, SC-27.

⁹⁵ Collective interview data: SC-30, SC-31, SC-35, SC-46, SC-47, SC-54, SC-64, SC-51.

AGM has newly set up a Church Planting Commission to facilitate these endeavours with new strategies for church planting. At the national level, the General Council holds evangelistic meetings and conferences with guest evangelist, Nathan Morris, to reignite the zeal and passion among pastors and church leaders for evangelism.⁹⁶ AG National Evangelist and Initiatives Department has been newly set up to revive evangelism and facilitating the evangelistic endeavours such as: evangelistic rallies and combined evangelistic services at regional and district levels nationwide, to raise local evangelists, and mobilise the churches to organise, pray, and work together.⁹⁷ In formalising what had been ongoing over past decades, AGM now also has the national Social Concern Department. There has been a broadening and diversification of missions and social concern ministries to meet the needs in today's society, such as medical, kidney dialysis centres, aids for unwed pregnancy and unwanted babies.⁹⁸

4.1.3.2.5 Homogeneity vs. Autonomy

Although the leadership aspires to steer the movement in the direction of being a CPCM and preserving the Pentecostal distinctive beliefs and practices, the leadership also recognises the autonomy of the individual churches as AGM is a fellowship and

⁹⁶ Collective interview data: SC-28, SC-29, SC-33, SC-34, SC-38, SC42, SC-43, SC-57, SC-65, WP-4, WL-15, CA-14, CA-15, CA-31, CA-32, CA-33. The new strategies and approaches for church planting: Firstly to have bivocational pastor to start off the work in a new area, serving and pastoring the people. Second strategy is community engagement whereby a church adopts a community, reach out to them through weekly provision of free medical check-up by medical team and follow-up team would connect with those who come and visit them in their homes. Churches are entering into new paradigm of missions, having more diversity in social concern ministry, migrant ministry, friendship evangelism. Thirdly, churches multiplying their cell ministries, church planting by a group of people or combination of cell groups. Fourthly, new church planting focus area in East Malaysia where the harvest is ripe.

⁹⁷ AG National Evangelist and Initiatives Department, 'Pentecost Sunday', 31 May 2020, InTouch AG, NEI20200531-IT. Collective interview data: WL-39, WL-44. A 'Nationwide Pentecost Sunday Celebration' (Acts 2:1-4) was launched on 31 May 2020 to encourage churches to celebrate together to 'experience a great encounter with the Holy Spirit' and 'a fresh awakening in an extraordinary way', and 'Pray for the unsaved and unchurched to receive Jesus' Salvation, Pray for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit; Pray for the sick to receive a healing touch from God our Father.'

⁹⁸ Social Concern Works, Assemblies of God Malaysia Directory 2018-2020, pp. 151-9, D/SCW2018-2020.

movement.⁹⁹ The level of emphasis on the Pentecostal distinctive is dependent on the church pastors' spiritual focus and conviction, in their preaching, teaching, and practices. As such, there is a variance in vibrancy within the movement. Some churches are more vibrant, more 'Pentecostal' in practice, and giving much room to the works of the Holy Spirit, whilst some may be more 'evangelical' with less or no practice of Pentecostal distinctive in regular church services.

4.1.3.2.6 Revival Prayer Rally

Ministers confirm there is a strong emphasis on the need for revival and maintaining the Pentecostal fervour of the movement. There has been much blending of practices and dilution of the Pentecostal distinctive due to influences from the Charismatic movement, particularly the contemporary worship and foreign worship styles. The internal issues include having many services, programmes, and events which are unrelated to Pentecostalism. Today's postmodern world impacted many AG churches to being more seeker-sensitive to the congregation and visitors, thus cut back on speaking in tongues, the supernatural and spontaneity of the Spirit. Speaking in tongues, spontaneity in worship, exercising of spiritual gifts, and BHS, are either discontinued, or restricted to certain times, or in smaller groups. Lack of emphasis by pastors becomes a huge factor in the decline in practice of Pentecostal distinctive. At the same time, AGM leadership recognises the autonomy of the individual churches, and some ministers were not trained in Pentecostal Bible schools and lack the conviction of Pentecostal practices.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Collective interview data: SC-49; AGM, Bylaw 2.2. Districts, District Councils and District Committee – Geographical Locations of the Districts, Constitution & Bylaws, 2016, pp. 45-6, AGM-CBLr20160531. In 2020, the AGM has 393 churches, 49,810 adherents and 823 credentialed members, in geographically defined ecclesiastical groupings, the churches being organized into six districts, namely the Northern, Southern, KL-Eastern, Central, Sabah, and Sarawak. AGM 53rd Business General Meeting 2021, p. 11, BR2021-53.

¹⁰⁰ Collective interview data: TI-46, TI-54, TI-34, TI-40, TI-37, TI-35, TI-42.

The AGM leadership has been focusing on the theme of revival in recent years and especially at the present time. Most respondents in the qualitative research show desires, prayers, and yearning of AGM ministers and leaders for a spiritual revival in AGM and Malaysia as a whole. Ong, in AGM's official biennial report asserts a strong desire and anticipation for the outpouring of the Spirit in the nation and churches:

Malaysia badly needs a spiritual revival and I pray that we will be a vital expression of it. Let us believe in and expect the supernatural, move in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, break barriers that bind us with the power of the Holy Spirit, unleash the evangelistic fire and release the fear of God in our churches. These are the main reasons why the Assemblies of God moved to Malaysia. We will only add to the Body of Christ when we embrace who we are and return to our Pentecostal roots and calling, enveloped in the fire and power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰¹

Ong relates that the Holy Spirit is the 'greatest bridge' between God and man, in church, missions, ministries, and personal Christian life. There is a need to give room to the spontaneity of the Spirit and the supernatural in every aspect. There is a need for revival to correct and recalibrate the church.¹⁰²

Realising the decline in the practice of Pentecostal distinctives like BHS, speaking in tongues, and mission engagements in the 1990s onwards, there has been concerted effort in the leadership in initiating the emphasis on spiritual revival, focus on the power of the Holy Spirit, revival services, praying in the Spirit, missions and evangelistic fervour. The Chinese Language Division has been organising the Chinese Pentecostal Convention and Zone Revival Rallies since 2007,¹⁰³ stirring up the churches to start 'believing' God, and in His power and works of the Holy Spirit. Concurrently, AGPC encourages churches to have prayer altars, 24/7 prayer altar, prayer watches, recruiting

¹⁰¹ Rev. Ong, General Superintendent's Report, 'A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement', AGM Biennial Report 2016-2018, p. 5, BR2016-2018-52-GS.

¹⁰² Collective interview data: WS-29, WS-38; and interview with Ps Ong.

¹⁰³ Assemblies of God of Malaysia, Chinese Language Division, 'The First Chinese Pentecostal Convention 2007: The Fire of the Holy Spirit', 27 Aug – 12 Sep. 2007, AG Malaysia and BCM, book and DVDC0030 (A-I), CLD-PC2007-1; 'The Second Chinese Pentecostal Convention: The Fire of the Holy Spirit', 2008, book and DVDC0031 (A-I). CLD-PC2008-2; The Third Chinese Pentecostal Zone Revival Rallies: End Time – Outpouring of Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-29), 18 May – 1 Jun. 2009, CLD-PC2009-3; The Third Chinese Pentecostal Zone Revival Rallies: End Time – Fire of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-29), 5-11 Oct. 2009 (Petaling Jaya, Setapak, Cheras, Miri, Johor Bahru, Kluang, Tawau), book and DVDC0032 (A-I), CLD-PC2009-4.

group of intercessors, to focus on prayer and praying in the Spirit. Its main thrust is to build up faith and stir up prayer within the whole movement, in praying for revival and national transformation.¹⁰⁴

More intense revival meetings were organised at the ministers' retreat at national level, and at some churches, so that the people will again start believing in the power of the Holy Spirit, miracles, signs and wonders. Speaking and praying in tongues boldly and publicly as well as the altar call ministry are the strong features of AGM movement. AGM re-emphasises the prayer movement and evangelism to move forward as a CPCM. Seminars by scholars are also organised for churches to learn about the Pentecostal distinctive.¹⁰⁵

The EXCO stresses that the goal of the General Council through all these efforts is to impact the ministers who would in turn impact their church members.¹⁰⁶ The leadership reckons the significant ways in maintaining the Pentecostal heritage in the next generation through the pulpit, national Bible school in synergy with the leadership, and the local church, to instil the conviction in future pastors-in-training and enabling them to pass it on.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Collective interview data: SC-32. AGPC, 'Revival Prayer Rally' 21 March 2020, 21 Days Fasting and Praying, AGPC20200311-IT; 'Pentecost Now', Nationwide Prayer Rallies, 30 May 2020, PR20200530-IT; InTouch AG. AGPC in the past decade has been organising regular prayer movement rallies, as well as prayer conferences, with Apostle Julius Suubi and Rev. Dr John Mulinde as speakers over a few occasions, who encourage praying in the Spirit and 'prayer altars'.

¹⁰⁵ For example: 'A Spirit-Empowered Church: The Acts 2 Model', Leading Growth Conference Notes, Rev. Alton Garrison, Assistant General Superintendent, USA, 5-6 Sep. 2017, LGC2017090506. More conferences and seminars have been organised by the Executive Committee and General Council to equip pastors, ministers, leaders, and churches on Pentecostal distinctive, church planting, church growth, contemporary issues, and ministerial skills.

¹⁰⁶ Collective interview data: SC-39, SC-53, SC-60, SC-66, WP-3, WL-49, WP-2, WP-5, WP-6. The national leadership has been organising annual 'fire conferences' and revival meetings with evangelist Nathan Morris as the speaker since 2014 to reignite the Pentecostal fires, zeal and passion among pastors and ministers. Some churches have also started to have their own revival services. However, plans were disrupted during the Covid-19 pandemic 2020-22.

¹⁰⁷ Second interviews with EXCO and leaders.

4.1.3.2.7 Pentecostal Heritage

Ultimately, preserving and traditioning this experiential Pentecostal heritage to the next generation is the primary concern of the leadership, that the present and coming generations would have personal encounters and experiences of the Holy Spirit, BHS, speak in tongues, operating in spiritual gifts, and being empowered for missions and evangelism. This has been the common challenge to all classical Pentecostal communities.

The role of Pentecostal theological education is paramount in teaching and upholding the Pentecostal theology and distinctives throughout the decades and into the future. As the leadership launches the new image of CPCM, there is a need to educate the constituency on the meaning of CPCM. The foremost matter is preserving AGM's identity, evident in the core beliefs, BHS, speaking and praying in tongues boldly and publicly, exercising bold faith, miracles, signs and wonders, church planting, holiness, and coming back to the spontaneity in worship, and giving room to the works of the Holy Spirit. The contemporary style of worship imported from UK, Australia, USA, and other countries, have somehow restricted the spontaneity in worship. The leadership expressed that AGM leaders, pastors, and members need to anchor their dependency on God. Not only that AGM needs to practice its Pentecostal beliefs and practices within the movement itself, AGPC, leaders and members should also be impactful in standing firm and be confident to profess and practice bold faith and things of the Spirit in interdenominational network and prayer united. It is AGM's duty and desire to remind other denominations that the role of the Holy Spirit is indispensable in church life and practice.¹⁰⁸

The above are EXCO's vision and desires for AGM's contemporary emphases. Therefore, AGM's official introduction of self-designated 'CPCM' in the 52nd Biennial

¹⁰⁸ Collective interview data: SC-48, SC-52, SC-55, SC-56, SC-58, SC-59, SC-62, SC-63.

General Meeting in 2018 marks a new historical milestone for the movement in this twenty-first century.

4.2 Critical Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter demonstrates how classical Pentecostalism has been developed and contextualised by comparing and contrasting the themes in each period. The themes in the ‘Classical Formation’ period is the beginning of contextualisation of Pentecostalism in Malaysia mainly through AGM and the Bible schools. Pentecostal theological education is a pivotal *modus operandi* of early AG missionaries in the establishing their missionary base and to raise local pastors and workers for the harvest field. Theological education is the most influential legacy of AG missionaries.

The establishment of the espoused classical Pentecostal theology with the practice of Pentecostal distinctives and fervour began with the emphasis on the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 and BHS as empowerment for missions. The eschatological and missionary fervour during the revival period had brought about the widespread of BHS igniting zeal and passion for church planting, missions, and evangelism. When there was homogeneity in the preaching, teaching, and practice of Pentecostal theology and distinctives, namely BHS, glossolalia, and missions, AGM grew rapidly until the mid-1980s.

The themes I conceptualised under the period of ‘Movement Growth’, namely contextualisation, expansion, diversification in emphases, hybridisation of external theological influences, and paradigm shifts are consequential in the AGM’s transition toward ‘Contemporary Pentecostalism in Malaysia’ in outlook, spiritual influences, missions, ministries, and practices. AGM gradually morphs in the changing nature of physical growth in church building, congregation, languages, generations, ministries, and resources.

The contribution to the widespread of missions and evangelism in the first part of this period being the fruit of revival, national leadership's missional focus, and Bible schools in raising local pastors, pioneers, church planters, missionaries, and evangelists. In view of the demands and needs in growth and development, this second part of this period is the beginning of diversification of emphases and focus on church growth and ministries.

The influx of external theological influences has impacted the missiology, ecclesiology, and ministerial aspects of AGM. The practice of Pentecostal distinctives and the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 is gradually slacken as many other emphases and strategies for church growth, various non-Pentecostal discipleship programmes, and other trending programmes are crowding out Pentecostal fervour. Whilst the movement becomes more contemporary, churches focus on being relevant and seeker-friendly, thus naturally tapering the teaching and practice of Pentecostal distinctives. BHS and glossolalia become less frequently practised in church services. As the churches grow in membership size and having multiple services, churches have lesser time to wait on God. There is lesser opportunity for the practice of spiritual gifts, lesser room for the works of the Holy Spirit, and no more tarrying meetings. The gap between the espoused Pentecostal theology and the practice of distinctives increases as the movement grows larger and is becoming more contemporary.

As AGM continues in modernising and becoming more contemporary, the impact of 'Movement Growth's' changing nature, perspectives, emphases, and paradigm shifts, has triggered the leadership to recalibrate AGM's vision, emphases, and themes in contemporary times. The importance to be relevant to current generation and young people and following the trends of technology and society is the focal point of the CPCM. Inevitably, there is a tension between preserving the classical Pentecostal 'DNA'

(distinctives and emphases) and becoming relevant to the cultural trends to make the gospel relevant to the changes in the sociocultural and religious context in Malaysia.

In the midst of implementing new missional strategy, the leadership is concerned about preserving the Pentecostal heritage for the next generation and stresses the synergy of Pentecostal theological colleges with the leadership and local churches. CPCMC also strongly emphasises on ‘revival’ and prayer movement in concerted effort with other Malaysian churches, such as interdenominational Prayer United and NECF’s prayer for the nation.¹⁰⁹ The desire for revival strongly indicates leadership seeing the spiritual gap and recognising the need of the centrality of Joel’s prophecy (Joel 2 – Acts 2) and Pentecostal distinctives in today’s church.

4.3 Voice of the Spirit (VoS)

The main purpose of this section is to analyse and interpret the changes in the nature and concept of VoS in contemporary practices compared to the conventional ways, and the significance of VoS as one of the key theological themes of Joel 2 – Acts 2 in the growth and development of AGM. The idea and nature of PDV also have gone through changes which seems like an evolution over time from a more literal and vivid imagery to a more metaphoric and conceptual nature.

¹⁰⁹ Selected prayer booklets: NECF Malaysia, ‘Pray for Malaysia: Transforming the Nation through the Local Church’, Lighting Up Our Nation, 40-Day Fast and Prayer Booklet, 22 Jul. – 30 Aug. 2006, NECF40D2006; NECF Malaysia, ‘Church the Transforming Agent’, 50 Years Merdeka, 40-Day Fast and Prayer Booklet, 22 Jul. – 30 Aug. 2007, NECF40D2007; NECF Malaysia, ‘The Lord Revives: Transforming the Nation Through the Local Church’, 40-Day Fast and Prayer Booklet, 22 Jul. – 30 Aug. 2014, NECF40D2014; NECF Malaysia, ‘Revive Us O Lord, Psalm 85’, 40-Day Fast and Prayer Booklet, 7 Aug. – 15 Sep. 2016, NECF40D2016; NECF Malaysia, ‘Hope in God, Ezekiel 37:1-14’, 40-Day Fast and Prayer Booklet, 7 Aug. – 15 Sep. 2017, NECF40D2017; NECF Malaysia, ‘The Harvest, Matthew 9:35-38’, 40-Day Fast and Prayer Booklet, 7 Aug. – 15 Sep. 2018, NECF40D2018.

4.3.1 Development of Understanding and Practices of VoS

VoS is a significant part of AGM's historical development as it demonstrates an implicit theology and practice shaped by Joel's prophecy which has impacted AGM's growth and development from classical to contemporary. Although PDV has not been a primary topic in AGM's preaching or teaching *per se*, as compared to the gospel, BHS, spiritual gifts, missions, and other aspects of Christian faith, the many testimonies from interviews and surveys reveal that receiving PDV or hearing the VoS is an essential practice in the spirituality of many AGM ministers particularly in their calling to ministry and being led by the Spirit in missions, church, and ministry.

VoS as divine revelation from the Holy Spirit in PDV is a striking theological theme from Joel's prophecy in AGM, and it is different from the Asian religiosity where dream and vision play a significant role, e.g. in Shamanism. Many Pentecostal testimonies show that usually the call to full-time ministry is preceded by some kind of hearing God's voice, visions, dreams, some kind of direct divine intervention. There is an underline theology that comes out of Joel – a special understanding of divine intervention. This pattern in Joel shapes the practice of AGM ministers especially in their call to ministry that something supernatural is to be relived. The theological significance of the early Pentecostal understanding is that they perceive the pattern in Joel and Acts that shapes their own experiences as well.¹¹⁰ AGM ministers may not know but their practice became an implicit theology that the call to full-time ministry is preceded by some kind of a

¹¹⁰ See chapter three on some testimonies and reports from *The Apostolic Faith* during the Azusa Street revival and missionary endeavours. In Acts, before going out to preach, there was Spirit-baptism. In Joel 2:28-29, there is a sequence of occurrence from the outpouring of the Spirit to prophesying and receiving dreams and visions, to the salvation of those calling upon the Lord to be saved. Early Pentecostal believed in this pattern in Joel when believers are being filled with the Spirit, they receive prophecies, see dreams and visions, then called to preach the gospel, and salvation will be given to those who call upon the name of the Lord.

special experience with the Lord. Chan states that when theology is unconsciously practised, it is primary theology where the very action itself implies a theology.¹¹¹

In the same way, the pattern in Joel and Acts shapes AGM's practice – being filled with the Spirit, receiving PDV, empowered and called to ministry to preach the gospel, followed by salvation of those who called upon the Lord. This pattern in Joel is prevalent in the spiritual experiences of AGM ministers' BHS and being led by the Holy Spirit through PDV. VoS plays an indispensable role in AGM's growth and development, particularly in the Holy Spirit providing direction to AGM ministers¹¹² in their calling, missions, churches and ministries.

The idea and nature of PDV also have gone through changes which seems like an evolution over time from a more literal and vivid imagery, e.g. of Christ, heaven, hell, cross, and etc. in the 1960s and 1970s to a more metaphoric and conceptual nature such as Ong's idea of 'dream and envisioning' the CPCM as stated in his recent report in 2018.¹¹³ I view that the contemporary PDV from 1980s to present are more enigmatic as strongly influenced by the Charismatic and Third Wave's new prophetic movement, particularly 'releasing' of prophetic word and impressions, 'personal prophecy', 'words of knowledge', and having prophetic conferences. There are changes in ideas and nature of PDV practised in AGM influenced by the different ethos from the First Wave

¹¹¹ Chan, *Liturgical Theology*, pp. 48-52. Chan provides the background of the primary and secondary theology. When theology is first practised, it is primary theology and is implicit. Only when it is reflected upon, it becomes more explicit, or secondary theology.

¹¹² The Constitution and Bylaws of AGM regarding the Ministerial Credentials General Qualifications stipulated in ByLaw 6.1 states: (1) The Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the initial physical evidence of speaking in other tongues is necessary qualification for all ministers (Lk. 24:48, 49; Acts 1:4-9, 2:4, 10:44-47, 19:1-6); (2) A life above reproach and becoming to a minister of the gospel; having a good report outside the church (1 Tim. 3:1-7, 4:12, Tit. 1:5-9); (3) Experienced divine call to ministry, evidenced by personal conviction, confirmed by the work of the Spirit and the testimony of fellow ministers; (4) Since divorced and remarried persons in the ministry usually cause stumbling, reproach and division, whatever may have been the cause of the divorce, we disapprove either ordaining or licensing to the gospel ministry those who have remarried and are now living in the state of matrimony while former companions are living. AGM, Constitution and Bylaws, pp. 72-3, AGM-CBLr20160531. These four criteria have been adhered to in practice by the AGM General Council in approving ministerial credentials.

¹¹³ General Superintendent's Report, 'A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement', p. 5, BR2016-2018-52. See chapter one, section 1.2.1 Change in Concept and Practices.

(Pentecostal), Second Wave (Charismatic renewal) to Third Wave (Neo-Charismatic Movement)¹¹⁴ from classical formation period to present times.¹¹⁵ There is also the change in concept and meaning of dreams and visions by modern management influence, where now churches have vision and mission statements, just as the business corporations. Mutually, the church is influencing the world and the secular world influencing the church. There is a whole new meaning and practice of PDV especially from 1980s onwards and these shifts are global.

4.3.1.1 God's Calling of AGM Ministers

There is consistency in the interview data of ministers from the early period to present times: they receive God's call to full-time ministry by hearing the VoS through Scripture, PDV, an audible voice, and that which some refer to as 'impressions'.¹¹⁶ From the feedback of the survey participants, these spiritual encounters and modes of hearing the VoS were the experience of 95 percent of them, both seniors and juniors, when God called them. I observe that all these spiritual encounters bring about personal conviction and a strong desire to serve God, and most of those surveyed expressed a deep stirring and burden in their hearts. This is consistent with the Pentecostal preference for 'special'

¹¹⁴ For details on Charismatic and Third Wave teachings, see Kevin Springer, ed., *Riding the Third Wave: What Comes after Renewal?* (Suffolk, 1987). Introduction and Afterword by John Wimber, pp. 246-52; Bill Hamon, *Prophets and Personal Prophecies* (Shippensburg, 1987); Bill Hamon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement* (Shippensburg, 1990); *Prophets Pitfalls and Principles: God's Prophetic People Today*, ed. by Paul Thigpen (Shippensburg, 1991); Jacobs, *Voice of God*; Thomas Allan Smail and others, *Charismatic Renewal: The Search for a Theology* (1993).

¹¹⁵ The external theological influences permeating AGM will be discussed in Stages 2 and 3.

¹¹⁶ The qualitative research data reveals that firstly, the call of God is always personal and received personally through a spiritual encounter with God. Secondly, the call of God is often revealed by the Holy Spirit to a third party, particularly to a preacher, leader or pastor who will release prophetic words and confirmations as evidence of the future minister being led by the Holy Spirit, with some even experiencing visions or dreams about the call of others to the ministry. In general, some would not say that they hear the voice of God but it is as if the words of God are pressed into their hearts and minds. It is noteworthy that only four percent began full-time ministry simply out of a desire to serve God in response to the needs in God's kingdom where *the harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few* (Matt. 9:37; Lk. 10:2). Some ministers heard God's call progressively and on many different occasions, through PDV, sermons, and Scripture. Some received only one very distinct and clear call into Christian ministry.

Providence rather than ‘general’ Providence, more direct encounter with God rather than indirect.

Some testimonies of ministers as to their hearing, receiving, and responding to God’s call to full-time ministry are presented here as evidence of the experiences of AGM churches and leaders over more than half a century, from early pioneers to the present generation. Below are sample testimonies on God’s call on current ministers.

The PDV that these early pioneers received were literal imagery, and some even with audible voice, there are also similarities of dreams and visions of Jesus Christ or Jesus on the cross, and another saw imagery of ‘heavenly place’ and ‘pit of burning fire’ or hell. These literal imagery of Christ, heaven or heavenly places, and hell in PDV were common imagery of PDV experienced by early Pentecostals. So, when God called Guneratnam, Ng, Leoh, Mathius and Fiona,¹¹⁷ through visions, dreams, and words, there was such deep conviction and the call was so clear, there could be no doubt about it. And once they obeyed God’s call, there was no turning back.

The qualitative research survey was also conducted at BCM in 2017, with 22 full-time residential students in this contemporary period, consisting of young church workers and ministers-in-training, age ranging from 19 years old to early 20s,¹¹⁸ from different churches contributing, and with all the districts and language departments represented. The results of our research into how this new generation of young ministers receive and respond to God’s call before enrolling in BCM indicate that they too have clear spiritual experiences of hearing the VoS. The exact nature of this religious experience, just as all others, is illusive, bordering between spiritual and ‘literal’. A few students testified hearing God’s call in an audible voice speaking personally to them, assuring them that they would become full-time ministers, and giving them words of assurance. A student

¹¹⁷ See Appendix Seven: Testimonies on VoS, nos. 1-5.

¹¹⁸ There were 28 full-time residential students at BCM during the time of survey (4-15 May 2017) and 22 participated in this research. These 22 participants were also part of the total 95 participants overall.

received visions of Jesus pouring oil on him, and others had dreams of preaching to a crowd. Few had multiple experiences and also received specific Scripture verses. Most received a prophetic word in the form of personal prophecies and confirmation from leaders or pastors.¹¹⁹

Although there is a shift from the PDV in AGM's earlier classical formative period where PDV received are often directed to one's calling for service and missions, to a certain extent more individual focus on personal prophecies in contemporary times, PDV remains instrumental in the calling of ministers. Consistent with earlier periods, about over one-third of respondents received their call during their personal time with God in devotions, worship and prayer, while two-thirds received it at camps, meetings, and during sermons and altar calls.

4.3.1.2 Missiological Practices

AGM ministers have been led by God's missional guidance through VoS over the decades from church planting endeavour in the pioneering period to more diversified social concern ministries in later years. Interviews and surveys reveal that the ministers are being led by the Holy Spirit in new ways, approaches, and directions at different times and seasons. Their sensitivity, attentiveness, and obedience to the Holy Spirit's leading and direction in life, missions, and service is instrumental in AGM tremendously growth over six decades from just a few churches to almost 400 today with diversified social concerned ministries impacting cities and communities.

In the earlier movement growth homogeneity period, the VoS usually directed the pioneers into church planting endeavours as they sought the Lord in missions. The early pioneers and church planters were led by the Holy Spirit through impressions,

¹¹⁹ Survey and follow-up texts, May 2017. See Appendix Seven: Testimonies on VoS, nos. 6-13.

promptings, prophecies, visions, and burdens. Their unanimous conclusion is that hearing the VoS is fundamental in God's guidance and direction for missions and the growth of the AGM movement and churches.¹²⁰

In 1990s, there is diversification in missional emphases, methods and approaches which is evident in the guidance by the VoS. Yap, having been led by the words dropped into his heart or a prompting of the Holy Spirit, pioneered the church's social work, and, encouraged by the prophetic dream of a church member, ventured into purchasing land for new church and ministry facilities.¹²¹ Yap and his church were one of the earlier pioneers venturing into new frontiers of social concern ministries in AGM and in the country.

In 1996, S. Ng read a newspaper report of a tragedy in the interior of the country and heard the VoS saying, 'Go there.' He obeyed immediately, and soon met a man who became the first native to graduate from BCM and who now serves in national leadership.¹²² Since then, there have been more mission work among the hunter-gatherer natives and helping them to settle down in villages, providing some basic needs and finances in building more permanent homes, providing tuition for their children, and teaching them skills in cultivation.

Connie Chan shared about how the Holy Spirit gave her a vision in 2015 during a time of soaking in God's presence with 'Harp and Bowl Worship' to start a Church Social Responsibility, a tuition ministry, and to reach out to neighbours.¹²³

¹²⁰ See Appendix Seven: Testimonies on VoS, no. 14.

¹²¹ Interview with Rev. Yap. See Appendix Seven: Testimonies on VoS, no. 15. In the early days since the 1970s, the main social concern work and awareness have been drug rehabilitation centres, orphanages, and old folk homes. Since his church established the kidney dialysis centre partnering with National Kidney Foundation, 'Pusat Dialysis NKF-Charis' in 1997, there has been increasing awareness and diversified social concern works among churches and NGOs launching into new frontiers of missions, reaching out to the sick, needy, homeless, hopeless, and etc.

¹²² Interview with Rev. Dr Ng. See Appendix Seven: Testimonies on VoS, no. 16.

¹²³ Interview with Rev. Connie Chan, 23 May 2017. See Appendix Seven: Testimonies on VoS, no. 17. See fn. 134.

4.3.1.3 Ecclesiological Practices

In this new phase churches have continued to focus on the spiritual growth and needs of the members but perhaps in more holistic ways: pioneering workers and senior pastors have continued to depend on the leading of the Holy Spirit through prophecies, and visions in their church planning and practice. There is a new kind of visioning in the present times compared to the earlier kind. These ministers typically share the visions they receive from God now not so much in the form of imagery, but in the form of words, insights, ideas, desires, burdens, inner promptings, and plans. As mentioned, nowadays, even in the world of management people talk about ‘vision’ and ‘mission’ and this is being adopted by Christian organisations and modern churches, including AGM and many church pastors today.

New concepts and practices of PDV today are received more in non-image forms, especially in words, desires, and inner witness. Guneratnam testified to the leading of the Holy Spirit through God-given ‘desires’ and ‘plans’, and on seeing their fulfilment for the good of God’s Kingdom and for glorifying His name. One example is the building of Calvary Convention Centre with an auditorium for 5,000-seat.¹²⁴ News reported Guneratnam testified on the dedication of CCC by Cho on 27 August 2013, ‘The journey to CCC has been about faith and trust in God’s vision for Calvary Church and remains focused on expanding its support towards its congregation and the people of Malaysia.’ And it is part of the church’s ‘holistic approach to nation-building.’¹²⁵

In recent decade, AGM also invites international guest speakers with prophetic gifting from the Third Wave and NAR to hold prophetic conferences. In the interviews, Marcus Tan in Penang, and Ronnie and Lisa Chin in Kuala Lumpur received very specific

¹²⁴ Interview with Tan Sri Guneratnam. See Appendix Seven: Testimonies on VoS, no. 19.

¹²⁵ Abby Carr, ‘Calvary Convention Centre Dedicated at Pentecostal Conference in Malaysia,’ *Charisma News*, 2013, <http://www.charismanews.com/world/40848-calvary-convention-centre-dedicated-at-pentecostal-conference-in-malaysia>, accessed 23 June 2017. CCC was dedicated by Rev. Dr Cho.

prophecies in a prophetic conference by Cindy Jacobs¹²⁶ in 2012 that God would give them new church buildings in Penang and Ampang; the prophecies was accompanied by detailed descriptions of the projects and, within a few years, the prophecies were fulfilled. Both Penang First Assembly and Revival Centre moved into their new multistorey church buildings in June 2015 and September 2016 respectively, and so were equipped for growth and expansion. Tan, on showing me his new church in Penang as prophesied by Jacobs, said: ‘We moved here just about one and a half years ago, so this hall is ready, this sanctuary can sit 2000.’¹²⁷ God has directed and provided for the growth and expansion of His church.

4.3.1.4 Ministerial Practices

In the classical formation and pioneering period, there was strong emphases on salvation, BHS, glossolalia, and empowerment for life and service, evangelism and missions. However, from mid-1980s onward, there has been a strong emphasis on BHS for body ministry, personal prophecy and moving in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, power healing, power encounter, power evangelism, especially from the Charismatic and Third Wave influence. There was already quite a blend of their practices in ministries. In fact, BCM graduating class of 1989 presented a book to the BCM library, introduced by Wimber and edited by Springer entitled, *Riding the Third Wave: What Comes After Renewal?*¹²⁸

For example, Michael Ho shares that he often receives prophetic promptings while praying for church members.¹²⁹ R. Chin often receives impressions of the Holy Spirit’s

¹²⁶ Rev. Cindy Jacobs is one of the renowned prophets in the new prophetic movement of the Third Wave and INC leader. Jacobs is founder and president of General International, an international prayer ministry to build prayer movements in nations around the world. She was personal intercessor of Wagner, and faculty member of Wagner Leadership Institute in the NAR movement.

¹²⁷ Interviews with Rev. Marcus Tan, 28 April 2017; Rev. Ronnie and Rev. Lisa Chin. A prophetic word for Rev. Marcus Tan (Senior Pastor of Penang First Assembly) and his team, by Rev. C. Jacobs, Prophetic Conference, Metro Tabernacle A/G, 2012 (5.05-minute MP4 file video clip), MTAG/PC2012-vid. See Appendix Seven: Testimonies on VoS, no. 20.

¹²⁸ Springer, ed., *Riding the Third Wave*.

¹²⁹ Interview with Rev. Michael Ho, 18 April 2017. See Appendix Seven: Testimonies on VoS, no. 21.

leading through pictures or a vision especially during altar calls.¹³⁰ And L. Chin would receive personal prophetic words and knowledge during the inner-healing ministry.¹³¹

4.3.2 Critical Interpretation on the Development of VoS

The VoS plays significant role in AGM's growth, particularly in guiding AGM ministers in God's calling, missiology, ecclesiology, and ministerial aspects from pioneering period to contemporary. AGM's development of VoS seems like an evolution and enculturation of global trends particularly the Third Wave teachings and practices. The testimonies from different times show changes in the nature, concept, and purpose of PDV, which is influenced by different theological emphases and changes in practice over time. There are also changes in the methods in waiting upon God from classical formative period to contemporary times. New concepts and practices open up a new understanding of the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy on PDV as experienced by AGM ministers; today these are received more in non-image forms, especially in words, desires, and inner witness.

In God's calling of AGM ministers, many pioneers were in their youth when they received God's call during the classical formation period. There is a difference in the nature and form of PDV received by the older generation as compared to the PDV received by the new generation today as evidenced by their testimonies.¹³²

There is also a change in the method and setting in receiving PDV. In the early missionary years and in the 1960s and 1970s, camps and revival meetings were regular practice by Pentecostals and AG, where there would be more people seeking God,

¹³⁰ Interview with Rev. R. Chin. See Appendix Seven: Testimonies on VoS, no. 22.

¹³¹ Interview with Rev. L. Chin. See Appendix Seven: Testimonies on VoS, no. 23.

¹³² See Appendix Seven: Testimonies on VoS. Occasions and places have been important for ministers in hearing and processing God's call to serve Him in a full-time capacity. There can be no doubt of the importance of camps, especially youth camps and Revival Meetings, where expectations are heightened in contrast to the regular services, in the process of receiving and responding to God's call, that being the emphasis of two-thirds of the respondents many of whom answered God's call through hearing sermons and responding to altar-calls. Only one-third of those who participated in the interviews heard God's call during their personal devotional, worship, and prayer times.

responding to His word, and being sensitive to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. As mentioned in earlier section on Classical Formation period, Synan explained that ‘tarrying meetings’ were regular practice of early Pentecostals.¹³³ The Pentecostal equivalent is the Prayer Room. It was a norm for Bible schools and early churches to have prayer rooms. After service and altar call, people would go to the prayer room to be prayed for and to be filled with the Spirit. These are more traditional Pentecostal practices in AGM brought in by the missionaries. And in the early days, receiving a prophetic word from the preacher in the gathering was occasional, but turned into a regular technique of personal prophetic word in later years which is what we see today.

In seeking God, there is a difference between the early Pentecostal practice of ‘tarrying’ in waiting on the Holy Spirit, and the more contemporary Third Wave’s IHOP method of soaking in God’s presence and enjoying the time of worship, prayer, and intercession namely the ‘Harp and Bowl model’.¹³⁴ Whether IHOP falls into the Third Wave category is a matter of debate. The practice may be different, but the Holy Spirit speaks and the people receive prophecies, visions, impressions, and promptings of the Holy Spirit. Although the methods and practices used by some AGM ministers may have changed, but the Holy Spirit still ministers and speaks to God’s people who gather to seek His face, worship Him in spirit and in truth, and wait upon Him.

¹³³ Synan, *Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, pp. 23, 25, 31. It has its roots in the Wesleyan-Holiness practice of ‘tarrying’ for ‘entire sanctification’ or ‘second work of grace’. Believers waiting for the Lord would tarry at the ‘penitence bench’ in Wesleyan-Holiness revivals or ‘mourner’s bench’ at camp meeting and holiness crusade.

¹³⁴ See fn. 123 and ‘What is Harp & Bowl Worship?’ by Ray Watson, The Secret Place Ministries, <http://www.secretplaceministries.org/pages/genre/harp-bowl.html>, and ‘Harp and Bowl Worship’ by Edward B. Allen, 28 February 2008, <http://web.cse.msstate.edu/~allen/personal/harpandbowl/index.html>, accessed 20 December 2019. ‘Harp and Bowl model’ was pioneered by the International House of Prayer (IHOP), Kansas City, USA, in 1999, as a model for prayer and worship up to continuous 24x7, adopted in local prayer meetings, or private worship and prayer sessions. ‘Harp and bowl worship’ is a worship style of music and prayer from IHOP, a Third Wave influence which includes reading of scriptures, prayer and intercession, singing, prophetic prayers, and soaking in God’s presence. The worship style is taken from Revelation 5:8, ‘And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense.’

One significant aspect arising from the testimonies about the call of God, is that, even though manifested and experienced in many different ways as the Holy Spirit chose, they all displayed only one specific purpose: God calls individuals to be part of His redemptive mission so that the world may know Him. This is evident in the conviction that a desire, vision, dream, and word received for full-time ministry is about the lost, the harvest in the mission field, preaching the gospel and fulfilling God's kingdom purposes.

In missiology, the surveys and interviews show a high proportion, 70 percent of ministers, responded that the VoS has been fundamental to the guidance and direction for missions and the church growth of AGM over the decades. Alongside that almost one-third of the respondents come to a broader and more holistic perception of missionary needs through research, networking, the considered opinions of a 'man of peace',¹³⁵ detecting open doors, and meeting social needs. God not only leads through supernatural means but also through natural ways. As such, missions and church planting are ultimately guided by God-given passion and desires like that of Guneratnam¹³⁶ and the inner witness of the Holy Spirit's direction as Ong shares.¹³⁷ The many testimonies have proven when God speaks, ministers experience boldness and confidence, and God brings to fulfilment His word, which never returns to Him void but accomplishes what He purposes (Isa. 55:11). And in faith and assurance, prophecies from God always come with His providence and grace.

In ecclesiology, the rapid growth in AGM church planting from only a few churches started in the initial period became explosive growth to over 300 churches between the 1970s and 1980s, and, at the same time, brought AGM into a new phase focused more on erecting church buildings, and establishing organisational structures, departments and

¹³⁵ Interview with Rev. Dr Leoh. He refers to the Gospels, mission is to go to where they are being received and welcomed (Matt. 10:11-14; Mk. 6:10-11; and Lk. 9:4-5).

¹³⁶ Interview with Tan Sri Guneratnam.

¹³⁷ Interview with Rev. Ong.

ministries to deal with the numerical growth in membership. VoS continues as God's guidance in ecclesiological aspect.

A very significant change in PDV over time is Guneratnam's case. A data comparison between Guneratnam's vision of Christ on his call in a vivid imagery quite typical for Pentecostals when he was 12 years old in 1957 and his new kind of visualisation in a form of a 'desire' with 'faith' in mid-1980s to build the CCC¹³⁸ (realised in 2013), knowing that God gives the desires and answers the 'prayer of faith'¹³⁹ shows a shift in perception and nature of vision.

I see that the language reveals a different ethos between a classical Pentecostal practice and a new concept of PDV which is somewhat similar to that of Cho's concept of vision in 'desire' and praying. However, Cho's contextualisation and pneumatology is much elaborated in relation to primal religious worldview and context. Cho relates the vision in 'desire' as 'instruments of the fourth dimension', 'a spiritual plane' to 'envision the future', 'imagination' being the 'soul of the vision and dream', and 'ability to see and dream'.¹⁴⁰ 'Faith-incubation' in the spiritual realm of 'fourth-dimension' encompasses envisioning, desiring, praying, and speaking the word, and it will become reality in the physical realm, particularly miraculous healing and blessings from God.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Interview with Tan Sri Guneratnam. He shared his vision of Calvary Church of 5,000-seater capacity in mid-1980s. The land was purchased in 2003, building project initiated in 2004 and completed in 2013. *Calvary Church 40th Anniversary* magazine, 1968-2008, p. 60, CC2008-40A.

¹³⁹ Michael Fackerell, 'The Prayer of Faith – by Prince Guneratnam', Christian-Faith, <https://www.christian-faith.com/the-prayer-of-faith-by-prince-guneratnam/>, accessed 22 June 2020. This article was reproduced from Dr Yonggi Cho's 'Church Growth' magazine and Church Growth International, where Guneratnam serves on the Board of Directors for CGI.

¹⁴⁰ An extract of Yonggi Cho and R. Whitney Manzano, *The Fourth Dimension: More Secrets for a Successful Life*, vol. 2, Plainfield, 1983, pp. 50-5, in 'Baptism in the Spirit and Charismatic Gifts', William K. Kay and Anne E. Dyer, eds., *Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies: A Reader* (London, 2004), pp. 120-3. Cho described, 'I liken the heart of man to a painter's canvas. What a man dreams and envisions is the paint. If the Christian takes the brush of faith and begins to paint on the canvas of his heart the pictures that God has revealed to him, those revelations become reality.'

¹⁴¹ Cho, *The Fourth Dimension*. See Hwa Yung, 'Mission and Evangelism: Evangelical and Pentecostal Theologies in Asia', in Sebastian C. H. Kim, ed., *Christian Theology in Asia* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 262-3.

According to Kay, Cho understood the Holy Spirit gives dreams and visions by which God's work is led forward.¹⁴² Here, we can see that within the Pentecostal-charismatic and Christian tradition, there are different views on the practice and forms of PDV. More than that, a different worldview is in operation in the contextualisation!

In ministerial aspect, from the 1980s, there has been stronger focus on the VoS in the widely varying ministerial practices in AGM churches, especially in prayer and intercession, preaching, altar calls, and general ministering to people. The most common practice is the use of a word of knowledge, a prophetic word, visions and so-called 'prompting'. Given the change of meaning over time, a prophetic word can mean God's word and message given through the written Word of God, thoughts, impressions or prompting by the Holy Spirit for His specific purpose which will be fulfilled.

In AGM's development of VoS, the global trend is a major contributing factor from 1980s and 1990s replacing the early Pentecostal understanding of VoS. The Third Wave's prophetic movement has introduced many new kinds of PDV and new parlance, namely 'personal prophecy', 'confirmation', 'releasing' prophetic word, and 'inner vision'. 'Specific prophecies' given in prophetic conferences become a new kind of prophetic movement and a popular contemporary feature. All these have been made popular practices in the prophetic movement but are rare in early Pentecostalism. This new

¹⁴² Kay and Dyer, eds., *Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies*, p. 83, Introduction by Kay. See Cho, Y., *The Fourth Dimension: Discovering a New World of Answered Prayer*, Special combined edition – volume one and two (Florida, 2017 [1979 and 1983]), pp. 45-6. Cho observed, 'In Sokagakkai, they draw a picture of prosperity, repeating phrases over and over, trying to develop the human spiritual fourth dimension; and these people are creating something ... Sokagakkai has applied the law of the fourth dimension and has performed miracles ...' Cho believed that the Bible, God, the Holy Spirit realm is also in the 'fourth dimension', thus applying similar technique of 'fourth dimension' for Christian visioning, we can dream and vision, pray in faith and create. For Cho's pneumatology, see George Canty, *Hallmarks of Pentecost: Discerning the True Spiritual Gifts* (London, 1989), pp. 171-3; Allan Anderson, 'The Contextual Pentecostal Theology of David Yonggi Cho', in Wonsuk Ma, William W. Menzies and Bae Hyeon-Sung, eds., *David Yonggi Cho: A Close Look at His Theology and Ministry*, AJPS Series, 1 (Baguio, 2004), pp. 145-6; and Simon Chan, 'The Pneumatology of David Yonggi Cho', in Ma, Menzies and Bae, eds., *David Yonggi Cho*, p. 97.

apostolic and prophetic movement is initiated and propagated by the Wagner, Jacobs, Hamon, and many more in a global network of ‘prophets’.¹⁴³

Jacobs who has good relations with AGM since earlier years, pioneers the new prophetic movement. She introduces and explains the prophecies in the prophetic movement about ‘the supernatural element of revelation’.¹⁴⁴ Personal prophecies is also a new kind of prophecy, which can also be closely associated with the word of knowledge and wisdom for a specific person, situation, place, in the present or for the future.¹⁴⁵ Personal prophecies covers every aspect of the individual’s life for ‘divine healing’, God’s personal will, marriage, business endeavours and financial prosperity, pregnancy, miraculous productivity, including prophecies concerning ministries, gifts and calling.¹⁴⁶

‘Releasing’ the prophetic word has become popular, and ‘inner vision’ which is more subtle kind of vision has also become widely used by the new prophetic movement, which is different from the ‘open vision’ (strong and visual).¹⁴⁷ ‘Release’ is a new term

¹⁴³ See Ed Stretzer, ‘C. Peter Wagner (1930-2016), Some Thoughts on His Life and Passing’, Christianity Today, 22 October 2016, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstretzer/2016/october/in-memory-of-c-peter-wagner.html>, accessed 20 June 2020; Cindy Jacobs, *The Reformation Manifesto* (Minneapolis, 2008); Cindy Jacobs, *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy: A Training Manual for Militant Intercession*, 3rd ed., with study guide (Grand Rapids, 2009); Cindy Jacobs, *Deliver Us from Evil* (Ventura, 2001); Edward F Murphy, *The Handbook for Spiritual Warfare* (Nashville, 2003); Peter Wagner, ed., *Territorial Spirits: Insights on Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare from Nineteen Christian Leaders* (Chichester, 1991); Peter Wagner and F. Douglas Pennoyer, *Wrestling with Dark Angels* (Ventura, 1990). Julius Suubi, *The Unbeatable Prayer, Governmental Anointing including The Unbeatable Power in a 40 Day Fast*. Their teachings and practices are prominent among the charismatic circle which has infiltrated the Pentecostal, resulting in a blend of practices among the Pentecostal-charismatic churches in USA and their global network in other nations. This new kind of prophecy is very different from prophecy practised by earlier Pentecostals who usually reference 1 Corinthians 12 to 14. This was rare in early Pentecostalism. The influence of the different theology and practices of Third Wave which is not rooted in Pentecostalism will be discussed in Stage 3. Their practices has permeated the Pentecostal circle in view of the commonality of Spirit-filled and spiritual gifts, but their theology is not the same as classical Pentecostal theology.

¹⁴⁴ Jacobs, *Voice of God*, p. 102. She explains, ‘Their prophecies will often embody a mix of several other spiritual gifts such as exhortation, forthtelling, discernment of spirits, miraculous power to heal and set captives free, and revelation far beyond their natural knowledge of a situation ... In charismatic terms, the kind of ministry I was doing is called “flowing in word of knowledge,” which means supernatural word God gives you directly. I know some discrepancy exists regarding whether or not it is accurate to call this a “word of knowledge”; but what I am referring to is generally understood as prophetic knowledge that brings revelation that the person ministering could not have known, and that greatly edifies the listeners.’

¹⁴⁵ Cindy Jacobs, *The Supernatural Life* (Ventura, 2005), p. 73. Dr Bill Hamon and his wife Evelyn, head the Christian International ministry in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida, and Evelyn is the pioneer of the ‘personal prophecy movement’ in the 1980s. See Hamon, *Prophets and Personal Prophecy*.

¹⁴⁶ Hamon, *Prophets and Personal Prophecy*.

¹⁴⁷ Jacobs, *Voice of God*, pp. 209-28. Chapter nine on Dreams, Visions, Prophetic Styles and Gifts.

in Pentecostal parlance, and carries certain theological connotations reflecting the spiritual technology of the Third Wave.¹⁴⁸ Ministers receive and ‘release’ prophetic words for the people they pray for and minister to; these can be words of confirmation, edification, comfort, healing, assurance or a simple Scripture. In contemporary times, responding to altar call takes on a shift to new motivation for church members as they come forward to seek a word from the Lord about their life situations and future undertakings, the destiny of God in life, divine healing, encouragements, and blessings, rather than for salvation, BHS, and giving their lives to serve God.

This kind of ‘vision’ and ‘interpretation’ through impressions and quick or instant revelations, seem to represent a new phenomenon not found among the earlier Pentecostals. Compared with visions mentioned earlier where the imagery was very clear, this kind of vision seems to be enigmatic. This is a common practice of spiritual gifts among modern Pentecostal-charismatics, particularly the exercising of prophetic gifting by ministers or believers during altar calls, praying over someone, and releasing personal prophetic words. Most times, the prophetic messages are being prompted by the Holy Spirit in the form of impressions, but may not be in vivid images, sometimes more like a gut feeling, intuition with meanings or interpretations.¹⁴⁹

Jacobs also affirms the practice of confirmations of prophecies.¹⁵⁰ That is why among modern Pentecostal-charismatic believers, there is an increasing emphasis on receiving a ‘confirmation’ from someone else or some kind of signs, in order to validate or confirm what has been prophesied or word received before, that it is truly from God.

¹⁴⁸ Jacobs, *Voice of God*, pp. 173-208, chapter eight on ‘Releasing the Prophetic Gift’.

¹⁴⁹ However, there is a danger to this kind of visioning. If the prophetic gifting is exercised by less mature believers lacking in biblical-theological foundations and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, this kind of enigmatic ‘visions’ may result in being misrepresented, misinterpreted, even misleading and untrue.

¹⁵⁰ Jacobs, *Voice of God*, p. 86. She states, ‘A good thing to remember is this: God never minds confirming His word to us. Matthew 18:16 says, “By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” If you are unsure whether something is from God, ask Him for further confirmation. I have had Him graciously confirm prophecies to me again and again until I was sure they were from Him. He will confirm the word in many ways for you.’

This relates to the NAR teaching on ‘apostolic covering’.¹⁵¹ There is constantly a measure of doubt and uncertainty over prophetic words which needs confirmations.¹⁵²

The new prophetic movement has been beneficial and edifying to some AGM ministers and churches especially in the contemporary practices.¹⁵³ Testimonies reveal that the prophetic movement has influenced some AGM ministers to exercise the prophetic gifting. Some of their teachings and practices have been adopted by prayer movements in many nations, and much emphasised over past decades in the revivalist movement or prayer movements for revival and transformation of the nation, especially in 2010s in Malaysia.¹⁵⁴

The powerful role of VoS in AGM, as part of the fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy is God’s revelation given through PDV when God pours out his Spirit in BHS. Spirit-baptised believers are sensitive to God’s revelation and communication in receiving the call to serve Him and guidance in life, missions, church, and ministry. One conspicuous change of interpretation of PDV in AGM over time is the form of literal imagery and

¹⁵¹ C. Peter Wagner, *Apostles and Prophets: The Foundation of the Church* (Ventura, 2000), pp. 122-4, 139. On 30 June 1999, The Apostolic Council of Prophetic Elders (ACPE) was established in Colorado Springs. Initiated by C. Jacobs who was key prophet, co-worker, and personal intercessor to Wagner, an initial group of 13 prophets came together to form an accountability structure and Wagner provided the ‘apostolic covering’. The prophets would have mutual accountability before releasing public prophetic declarations especially for national or regional levels to avoid mistakes they learned from the past. The charter members of ACPE and prophets: Beth Alves, Jim Goll, Chuck Pierce, Mike and Cindy Jacobs, Bart Pierce, John and Paula Sandford, Dutch Sheets, Tommy Tenney, Hector Torres, C. Peter Wagner, Barbara Wentroble, Mike Bickle, Paul Cain, Emanuele Cannistraci, Bill Hamon, Lingsley Fletcher, Ernest Gentile, Jim Laffoon, James Ryle, Gwen Shaw.

¹⁵² Wagner, *Apostles and Prophets*, pp.133-5. The Ernie Gruen Controversy on the aberrant practices and teachings of Kansas City Fellowship. Wimber and ‘Kansas City Prophets’ made huge mistakes in their prophetic movement and brought disillusionment and disappointments in 1989-1991 over ‘the prophesied but unrealized-revival in England’. In 1995, Wimber regretted having led the Vineyard into the prophetic era which got them off track and he himself disillusioned.

¹⁵³ Wagner, *Apostles and Prophets*; Wagner, ed., *Territorial Spirits*; Wagner and Pennoyer, eds., *Wrestling with Dark Angels*; Jacobs, *The Reformation Manifesto*; Jacobs, *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy*; Murphy, *The Handbook for Spiritual Warfare*. However, when we look deeper into their establishments and ethos, they are actually the pioneers and ‘spiritual leaders’, ‘apostles’ and ‘prophets’ of the NAR, where their certain main theology and set of teachings are completely different even to the point of AGUSA having position papers on certain theology and teachings. Furthermore, in a corporate setting, the individual spiritual leaders in NAR and new apostolic and prophetic movement are exercising authorities over nations and churches in prayer movements with teachings on apostolic covering over a nation or region. Their prayer movement relates to spiritual warfare, dealing with geographical and ‘territorial spirits’, ‘strategic-level spiritual warfare’, ‘seven mountain mandates’, end-time prophetic prayer, and etc.

¹⁵⁴ These external theological influences have implications on AGM’s classical Pentecostal theology, distinctives and practices as will be discussed further in Stage 3 Theological Reflection.

words received by early Pentecostals and early pioneers of AGM. But nowadays, VoS are not necessarily in imagery form, but more commonly in the form of inner witness, burden, prompting, desire or conceptual ideas, impressions, personal prophecies, praying over people with instant revelations, which is a new phenomenon where these new kinds of PDV are enigmatic.

When the Holy Spirit speaks in VoS, it is common for the minister not to know anything about the person's situation or condition, the Spirit-given words are being released through the leader as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19-20) and God's vessel in and through whom the Holy Spirit flows. Thus, the church and her members are edified. A Christian's body is the dwelling place of God and we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Our body is God's temple, where God's Spirit lives in us and communes with us.

Here, we can see how PDV has changed and expanded in nature, purpose, and coverage from direction for missions and service in classical times to body ministry, personal prophecies on life destiny and encouragement in contemporary times. As a whole, I see an evolution in VoS with valid enculturation and valid responses to the external influences on PDV, which are evident in the changes in form, nature, idea, and concept of PDV over the decades. Throughout the different historical periods, VoS has been a significant spiritual element in AGM's growth and development as a Spirit-led movement and community of faith.

4.4 Summary of the Findings

Stage 1 on AGM's situation and complexities reveals conspicuous differences in emphases and practice between the formative period and the contemporary times. The new findings on changes include: From 'tarrying meetings' to prophetic prayer conferences, seminars, institutionalised prayer movement, and 'Harp and bowl worship'

sessions; from ‘door-to-door evangelism’ to ‘relevance’ to society and current generations; from bold faith and practices of BHS, speaking in tongues, and spiritual gifts to being ‘seeker-friendly’ church services lacking in the practice of Pentecostal distinctives; from eschatological and missionary fervour to more diversified focus on church ministries and members’ edification; church planting to diversified social concern ministries; from classical hymns to contemporary worship and latest trends; from homogeneity to hybridisation of external influences; from vivid imagery of PDV to enigmatic and new concept of PDV, among many other changes.

In classical formation period, CPM is rooted in the prophecy of Joel 2 (fulfilled in Acts 2), and classical Pentecostal theology. In AGM’s morphing from classical to contemporary, there are various changes in the emphasis and practice of Pentecostal distinctives over the six decades from its inception in 1957 to present times. There was strong emphasis on the early classical Pentecostal practices in the formative period.

The movement growth period encompasses certain strong emphases and practices in conformity with the spiritual atmosphere then and now, but the core beliefs remain as per the Tenets of Faith. Gradually, there is a growing tension between upholding the Pentecostal distinctives and becoming more contemporary, although these two do not have to be mutually exclusive in the ideal world. The complexities grow more prominent during the movement growth period in the midst of its changing nature – in contextualisation in the sociocultural Malaysian context; expansion in physical buildings, structures, ministries, generational growth, and multilingual congregational growth; snow balling in diversification and shifts in emphases alongside hybridisation of external theological influences and practices from 1980s onward. These complexities result in paradigm shifts shaping AGM’s current perspectives and practices, which has an increasing gap from the espoused classical Pentecostal practices.

Interwoven as a prominent part of Joel's prophecy in AGM's growth is the significance of PDV in the calling of ministers to full-time service, and its importance as God's guidance and direction in impacting the missiology, ecclesiology, and ministerial aspects of the movement. VoS is evidence that the power of BHS brings about sensitivity to the supernatural dimension of the work of the Holy Spirit. It is demonstrated in an implicit theology and practice shaped by Joel's prophecy, but the changes of nature and concept of PDV to being more enigmatic over time seems like an evolution, indicating some valid enculturation and valid responses to external theological influences and practices of the Charismatic and Third Wave.

In contemporary times, there is a tension between preserving the classical Pentecostal DNA (distinctives and emphases) and becoming relevant to the cultural trends to make the gospel relevant. The new image of CPCM and the leadership's contemporary emphases seek to minimise the gap between the espoused and the current practice, in reviving the Pentecostal and missionary fervour. The nationwide synergy of AGM and the Malaysian churches praying for revival in the nation recognises the importance of the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 in today's church. Even though times have changed, Pentecostal theological education continues to play a vital role in AGM's contextualisation process and growth.

Chapter Five

Stage 2 – Contextual Analysis

5.1 Introduction

AGM's contextual situation and complexities emerged from the analytical results and critical interpretations of the primary data in Stage 1. This chapter aims to provide the main contextual factors for the changes in emphases and practices of the central Pentecostal distinctives and PDV from Joel 2 – Acts 2 in AGM's development from classical to contemporary. It seeks to answer the sub-question: How have the contextual factors as triggers for the development of interpretation and practices of Joel 2:28-32 impacted on changes of theology, missiology, ecclesiology and ministerial perspectives and practices?

In Stage 2, I will analyse the historical, missiological, and sociocultural underlying contextual factors which cause the changes and shift in emphases, in relation to the practice of Pentecostal distinctives. This involves AG's contextualisation in Malaysia and the paradigm shifts (perspectives and practices) in the transitioning movement growth period as AGM gradually morphs from a CPM to a CPCM.¹ The paradigm shifts in the latter part of movement growth period are impacted by inter-related internal, external, and global factors.

5.2. Historical Factors

AGM has developed and transitioned through the historical periods from classical to contemporary, and the complexities begin during the latter part of movement growth

¹ The theological aspects will be discussed more in Stage 3 Theological Reflection. Chapter three on foundational Scriptures provides the historical-theological backdrop for understanding the AGM and its changes, for this empirical study on the changing nature of the AGM movement from a CPM to a CPCM through the different historical periods with respect to Joel's prophecy and the implications on its theology, missiology, ecclesiology, and ministerial perspectives and practices.

period from the mid-1980s, where the movement undergoes changing nature and paradigm shifts. The historical factors are crucial in understanding AGM's gradual transitioning from a CPM to a CPCM which has implications on the theological, missiological, ecclesiological, and ministerial emphases. The historical factors provide the origin of the espoused classical Pentecostal theology centred on Joel 2 – Acts 2, the contextualisation in the Malaysian context, and how the emphasis and focus on Pentecostal distinctives has shifted and diversified over the periods. It is essential to understand the contextual Pentecostalism of AGM in the light of global context.

5.2.1 Contextual Pentecostalism

5.2.1.1 Revival and Early Missional Strategies

The historical background of AGM's Pentecostalism can be traced from the roots of American Pentecostalism. Pentecostal historians and scholars affirm the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 in the birth of classical Pentecostalism and the early missionary strategies.²

Pentecostal scholars affirm the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 has been the very core of the Pentecostal movement since the Azusa Street revival,³ with Spirit-baptism as the empowerment for missions, and within one century, has become a major part of the multidimensional global missionary movement.⁴ AGUSA became one of the largest Pentecostal movements urgently sending out missionaries to every part of the world, including Malaya and Singapore as AGUSA Foreign Missions reported⁵ in the first half to middle of the twentieth century. There is unanimous agreement of Pentecostal scholars, such as Anderson, Land, Faupel, Macchia, J. Ma, and Kärkkäinen, that the understanding

² See chapter one, sections 1.6.1 The Early Missionary Period; and 1.6.2 The Inception Period.

³ Hunter and Robeck, *Azusa Street Revival*, p. 22.

⁴ Allan Heaton Anderson, 'The Emergence of a Multidimensional Global Missionary Movement: A Historical Review', in Ma, Kärkkäinen and Asamoah-Gyadu, eds., *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, pp. 12, 23.

⁵ L.O. McKinney, 'A Glimpse of Malaya', n.p. 1943, pp. 13-9, MR1943; 'Singapore, Malaya', *Global Conquest*, Mar. 1961 (published bimonthly by the Assemblies of God Foreign Missions Department, Springfield, MO), GQ196103.

of the early Pentecostals during the outpouring of the Spirit at Azusa Street revival was they were living in ‘the last days’ with the eschatological fervour to preach the ‘full gospel’ to the world hastening the imminent return of Christ. The apocalyptic vision or ‘crisis’ eschatological understanding of ‘the last day’ had ignited the early Pentecostals’ missionary zeal for evangelism and universal missions empowered by the Spirit, spurred the worldwide revival which grew into global Pentecostalism. They affirm the common agreement of the formative factors and nature of Pentecostal mission being attributed to the eschatological fervour in the ‘last days’ and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17).⁶ R.P. Menzies states that all Pentecostals believe in living out the book of Acts today and understand that Spirit-baptism is utmost essential as empowerment for missions, with the initial physical evidence of speaking in tongues, and believes in all spiritual gifts, miracles, signs and wonders are for the church today.⁷

The AG missionaries and the establishment of AG in this region had similar early traits and classical Pentecostal practices of the early American Pentecostalism. They established the general council with the organisational and administrative structures in place after starting some missionary work. There had been similar eschatological and missionary fervour, with similar mission strategies and *modus operandi*, namely evangelism, healing rallies, evangelistic crusades, church planting, and establishing Bible schools to raise local ministers and missionaries for the mission field. Julie Ma studies the main *modus operandi* of Pentecostal mission being evangelism and church planting since its beginning, with divine healing as demonstration of supernatural power making

⁶ Anderson, *Introduction*, pp. 198-202; Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, pp. 59-63; Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, pp. 21-2; Macchia, ‘The Struggle for Global Witness’, p. 17; Anderson, ‘The Emergence of a Multidimensional Global Missionary Movement’, p. 25; Kärkkäinen, ‘The Pentecostal Understanding of Mission’, p. 27; J. Ma, ‘Pentecostal Evangelism, Church Planting, and Church Growth’, in *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, pp. 87, 90.

⁷ Robert P. Menzies, *Pentecost: This Story is Our Story* (Springfield, MO, 2013), pp. 160-73, also cited in Chan Nam Chen, Lecture Materials, Session 5, Pentecostal Foundation Course, BCM, 2018, PF2018-S5. Rev. Dr Chan N.C. is an adjunct faculty of BCM.

inroad for the gospel.⁸ Indeed, these main mission approaches namely evangelism and church planting, open air crusades or healing crusades and publication had been used by early AGUSA missionaries in Malaya and AGM since in the pioneering period. The main missional strategy of the AGUSA missionaries in many nations around the world is the establishment of the AG general council and Pentecostal Bible schools to train and raise national leadership for the local field to plant and pastor churches.⁹

Historically, colonization affected many countries in parts of Asia and Southeast Asia, thus the national independence resulted in the cease and departure of foreign powers and the time was up for most foreign missionaries. As national patriotism intensified in some countries, foreigners were politically evicted by the immigration law of the lands, and many missionaries returned to their home countries and AG general councils transitioned to indigenous leadership. Malaya gained independence in 1957 followed by the formation of Malaysia in 1963. In 1967, Malaysian immigration regulation imposed a ten-year ruling for missionaries. As from 1970s, most foreign missionaries across all Christian denominations had to leave Malaysia due to this immigration restriction as recorded in BIM Report,¹⁰ and the Azusa Street revival – Pentecostal heritage which provided the theological foundation of the movement passed on to Malaysian leadership in 1974.

AGM and the early missional strategies had taken root during the times of revival when the outpouring of the Spirit in BHS became widespread in Malaysia.¹¹ The

⁸ J. Ma, 'Pentecostal Evangelism, Church Planting, and Church Growth', p. 87.

⁹ Collective interview data: SP-13, SP-12.

¹⁰ Bible Institute of Malaya Report: Malaysia, missionary force depleting due to the strict regulations imposed by the Malaysian government upon missionary visas, and local leadership is much needed in this country, May 1981, BIMR198105; 'Worldwide', *The Pentecostal Evangel* 2786 (1 October 1967), p. 7, PE19671001.

¹¹ Collective interview data: SP-23, SP-21, SP-6, SP-2, SP-3, SP-9, SP-4, SP-20, SP-15. There were revivals and spiritual renewals in mainline denominational churches in the 1970's to 1980's. There were also pockets of revivals in indigenous villages such as Ba'kelalan of Bario Highlands, Ranau, and Taginambur in East Malaysia. See Tan, *Planting an Indigenous Church*, pp. 214-5, 225-43. For further details on revival, also read Solomon Bulan and Lillian Bulan-Dorai, *The Bario Revival* (Kuala Lumpur, 2012); Christopher Choo, *The Ba Kelalan Revival of East Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya, 1994).

uniformity of the strong emphasis on BHS and purpose of empowerment of the Spirit on life and service, especially zeal in missions and evangelism had ignited an exponential growth with intensive church planting endeavours and church growth initiatives in formative and pioneering period as a CPM.¹²

5.2.1.2 Diverse Ethnicity and Culture

Although the early AGUSA's missional strategies and endeavours were similar in many countries inheriting the espoused classical Pentecostalism, AGM is Malaysian Pentecostal in its diverse ethnicity and culture as emphasised by its leadership and pioneers.¹³ For example, certain western church methods and formal western attire taught at the Bible schools by the early missionaries in the formative years were not so applicable at the grassroots level. Missionaries and church planters in small towns and villages have to learn and adapt to the culture and indigenous perspectives in engaging with the locals and natives, meeting their needs in practical ways, and preaching the gospel in grassroots realities.¹⁴ Missions and evangelism methods and approach need adaptation to the local environment, culture, and context.

In understanding AGM's historical context of Pentecostalism, the contextualised studies on Asian, Asia Pacific, and Southeast Asian Pentecostalism, particularly on AGUSA missionaries sent to these parts of the world present some similarities in their indigenising and contextualising in the different nations.¹⁵ AGM's contextualised

Christianity Malaysia, Law, J., 'The Bario Revival: Its Background Context and Beginnings', 17 July 2015, <http://christianitymalaysia.com/wp/the-bario-revival-its-background-context-and-beginnings/>, accessed 31 October 2017; and Chan K.E., 'A Brief Note on Church Growth in Malaysia, 1960-1985', in Hunt, Lee, and Roxborough, eds., *Christianity in Malaysia*, pp. 354-78.

¹² See chapter four, section 4.1.1 Classical Formation and 4.1.2.1 Homogeneity.

¹³ Collective interview data: CA-8, SC-36; interviews with Rev. Ong and Rev. Dr Chan N.C.

¹⁴ Collective interview data: CA-11; interview with Rev. Dr Chan N.C.

¹⁵ For Asian Pentecostalism, Asia Pacific Pentecostalism, and contextual studies in Southeast Asia and South Pacific, see Anderson and Tang, eds., *Asian and Pentecostal*; Austin, Grey and Lewis, eds., *Asia Pacific Pentecostalism*; Chin, *The Cross Among Pagodas*; Pagaialii, *Pentecost "to the Uttermost"*; Johnson, *Theology in Context*; Engcoy, *Pentecostal Pioneer*; Lovelace, *From Seedtime to Harvest*; Abeysekera, *History of the Assemblies of God in Singapore*; among others.

Pentecostalism is also quite similar with some nations which have multiracial or multiethnic, multicultural, and multireligious populations. Similar to the Pentecostalism in the larger context, the contextualisation of AGM has been fast and adaptable.

As analysed in Stage 1, AGM has grown in multilingual congregation¹⁶ comprising English, Chinese language and dialects, Tamil, Malay and indigenous languages for the natives, as well as some foreign migrant groups in outreach works. The urban multilingual congregations practise more modern and contemporary worship services influenced by contemporary worship trends¹⁷ compared to churches and outreaches in more remote areas. The natives use more worship songs from Indonesia as it is quite similar to the Malay language. AGM is Malaysian Pentecostal in its diverse ethnicity and cultural composition, where missions, evangelism, and ministries are adapted sensitively in a more holistic approach to the grassroots realities and perspectives influenced by local or indigenous cultures, traditions, way of life, socio-economy, animistic religious beliefs or background and so on.

5.2.1.3 Spirituality and Worldview

AGM pioneers and ministers were led by the Spirit through PDV in church planting, mission work, and church ministries. In a way, Joel's prophecy on PDV is very much alive, experiential, and impactful in the growth and development of AGM.¹⁸ The supernatural aspects, particularly in prayer for healing, exorcisms, miracles, and spiritual warfare have also been prominent in the movement.¹⁹ Pentecostals are known for their more literal understanding of the Bible and spiritual experiences, as well as their simple faith in expecting God to answer prayers in miraculous ways and that God will come

¹⁶ See chapter four, section 4.1.2.2.3 Diversification.

¹⁷ Collective interview data: TC-10, TC-11, TC-12.

¹⁸ See chapter four, section 4.3 VoS and Appendix Seven: Testimonies on VoS.

¹⁹ Collective interview data: SP-18, SP-21, SP-22, SP-9.

through in their situation. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit through Spirit-baptism allows sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and the spiritual realm, hence the ability to sense and hear the VoS in dreams and visions comes quite naturally to many Spirit-baptised Christians in this region.

AGM also shares similarities in certain aspects of spirituality and worldview of the majority world through their local cultural lenses, languages, and experiences in the Asian context. Theologians and scholars who study the majority world theologies and Asian theology have common agreement to the population's sensitivity to the spirit world due to the diverse animistic religions, primal spirituality or religious background, in comparison to the Western world. This impacts their receptivity to the realities of supernatural realm, power encounter, the manifestation and works of the Holy Spirit: healing, miracles, spiritual gifts, as well as demonic spirits, exorcism, spiritual warfare, and the beliefs in 'territorial spirits' or geographical spirits.

Hwa Yung discusses Asian theology where Asians and Two-Thirds World understand the realities of the spirit world especially in their 'folk religion' and power encounter, unlike the Western worldview that rejects the belief in Satan or demons, 'principalities and powers' until the Pentecostal, charismatic, and 'Third-wavers' in recent decades brought it back into prominence internationally.²⁰ And in Chan's discussion about the Holy Spirit, he affirms, 'In Asia the world of spirits is very much a part of everyday life.' There is a sensitivity to the spiritual world, 'a world in which dreams and visions have their own place.'²¹ This is particularly true in AGM, in this Asian Pentecostalism context.

²⁰ Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas? The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology*, 2nd edn, Regnum Studies in Missions (Oxford, 2014), pp. 57-62. Folk religion are beliefs in the local deities, ancestral worship, other spirits and demons.

²¹ Chan, *Grassroots Asian Theology*, p. 156.

Generally, in normal circumstances, church members do not discuss much on theology and doctrines, but are more concerned about practical life, livelihood, relationships, and being part of the community in church. They generally receive what the church pastors preach and teach, they tithe and give to missions, serve in the various church ministries as expressions of their worship, and participate in the fellowship groups and programmes lined up for them. The practice of Pentecostal distinctives to a large extent is dependent on the emphasis by the church pastors and leaders. In recent decades, modernisation and secularisation has been impacting the current generations with western worldview in contemporary churches, which will be discussed later.

5.2.2 Blending of External Theological Influences

There have been changes in theological emphases and practices in AGM over time due to the blending of external theological influences. The paradigm shift in theology is evident in the theological emphases and focus in the preaching and teaching in the different historical periods and the current personal preaching topics of pastors.

5.2.2.1 Homogeneity in Pioneering Years

In the pioneering days, there is homogeneity in focus on classical Pentecostal theology and practice inherited from early missionary in the classical formation since inception in 1957 to mid-1980s. Interviews show that the theological emphases of church sermons are on BHS, the Holy Spirit, Spirit-filled life, Spirit-empower, the working of the Holy Spirit, book of Acts, missions, church planting, end times, soul winning, faith, giving, evangelism, financial giving, missions, faith promise, discipleship, holiness, going to the nations, and etc. The theological emphases was on ‘Second coming of Christ’, ‘The Full

Gospel’, and ‘Christ as a Healer’ by Cho, and ‘Thief in the Night’ movie carried an urgent message, and there was a deep sense of urgency to win souls for Christ.²²

5.2.2.2 Diversity in Movement Growth Years

5.2.2.2.1 Church Growth Strategies

The movement growth days were a period of church growth, diversification of ministries, emphases and focus. Churches adopted programmes and popular strategies in church growth which worked well in other parts of the world or other churches. Cho’s preaching, teaching, and books become very popular.²³ Cho had been a strong influence to AGM and charismatic churches in Malaysia, especially from the late 1970s to 2000s. AGM churches are much impacted by his strategies in church growth, methods, administration, leadership, prayer, giving, faith, and enhance church programmes with cell groups, lay leadership, Christian Education and so on. In Korea, church planting and church growth are seen as alternative strategies. Later on, Warren’s *The Purpose Driven Life*²⁴ also become a popular programme in AGM churches in 2000s, focusing on how a member can help the church growth. This period of consolidation and church building up their ministries shifted the emphases and focus on addressing the need of the culture in church and for the people.²⁵

²² Collective interview data: CS-53, CS-54, CS-55, CS-56, CS-57, CS-58.

²³ Dr David Yonggi Cho (1936 – 2021) was a South Korean Christian minister, founder of Yoido Full Gospel church, the largest church in the world. His book titles include *Successful Living* (1977); *Solving Life’s Problems* (1980); *Successful Home Cell Groups* (1981); *The Leap of Faith* (1984); *Prayer: Key to Revival* (1984), *The Fourth Dimension* (1979, 1983); *Salvation, Health and Prosperity* (1987); *The Holy Spirit My Senior Partner: Understanding the Holy Spirit and His Gifts* (1989); *The Body of Christ’s Present-Day Provision for Divine Healing* (co-authored 1989); *Born to be Blessed* (1993); *How to Pray: Patterns of Prayer* (1997); *Spirit Led Reader: the Holy Spirit My Senior Partner/The Next Move of God/There’s a Miracle in Your House* (co-authored 1999); *Prayer that Brings Revival* (1998); *How Can I Be Healed?* (1999); *Spiritual Leadership for the New Millennium* (2003); *Unleashing the Power of Faith* (2006); *4th Dimensional Living in a 3 Dimensional World* (2006); *Ministering Hope for 50 Years* (2008).

²⁴ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Michigan, 2002); *The Purpose Driven Church* (Michigan, 1995).

²⁵ Collective interview data: CS-59, CS-60, CS-61, CS-62.

5.2.2.2.2 Church Autonomy

Church autonomy within the AGM fellowship is unlike a traditional denomination, as the level of emphasis on Pentecostal distinctive is very much dependent on the church pastor.²⁶ Interviews show a shift in emphasis on preaching topics from Pentecostal distinctives, eschatological urgency, and missional fervour in the classical formative period to more contemporary Christian living, spiritual growth, and biblical principles, from the movement growth period to present.

5.2.2.2.3 Exposure to New Global Trends

In the digital age, there is a wide spectrum of Christian resources and teaching easily accessible especially from the new global trends of the more extreme overemphasis on spiritual gifts, signs and wonders, direct access to God and the supernatural realm. The EXCO's concern is that the preaching and teaching nowadays often focus on prosperity, survival, blessing, but lack of the gospel message and missions.²⁷ Studies show that global Christianity is exposed to the global trends, particularly the Charismatic Movement associated with Wimber, Third Wave and NAR Movement by Wagner, and new prophetic movement by 'Independent Network Charismatic' (INC).²⁸ There are many popular American televangelists, celebrity preachers and authors, and international leaders who have been categorised by their critics in social media as preaching prosperity gospel.²⁹

²⁶ Collective interview data: TI-46, SC-49; CS-69, CS-70, CS-71, CS-72, CS-73.

²⁷ Collective interview data: CS-63, CS-64, CS-65, CS-66, CS-67, CS-68; interview with Rev. Ong.

²⁸ INC, namely Prophets and Apostles Bill Johnson, and Cindy Jacobs, Mike Bickle, Chuck Pierce, Ché Ahn. See 'The "Prophets" and "Apostles" Leading the Quiet Revolution in American Religion: A Christian movement characterized by multi-level marketing, Pentecostal signs and wonders, and post-millennial optimism,' interview by Smetana, B., with Christerson, B., and R. Flory, *Christianity Today*, 3 August 2017, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2017/august-web-only/bethel-church-international-house-prayer-prophets-apostles.html>, accessed 25 May 2020.

²⁹ Examples of celebrity preachers, namely Joseph Prince, T.D. Jakes, Bruce Wilkinson, Steven Furtick, Kenneth Copeland, and others; or emphasising only on a certain aspect of faith like Ever Increasing Faith Ministries by Frederick K.C. Price, Word of Faith movement by Joyce Meyer, Lifestyle Christianity by Todd White, motivational preaching by Joel Osteen, among others. Christian Science is the root of Word of Faith movement, positive confession, speaking things into existence, in the form of health and wealth prosperity gospel.

There have also been increasing controversial global movements and hyper-charismatic influences particularly in beliefs, teachings, contemporary worship experiences including lyrics which lack theological, doctrinal, and biblical truths.³⁰ Most of the setbacks of these many global trends and movements are their overemphasis on a particular area of faith, teaching, or spiritual gifts. In fact, concerned evangelicals scrutinise and critique some of the new theology, teachings, books, and songs based on the Bible and Christian theology, some are found problematic, unbiblical, not reflecting true Christian theology, and even heretical, particularly the Third Wave's NAR movement and some INC beliefs and practices.³¹ Most of these newer hyper-charismatic movements have millions of followers worldwide and are very invasive. And because these Third Wave, NAR and INC have the commonality of BHS and spiritual gifts, their hyper-charismatic teachings and practices could dilute the Pentecostal spirituality.

The downside of exposure to the wide range of emphases and focus on many other aspects of Christian faith with different theology and ethos is the dilution of the preaching, teaching, and practice of Pentecostal distinctive. In this digital age and permeating external influences, pastors and leaders need to exercise discernment in guarding their sheep and uphold proper theology and sound doctrines.

As a result of the various changes of theological emphases and teachings, there are changes in spirituality, dynamism, and practical theology over the periods, including

³⁰ See Jones, M.W., 'Inside the Popular, Controversial Bethel Church', *Christianity Today*, 24 April 2016, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2016/may/cover-story-inside-popular-controversial-bethel-church.html>, accessed 25 May 2020. The most recent being the controversial Bethel Church with Bethel Music or Jesus Culture, and Elevation Church's worship experiences which have received much critique on social media.

³¹ Some critiques on youtube channels arguing against some global trends, prosperity gospel, hyper-Charismatic Movements, and contemporary worship include: Doctrinal Watchdog, wretched.org; John MacArthur; Grace to You; TheOnlyWay Apologetics; Spencer Smith; Tim Challies; Justin Peters Ministries; Doreen Virtue; Melissa Dougherty; Lindsay Davis; Roberta Morrison; Mike Winger; Servus Christi; Polite Leader; REAL Bible Believers; TruthSource; SO4J-TV; Jesus Truth; Exposing Charlatans; VASVIK MEDIA; JesusChrist TV USA, Revealing Truth; among others, accessed 3 June 2020. Some of these critics address certain NAR theology, teachings and practices of current Bethel Supernatural School of Ministry are influenced by the New Age movement.

discontinuity in certain early classical Pentecostal practices as follows: Waiting upon the Holy Spirit or ‘tarrying meetings’, holiness movement, disengaged with certain ethos, cultural appendages and theological baggage from the AGUSA roots, evangelism approach like ‘door-to-door evangelism’, house-to-house evangelism’, ‘tracting’, ‘open air meetings’. The interviews reveal that for some churches, they no longer practise speaking in tongues in church services or the lack of emphasis, which has been a tendency in the USA as well. Some churches lose the spontaneity of the Spirit and the supernatural, and they do not speak in tongues anymore, while some others limit specific time for speaking in tongues.³²

There are shifts in the way of praying from ‘tarrying meetings’ to prayer meetings, prayer altar, and prayer movement. As for missions, there are shifts in methods and approaches. And for church services and ministries, there are shifts from regular altar call for BHS, and exercising glossolalia, interpretation of tongues, exercising spiritual gifts in the past to singing in the spirit in contemporary worship or none at all. Church anniversary magazines indicate there is also a shift to new trends of contemporary worship, worship concerts, conferences, and seminars, and most churches have performing arts and musical productions for Easter and Christmas as evangelistic events.³³ Naturally, there is a drastic decline in the practice of Pentecostal distinctive in some churches due to the many other main emphases and focuses during the diversified movement growth period.

5.2.2.3 Contemporary Blends of Global Culture

In contemporary times, pioneers and senior ministers expressed there is much blending of Pentecostal, Charismatic, Third Wave, and non-Pentecostals, resulting in generational

³² Collective interview data: CD-74, CD-75, CE-76, CD-77, CD-78, CD-79, CD-80, CE-82.

³³ Calvary Church 40th Anniversary 2008, CC2008-40A; Glad Tidings Assembly of God, Celebrating 50 Years of God’s Empowering 1963-2013, GTAG2013-50A; Metro Tabernacle 35th Anniversary 1982-2017 MTAG2017-35A; Agape Community Church, Favour! 35th Anniversary 1981-2016, ACC2016-35A.

growth with less exposure to Pentecostal fervour. There is an emerging global culture in the blending of theology and teachings of spiritual gifts and the new prophetic movement with new revelation and practices, contemporary worship styles, and the boundaries are getting blurred.

The major shifts in theological emphases and focus has direct impact on preaching or sermon focus, teaching, and missions. For example, the major shift in sermon topic like ‘The Second Coming’ during the pioneering period has changed to a contemporary style of Bible classes and seminars on ‘End Times Prophecies’ or ‘Signs of the Times’, and other apologetics seminars.³⁴ As such, there is lack of direct impact of the theological emphases on the missional zeal and practices today compared to the early period.

There is a wider range of sermon topics and teachings. Of course, there is still the ongoing preaching of the gospel, the plans of God, love of God for us, and our responsibility to our society, personal growth, church growth, missions, and social responsibility. The contemporary focus is more on unity and church in nation-building. There is a broader range and variety of external influences such as spiritual health, emotional health, and social values. Ong expresses nowadays, there is much focus on ‘How to have a better life on earth?’, ‘How to improve yourself?’ There are many messages on prosperity, survival, and blessing, but lack the gospel message.³⁵ Although there is a re-emphasis on the praying for believers to receive BHS, experiencing the Holy Spirit, encountering with God, doing the ministry of God and etc., there is generally a lack in mission focus for the congregation.³⁶

The major shift in theological emphases and focus also has a direct impact on the theological practice of Pentecostal distinctive, particularly the BHS. Over the decades, interviews, BIM newsletters and magazines show there has been a decline in the emphasis

³⁴ Collective interview data: CA-1, CA-17, CA-52.

³⁵ Interview with Rev. Ong; Collective interview data: TI-50, TI-45.

³⁶ Interview with Rev. Ong; Collective interview data: CS-63, CS-64, CS-65, CS-66, CS-67, CS-68.

of BHS. The shift in emphasis on BHS is evident from being very spontaneous and regular in revival meetings, evangelistic rallies and church services in the early period, to mainly in youth camps, annual church camps and Pentecost emphasis week.³⁷ As S. Ng shares that there has also been the major shift in praying for BHS at regular ‘tarrying meetings’ during the classical formation period to only twice a year at church annual camps and Pentecost Sunday in these contemporary times.³⁸

In contemporary times, there has already been much blending between Pentecostal and charismatic practices. AGM promotional materials reveal that at national level, AGM has organised revival services, evangelistic and healing rallies particularly from 1990s, which include meetings by Steve Hill in 2001;³⁹ Fred Roberts in 2004;⁴⁰ and more recent years ‘God Encounter’ and ‘J316 encounter’ by Nathan Morris in 2015 and 2016.⁴¹ There has been a mixture of Charismatic and Third Wave influence, to name a few, AGM ministers’ retreat speaker on ‘God’s Presence, Power and Glory through the Anointing’ by Cartledge in 1997 who authored *The Apostolic Revolution: The Restoration of Apostolic and Prophetic Ministry in the Assemblies of God in Australia*; with foreward by Wagner.⁴² Besides, ‘Power Conference’ and ‘Power Encounter Rally’ by Bernard Blessings (Ankomah) from Ghana in 2007⁴³ and ‘Power Encounter Rally’ by Dag

³⁷ Collective interview data: CA-12, CA-22. *AG Voice*, AV1987-2009; BIM magazines, BIM1972-1976; church magazines. For example: annual national youth camps namely Elisha Camp (Chinese) started in 2005, Youth Enrichment School started in 2006, and Huge Camp (English), annual church camps, and so on.

³⁸ Interview with Rev. Dr Ng.

³⁹ AGM, ‘Here’s Life!’ Evangelistic and Revival Meeting, Rev. Steve Hill, 3-5 October 2001, Putra Stadium, Bukit Jalil, KL, leaflet, RM2001100305-L.

⁴⁰ AGM, Revival and Healing Meetings, Dr Fred Roberts, 1-2 June 2004, Glad Tidings AG, PJ, leaflet, RM2004060102-L.

⁴¹ AGM, ‘God Encounter Revival, Healing, Evangelistic Meeting’, Rev. Nathan Morris, 16-19 April 2015, MCA Hall, KL, leaflet, RM2015041619-L; 21—24 April 2016, Calvary Convention Centre, Bukit Jalil, KL, leaflet, RM2016042124-L; ‘J316 encounter’ Revival and healing meetings, Rev. Nathan Morris, 29 Sep. – 1 Oct., Stadium Malawati, leaflet, RMJ316-L.

⁴² David Cartledge, *The Apostolic Revolution: The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets in the Assemblies of God in Australia* (Chester Hill, 2000); AGM ministers’ retreat registration form, 3-5 December 1997, Awana Resort, Genting Highlands, AGMR1997120305-F.

⁴³ AGM, ‘Power Encounter Rally’ in conjunction with Power Conference 2007, Rev. Bernard Blessings, 16-17 August 2007, Glad Tidings Assembly of God, leaflet, PER2007081617-L.

Heward-Mills also from Ghana in 2008 on ‘releasing of anointing for the supernatural, impartation of faith and power, stirring of your spiritual gifts, breakthrough for your life and ministry’, are fruits of the Third Wave.⁴⁴

In 2009, AGPC and Northern District Council organised ‘Ablaze’ breakthrough seminar on 19-23 May, by Barbara J. Yoder, founding ‘apostle’ and senior pastor from Michigan, having a ‘prophetic ministry and apostolic breakthrough anointing,’ ‘moves powerfully in the area of spiritual warfare and breakthrough on a corporate level’. She serves on the ‘Board of Governors of Christian International’ under the direction of Bill Hamon and is the ‘Michigan State Coordinator Global Apostolic Prayer Network’ under Wagner and Chuck Pierce.⁴⁵ This is also a strong Third Wave influence.

As analysed in the contemporary emphases in Stage 1, in 2010s, AGM national leadership has been emphasising on revival, evangelistic and healing rallies by Pentecostal minister, Morris. At the same time, there has also been strong focus on prayer movement with prophetic prayer conferences on revival and prayer strategies conducted by Jacobs, Apostle Suubi, and Mulinde from the Third Wave influence.⁴⁶ As these conferences, rallies, and practices were organised and emphasised at the national level, the penetration and impact of these newer theological influences and practices in churches varied with the autonomous status of churches in the fellowship.⁴⁷ The strong emphasis on prayer movement over the past decade shows that there has been a huge shift and blending of newer theological emphases, teachings, and practice of the apostolic and

⁴⁴ AGM, ‘Power Encounter Rally’ in conjunction with Power Conference 2008, Bishop Dr Dag Heward-Mills, 11-12 August 2008, Glad Tidings Assembly of God, leaflet, PER2008081112-L.

⁴⁵ AGPC, ‘Ablaze’ breakthrough seminar, 19-23 May 2009, Pastor Barbara J. Yoder, AG News, May 2009, p. 1, AN200905.

⁴⁶ See chapter four, section 4.1.2.2.4 Hybridisation, and 4.1.3.2.6 Revival Prayer Rally.

⁴⁷ Bigger churches pastored by EXCO members in larger cities particularly in the Central District would engage more with the national level emphases, but these events may have lesser impact on churches in other districts especially in smaller towns, whose pastors and members may not have attended or participated in them mainly due to logistic reasons and insufficient mobilisation.

prophetic ministries from USA and Africa. These influences are very different from the classical Pentecostal emphases and practices in AGM's formative and pioneering period.

Theologically, there has been changes in emphases in the diversification and blending of other teachings and programmes, which has an implication on the focus and emphasis on the classical Pentecostal theology and practices over time including some discontinuity discussed earlier.⁴⁸

The historical factors shows that AGM is Malaysian Pentecostal impacted by the blending of theological emphases and practices in its contextualisation from the classical formative period to contemporary times. Basically, these newer influences especially the prayer movement strongly emphasises on the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 in the solemn assemblies and revival prayer meetings, praying for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the church and nation. I see that prayer conferences are good for encouraging people to seek God, to pray and intercede, as praying is vital in Christian spirituality. However, imposing new theologies, mandate, strategies and methods on prayer and spiritual warfare leads to some controversies which needs investigation. Stage 3 on theological reflection will examine the underlying theology and ethos of these newer theological perspectives influencing and transforming AGM.

5.3 Missiological Factors

Although AGM has been strongly emphasising on missions since its inception to present, there has been much paradigm shifts and lesser homogeneity in the movement in contemporary times. First, there has been a shift in the theological motivation in missions from eschatological fervour to the new understanding of the 'the last days' in hermeneutical development. The paradigm shift in missiology involves the theological

⁴⁸ The theological development of AGM and the underlying theology on these changes in practice, particularly the hybridisation of external theological influences will be discussed in Stage 3.

shift in the purpose of BHS as empowerment for missions to more emphasis on spiritual gifts for the edification of believers and the body of Christ. This shift was evident among Charismatics which will be discussed in chapter six.

Besides the theological motivation in missions, there has also been a major shift in mission ownership from Spirit-baptised individual believers to mission organisations and mission department of churches. The modern development of missions has encouraged diversification of mission field toward more holistic mission and social concern ministry. There are shifts and diversification of missional methods and approaches, from homogeneity of church planting, healing crusades, and door-to-door evangelism to more social concern ministries, and partnerships with mission organisations, overseas missions, and parachurches in contemporary times.⁴⁹

5.3.1 Theological Motivation in Missions

The paradigm shifts in theological and missional motivation or driving forces over the decades from the eschatological fervour and BHS empowerment for life and service or missions and witnessing, to the different understanding of ‘the last days’ and purpose of BHS with the charismatic influences not necessarily empowerment for witness and missions, has impacted the methods and approaches in doing missions.

5.3.1.1 New Hermeneutical Development on Eschatology

The main theological factors affecting the waning of eschatological fervour and missional motivation of the classical formation period has to do with new hermeneutical development. The shift in eschatological motivation for evangelism and mission from 1980s is evident in the waning ‘crisis eschatology’ on ‘the last days’ and ‘second coming

⁴⁹ See section 5.4.4 Malaysian Social Influences, which is also a crucial factor impacting the shifts and diversification of missional methods and approaches in the country.

of Christ' and missionary fervour driven by this underlying motivation. Interviews show these shifts are evident in the changes and discontinuity of preaching and teaching topics on 'last days', 'return of Christ', over the periods, as well as the discontinuity of certain early classical Pentecostal practices like 'tarrying meetings' and evangelism approaches like 'door-to-door evangelism', driven by 'crisis eschatology'.⁵⁰

As mentioned in chapter three, the early Pentecostals interpreted the 'last days' chronologically and this 'crisis' eschatology was the dispensational premillennial eschatology view where the world was near its impending doom at the end of tribulation, hence urged the early Pentecostals to launch the universal missions lest it be too late before the return of Christ. Anderson, Kärkkäinen and J. Ma affirm the early Pentecostals' eschatological fervour in the 'last days' mission emphasis was received through BHS with Spirit's empowerment (Acts 1:8; 2:17; 5:12-16).⁵¹ However, over time, there are doctrinal issues in the Pentecostal eschatology, where modern Pentecostal scholars do not agree with some eschatological perspectives taught by the early Pentecostal writers. *DPCM* records that this new century, modern Pentecostals understand 'last days' very differently as they do not believe that the 'last days' should be taken in a chronological sense, but from the perspective of salvation history, which is the last age of salvation history beginning with the Incarnation and ending with the Parousia. ... Modern Pentecostals believe that Peter's phrase 'the last days' (Acts 2:17) means 'the entire period between the first and second advents of Christ.'⁵²

The shift in the underlying theology of 'crisis' eschatological fervour in early Pentecostalism to modern theological interpretation on 'the last days' and 'the latter rain'

⁵⁰ Collective interview data: CS-55, CS-58, CD-74, CD-75, CE-76, CD-77, CD-78, CD-79, CD-80, CE-82. See section 5.2.2.2.3 Exposure to New Global Trends, also resulted in certain discontinuity.

⁵¹ Kärkkäinen, 'The Pentecostal Understanding of Mission', in Ma, Kärkkäinen and Asamoah-Gyadu, eds., *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, p. 27. J. Ma, 'Pentecostal Evangelism, Church Planting, and Church Growth', in Ma, Kärkkäinen and Asamoah-Gyadu, eds., *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, pp. 87-93.

⁵² Burgess, McGee and Alexander, eds., *DPCM*, s.v. 'Book of Joel', p. 495.

has impacted the changes in missionary fervour and missional approach. This is a good drift towards the Bible, coming from evangelical traditions outside the dispensational tradition, embraced by contemporary Pentecostal theologians and scholars when AGM joined the evangelical family in the 1980s. Although it is a corrective adjustment, what is worrying is the disappearance of eschatological message altogether from Pentecostal pulpits. Missionary fervour is still a strong distinctive feature of Pentecostals but with a more biblical-theological perspective on ‘the last days’. W. Ma highlights, ‘As the movement enters the third generation, eschatological messages from Pentecostal pulpits have gradually disappeared to be replaced by this-worldly concerns, such as church growth, the message of blessings and health.’⁵³

5.3.1.2 Limitation of Classical View on BHS and Glossolalia

The limitation of classical Pentecostal view on the central doctrines of BHS and glossolalia has resulted in a gradual decline of emphasis and practice in the midst of the movement growth and development, with new diversified emphases more on spiritual gifts, church ministries, and edification of the church.

In the early period, there was a strong missional emphasis with eschatological fervour as the driving force. The purpose of BHS is Spirit empowerment for missions and evangelism based on the preaching and teachings of the early missionaries and the early classical Pentecostal theology. Interviews inform that the strong emphasis on Spirit empowerment for church planting, evangelism, and missions, and response to full-time

⁵³ W. Ma, ‘Theological Motivations for Pentecostal Missions’, in Lee, Younghoon and Wonsuk Ma, eds., *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, pp. 36-7. The correlation between Pentecostal eschatology and mission is found in Wonsuk Ma, ‘Pentecostal Eschatology: What Happened When the Wave Hit the West End of the Ocean’, in Harold Hunter and Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., eds., *The Azusa Street Revival and Its Legacy* (Cleveland, 2006), pp. 227-42; and Wonsuk Ma, ‘The Holy Spirit in Pentecostal Mission: The Shaping of Mission Awareness and Practice’, *IBMR* 41, no. 3 (2017): 227-38, [10.1177/2396939317704757](https://doi.org/10.1177/2396939317704757), accessed 16 January 2022.

calling, has come to a drastic decline over the decades to the point where now BCM gives an award to students with pioneering spirit. In the past, the purpose and impact of BHS is outward looking and call to mission work, but this has shifted to inward-looking and enriching services within the church.⁵⁴

According to Anderson, Classical Pentecostals claim the normative pattern of BHS and glossolalia being the ‘initial physical evidence’, thus believing there is a distinction between tongues as a ‘sign’ or initial evidence of BHS as well as a ‘gift’ (1 Cor. 12:30; 14:5,18) in relation to Paul’s epistles to the Corinthians.⁵⁵ From the earliest days of Pentecostalism, Holiness Pentecostals linked BHS with holiness, and only secondarily with missions. The early Pentecostals’ view on BHS was narrowly focused on Acts or Lukan pneumatology. Advocates of the early Pentecostal view, Stronstad and R.P. Menzies focus on the bestowal of the prophetic gift (Acts 2:15-21, 33) and the Spirit’s empowering for witness (Lk. 24:47-49; Acts 1:8).⁵⁶ Some pioneers argued that the charismatic influence since the 1980s had brought to the lost heritage on missions due to the different focus of spirit-filled believers more on spiritual gifts and edification within the body of Christ.⁵⁷

The shift in eschatological fervour in new hermeneutical development over time has directly impacted the emphasis on the purpose of BHS as empowerment for life and service or missions. The limited classical view of glossolalia as the initial physical evidence of BHS, which has been challenged by modern theologians and scholars has resulted in less emphasis and practice in churches generally in the midst of evangelicalism and being seeker-friendly.

⁵⁴ Collective interview data: CA-6, CA-48.

⁵⁵ Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 183.

⁵⁶ R.P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*.

⁵⁷ Collective interview data: CA-13.

Besides the missional development within Pentecostalism, some missional theories by Matacio and Winter about the global trends of modern churches also explain the changing landscape and focus of churches in contemporary times. The theories underlying the decrease in missions and evangelistic fervour is due to the centripetal vs. centrifugal mission, where churches are being inward looking vs. outward looking.⁵⁸ In similar kind of theory is the church organisations are being modality vs. sodality, meaning churches are focusing on local church structure vs. churches focusing on missions.⁵⁹ In the postmodern period, churches are generally becoming centripetal and modality in nature. These are global changes of missional emphasis which is prevalent in the world of Christianity today. In this modern time, churches need a balance of good structure and to be intentionally missional focused in the midst of diversified emphases, and to mobilise more holistic approach in missions and evangelism, particularly in reaching out and impacting the community.

Despite a different understanding of ‘last days’ and eschatological fervour of the formative period, Pentecostal missionary emphasis is not diminished. There has been new missional methods, approaches, perspectives, ideas, strategy, and more specific roles in contemporary times to suit the changing times and generations, as well as Malaysian sociopolitical context.⁶⁰

5.3.2 Shift in Mission Ownership

The paradigm shift in missions is mainly the shift in responsibility from Spirit-baptised believers to mission organisations and mission departments of churches, as well as the

⁵⁸ Doug Matacio, ‘Centripetal and “Centrifugal” Mission: Solomon and Jesus,’ *JAMS* vol. 4: No. 1, 2008 31-42, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jams/vol4/iss1/4>, accessed 11 September 2019.

⁵⁹ Ralph D. Winter, ‘The Two Structures of God’s Redemptive Mission’, an address given to the All-Asia Mission Consultation in Seoul, Korea, in August 1973 (the founding of the Asia Mission Association), pp. 220-30, <http://frontiermissionfellowship.org/uploads/documents/two-structures.pdf>, accessed 11 September 2019.

⁶⁰ See section 5.4.4 Malaysian Social Influences.

diversification of mission field. As a result, the *modus operandi* of missions have changed drastically and many classical ways of doing missions have discontinued. There has been lesser emphasis on missional purpose of BHS but more on spiritual gifts and edification of believers which impacted the individual zeal and passion for missions as compared to the earlier decades where the teachings on BHS was consistent and strong emphasis on empowerment for life and service, especially for witness and missions.

As global missiology advances and evolves, the 'specialized' role of missions and evangelism has been taken over by mission organisations and agencies, namely Operation Mobilisation, Youth with a Mission, Interserve, OMF International, and many others. Church souvenir books over the decades show there are designated missions departments and missionaries in local churches, hence the responsibility for missions, evangelism and witness has shifted in Malaysian churches.⁶¹ Local church-initiated mission operation has been noticed in the West for some time, especially by megachurches.

AGM reports show that lately, in the growing business and corporate world, there is also a new area of 'marketplace ministry' led by Christians who have a professional career, business, or corporate vocation, and witness to Christ at their workplaces.⁶² This is a current trend in Malaysia, not just in AGM. Charismatics emphasise more on lay leadership and making a difference in the marketplace. Churches are also networking and partnering with mission organisations and more church members' participation in missions is through prayer support and missions giving. Thus, the overall importance and need for full-time ministry is gradually decreasing as far as the perceptions of society, including Christian society, are concerned.

⁶¹ Church souvenir books.

⁶² 'Pentecostal in the Market Place', BCM Public Seminar, 15-17 Jul. 2013, speakers: Rev. Dr Amos Yong, Mr. Sreedhar Subramaniam, and Rev. Sophia Tan, S2013071517; Rev. Paulus Wong Too Tiang, Chinese Language Division Supervisor Report, 2nd CLD Young Adult Starlife Camp, theme: 'Anointed Marketplace Leadership', 16-19 July 2015, speakers: Rev. Joeann Chong and Zac Gou Hao Zheng, AG Biennial Report 2014-2016, 'Together Encounter God, Empower the Church, Enforce the Kingdom, Encourage One Another', 30 May to 2 June 2016, p. 28, BR2014-2016-51-CLD.

5.3.3 Diversification of Mission Field – Holistic Missions and Social Concern

Ministry

The development of modern missiology involves AGM's broadening mission perspective in employing holistic missions and more social concern ministries over the past decades. This is very significant in the changes of AGM's missiological stances over the three periods.

A shift from the missionary fervour in the classical Pentecostal approaches from 'door-to-door evangelism', 'tracting', and 'open air meetings' to contemporary mission approaches of churches organising short term mission trips for members' participation, and evangelism programmes like the 'Alpha Course' for pre-believers, and encouraging more friendship evangelism. Besides, a more interesting shift in missional approach is the shift from previously only church planting and evangelism to now also engaging with socio-economy and integral mission.⁶³

AGM's missions has been moving beyond evangelism and church expansion into social concern ministry which W. Ma calls 'mercy ministry',⁶⁴ such as caring for the poor and needy, the marginalised, and the suffering, and really touching the real world outside the four walls of the church. From 1990s, there is a shift in understanding the need for diversification of missions and social concern ministry as time changes. AG Malaysia National Department now has a Social Concern Department with the broadening and diversification of missions and social concern ministries, many of which are new frontiers. Generally, people are becoming more aware of social concern ministries and the needs of the community nowadays.

Churches are also shifting their approach and methodology of missions and evangelism, by organising more mission trips and encouraging members to engage in

⁶³ Collective interview data: CA-10, CA-30, CA-50.

⁶⁴ W. Ma, 'The Theological Motivations for Pentecostal Mission', in Lee and Ma, eds., *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, p. 26.

personal evangelism.⁶⁵ There has been more local outreaches to *Orang Asli* (native) settlements, social concern ministries, community services, and partnership with mission organisations in financial support for missionaries and mission works. There are at least 37 organised and registered social concern works in AGM, mainly: homes for orphans and underprivileged children, youth, aged men and women, day cares for elderly, home for homeless and destitute women, home for unwed mothers with unplanned pregnancies, home for delinquent children, dialysis centre for dialysis, rehabilitation centres for drug addicts, gamblers, and alcoholics, community centre, food bank, e-learning tuition, tuition centres for marginalised community, learning centres for refugee children, training of persons with slow learning disabilities, home schooling for learning disabilities children.⁶⁶ These social concern works are really impacting the community with God's love, the gospel, and message of hope in this contemporary world. There are many more missions, outreaches, and community services done by churches at smaller scale within the governance of the churches.⁶⁷

Since the slowdown of AGM's local church planting endeavours in the 1990s, there has been an expansion to overseas missions including church planting and outreaches. For example, Calvary Church started Westside Pentecostal Church, a daughter church in Canada in 1991, as well as Calvary Family AG in Medan and Parapat, Indonesia in 1994 and 1995 respectively; in Nairobi, Kenya in 2000; and Yei, Sudan in 2006.⁶⁸ Bigger churches continue to plant and support churches and outreaches locally and abroad in the 1990s to present. Metro Tabernacle established mission partnership and support for churches and ministries in Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Romania, Philippines,

⁶⁵ Collective interview data: CA-7, CA-23, CA-24, CA-29, CA-43, CA-49.

⁶⁶ Social Concern Works, Assemblies of God Malaysia Directory 2018-2020, pp. 151-9, D/SCW2018-2020.

⁶⁷ Glad Tidings Assembly of God, Celebrating 50 Years of God's Empowering 1963-2013, p. 66, GTAG2013-50A.

⁶⁸ Calvary Church (Assembly of God Kuala Lumpur), 'Calvary Church 40th Anniversary', pp. 50, 56, CC2008-40A.

Bangladesh, Sudan, China and etc.⁶⁹ From 1990s there has been a shift in focus to foreign mission trips such as Glad Tidings's mission teams to nine nations including Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, China, India, and so on.⁷⁰ There are churches going strong in missions during the movement growth period in the midst of expansion and diversification. Ongoing missions, church planting, outreaches and community service remain the main focus of some big churches, such as Calvary, Glad Tidings, Metro Tabernacle, and Agape Community Church among others.

The exploration of missions into new frontiers in social concern ministries and reaching out to the communities is in tandem with the changes in global Pentecostal missions expanding in 'social engagement', following the evangelicals' response to the Lausanne Conference in 1974. J. Ma remarks, 'The most visible turning point is the adoption of the Lausanne Covenant, which declares proclamation and social service as "partners" of mission.' The waning eschatological urgency in missions with new hermeneutical understanding of 'the last days' has prompted Pentecostals to follow the evangelicals in their missional change to include the 'social dimension', such as 'poverty, social injustice, children at risk, disaster relief and others.'⁷¹ A few AGM churches started social concern work mainly drug rehabilitation centres and homes for orphans and underprivileged children in the pioneering years. Awareness on holistic missions, social issues, and engagement in new frontiers is a gradual process over the decades as Malaysian churches become more active in reaching out to the society and taking part in

⁶⁹ Metro Tabernacle, *Connect: 30th Anniversary 1982-2012*, Special Edition, August 2012, p. 74, MT2012-30A.

⁷⁰ Glad Tidings Assembly of God, *Celebrating 50 Years of God's Empowering 1963-2013*, pp. 58, 72, GTAG2013-50A.

⁷¹ Julie C. Ma, 'A Pentecostal Perspective: Challenges, Contributions and Commitment of Pentecostals in Missionary Work Among Other Faiths', in Pachuau, L. and Knud Jørgensen, eds., *Witnessing to Christ in a Pluralistic World: Christian Mission among Other Faiths*, Regnum Edinburgh 2010 Series (Oxford, 2011), p. 81.

nation-building in contemporary times. One possible and strong evidence can be the attitude of pastors towards Pentecostal mission.

5.4. Sociocultural Factors

5.4.1 Internal Issues: Church Growth and Diversification

The changing nature of AGM particularly in church growth, diversification of ministries and generational growth, has caused paradigm shifts in theological emphases and practices. Priorities have gradually drifted from the classical Pentecostal theology and practice of Pentecostal distinctives to the contemporary trends and influences. Unconsciously, some churches have seemingly placed the Pentecostal practices in the back seat. This has major implications on the ‘Pentecostal’ and ‘missional’ characteristics of the church.

5.4.1.1 Church Growth in Size and Finance

As the movement expands over time, the small churches planted nationwide have grown in size and also gone through a phase of consolidation. As they have become more financially stable and able to purchase their own church buildings, church leaders have begun to concentrate on church growth and the spiritual maturity of the members, with diversification of ministries and departments. Thus, the church has become more organised and structured, with church operations and administrations more corporate in style. Pak reviewed that the ecclesiological changes and shift in emphases have affected the Pentecostal fervour and evangelism:

Perhaps in the mid-1980s, we were stabilising, churches were buying their buildings ... In the 1990s churches already bought buildings ... So when we became more and more respectable, more polished, we lose certain part of the boldness and if we tie in with the baptism of the Holy Spirit ... we have programmed ourselves out. It requires a breakthrough by the Holy Spirit to make us to move ... In the 1990s we were plateauing already. In 2000s I don't think there was much growth, in the Christian Church. By and large it's because we have perhaps lost the thrust in evangelism.⁷²

⁷² Interview with Rev. Pak.

AGM leadership often evaluates growth of the movement in terms of church planting efforts and mission endeavours, and number of adherents. As mentioned earlier, there were growth spurts in the 1970s till mid-1980s especially during the revival times. From 1974 until 2000, 301 churches were planted, and adherents increased from 3,400 to 47,073.⁷³ Almost two decades later, by 2017, only 74 churches were planted, totalling 374 churches and a decrease in adherents to 44,854.⁷⁴ So, when it comes to numerical growth, there has been somewhat a slowdown or even almost a plateau since 1990. With the EXCO's refocusing on church planting efforts in recent years, 50 churches were planted from 2018 to 2020, leading to a total of 393 churches, with 22 closed and 7 terminated.⁷⁵ Ong remarks that church growth and consolidation is not wrong but acknowledges the moving away from church planting efforts due to the shift in emphases on church ministries.⁷⁶ This is a natural growth and development factor which involve broader range of emphases.

There has been a focus on church buildings and facilities, on building the spiritual growth of the congregation with diverse departments and ministries to cater for the many needs of the church members. Perhaps running church programmes, multiple services, and ministerial activities catering for the spiritual growth has become a more comfortable option. The aftereffect is that local congregations generally become more 'inward looking', focusing on prosperity and blessings, earthly minded, rather than actively reaching out to the community and making disciples.⁷⁷ There is a danger of 'inward looking' which may be equated with turning the church into an ingrown club and comfort zone. If spiritual growth is biblically and theologically defined, it should lead naturally to reaching out to others.

⁷³ AGM 50th Anniversary 1957-2007, pp. 47 and 53, AGM2007-50A.

⁷⁴ AGM 52nd Biennial Report 2016-2018, p. 11, BR2016-2018-52.

⁷⁵ Rev. Kelly Yap, 'Home Missions', AGM 53rd Business General Meeting 2021, p. 34, BR2021-53.

⁷⁶ Interview with Rev. Ong.

⁷⁷ Collective interview data: TI-50, TI-45.

As AGM expands, there is a tension between the movement and the autonomy of churches. AGM movement is a fellowship even though the structure may seem like a denomination. Participants confirm that the leadership cannot force the church or pastor to practice the Pentecostal distinctive, but can only tell them that they should do it as being part of AGM. Therefore, the level of emphasis depends on the pastor, leader, Bible school student, and members.⁷⁸ The emphasis on Pentecostal practices depends on the spiritual conviction of the church pastors and leaders even though they all subscribe to the AG fundamental truths. This reveals that Pentecostal theological education is of the essence in raising Pentecostal ministers and leaders who have strong convictions on Pentecostal spirituality.

5.4.1.2 Generational Gap

Generational progression with less exposure to Pentecostal fervour happens over the periods without intentional discipleship on the Pentecostal heritage, and the younger generations are exposed to different spiritual experiences. Many early local pioneers and leaders of AGM were either first generation converts to Christianity when they joined the AGM in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, or came from other Christian denominations. A handful were second-generation Christians. The survey in 2017 from 93 respondents shows that 41 percent were new converts from non-Christian religions, i.e. Buddhism, Taoism, and Hinduism, five free thinkers; 32 percent from other denominational background, i.e. evangelicals, Roman Catholics, and Charismatics. Majority of both categories were pioneers and senior ministers except for a few younger ministers, while 26 percent being the second-generation born in AGM.⁷⁹ The pioneers who were the

⁷⁸ Collective interview data: TI-46.

⁷⁹ Surveys 2017.

youths in the early periods have matured, and now most of them have become grandparents and parents with adult children.

As AGM grew over the decades, the church grew along with its members. The younger generations were born into families attending AG churches, and at present, many young ministers or members are already second-generation Christians, and some with family and children themselves. The surveys and interviews show that the older generation who were Spirit-baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit evangelised and witnessed to Christ (Acts 1:8). However, the younger generations who have grown up in Christian families (not just in AGM, but across other denominations) feel less urgency or inclination to preach the gospel, share Christ or be a Christian witness. Wong Y.M. explained the cycle of growth experienced in AGM in terms of maturing in age and generational growth, which consequently influence the changes in the internal dynamics of the movement:

In the 1970s, 1980s, AG Malaysia was a young movement in terms of membership ... it was the spiritual, youthfulness and passion fused together, so you have this explosion of growth, church planting, Bible school being filled ... And now this group of baby boomers [youths from revival period 1970s-1980s] had grown up and have family. The children as second-generation Christians never had the kind of pre-Christian life before ... Now, if you ask the young people to write about 'Before you become a Christian, when did you know Christ and what happened after you know Christ', they would stare at you. Because they grew up in a Christian family. To them, they don't have the 'pre' ... they are so used to church, they are already exposed especially to Pentecostal Christians. They grew up in the Assemblies of God. To them, this is normal. So that kind of excitement is not there. Until they themselves have a personal encounter with God, then it will be different.⁸⁰

The younger generation may be more reserved in reaching out as some may not have had the same impactful experience of the BHS as the older generation. Even if they had the BHS experience, nowadays there is no longer the emphasis on eschatological urgency to save the lost like the early Pentecostals. Many second-generation Pentecostals have not experienced the dramatic conversion experience like their parents had, such as drastic change of spiritual experience and even persecution from family with staunch non-Christian religious background. The second-generation who grew up in a 'Pentecostal'

⁸⁰ Interview with Rev. Wong Yin Ming. Words added in bracket for clarification purpose.

environment may find the spiritual atmosphere in church a norm and nothing really spectacular or exciting because they are used to it since young. Therefore, perhaps the problem is more of being a nominal Pentecostal who has less dynamic experience of the Spirit among the younger generation. Unlike the earlier period, this make-up of the church would impact the discipleship programme of local churches.

This primary focus and purpose of BHS seen in the older generation is less visible in the contemporary generation as the dynamics of spiritual fervour, spiritual experiences and practices have changed. C. Wong expressed the change, 'Churches become more contented and complacent. I think at that time also churches lost their cutting edge for young people. Also a big issue, many youth movements, namely ICA (Inter-school Christ Ambassadors) and CA (Christ Ambassadors) started closing down.'⁸¹ R. Chin reminisced about the strong Pentecostal fervour in the early period when the churches were smaller in comparison to bigger churches nowadays:

We were blessed to be saved and called in that period. In those days, it was like one church one pastor. But now it has grown to an extent, where I think we have a second-generation and third-generation of Pentecostals. I think the Pentecostal emphasis has tapered down somewhat. It's still there, maybe, but it's not like during that time.⁸²

Most interviewees noticed a declining emphasis on BHS and the Holy Spirit over the decades as the churches grow biologically and generationally.

In the surveys and interviews, some youth pastors feedback that the current generation are more sceptical, logical, rational, scientific, intellectual, secular, humanistic, and naturalistic, thus lacks interest in the spiritual and supernatural. The current young generation has little understanding and interest about Pentecostalism due to lack of emphasis in the churches. There are many who do not fully understand the Pentecostal theology and distinctives. There are many young people who are more self-reliant and not so reliant upon God due to lack of intimate relationship with God.

⁸¹ Interview with Rev. Clement Wong.

⁸² Interview with Rev. Ronnie Chin.

The younger generation feels weird or unfamiliar when it comes to Spirit-baptism and speaking in tongues, and feel spooky about the things of the Spirit. As expressed in the surveys and interviews observed by some ministers: ‘Sadly to say, what I’ve noticed is that the current generation has little understanding or interest about Pentecostalism, possibly due to little emphasis about it in the churches.’⁸³ ‘Speaking in tongue and Holy Spirit filled – Current generation will feel weird, and there is no scientific approach!’⁸⁴ It means that some younger generation with their rational thinking and scepticism tend to feel strange or show apprehensions about the supernatural and reluctance to accept spiritual things due to lack of understanding, exposure, and spiritual experiences. ‘Younger generation due to their much more informed secular, scientific mindsets causes them to question these doctrines.’⁸⁵ ‘The current generation fear what they don’t see or understand. They doubt in the true power and dare not commit or take a stand for anything.’⁸⁶ ‘Most young people (those that I [survey participant] encountered) will question about speaking in tongues.’⁸⁷

There is also lack of spiritual traditioning and theological articulation about the Pentecostal theology, doctrines, and practices.⁸⁸ The interviews and surveys show that in general, there is a decline in spirituality among the younger generations due to their mindsets being influenced by secularised education. Thus, there is lack of personal spiritual convictions of BHS, theological concern, and sense of Pentecostal history.⁸⁹ There is an urgent need for AGM to recapture its spiritual heritage and Pentecostal distinctive as a God Spirited movement.

⁸³ Survey: SV-38-C4e.

⁸⁴ Survey: SV-67-C4e.

⁸⁵ Survey: SV-58-C4e.

⁸⁶ Interview with Pastor Tan Szet Anne, 26 April 2017; Survey: SV-39-C4e.

⁸⁷ Survey: SV-60-C4e. Words added in bracket for clarification purpose.

⁸⁸ Collective interview data: TI-35; TI-37; TI-39; TI-41.

⁸⁹ Interviews with Rev. Ng and Rev. Wong Y.M.; collective interview data: CA-18; CA-39, CA-40, CA-41; TC-14, TC-32, TC-33, TE-31, TI-58, TI-37, TI-39, TI-35, and others.

In AGM, surveys and interviews revealed that while the SFT is accepted in theory, the emphasis, teachings and practices of the Spirit-baptism and glossolalia has declined over the decades. The primary concerns of AGM leadership and ministers are on preserving the Pentecostal heritage and passing on to the next generation.

Since 2000, there has been significant remedial steps and present efforts to restore Pentecostal heritage especially among the younger generation. '[A]t the wake of losing the next generation', AGM started a national youth department called Youth Alive Malaysia (YAM) in 2001 to reach out to youths and raise up youth leaders.⁹⁰ YAM has started the Youth Enrichment School (YES) in 2006 and runs annual two-week equipping course to introduce young people to theology, ministry, leadership, creativity and self-development. More than 650 youths have undergone this programme in a decade.⁹¹ There are some effective fruits. In 2007, C. Wong, the former National Director of YAM testified on their youths' BHS experience:

They do not have hang-ups with the Holy Spirit such as speaking in tongues, spiritual gifts, falling or crying and laughing under the power of God. They experience the anointing in a very tangible manner. They prophesy, they pray, earnestly, they fast. They may not understand the word 'Pentecostal Heritage' but they are experiencing it.⁹²

In 2010s at BCM, there has been an increase in the new intakes of youths who have just completed school and answered God's calling for full-time ministry. Stage 1 testimonies revealed many young Bible school students received God's call through PDV, and God is raising the new generation of young pastors and ministers to reach out to the millennials and future generations.

On 21 March 2017, YAM launched the 'iBelieve', which is the 16 Fundamental Truths guidebook and Bible study tool for youths and being translated to other languages

⁹⁰ Pastor Tan Szet Anne, 'Youth Alive Malaysia', *Newzette*, 1st Trimester 2018, p. 8. YAM was founded in 2001, NZ2018-1.

⁹¹ Rev. Danny Tan, Youth Alive Malaysia, National Departmental Reports, 'A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement', AGM Biennial Report 2016-2018, p. 57, BR2016-2018-52-YAM.

⁹² AGM 50th Anniversary 1957-2007, p. 75, AGM2007-50A.

in subsequent years.⁹³ This marks a beginning of a traditioning and a timely remedial effort to mentor and disciple the young generation in the Pentecostal theology and distinctives. As this is newly launched, it will take time to see the response and results. There seems a lack of social media presence of this campaign. However, this spiritual mentoring would only be effective should all the AGM churches be using this material not only to teach knowledge about the theology and doctrines but momentarily imparting the Pentecostal's spiritual experiences to their youths, that they too would experience the presence of Christ in the BHS and receive the expression of tongues, the gifts of the Spirit, and to hear the VoS in their journey of real faith, missions, ministry and service.

5.4.1.3 Change in Spiritual Dynamism

The paradigm shifts in ministerial aspects imply the change in spiritual dynamism from earlier generation to second-generation. It concerns ministers' convictions on Pentecostal distinctives from homogeneity to autonomy, and understanding of God's calling to service and ministry, from pioneering churches and evangelism to filling ministerial portfolios within the church.

Over the six decades, the spiritual atmosphere has been different. The dynamism and spiritualism from the revival times in pioneering years has transitioned to more complacency and lacking in dynamism and spiritual excitement in contemporary times. The evolution of worship styles from hymns to scripture choruses, to more contemporary songs, following the trends in the overseas market has its repercussions. While it maintains the vitality in worship, certain trending songs divert the focus from true worship. Senior ministers relate the old Pentecostal songs are more God-centred, about commitment and sacrifice, whereas modern contemporary and charismatic songs are

⁹³ Collective interview data: WP-1; Tan, Youth Alive Malaysia, National Departmental Reports, p. 58, BR2016-2018-52-YAM.

more ‘me’-centred and shifted from who God is to what He can do for us. If not careful, there is a danger of shifting to auto mode when all is well. When churches are well-established, matured, having sufficient resources and experienced pastors, complacency and sufficiency may set in, and people would lack dependency on God. The Pentecostal distinctives, particularly the BHS and glossolalia is neglected to a certain extent in the life of second-generation Pentecostals and the lack of emphasis on the supernatural.⁹⁴

The spiritual atmosphere is not just determined by external influences, but also contributed by internal factor. It is mainly dependent on the personal spiritual convictions of pastors and ministers. This is a theological issue. This also ties in with the autonomy of churches and the pastors’ focus and emphases. From late 2000 to present, there has been a motion in the taking in ministers who are not trained in Pentecostal Bible College and having lesser conviction on Pentecostal distinctive. Generally, there are differences in the level of conviction on BHS as well as the level of commitment, sacrifice and devotion to God between the senior and junior ministers.⁹⁵ The ministers from the pioneering periods seemed to be more resilient, ‘die-hard’, and served the Lord despite all hardships.

M. Tan observed a paradigm shift in church ministerial calling now compared to early period. As churches become more established, they send potential church workers for theological training at Bible schools in order to serve in their own churches to meet the growing needs of the local church and members. The focus of preparation of this new generation who do receive God’s call into full-time ministry is on training and equipping them for specific ministries prepared for them in the churches,⁹⁶ as Youth Pastor, Children’s Pastor, Worship Pastor, or Assistant Pastor. As such, there is a drastic decline in church planting and mission outreach by ministerial workers compared to AGM’s

⁹⁴ Collective interview data: CA-16, CA-18, CA-21, CA-40.

⁹⁵ Collective interview data: CA-39, CA-41, CA-42.

⁹⁶ Interview with Rev. Marcus Tan.

formative and pioneering period. In the survey conducted among BCM full-time residential students, most of them still received God's call through PDV like in the earlier days.⁹⁷ However, the purpose of answering God's call and being trained in Bible school has morphed.

Ng observed that in terms of responding to God's call to service and ministry, although there are hundreds of AG churches nationwide, the current intake of Bible school full-time students is smaller than in the late 1970s when there were only 50 AGM churches. This seems an alarming sign. Since the gradual move from the core emphases and passion on Spirit-baptism, missions, church planting, and evangelism over the decades, it would seem that today's young people are not as keen to serve God in the ministry as those of earlier periods. Today's generation with many other priorities and passions, appears to regard full-time Christian ministry as strange and even dispensable.⁹⁸ This evolving trend would seem to be a global issue, as young people are exposed to a whole new world of education and professional career choices and opportunities. Generally, the intakes to Bible seminaries globally and in Malaysia are affected by these global trends.⁹⁹

Nowadays, AGM church members are exposed to the more popular respond to God's call by professionals and laity serving God in 'marketplace ministry'¹⁰⁰ without the sacred-secular divide. There is a renewed biblical theology of work where God's kingdom, vocation, and calling are undivided as a Christian. Christians do not need to work in church as a clergy, pastor, or staff, and do not need to be ordained ministers, to be called by God. All Christians in whatever vocation participate in God's kingdom

⁹⁷ Surveys with BCM full-time students.

⁹⁸ Interview with Rev. Ng.

⁹⁹ Resources for American Christianity 2008-2016, Insights into Religion, 'Theological Education Rebounds, But Fewer Students Enroll', <http://religioninsights.org/articles/theological-education-rebounds-fewer-students-enroll>, accessed 19 Jan. 2018.

¹⁰⁰ 'Pentecostal Movement', BCM Chapel Service sermon by Rev. Stephen Ong, Senior Pastor of First Assembly of God Church Kuala Lumpur, on the Chinese Pentecostal Movement in Malaysia and Marketplace Missions, PowerPoint slides in pdf file and audio m4a, 14 Feb. 2019, CS20190214-P/aud.

purposes, creation, and providence. This is more a protestant understanding and more Christians are subscribing to this trend. There is also the increasing variations of bivocational pastors or tent making ministries in missions rather than the old practice of churches sending full-time missionaries to live in a foreign land. Churches also organise seasonal mission trips, medical teams, and so on. There are many opportunities to serve God without having to be attached to a church as ‘full-time’ clergy or worker. This results in the global trend of decreasing numbers of full-time students at theological seminaries and Bible colleges.

The reconceptualization of Christian service and missional approach in contemporary times has directly impacted theological education. This is evident in the demographics of the student body and BCM’s adaptations in the twenty-first century. Registration record shows that there is an increasing number in the enrolment of non-full-time students contrasting the drastic reduction of the number of full-time students who have full-time calling as pastors. The average number of full-time students in the past five years have decreased from more than 40 to around 10 at the end of 2021. There are also students changing status from full-time to non-full-time due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the number of non-full-time students, many of whom are lay leaders, has tripled to more than 800 presently, compared to only 13 full-time students in January 2022.¹⁰¹ Although AGM places top priority in providing credentials to ministers with conventional full-time calling, BCM has been designing and offering new programmes and courses that are well-suited for equipping the lay leaders, particularly counselling and leadership which are needed in churches and marketplace.

Other Bible colleges have also been upgrading and improving their theological training programmes to meet the needs of the alternating spiritual dynamics. Soh has

¹⁰¹ Rev. Dr Victor Lee, ‘Bible College of Malaysia Communications’, email from president to the field, 13 December 2021 BCM-VL20211213; Student information report, SIR2015-2022.

recently done research on ‘Fostering Vocation’ in a case study on ACTS College, AG Bible College in Singapore, which shows similar trend in the change of the conventional understanding of full-time calling to the wide spectrum of vocation as Christian service in the world. The meaning of ‘vocation’ is redefined, where nowadays Christians believe that they are called to serve anywhere in the marketplace, industries, and arenas in society, not confined to full-time pastors and workers at church. As such, the role of Bible schools or theological education has advanced from training pastors and missionaries to ‘equipping the saints’ or lay leaders for any kind of service unto the Lord.¹⁰²

Pentecostal theological education at Bible schools and in the local churches has strong impact on the spiritual dynamics of the movement in theology and practice. Over time, there is a tapering down in the Pentecostal fervour from the classical formative period to the twenty-first century as more focus is given to ‘equipping the saints’ with knowledge and diversified ministry skillsets and vocation in the marketplace.

5.4.2 Contemporary Issues

As modernisation and secularisation influence of the Western thought permeates Malaysian society, present generations are becoming more scientific in their knowledge and intellect, thus less spiritually inclined, and less interest in the supernatural realm. The infiltration of alternative thinking, belief, practices, and changing trends of society affect AGM’s theology, perspective, and practices. Contemporary issues affecting AGM’s Pentecostal distinctives are mainly modernisation, technology and digital age; cultural and societal changes; young generation’s mindset, and time constraint.

¹⁰² Soh Hui Leng Davina, ‘Fostering Vocation in the Here and Now: A Case Study’, in Alexander, P. et al. eds., *Pentecostal Education*, A Journal of the WAPTE, vol. 5, nos. 1 & 2, (2020), pp. 33-43, <https://wapte.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/pentecostal-edu-vol-5.pdf>, accessed 8 Jun. 2021.

5.4.2.1 Modernisation, Technology, and Digital Age

In this modernisation, technology, and digital age, people are exposed to all kinds of religions, beliefs, faiths, teachings, philosophy, culture, and etc. The emerging culture of technology brings in information on trends from around the world, and influence of overseas mega churches on what it means to be contemporary. The churches need to be careful on how to engage and communicate using technology, making the best ways to bring forth the gospel message.

Modernisation comes with the postmodern movement, internet, information age, and people are exposed to current issues and influences. The internet age brings about the globalisation and hybridisation of the different streams of Christianity.¹⁰³ Church members are exposed to all kinds of teachings and beliefs, so if there is lack of emphasis on the Pentecostal teachings in church, people would be easily influenced by the many other teachings available online. The restrictions imposed due to the Covid-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2021 had forced church services and programmes to be held virtually. Pastors' fellowship meetings informed of the decline of church members' attendance in virtual church life in the past two years, and even so when the physical meetings have resumed during the recovery period.¹⁰⁴

5.4.2.2 Postmodernism and Its Philosophical and Sociocultural Influences in Malaysia

The cultural and societal changes are affecting the advancing and acceptance of the gospel. Interview data shows that during the revival times, people are more receptive to the gospel. Nowadays, people are more hesitant and there are more negative responses to the hearing of the gospel. The postmodern world and sociological impact in current

¹⁰³ Collective interview data: TC-8, TC-15, TC-25, TC-28.

¹⁰⁴ AGM, Central District Zoom Fellowship, 16 August 2021, at <https://zoom.us/j/3186943848>; and 13 December 2021, at <https://zoom.us/j/97659279689>.

generation pressurise churches to be seeker-sensitive and cut down on the supernatural and spontaneity of the Spirit. Sociological category of millennials is true but overrated when churches emphasise too much on making the church services and programmes more appealing to the millennials rather than emphasising on biblical-theological emphases.¹⁰⁵

Contemporary churches are becoming more seeker-sensitive to the secularised society. This affects the dynamism and spirituality of the congregation with declining emphasis on Pentecostal distinctives and spiritual experiences over time. In the urban areas, modern younger generation are also becoming less acquainted with the spirit world compared to older generations who mostly had more drastic conversions from other religious faiths. This is a major setback to the practice of Pentecostal distinctive in churches nowadays.

The young generation's mindset is influenced by postmodernity and modern culture. AGM leadership hopes that the youth could grow faster as AG is an aging movement. Perhaps this may be the most serious pressure for reaching the youths. Youths have very different mindset today, such as different moral standards, everything is relative, there's no absolute, and etc. Openness and inclusiveness in accepting one another's theological views and practices is common among the young generation. Young people do not hold tight to Pentecostal views and practices. In fact, youths who grew up in church, Spirit-baptised and speaking in tongues, but when reached college age, they mix with peers from mainline churches which affect their views and cause them to question their Pentecostal practice.¹⁰⁶

Another factor which affects everyone in present societal change is time constraint. Participants share that people generally have less time for spiritual engagements. Time constraint among church members causes weakening to the practice of extended hours in

¹⁰⁵ Collective interview data: TC-22, TC-29, TC-30.

¹⁰⁶ Collective interview data: TC-13, TC-14, TC-32, TC-33.

worship, prayer, and fasting. Church pastors and leaders could no longer be imposing on their church members on attending church services and programmes, as well as commitment and participation in ministries and services. Time stress of members even affect the organising of church events, for example, church camp for some churches is held on alternate year instead of annual.¹⁰⁷

5.4.3 Relevance and Relations

The driving factor for the major changes of AGM from CPM to CPCM can be summarised in three driving forces: Relevance to society and present generation, interdenominational relationship, and the sensitivity to postmodern society.

5.4.3.1 Relevance to Society and Present Generation

Churches constantly face the tension of following the modern trends of the progressing world in using new approaches from time to time in order to be relevant to society and generations today.

Over the different periods, there has been a change in the audience. In the pioneering years, AGM was a youth movement where church members and Bible School students were mostly ‘youths’, and evangelism was easier among youths. Now, with the generational growth, the churches need to reach out to all generations with barriers and resistance, and it is harder to evangelise in contemporary times. This involves adapting to the culture and current trends, updating the language to modern-day terminology to be meaningful in explaining the classical theology, and modifying the approach of ministry to be relevant to the younger generation. However, in making all the needful adjustments, there has also been a move from the strong emphasis and focus on BHS, revival meetings,

¹⁰⁷ Collective interview data: TC-26, TC-27.

evangelistic rallies, and church planting to more emphasis on leadership and discipleship, seminars and conferences approach.¹⁰⁸ This somehow dampens the Pentecostal fervour among the current generation.

5.4.3.2 Interdenominational Relationship

As AGM grew to be more established in the early years and gradually accepted to be part of the interdenominational network in the movement growth period in the 1980s, there has been a turn around in the relationships with other denominations.

AGM had joined the NECF which was formed in 1982 and Guneratnam was a committee member since 1985. BCM later also became a member in 1989. Since then, there has been an improvement in the acceptance level from mainline churches and the way AGM leaders and pastors relate to other denominations. The interchange became more diplomatic, less judgmental, and focused discussions on external matters (non-theological) and practical aspects.¹⁰⁹ There has also been united efforts in praying for the nations and many interdenominational gatherings over the decades. This sets up AGM's reputation and approach in public and interdenominational meetings. Somehow, AGM has gradually mellowed down and not expressing much Pentecostal values and practices when in public.

5.4.3.3 Sensitivity to Postmodern Society

In present times, churches are becoming more sensitive to the postmodern society and less expressive in the Pentecostal values and practices such as BHS, exercising of spiritual gifts, speaking in tongues, and etc., especially in church services. There is a change of attitude in the congregation from olden times to modern congregation who now question

¹⁰⁸ Collective interview data: CA-34, CA-51, CA-27, CA-2, CA-19, CA-28.

¹⁰⁹ Collective interview data: CA-25, CA-44, CA-4, CA-5.

church practices, tongues, and etc. Now, pastors need to be sensitive to congregation and visitors, and making the church service more seeker-friendly. The church has become more informed in general knowledge of science, psychology, medical, and etc., that not every condition is spiritually-related. In the past, every problem or condition is related to spiritual and demonic. Now, not every case is spiritual.¹¹⁰

The increase in general knowledge somewhat implicated the dynamism and spirituality of the congregation, where people are becoming more sceptical and less spiritually inclined, and disinterest in the supernatural realm. Churches tend to be seeker-sensitive by cutting back on the supernatural and spontaneity of the Spirit and becoming overly concerned about audience's response rather than believing in the power of the Holy Spirit to work in people's lives.¹¹¹ This diminishes the practice of Pentecostal distinctive and spiritual experiences.

In a sociological reflection on this contemporary period, secularism, modernity and postmodernity has impacted the global church today, and Malaysian context is no exception. Walker states, 'Post-modernism not only eschews the metanarrative of rational discourse but it also distrusts the lordship of the self and inner experience.'¹¹² In secularism, there is a separation between church and state, drop in the need for religion, and has been damaging to the individual level in terms of decline in church commitments.¹¹³ He uses the term 'laicisation', 'broadly it denotes the fact that institutional church religion has been pushed by modernity out of the centre of social and cultural life and into its own peripheral and private sphere.'¹¹⁴ He states, 'Furthermore the new technical and rational society not only dissolved the sacred order; it disintegrated

¹¹⁰ Collective interview data: CA-47, CA-45.

¹¹¹ Collective interview data: TI-42, TI-43.

¹¹² Andrew Walker, 'Thoroughly Modern: Sociological Reflections on the Charismatic Movement', in John Wolffe, ed., *Global Religious Movements in Regional Context*, Religion Today, v. 4 (Aldershot, 2002), p. 221.

¹¹³ Andrew Walker, *Enemy Territory: The Christian Struggle for the Modern World* (London, 1988), pp. 110-1.

¹¹⁴ Walker, *Enemy Territory*, p. 111.

the community order.’¹¹⁵ There is the growing subculture world of individualism and privatisation, which promotes hedonism or private way of life and self-fulfilment, which encourages consumerism.¹¹⁶

The postmodern society generally suffers from boredom, constantly seeking novelty, and desiring new things, new technologies, interesting programmes, latest worship songs, convenience, and feelgood sermons. Contemporary churches are striving to keep up with the latest trends. Some people may only attend church on Sundays but live their private lives the rest of the week, and having the expectations on how the church should be of service to them instead of how they could serve the church and others. The consumerism mindset of this age could be one of the main reasons majority of members lack interest in prayer meetings or to serve in ministries. Postmodern congregations have many other priorities in their private world. Many young adults and adults tend to prioritize their careers or vocations above spiritual matters or church.

Current generation has some problems in understanding Pentecostal distinctives like glossolalia and the need for it. The current generation tends to question everything.¹¹⁷ Global churches in this age of modernisation, secularisation, and consumerism face the challenge of losing their young adults without effective discipleship and nurturing. These sociological factors have also influenced the Malaysian church at large including AGM. Thus, there has been a challenge to make the gospel and Pentecostal distinctives relevant to the society and present generation.

5.4.4 Malaysian Social Influences

The Malaysian social influences, especially the majority Muslim and the multiethnic, multireligious environment, is crucial in shaping the religious landscape of the country.

¹¹⁵ Walker, *Enemy Territory*, p. 111.

¹¹⁶ Walker, *Enemy Territory*, pp. 131-2.

¹¹⁷ See section 5.4.1.2 Generational Gap.

Along with other faiths in the minority group, Christianity by and large exists with many restrictions governed by federal and state laws, policies and regulations. The Malay's strong nationalistic fervour in Malaysianisation, Islam revivalism and Islamisation create political, religious, and racial sensitivity in the nation, and limit the way Malaysian churches function in worship, practice, evangelism and missions.¹¹⁸

Islam is the national religion as stated in the Independence Constitution 1957 and 'religion of the federation' in the Federal Constitution 1963. The constitution allows freedom of religion with specified limitations (Articles 3 and 11). All Malays are Muslims (Article 160 (2)), and propagation of any religion to Muslims may be controlled and restricted by the state law (Article 11 clause 4). Malays (64% of population) will lose their 'Malay' identity and special privileges (Article 153) if they convert to other faiths.

The global Islamic resurgence and revival has actively taken place in Malaysia since 1970 and there has been increasing Islamic nationalism implemented by the government. Islamisation process has been integrated nationwide into politics, government administration systems, judiciary, state law, banking, insurance, economy, education, social media, and society.¹¹⁹ There has been erosion of religious freedom and growing tensions due to the increasing restrictions by laws and policies.¹²⁰ On 27 October 1987,

¹¹⁸ Collective interview data: TC-23. See chapter one, section 1.6 Research Context: AGM in Malaysian Context. For details, see Salbiah Ahmad, *Critical Thoughts on Islam, Rights and Freedom in Malaysia*; Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia*; and McAmis, *Malay Muslims*, pp. 50-1, 79-90, 115-7. Muzaffar defines Islamic resurgence as 'the endeavour to re-establish Islamic values, Islamic practices, Islamic institutions, Islamic laws, indeed Islam in its entirety, in the lives of Muslims everywhere', on p. 2.

¹¹⁹ Batumalai, *Islamic Resurgence and Islamization in Malaysia*, pp. 11-2, 39, 42-4, 57-8, 66, 81, 93, 135-9, 240-8, 259-72. The Constitution Article 153 grants Malays special privileges in public services, education, business and economy, and land. The Malays benefited much from the New Economic Policy since 1970.

¹²⁰ Batumalai, *Islamic Resurgence and Islamization in Malaysia*, pp. 42-4, 125, 137-9, 238, 259-72. For example, foreign missionaries were given a limit of 10-year immigration ruling (1967). The Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 imposed restriction on language, proscription in languages and publication. In 1986, there are prohibitions on the usage of specific terms by other religion, especially *Allah* and certain words that are sensitive to Muslims even though they are in the national language. *Allah* is a general name for 'God' in Arabic and a borrowed word in Malay and Indonesian languages. Christians use *Allah* in the native languages and national language. However, it is a specific name for 'God' in Islam. The usage of many common terms were banned or restricted for Muslim use only. The Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 curtailed non-Muslim programmes on radio and TV. There is limitations to freedom of press. Applications for lands by other religions are becoming more difficult with the National Land Code 1965 and Town and Country Planning Act 1976, while *suraus* (small mosques) and mosques are built in most

more than 100 ‘radicals’ including NGO activists, politicians, media reporters, artists, etc. were detained for two years without trial under ISA to defuse racial and political tensions. Although ISA was repealed, the implications of this *Operasi Lalang* (weeding operation) have shaped Malaysia over three decades.¹²¹

Islamisation agenda is also reflected in many other laws and the implementation of Islamic Laws in several Malay states.¹²² There have been respective agendas of political and religious parties leading the Islamisation and pursuing an ‘Islamic state’ although the constitution defines Malaysia as a secular state.¹²³ Political struggles and conflicts are constantly impacting the whole nation.¹²⁴ Whilst there are increasing restrictions and prohibitions imposed by federal and state laws and regulations, the impingement of religious freedom and rights for the minority intensifies with religious extremism and politicisation of religion. For decades, there were legal battles on the *Allah* issue; bans on certain Christian books and media materials; and restrictions on the importation on Indonesian/Malay Bibles or *Alkitab* as they are considered ‘prejudicial to the national

villages and towns. The amended Sedition Ordinance 1970, Blasphemy Law against Islam and Prophet Muhammad, and the Internal Security Act (ISA 1960-2012), followed by Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (SOSMA) have been enforced on grounds of national security and public order.

¹²¹ The Rakyat Post, Anne Dorall, ‘What Happened with Ops Lalang 33 Years Ago?’ 27 October 2020, <https://www.therakyatpost.com/living/2020/10/27/what-happened-with-ops-lalang-33-years-ago/>, accessed 26 February 2022.

¹²² Andrew Khoo, ‘Freedom of Religion and Extremism’, in Hwa Yung and Helen Ting, eds., *Christians and Nation-Building in a Pluralistic Society* (Petaling Jaya, 2021), pp. 117-22; Batumalai, *Islamic Resurgence and Islamization in Malaysia*, pp. 62-7. Islamisation agenda also includes: the Penal Code (1965), Societies Act (1966), Customs Act (1967), Education Ordinance 1957 and Education Act 1996 which requires compulsory Islamic studies in public education; various State Enactments of Islamic Laws (1980 onwards), State *Fatwa* (religious ruling), and attempts to implement *Syariah* Islamic law and Constitution based on *Quran* and *Sunnah* (sayings and practices of Prophet Muhammad) in the country.

¹²³ Batumalai, *Islamic Resurgence and Islamization in Malaysia*, pp. 64, 88-9. The United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), *Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia* or Malaysian League of Muslim Youth (ABIM) led the Islamisation and Malaysianisation, while *Parti Islam Se-Malaysia* or Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) attempted to make Malaysia an ‘Islamic state’.

¹²⁴ Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia*, pp. 67-97.

interest'.¹²⁵ Social issues and religious frictions have affected the whole Christian population and multifaith community in the country.¹²⁶

Living within these constraints and the government policy on Malaysianisation and Islamisation, Malaysian Christians have been responding and adapting with innovative missional developments: the establishment of seminaries to raise local church leaders and workers, BSM to print Bibles, and an ecumenical formation of Christian federation among churches (CFM) in 1985 which had fostered unity among the many denominations and independent churches.¹²⁷ Churches and Christian organisations are engaging more in doing good works, charity, and social concern ministries in the community. At the same time, there has been a rise in united interdenominational prayer networks among the evangelicals, mainline church traditions, Pentecostals and charismatic churches under NECF, CCM, CFM. There has been a growth in prayer movements mainly among Pentecostal and charismatic churches to pray for the many issues of the nation like never before.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Batumalai, *Islamic Resurgence and Islamization in Malaysia*, p. 137; Lee Min Choon, 'The State of Religious Liberty, 2002-2004', in S. Wong, Lim, and Wong K.K., eds., *The Realities of Christian Living in Malaysia*, p. 105; Stephen Ng, 'Mais and AG [Attorney General] stop pussyfooting around', Malaysiakini, 24 April 2014, <https://www.malaysiakini.com/letters/260897>, accessed 18 February 2022; BBC News, 'Malaysia's High Court rules Christians can use "Allah"', 11 March 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-56356212>; ASEAN Today, Umair Jamal, 'Allah row in Malaysia is settled for now but far from over', 25 March 2021, <https://www.aseantoday.com/2021/03/allah-row-in-malaysia-is-settled-for-now-but-far-from-over/>; Amnesty International, 'Malaysia must end ban on Christians saying "Allah"', 24 June 2014, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2014/06/malaysia-must-end-ban-christians-saying-allah/>, accessed 25 February 2022. Highlighting a few incidences, in 2003, 35 religious books including the *Bup Kudus* (native Iban Bible) were banned, but the ban on the Bible was lifted after protests. Soon after, a shipment of *Alkitab* was seized. Iban is Malaysia's largest indigenous group in Sarawak. On 2 January 2014, the Selangor Islamic Enforcement Department (JAIS) raided the Bible Society of Malaysia (BSM) and seized 300 copies of *Alkitab* which were imported with approval from Home Affairs Ministry. There were decades-long legal battles on the usage of the word *Allah* by Christians in Jill Ireland Lawrence Bill's case in 2008 where Bill's educational CDs with *Allah* on the title were seized at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport; and legal battle on the Roman Catholic publication, *The Herald*. The struggle had resulted in several firebombs on churches in Kuala Lumpur in 2009.

¹²⁶ Malay Mail, 'Silence over missing activists "disconcerting", says Malaysian Bar', 11 April 2017, <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2017/04/11/silence-over-missing-activists-disconcerting-says-malaysian-bar/1353911>, accessed 25 February 2022. See Khoo, 'Freedom of Religion and Extremism', in Hwa and Ting, eds., *Christians and Nation-Building in a Pluralistic Society*, p.119. There were also abductions and disappearances of five social activists including three pastors in 2016-17 and these cases are still unsolved.

¹²⁷ Batumalai, *Islamic Resurgence and Islamization in Malaysia*, p. 125.

¹²⁸ See chapter six, section 6.3.5 United Prayer and Interdenominational Relationships.

In the multiracial and multireligious environment, there have been efforts to forge better unity, peace, and harmony, after the racial riots on 13 May 1969. Over the years, various religious organisations and universities have organised interfaith dialogues, seminars, and forums to bridge differences in the plural society. In 1984, the Malaysian Consultative Council of the Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism (MCCBCHS) was established to address matters pertaining to religion.¹²⁹ These exertions build networks and understanding among different faiths.

Over the decades, these social influences and challenges have created political, religious, and racial sensitivity in the pluralistic society. The religious diversity in Malaysia restricts and shapes the Malaysian Church and AGM's missional engagement. These factors impact AGM as a minority within a minority and shape the contextual Malaysian Pentecostalism. Anderson remarks, 'Contextualization not only takes into account cultural values, but also tries to make the gospel relevant to the current situation of social change and new economic and political contexts.'¹³⁰ Forward looking, the Catholic Research Centre, Graduates Christian Fellowship, and Kairos Dialogue Network collectively urge all Christians to engage in nation-building and sociopolitical responsibilities to build 'a better Malaysia for all'.¹³¹ These sociocultural and sociopolitical influences shape the contextual Malaysian Pentecostalism to be different from other global contexts.

5.5 Summary of Findings and Implications on the Centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2

Stage 2 analyses the underlying contextual factors, namely historical, missiological, and sociocultural involving the internal, external, and global factors, which have implications

¹²⁹ Ng Kiok Nam, 'Islam in Malaysia', in *Islam in Asia*, pp. 97-104; Batumalai, *Islamic Resurgence and Islamization in Malaysia*, pp. 137, 145-7. Tan Jin Huat, 'Towards a Spirited Apologetics', in S. Wong, Lim, and Wong K.K., eds., *The Realities of Christian Living in Malaysia*, pp. 118, and 124-7.

¹³⁰ Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 195.

¹³¹ Hwa and Ting, eds., *Christians and Nation-Building in a Pluralistic Society*, p. xii.

on the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2. The changing nature and paradigm shifts affected the emphases and practice of Pentecostal distinctives, thus seemed to blur the Pentecostal identity, theology and practices of AGM. There is an increasing gap between the espoused classical Pentecostal theology and practice.

The contextualisation of Pentecostalism in a country with diverse ethnicity and culture often focuses more on meeting the practical needs and livelihood of the communities in their grassroots realities. The challenges are common across the racial congregations who are majority Chinese and Indians¹³² in the urban areas. Overall, AGM exists in a Muslim dominant country within the multireligious and multiethnic environment. The Malaysian social influences with the increasing restrictions imposed by the government in Malay nationalism, Islamic resurgence, and Islamisation play a role in shaping the contextual Pentecostalism over the six decades.

Modernisation, secularisation, cultural and societal changes has influenced the present and younger generation with Western worldview and sceptical mindset. Thus, some are not so inclined to supernatural matters. The generational gap is evident in the declining emphasis on BHS and the Holy Spirit. There is a lack in passing down the spiritual heritage. Nowadays, believers usually receive teachings on classical Pentecostal theology and distinctives prior to their spiritual experiences. As such, the spiritual dynamism and Pentecostal fervour in contemporary times is comparatively different from the classical formative period.

The new hermeneutical development on eschatology and the limitation of classical views on BHS and glossolalia has caused the waning eschatological and missionary fervour. This results in AGM's evangelicalism plus receiving many other external theological influences and new teachings to fill the vacuum. During the movement growth

¹³² Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 143.

period, the Pentecostal fervour and practice of distinctives began to taper down. There was discontinuity of practices from the classical formative period.

On the positive side, AGM experiences the broadened theology and teachings on Christian faith over the decades. This includes the broadened theology and understanding of the Spirit, church growth, holistic and integral missions in social concern ministries, community outreach, venturing into new frontiers, and nation-building. The blending of theology, teachings, and practices show a sense of unity among denominations. There is more global networking and unity with the larger body of Christ. The global church, Spirit-filled and evangelicals in particular, is becoming increasingly identical and borderless in contemporary times as the Holy Spirit unites the denominations and breaking down barriers and differences.

The blending of external theological influences, contemporary worship, and global culture have diluted the convictions on practising Pentecostal distinctives. From the movement growth period through contemporary times, the boundaries and distinctions among the Pentecostals, Charismatic and Spirit-filled churches are getting blurred. Pentecostal spirituality is diluted and much blended with the teachings and practices of Charismatic and Third Wave, plus many new teachings and programmes. This impacts the Pentecostal identity and practice as they are so mixed in contemporary times. AGM originated from the first wave of Spirit renewal last century but has been much influenced by the theologies, teachings, and practices of subsequent Spirit renewals. Charismatic and Third wavers focus more on ‘strategic level spiritual warfare’, spiritual gifts especially prophetic ministry, and contemporary worship that have shifted AGM’s classical emphases on BHS, glossolalia, and missions, and dilutes the Pentecostal spirituality and identity.

The implications on the practice of PDV in AGM is very much influenced by Charismatic and Third Wave’s prophetic movement since 1980s, with new teachings,

new concepts of PDV, more enigmatic, and the popular practice of personal prophecies and national prophecies. The changes in nature, perspective, and practice of VoS over the historical periods has been analysed and interpreted in Stage 1¹³³ and the underlying theologies will be discussed further in Stage 3, theological reflection on AGM's theological development.

Besides the Spirit renewals, the blending with other teachings on prosperity, health, spiritual gifts, blessings, edification, and bodily ministry produces a more inward-looking perspective of Christianity, diverting the missional focus in churches and congregations. Some churches are becoming more seeker-friendly, less bold in practising the Pentecostal distinctives, and losing the spontaneity of the Holy Spirit or the supernatural especially among the present and younger generations.

Diversification of emphases in churches has lessen the emphasis on BHS as empowerment for missions, glossolalia, and missions generally. Many other aspects include church growth, caring for the needs of members, Christian living, expanded Christian Education covering many non-Pentecostal topics, and churches adopting non-Pentecostal programmes for church growth and ministries.

The most crucial impact of these contextual factors on AGM is that Malaysian Pentecostalism is a melting pot of different theological influences and newer teachings and there is much blending. This diversity as noticed, comes from various areas, some contextual and other theological. For some churches, it is becoming hard to tell the difference or distinctives especially among Spirit-filled churches of other denominations. For other churches, they may be rather similar to evangelical churches with lesser emphasis on the Holy Spirit and Pentecostal distinctives. In both cases, there is a tension between the classical understanding and practices of Pentecostalism and the ones of

¹³³ See chapter four, section 4.3 Voice of the Spirit.

contemporary Pentecostalism. Overall, these contextual factors are impacting the focus on the centrality of the gospel and Pentecostal identity.

Pentecostal theological education evolves along with the changing society, spiritual dynamism of the generations, and focusing on ‘equipping the saints’ in diverse ministry skillsets and vocations more than the conventional training of full-time ministers. The challenge is reflected in theological education, both in curriculum and faculty preparedness. The huge change in demography of Bible colleges in training more lay leaders has impacted the emphasis on Pentecostal fervour as most non-full-time students only attend courses but receive limited focus on spiritual dynamics of Pentecostalism in contemporary times.

There is the realisation of the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2, the vitality of the central Pentecostal distinctives as AGM’s identity, and the need to preserve the Pentecostal heritage for the younger generation. Thus, continuous emphasis on the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 and BHS is much needed as the theological significance of Joel’s prophecy needs to be re-emphasised. This also results in AGM’s emphasis on revival especially in the past decade especially during the present leadership of Ong and the EXCO.¹³⁴ The most significant implication is AGM’s continual morphing into a contemporary movement and the introduction of a new vision and image of a CPCM.

The overarching factor of the changes and shifts in emphases and practice is the underlying theological development of the movement, which will be discussed more in Stage 3 on theological reflection.

¹³⁴ AGM Leadership Summit Report, [Theme: ‘Energize! Extend! (Col. 1:29) An Era of Revival, Church Planting, Emerging Leadership & Pastoral Excellence’], 18 Sep. 2012, LSR20120918.

Chapter Six

Stage 3 – Theological Reflection on AGM’s Theological Development as a Malaysian Pentecostal Movement

6.1 Introduction

Stage 3 engages critical reflection on the theological development of AGM’s Pentecostalism and its practices. The EXCO perceives changes and differences in the movement as it morphs from a CPM to a CPCM over six decades. Although the changing nature and concept of certain distinctives like VoS seems more like an evolution with some valid enculturation of newer teachings and practice, analyses in Stages 1 and 2 reveal an increasing tension and gap between the espoused Pentecostal theology and practice, as the movement grows and progresses. If the gap is wide, the Pentecostal distinctiveness will erode. The leadership in their interviews collectively affirm AGM’s Pentecostal identity in upholding the classical Pentecostal theology, Pentecostal spirituality with the distinctive practices, and concerted effort in fanning the Pentecostal fervour in an ever changing time. Concurrently, the leadership expresses the need of being ‘contemporary’.¹

Stage 3 is a critical interpretation of the theological factors causing the tensions and gaps in Pentecostal identity and theology evident from the theological drifts in distinctive practices related to Joel 2 – Acts 2 in contemporary times. This chapter aims to bring critical evaluation and reflection on the changes in Stage 1 and contextual factors in Stage 2 in the light of the espoused theology, and to uncover the underlying theology of the

¹ See Stage 1 in chapter four section 4.1.3.1 Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement (CPCM). ‘Contemporary’ means to be up-to-date and modern in image or outlook, technology, methods, styles, communications, and approach, being relevant to current generation and society while maintaining the centrality of the gospel message and core beliefs.

changes in emphases and practice impacting the Pentecostal distinctives and heritage.² It answers the sub-question: How do AGM ministers understand and evaluate both the current theology and its practices and the changes and their contextual factors in light of the espoused theology and Scripture (Joel 2 and Acts 2)?

The overarching theological argument and unique key contribution to understanding the distinctive nature and characteristics of the contextualised Pentecostalism in Malaysia is interpreted in three theoretical explanations: Ecumenical diversity; pragmatism; and relevance. These three main theoretical themes are interpreted based on evidence and analysis on why the changes in emphases and practice have happened in AGM: Ecumenical diversity being AGM's interdenominational and international connections with diverse theological influences impacting the hybridisation of external theological influences within AGM; pragmatism as the movement seeks means and methods to meet the sociocultural influences in Malaysia; and in relation to that, seeking relevance in facing the contemporary pressures of postmodernity to be seeker-friendly, and theological drifts influenced by the Third Wave in national revival movement.

This critical interpretation involves comparing and contrasting the empirical findings in Stages 1 and 2, differentiating them with the theoretical background of the seven classical Pentecostal distinctives derived from Joel 2 – Acts 2 in chapter three, and providing theoretical explanations on the general theological development of Malaysian Pentecostalism.³ The new knowledge contribution of this study is from differentiating the empirical findings from the existing scholars' theories and knowledge on Pentecostalism,

² Chapter three provides the historical-theological backdrop to understanding AGM and its changes over time. AGM's theological development and contemporary Pentecostal spirituality will be interpreted through the lens of the key theological themes of Joel 2 – Acts 2, the foundational Scripture of classical Pentecostal theology.

³ Collective interview data: SC-36. Rev. Ong and Rev. Dr Chan N.C. specifically refer AGM as a contextual 'Malaysian Pentecostal'.

and interpreting the theoretical explanations on the theological development as a Pentecostal movement in the sociocultural and religious contexts of Malaysia.

6.2 Theological Gap between the Espoused and Practice

Theological gap, major changes, and contrasts between the espoused classical Pentecostal theology and contemporary practice is evident that underlying theologies are paramount in impacting the emphases and practices in contemporary times. It might be the other way round that the emphases, practices, and methods are employed due to ecumenical diversity, pragmatism, and relevance, without considering the presuppositions are actually impacting the drifts in theologies. Either way, theological drifts are widening the tensions. The overall comparing and contrasting of the classical and contemporary theological emphases and practices in the light of the key theological themes from Joel 2 – Acts 2 are interpreted as follows:

In terms of BHS, the waiting on the Holy Spirit has much been replaced by imparting the anointing. Glossolalia as the initial evidence of BHS, and its practices are no longer a strong emphasis in the contemporary church as compared to the classical formative period, and there is a general decline in the practice of this Pentecostal distinctive over the decades.

The changing spiritual dynamism in Christian vocation beyond the conventional full-time minister or missionary in modern missional approach has given rise to lay leaders. Believers of different ages, gender, from all walks of life and background are involving in the marketplace and every sphere of society as Christian witnesses to Christ.⁴ The positive changes including this missional drift may be seen as a manifestation of the

⁴ See chapter five, section 5.4.1.3 Change in Spiritual Dynamism.

Spirit's empowerment on believers to be witnesses wherever God places them or sends them to (Acts 1:8), which is part of the fulfilment of Joel 2 – Acts 2.

On the other hand, missions has changed tremendously from its homogenous classical practices driven by crisis eschatology to the contrast of relevance to postmodern generation. Missionary emphasis has shifted to prayer movement. The missional motivation and focus of 'the last days' from eschatological perspective of the return of Christ has shifted to focusing on the 'present'. There is a shift in focus and emphasis of mandates from the Great Commission and full gospel from early AG missionaries (from First Wave) to the new mandate of prayer movement of the Third Wave (and Fourth Wave). As such, for missions, there has been drastic changes and even contrasts of missional motivation, focus, and mandate.

Pentecostalism began as a revival movement and missionary movement, which was how it came to the shores of Malaysia. Over time, revivalism with the focus on BHS, the gospel and missions, has changed in emphasis and focus to prayer for revival, united prayer for the nation, and spiritual warfare. And for Joel's significant theme of PDV, it has continued to be fundamental in Pentecostal spirituality from classical Pentecostalism to contemporary Pentecostalism. The emphasis on PDV has been continuous but there is a contrast in its nature, purpose, and concept over time. The PDV in classical formative period is usually God's call to missions, full-time ministry, guidance in church growth and missions. They were more imagery on Jesus Christ, the cross, and so on. In contemporary times, PDV has shifted from the call to missions to prophetic movement with new national prophecies, new prophetic intercession, enigmatic PDV which covers everything in life and the popularity of personal prophecies.

The theological gap between the espoused and practice in contemporary times needs a critical theological reflection and interpretation of the underlying theologies impacting the emphases and practices.

6.2.1 AGM Pioneers Seeing a Mixed Bag

AGM pioneers are seeing the infiltration of new theologies, teachings, emphases, and practices in the movement. Chan N.C. observes that AGM has become ‘a mixed bag’ in its teaching and understanding on the theology of the Spirit that there is a huge gap between what is espoused and what is actually believed in practice. He stresses:

Now, when you talk about [AGM ministers and members] subscribe [to the classical Pentecostal theology], I would say that there is a difference between what is espoused, that means what people confess, to what they actually believe at the very depths of their heart. And by that, I mean it shows in their philosophy of church ministry, it shows in their approach to church life and to leadership ... AG [AGM] right now is a mixed bag ... it is also the same with every single other denomination because right now the theological boundaries between different denominations was not like what it was 20-30 years ago before. We are reading each other’s book and inviting each other to our pulpit. But through the interacting, none of us ever [believe] 100 percent everything that the other person says. We pick and choose.⁵

Teh shares the same view and concerns that BHS has taken a back seat over the decades with the new teachings and practices of the Charismatic Movement as churches are drawn to ‘power encounter’ and manifestation of the Holy Spirit. She comments:

In the early days, ’60s and ’70s, when AG Malaysia was still in the baby stage, we were growing and were very Pentecostal. Speaking in tongue was a daily thing. Speaking in tongue was a norm in our worship service. There was great emphasis on the BHS and also in the gifts of the Holy Spirit ... But when we moved on to the ’80s, I see there is a new trend ... Charismatic Movement that was infiltrating the Malaysian churches ... the many so-called phenomena had taken the place of BHS. For example, slain in the Spirit, holy laughter, prayer walk, power encounter, spiritual warfare, spiritual mapping, and many others, even gold dust. And all these seemed to draw the attention of the churches to this so-called outstanding demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit, or the presence of the Holy Spirit. So I find that this trend had taken the place of the BHS.⁶

The survey analysis reveals a drastic decline in the practice of Spirit-baptism in AGM over the decades. 68 percent ministers rated ‘strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit’ during the 1957-1974 period, but this rating declined to 48 percent responses for 1975-2007 period, and further dropped to only 20 percent responses for 2008 to present.⁷ On the contrary, the rating for ‘medium emphasis on the Holy Spirit’ has increased from two percent of respondents for the first period, to 34 percent in second period, and uphill to

⁵ Interview with Rev. Dr Chan N.C. Words in bracket added for clarification purpose.

⁶ Interview with Rev. Teh.

⁷ This statistic is from 65 ministers who filled up the rating for all three periods. This statement does not include the more junior ministers and BCM full-time students who could only rate for the present. Survey, 2017.

51 percent in present period. 12 percent of respondents rated ‘little emphasis on the Holy Spirit’ in present time.⁸

The waning eschatological fervour in missions as Pentecostals embraced the evangelical hermeneutics on ‘the last days’ outside the dispensational tradition, and with the limitation of classical view on BHS primarily as empowerment for missions and glossolalia as the initial physical evidence of BHS has resulted in a theological gap. This vacuum impacted Pentecostals including AGM to accommodate the infiltration of the external theological influences, global movements, and other theological motivation for missions.⁹ This may prove that the failure of a proactive theological reformulation results in the theological vacuum, allowing other influences to easily come in.

While evangelicals have influenced AGM in solid Christian theology and strong emphasis on the Word, the Charismatic and Third Wave brought about the contemporary worship, emphases on ‘power encounter’, signs and demonstration of the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, ‘strategic level spiritual warfare’, ‘awaken’ the church to transform the nation and so on. In this process, there has been a broadening in Christian biblical-theological aspects and the widening of the spectrum of pneumatology within AGM over the decades. To a certain extent, there are some valid enculturation and responses to the teachings, emphases, and practices of subsequent waves of Spirit renewals as they widely infiltrate global Christianity as the new move of the Holy Spirit.

The direct implication of the blending of external theological influences over the decades discussed in Stage 2 is AGM becoming mixed in emphases and practices.¹⁰ This is not just happening to AGM, but among Pentecostal, Charismatic, Spirit-filled

⁸ Survey: SV-C4d.

⁹ See discussion in chapter five, section 5.3.1 Theological Motivation in Missions, 5.3.1.1 New Hermeneutical Development on Eschatology, and 5.3.1.2 Limitation of Classical View on BHS and Glossolalia.

¹⁰ See discussion in chapter five, section 5.2.2 Blending of External Theological Influences.

denominations¹¹ and independent churches alike in an ecumenical development. All AGM churches subscribe to AGUSA's SFT but the blending of various theological influences and practices has resulted in different levels of emphasis on Pentecostal distinctives. For clarity, AGM's individual churches are by no means having individual theologies.

Furthermore, over time, AGM ministers especially the pioneers like Ronald and Jasmine Ooi, who have been serving the Lord ever since the formative period in the '70s are seeing the need for revival in the present times due to the sense of stagnancy, prosperity gospel seeping in, diversified attention on building projects and institutionalisation in the midst of development, the declining emphases on the Pentecostal fervour, and for the second-generation to truly experiencing God personally.¹² The logic implies that a revival would also restore BHS and the zeal for missions. However in the movement's quest for revival, Ng's view that may represent some ministers, disagrees with the Third and Fourth Waves' revivalist movement with extra-biblical teachings and overemphasis on the spirit world. He argues:

We cast out demons in Jesus' Name (from people possessed by them). To go into levels of demons, and 'territorial spirits' and to conduct 'warfare' there is just nonsense. There is a 'spiritual war' up there – God's angels vs. Satan's angels. We can't go in there directly. What we can do is to fast, pray, resist the devil, be a light/witness, do good, speak for God. That we can do. Go into a 'dark' area and 'shine' there – by prayerful, humble good work. Stop shouting into the air to bind demons or engage in a shouting match with them ... Well, times of revival comes and goes (all through history). Has Peter Wagner's third wave and fourth wave resulted in any global revival or even widespread revival? – The global condition is worsening in moral and spiritual terms ... My paradigm is more Wesley's – he preached, fasted, prayed. And he and his team did enormous good works practically. Changed England ... The apostle Paul preached and collected an offering for the poor.¹³

¹¹ As mentioned in chapter one, section 1.6.3, some people in mainline denominations attracted to Spirit renewals in the mid-1970s were from the Anglican, Methodist, Lutheran, Brethren, and Roman Catholic Church, who joined the Renewal Fellowship Council. However, not all mainline denominations were open to the Charismatic Movement. By late 1980s and 1990s, more denominations begin to accept Spirit renewals within their denominations although still with some reservations and oppositions. Most of them have separate Spirit-filled services. Independent churches started mushrooming in Malaysia in 1990s.

¹² Interviews with Rev. Ronald and Rev. Jasmine Ooi, 27 April 2017. See chapter four, section 4.1.2.2 Complexities in Changing Nature, and chapter five, section 5.4 Sociocultural Factors.

¹³ Follow-up text with Rev. Ng. Classical Pentecostal's theological roots can be traced back to Wesleyan-Holiness Movement.

There has been a shift in focus from preaching the gospel and doing good works, to ‘strategic-level spiritual warfare’ for revival in present times.

This is a primary concern of most veteran AGM ministers, especially the pioneers and senior pastors who came from the classical formative period. They have been in AGM from the early years, they can identify that newer theologies, emphases, and practices differ much from the earlier classical Pentecostal theology, distinctives, and ethos. Overtime, there is an increasing gap between the espoused classical Pentecostal theology and what is actually believed and practised.

6.2.2 Global Theologians Seeing the Drifts

Positioning AGM’s local context in a global context of Pentecostalism, studies done by Pentecostals scholars, historians, and theologians are consistent with their critique on seeing the drifts and mutations in classical Pentecostalism.

The external theological influences and practices of Neo-Charismatic Third Wave actually erodes classical Pentecostal core beliefs and distinctiveness. Synan argued that Third Wave movement bypasses the distinctives of BHS and glossolalia, but strongly emphasises on the spiritual gifts. Synan highlighted that the Third Wave pioneer, Wagner himself did not even identify himself as Pentecostal or charismatic,¹⁴ but he started the ‘New Apostolic Church’ or NAR movement. David Barrett (1927-2011) clarified that Third Wavers’ claim on being Spirit-filled is theologically different from the classical Pentecostal’s distinctive beliefs of BHS and glossolalia.¹⁵ Synan remarked, ‘Only time

¹⁴ Vinson Synan, ‘Streams of Renewal at the End of the Century’, in Synan, ed., *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 359-60. Cited C. Peter Wagner, *The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit: Encountering the Power of Signs and Wonders Today* (Ann Arbor, 1988), pp. 13, 15, 18-9, 54. Wagner stated, ‘I see myself as neither a charismatic nor a Pentecostal.’ Though Spirit-filled and advocated signs and wonders, Wagner clarified, ‘I myself have several theological differences with Pentecostals and charismatics, which don’t mar any kind of mutual ministry, but keep me from saying I’m a charismatic.’ The 1980s was to him as a time of opening for ‘straightline evangelicals and other Christians to the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that the Pentecostals and charismatics have experienced but without becoming charismatic or Pentecostal.’

¹⁵ David Barrett, ‘The Worldwide Holy Spirit Renewal’, in Synan, ed., *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, p. 396. Third Wavers claim, ‘[B]ecoming filled with the Spirit, or empowered or energised by the Spirit and

will tell if Wagner's attempt to bypass the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the Pentecostal emphasis on tongues as an essential part of the experience will change the direction of the World Pentecostal movement.'¹⁶

The boundaries and distinctions have been blurred and the beliefs and practices blended for many years among Pentecostal, Charismatic, and other Spirit-filled denominations. The crossing-over and blending has been more intense over the last three decades, especially from 1990s to present, that it is difficult to differentiate a Pentecostal from a charismatic or a third waver. These global movements from first to third waves have been so mixed that Barrett made a generic classification of Pentecostals/charismatics represent the whole third wave phenomenon,¹⁷ permeating global Christianity, and where all the three waves are but 'one cohesive movement' hitting the same beach, with the total of living believers in all renewals (affiliated or unaffiliated) of 618.9 million in 2000.¹⁸ In a positive way, there has been much blending and lesser differences in global Christianity among the Spirit-baptised or Spirit-filled.

I agree with the Pentecostal theologians and scholars who see that these external theologies and practices are shifting the Pentecostal doctrinal emphases and distinctiveness. Chan sees the traditional Pentecostalism as a movement of power and emphasis on the BHS as empowerment for service has shifted to 'praise and worship', 'power encounters' and 'power theology', fruit of the 'third wave' influence.¹⁹ The Third Wave leans toward theology of glory, over-realised eschatology of the 'already' more than 'not yet'. The results are 'the gospels of "signs and wonders", prosperity, positive

experiencing the Spirit's supernatural and miraculous ministry (though usually without recognizing a baptism in the Spirit separate from conversion), who exercise gifts of the Spirit (with much less emphasis on tongues, as optional or even absent or unnecessary), and emphasize signs and wonders, supernatural miracles and power encounters, who leave their mainline nonpentecostal denominations but also do not identify themselves as either Pentecostals or charismatics.'

¹⁶ Synan, 'Streams of Renewal', p. 378.

¹⁷ Barrett, 'The Worldwide Holy Spirit Renewal', p. 383.

¹⁸ Barrett, 'A Chronology of Renewal in the Holy Spirit', in Synan, ed., *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, p. 450.

¹⁹ Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, pp. 48-9.

confession, and the fixation on extraordinary phenomena (gold dust, visions of angels, etc.).'²⁰ Third Wave has a completely different theology and practice from classical Pentecostal where BHS and glossolalia are the most distinguishing mark of AGM and Pentecostals. Lederly's study reveals that the Third Wave or 'Signs and Wonders movement' employ spiritual power for evangelism and power healing in empowering the saints or every member ministry. They underplay the importance of tongues and deny initial evidence, and deny glossolalia's direct link to BHS.²¹

W. Ma looks at the Third Wave as 'a further evolution of the two earlier movements which emphasized the Holy Spirit and the contemporary manifestations of the Spirit.'²² In his observation of an individual deliverance session by missionary anthropologist Charles Kraft, while in Fuller Seminary, Ma points out certain controversial and problematic biblical and theological issues of the Third Wave's 'lower-level power encounter'. He commends some lessons Pentecostals can learn from Kraft in terms of pastoral concern, strategies of deliverance ministry, and insights into the spiritual world particularly demonology and angelology. However, Ma critiques Kraft and the Third Wavers' strategic pragmatism in constructing theology based more on observations of human life and settings rather than the Bible. Their spiritual triumphalism poses troubling theological concerns which undermines God's sovereignty, especially in strategic spiritual warfare with their pan-demonic orientation, theories lacking in biblical foundation, controversy on demonization, and questionable practices like 'getting information from demons'. More problematic is the incorporation of non-biblical

²⁰ Chan, 'Pentecostalism at the Crossroads', in Synan and Yong, eds., *Global Renewal Christianity* (2016), pp. 384-6.

²¹ Henry I. Lederle, 'Initial Evidence and the Charismatic Movement', in McGee, ed., *Initial Evidence*, pp. 137-8.

²² Wonsuk Ma, 'A "First Waver" Looks at the "Third Wave": A Pentecostal Reflection on Charles Kraft's Power Encounter Terminology', *Pneuma* 19, 1 (1997), p. 189, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/157007497X00127>, accessed 15 Jan. 2022.

concepts by Third Wavers in ‘inner-healing’ ministry, such as ‘Inner Child’, ‘Canceling’ of ‘Intergeneration Curse’, etc.²³ which found lucrative reception in Asia.

In fact, in spite of the controversy, some AGM churches are already embracing this spiritual dimension of ‘lower-level power encounter’ and practising this ‘inner-healing’ and deliverance ministry. R. Chin shares about his wife’s ‘power encounter’ ministry:

She [Rev. L. Chin] does a lot of counselling ministry, inner-healing and deliverance ministry. She flows better in the spiritual gifts than me at least in the prophetic gifts, the revelation gifts, like the word of knowledge, word of wisdom, discerning of spirits and all that. It [exercising of spiritual gifts] adds a very powerful dimension in counselling, because people don’t even know the root cause of that problem. And sometimes, it’s just a word from the Lord that breaks open the whole situation and goes beyond the superficial and gets right into the roots. I remember her telling me that in some cases where the Lord revealed way back to the person’s childhood, even what happened and things like that.²⁴

A BCM student informed me that his church is currently starting this ‘inner-healing’ ministry as the leadership senses that the people need to have holistic Christian life and ought to focus on the spiritual and emotional aspects as well.²⁵ Careful attention is most needed in healing and deliverance ministry to discern the biblical and non-biblical aspects, and to be founded in Scripture and balanced Christian theology.

MacArthur Jr, evangelical scholar argues that many charismatic spiritual experiences and Third Wave beliefs and methodology are unfounded in Scripture. Some main issues analysed are as follows: Wagner rejects the labels ‘charismatic’ and ‘Pentecostal’ due to having different theology and terminology.²⁶ Third Waves’ credo and evangelistic strategy of ‘power encounter’ and ‘power evangelism’, mainly signs and wonders, and miraculous phenomena undermines the gospel message with overemphasis on Holy Spirit power.²⁷ In contrary to MacArthur’s view, I see that often times, in the

²³ W. Ma, ‘A “First Waver” Looks at the “Third Wave”’, pp. 189-206.

²⁴ Interview with Rev. Ronnie and Lisa Chin.

²⁵ BCM small group session, 22 February 2022.

²⁶ John MacArthur, Jr, *Charismatic Chaos* (Grand Rapids, 1992), p. 145. Cited Wagner, *The Third Wave*, pp. 13, 15, 18-9, 54. He claims that many of the miraculous testimonies in Wimber’s and Wagner’s accounts are anonymous and with sketchy details. Third Wave also has the thirst for new revelation undermining the Scripture’s sufficiency. Jack Deere, Wimber’s assistant, stated, ‘we must be able to hear His voice both in the written word and in the Word freshly spoken from heaven’ is extra-biblical experiences.

²⁷ MacArthur, Jr., *Charismatic Chaos*, pp. 128-51, 145. He also states that Third Wave’s ‘inner healing, visualization, feelings of warmth and electricity – those things are the vocabulary of New Age and occult practices and as such have nothing to do with biblical Christianity.’ This book was presented by current

majority world, it is the manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit in healing, miracles, and deliverance from demonic spirits that accompanies and validates the gospel message. Evangelistic healing rallies are common among Pentecostals and charismatics, and have been effective in winning souls into God's kingdom. The full gospel message must be preached. I agree with Hwa Yung on the effectiveness in bearing the gospel in the dimension of reality of the supernatural, spirit world, 'principalities and powers' in the Two-Thirds World. He asserts, 'For, if our worldviews miss out on some dimension of reality, we will fail to bring the gospel to bear on that aspect of reality. The extent to which we fail to do so, is the extent to which the gospel will fail to be truly liberating.'²⁸

In a global Pentecostal perspective and towards Christian unity, George P. Wood of AGUSA offers a Pentecostal response to MacArthur's cessationist view and negative critique of the Charismatic Movement as mostly 'ill-founded'. Wood claims that the AG is 'part of the Charismatic Movement' being 'the largest denomination within the Charismatic Movement'.²⁹ In the Philippines context, Timenia sees the Third Wave's revivalist spirituality which spreads globally from Toronto Blessings in 1994 with signs and wonders as continual works of the Holy Spirit in Spirit-empowerment though having different theologies. As a Classical Pentecostal, she uses an inclusive term by classifying the Neo-Charismatic Movement or revivalist movement as 'Third Wave Pentecostalism'.³⁰

Central District Superintendent Rev. Pak and his wife to BCM Library in 1992. BCM Library WLCS system record. MacArthur, Jr., Evangelical Bible expositor, has written a concise study and analysis on the doctrinal differences between these waves based on Scripture. See Wagner, *The Third Wave* and Wimber, *Power Evangelism*, Jack Deere, 'God's Power for Today's Church' (tape 1), Nashville, Belmont Church, n.d.

²⁸ Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas?* p. 60.

²⁹ Assemblies of God (USA) Official Website, George P. Wood, 'Strange Fire, Strange Truth, Strange Love: John MacArthur offers a highly negative assessment of the Charismatic Movement in his new book, *Strange Fire*. George Paul Wood offers a Pentecostal response.' <https://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/issues/2014/spring-2014/strange-fire-strange-truth-strange-love>, accessed 7 September 2021.

³⁰ Lora Angeline Embudo Timenia, *Third Wave Pentecostalism in the Philippines: Understanding Toronto Blessing Revivalism's Signs and Wonders Theology in the Philippines* (Baguio, 2020). She traces the history and offers a Pentecostal response to some controversial issues in the Philippines influenced by Toronto

Both Third Wavers and Pentecostal scholars view that the ‘church’ is at the crossroads though in different ways. NAR leader, Jacobs writes, ‘The church is at a crossroads – we are in a place of comfort and complacency while the Enemy is making progress – and God is calling His church to a radical change.’³¹ Although many Pentecostals globally embrace the Charismatic and Third Wave influences, Pentecostal scholars view that AGUSA and Pentecostalism has come to the ‘crossroads’ in losing the Pentecostal distinctiveness with the influx of external theological influences. Poloma in her empirical study in 1989 describes the Assemblies of God at the crossroads as it stands in the tension between charisma and institutionalisation in the midst of modernity and being one of the fastest growing denominations in America. Evangelicalisation and institutionalisation quenches the ‘fire of charisma’ and Pentecostal distinctiveness. The classical Pentecostal movement has drifted much from the Pentecostal distinctives and practices with the influences of evangelicalism, Neo-Pentecostals among evangelical circle, and Charismatics, as well as routinisation of charisma.³²

In a more global view, Chan evaluates the modern Pentecostal and charismatic phenomenon and finds stark differing views as well as rapid mutation process with charismatisation and Third Wave influences, in the midst of modernisation, secularisation, church growth to megachurches, and so on. Overtime, classical Pentecostal churches are becoming more Charismatics, forgoing liturgical and biblical norms, and focus on self and personal experience, resulting in rapid mutation of Pentecostalism. Third Wave promotes higher authority of ‘apostles’ appointed through council of apostles with new ‘revelations’ and reliance on ‘*rhema word*’. Besides, charismatic worship has eroded Pentecostals’ ‘confession of sin, intercession, and

Blessing’s revivalist spirituality. Revivalism’s theologies includes deliverance, somatic displays, making animal sounds, spiritual warfare, inner-healing, demonology, and glory manifestation.

³¹ Jacobs, *Reformation Manifesto*, inner cover page.

³² Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, pp. 141-3.

testimonies’, and shifted to ‘praise’ with theology of glory, lacking in trinitarian and soteriological aspects. The issue of prophecy is alarming as it is loosely practised by self-styled prophets and received without question. Besides, Third Wave believes in ‘territorial spirits’, and tends to trivialise the gospel with ‘strategic practices’. All these processes have brought ‘Pentecostalism at the crossroads’. Which would be the way forward and what would the future hold?³³

In a biblical-theological Pentecostal response, Onyinah critiques the Charismatic theology on spiritual warfare and the worldwide contemporary spiritual warfare movement. Although it has brought more focus on vibrant prayer, faith, strategic prayers for unevangelised areas, awareness of sins and demonic attachments, Pentecostals raise certain theological concerns. He observes, ‘From the 1990s onwards, the focus of demonology intensified to a full-blown theology of spiritual warfare.’³⁴ He critiques their ‘overt attention paid to the devil, the sovereignty of God, the cause of misfortunes, and the place of suffering.’ Onyinah addresses the ‘ground-level warfare’, ‘strategic-level warfare’, ‘witchdemonology’, and offers ‘a biblical Pentecostal theology of spiritual warfare’ against Christological backdrop, focusing on ‘Christ and the kingdom’, ‘Satan’s method is the mind’, and ‘Christ is the victory of believers’.³⁵

I view that it is paramount to have a balanced Christian theology and practice. Charismatics and Third Wavers tend to overemphasize on spiritual warfare. All in all, I fully agree with W. Ma who provides a forward direction in recognition of these differences of Spirit renewals. In his recent presentation on ‘Today’s Pentecostal Christianity (and Its Theological Education for Tomorrow)’ in the APTA online

³³ Simon Chan, ‘Pentecostalism at the Crossroads’, in Vinson Synan and Amos Yong, eds., *Global Renewal Christianity, vol. 1: Asia and Oceania* [Kindle edition] (Lake Mary, 2015), pp. 379-92.

³⁴ Opoku Onyinah, ‘Spiritual Warfare: The Cosmic Conflict between Good and Evil’, in Wolfgang Vondey, ed., *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, Routledge Handbooks in Theology [VitalSource Bookshelf version] (Abingdon, 2020), pp. 321-2.

³⁵ Onyinah, ‘Spiritual Warfare’, in Vondey, ed., *Pentecostal Theology*, pp. 322-9.

gathering, Ma suggests for theological education or ‘TE that serves the broader Spirit-filled families.’ He differentiates the ‘First’, ‘Second’, and ‘Third’ families in their levels of ‘Pentecostal’ theological education: The classical Pentecostals have the ‘most experiences, educational infrastructure, resources, and influence (but the smallest).’ The Charismatics have ‘less theological education infrastructure for Pentecostal articulation’. The Neo-Charismatic, Third-Wave, Post-denominational, and independent being the most pragmatic and chaotic, are ‘less organized, extremely pragmatic, and yet fastest growing (and the largest segment)!’ Ma suggests that the ‘Second’ and ‘Third’ families can benefit from the ‘First’ family in terms of theological foundation and education that ‘serves broader Spirit-filled families.’ On the other hand, Pentecostal believers need to actively serve and lead in public entities, engaging in every sector of society.³⁶ I echo W. Ma’s heart for increased constructive ‘inter-Waval’ theological dialogues among the Pentecostals, charismatics and the Third Wavers from the common ground of ‘the belief and experience in the supernatural work of God.’ Ma challenges:

The Third Wave movement may trigger a strong reminder that the Pentecostal movement has a unique mandate to bring the immanent presence and working of the Holy Spirit into the life of individuals, churches, and missionary activities ... Pentecostals need to hear God’s strong reminder through the Third Wave’s ministry that the powerful working of the Holy Spirit continues today. Let those who have ears hear.³⁷

Pentecostals are to be effective Spirit-empowered witnesses to Christ. Likewise, BCM as AGM national Bible College ought to enhance its significant role in providing Pentecostal theological education in Malaysia and this region.

I view that despite the Third Wave pioneers were neither Pentecostals or charismatics, and their theologies, strategies, and methods have been quite controversial since 1980s in the Western world, their theologies, mandates, and strategies in spiritual

³⁶ Wonsuk Ma, ‘Today’s Pentecostal Christianity (and Its Theological Education for Tomorrow)’, Oral Roberts University, 2020 Asia-Pacific Theological Association online gathering, 8 September 2020, <https://alphacrucis.zoom.us/j/98541086533>, APTA20200908-WM.

³⁷ W. Ma, ‘A “First Waver” Looks at the “Third Wave”’, pp. 205-6. See 6.2.2 Global Theologians Seeing the Drifts.

warfare have somewhat gained much popularity globally. They are well-received by many charismatics, Pentecostals, and Spirit-filled believers in the majority world due to the belief in the realities of the spirit world, the demonic spirits, ‘territorial spirits’, and stronghold of the devil that affects the natural world. In fact, these Spirit renewal influences have become part of the contextualised Pentecostalism in Malaysia.

Macchia observed in global Pentecostalism the paradigm shift in the degree of eschatological fervour to focusing on divine healing and aspects of worship, underscoring that the emphasis on signs and wonders and the general work of the Spirit had somehow hindered the vision for social transformation and social ministries.³⁸ So, the focus on missions resulted from the experience of being Spirit-filled has shifted to other works of the Spirit. This has resulted in the weakening of missionary fervour and churches becoming less outward-looking. In W. Ma’s theologising the contextualised Asian (Classical) Pentecostal impacted by Asian cultural-religious and politico-economic conditions, he enlightens, ‘Asian classical Pentecostalism is not so “classical”, that is, it does not always reflect the early Pentecostal beliefs and practices faithfully.’³⁹

The reality of the spirit world in the Malaysian context compels Charismatics, Pentecostals, and Spirit-filled Christians to emphasise on spiritual warfare amidst national crises. I view that since AGM and BCM are already established six decades long and there is increasing diversity in theologies, emphases, and practice within the movement (and the nation), it would be good for ministers to have dialogues about the diverse theological issues and differences as the movement seems no longer distinct from other Spirit-filled churches. There is a need to recalibrate and to find a good balance between Christian theology particularly Pentecostal theology and the newer teachings along with

³⁸ Macchia, ‘The Struggle for Global Witness’, p. 23. Eschatological fervour is the early Pentecostal’s urgency to evangelize the world before Jesus’ return.

³⁹ W. Ma, ‘Asian (Classical) Pentecostal Theology in Context’, in Anderson and Tang, eds., *Asian and Pentecostal*, p. 60.

the pressing need for revival and transformation of the nation. Indeed, the Spirit of God is above the power of demons and is the emancipation for churches and believers through a contextualised Pentecostalism in Malaysia.

6.2.3 Autonomy in AGM Fellowship

There is one consideration that this research is not meant to generalise the AGM movement as each AG church in the fellowship is autonomous, some are more Pentecostal, some very charismatic, and some more quiet when it comes to practising the distinctives and spiritual gifts. Interviews confirm that although subscribing to the SFT, there is no longer homogeneity like the formative period and every church is different in conviction, emphases, and practice.⁴⁰ Although AGM leadership officially includes teachings and practices from Third Wave influences, AGM churches are autonomous on their theological emphases, while subscribing to AGM's espoused classical Pentecostal theology. Some churches and ministers are more traditionalists in beliefs and practices, some are more progressive, always updating with new developments, while others may be more evangelical and some place lesser emphasis on Pentecostal distinctives in practice. As S. Ng suggests that it is a matter of conviction and seminary training.⁴¹ The fact that not all AGM churches are the same, I will be 'painting with a broad brush' in this theological reflection on the emphases and practice of Pentecostal distinctives in the movement.

6.2.4 Ecumenical Diversity, Pragmatism, and Relevance

The theoretical explanations of ecumenical diversity, pragmatism, and relevance are critical to understand the theological development of the contextualised Pentecostalism.

⁴⁰ Interviews with Rev. Ng and Rev. Dr S. Ng; collective interview data: SC-49; TI-46.

⁴¹ Interview with Rev. Dr S. Ng.

These are the distinctive nature and characteristics of the contextualised Pentecostalism in Malaysia.

The Third Wave's focus on 'transforming nations' is influencing Pentecostals and filling the vacuum as the latter shifted focus from end times to present. These theoretical themes set in as the Pentecostal's waning eschatological fervour has shifted its theological motivation in missions from focusing on apocalyptic vision to relevance to society.⁴²

In the efforts of ecumenism, AGM has been exposed to a diversity of external theological influences. The 'evangelical turn' leads ministers to be shy about emphasising gifts of the Spirit. On the other hand, present day Pentecostals' restrictive view of Spirit-baptism in its links to missional focus is gradually neglected with the widening spectrum of ministerial needs of church members, and the broadening of the theology of the Spirit within AGM under the influences of newer waves of Spirit renewals. Chan N.C. views AGM's broadening perspective of the work of the Holy Spirit and Spirit-baptism over the decades is mainly due to diversified focus, the Charismatic influence, and alternative views which has blurred AGM's Pentecostal distinctives.⁴³ Teh observes a lack of emphasis on Spirit-baptism, speaking in tongues, praying in tongues, and worshipping in tongues in churches today due to many other modern trends and emphases, namely church growth, marketplace ministry, worship, prayers.⁴⁴

⁴² See chapter five, section 5.3.1 Theological Motivation in Missions; 5.3.1.1 New Hermeneutical Development on Eschatology; and 5.3.1.2 Limitation of Classical View on BHS and Glossolalia.

⁴³ Interview with Rev. Dr Chan N.C. He views, 'I think in the early stages, the divisional lines between denominations were much stronger, therefore the Pentecostal preachers would definitely preach a lot more on the BHS in the early years before the 1980s ... because there was a stronger Pentecostal distinctive ... and therefore the emphasis was more on fulfilling the Great Commission and for Pentecostal, the key to fulfilling the Great Commission is BHS, the power of the Holy Spirit. I think there is very much less emphasis right now, on the BHS ... Right now, we are exposed to a much broader perspective of the work of the Holy Spirit, which is not merely the BHS, and also a broader perspective of the Great Commission which is not just witnessing, but a wider range of stuff, such as holistic mission, people, new challenges, holistic Christian life, family life, Christians in the marketplace and everything else of what it means to be a human being. And therefore, less specific focus on the BHS. Another observation that I made is this, much exposure to the Charismatic Movement and the alternative views about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I think in many Pentecostal churches, they are a little bit confused.'

⁴⁴ Interview with Rev. Teh. She states, 'BHS is one of our main Tenets of Faith. Churches still teach about it, but in practice, I'm afraid not many churches are actively or aggressively teaching and practising it, nor encouraging people to seek and be filled by the Holy Spirit. I find that there are many other things that

The emphasis on church growth and expansion led to pragmatism to adopt any working plan regardless of theological considerations. Then the growth came with this challenge. Interviews inform that churches are adapting other successful models and thriving examples of ‘doing church’.⁴⁵ Many ministers have also voiced their concern on the diverse emphases during the movement growth period to present, thus lack of emphases on the Pentecostal distinctives.⁴⁶ Ho observes that AGM churches in general have not grown much in recent decade as there is more dependency on modern technologies, contemporary style of worship, and certain neglect of the foundation upon which AGM has been built – its emphasis and dependence on the Holy Spirit and the supernatural.⁴⁷ There has been a change in spirituality, dynamism, and practice over the periods as churches are drawn to new strategies and methodologies on various aspects including conferences, seminars, and Third Wave’s prayer strategies for revival to transform the nation.

Besides ecumenical diversity and pragmatism, seeking relevance has shifted AGM’s emphases and practices mainly to the prayer movement and modernisation. In focusing on the present, church services are also gradually becoming more seeker-friendly in contemporary times. Yeoh comments on churches nowadays accommodate

cropped in throughout the decades. There are many other attractions, emphases that bombarded the AG movement. For example, there are great emphases on church growth, marketplace ministry, worship, prayers, all these are good, no doubt about it, I have nothing against some of these emphases, but I’m only afraid that some of this so-called modern trends tend to take over the place of the BHS, whereby it’s no longer the main emphasis of our AG churches today. As I travelled to different AG churches to preach, I find some of their worship services don’t even emphasise on praying in tongues, speaking in tongues, or worship in tongues anymore. Hence, the joke, “The evangelical churches are even more charismatic than the Pentecostal churches.”

⁴⁵ Collective interview data: TE-20, TI-38.

⁴⁶ Collective interview data: CD-74, CD-75, CD-78, CD-79, CD-81.

⁴⁷ Interview with Rev. Ho. He shares, ‘Many of our AG churches for the sake of being contemporary, sometimes have neglected ... the supernatural ... We used to be one of the fastest growing denominations ... our Superintendent also encourages us to emphasise on the works of the Holy Spirit, BHS, ... The EXCO knows and has seen by facts that many of our churches have lacked or slacked in this area. We are becoming more dependent on the present ‘technologies’, present style of worship, and I think this is not wrong ... but we have started to build other foundations and neglecting the main foundation where our AG began.’

to non-Christians who come to the church and making them feel comfortable not having the gospel pushed down their throat. He reflects:

We [churches] became unknowingly seeker-friendly. And I think that kind of robbed us from consciously and unconsciously from exercising the gifts of the Spirit especially speaking in tongues from the pulpit, or in the congregation. Very subtle. It started drying the older group of people, more educated people. I think somehow, somewhere along the line, we kind of pulled back on our Pentecostal distinctives and practices.⁴⁸

EXCO members also comment that the postmodern world and sociological impact in current generation pressurise contemporary churches to be seeker-sensitive. However, attempting to be relevant to the congregation, visitors, current and younger generation, by the cutting down on the supernatural and spontaneity of the Spirit⁴⁹ has consequences: the stifling the Pentecostal distinctives, the decline in Pentecostal fervour, and members being less exposed to Pentecostal spirituality. Relatively, the Third Wave influences are more focused on ‘power encounter’, spiritual gifts, spiritual warfare, Christians impacting the arenas of society and nation, but lacking in emphasis on preaching the gospel. The increasing theological tensions and gaps as well as underlying theologies are discussed in the following sections.

6.3 Ecumenical Diversity: Hybridisation of External Theological Influences

AGM’s changing nature⁵⁰ and paradigm shifts during the latter part of movement growth period from mid-1980s have been influenced by the influx of global trends and movements in an ecumenical diversity. The hybridisation of external theological influences, mainly evangelicalism, Charismatic, Third Wave and most recent the INC creating divergence impacting AGM’s emphases and practices of Pentecostal distinctives to a certain extent. At the surface level, there are valid enculturation and valid responses due to the commonality of BHS, spiritual gifts and the supernatural. There is a blending

⁴⁸ Interview with Rev. Benjamin Yeoh, 26 April 2017. Word in bracket added for clarification purpose.

⁴⁹ Collective interview data: CA-19, CA-47, TC-29.

⁵⁰ See chapter five, section 5.2.2.3 Contemporary Blends of Global Culture. Collective interview data: TE-1; TE-2; TE-16; TE-17; TE-31.

and crossover among the Pentecostals, Charismatics, and Spirit-filled churches and believers accepting one another's teachings and practices. The standard is not truth but divergence as AGM learns from different traditions, particularly the solid biblical-theological teachings of evangelicalism and the broader pneumatology from the Charismatics.

The current ongoing factor of the infiltration of Third Wave influence is AGM's role in the united prayer movement. There is a common ground for the need of revival and the spiritual worldview of majority world ushers the acceptance of the Third Wave teachings on 'mandate' to transform the nation through 'strategic-level spiritual warfare', prophetic prayer intercession, and prayer movement. The problem is not the aspiration but the methods. A deeper look into the theological roots, theology, and ethos, reveals vast distinctions. The Third Wave Neo-Charismatic and the current Fourth Wave of NAR from various continents have different theologies and practices from classical Pentecostal theology. As some Malaysian churches including AGM have rather mixed influences from these subsequent Spirit renewals, it is crucial to examine the major differences of these external theologies and practices infiltrating AGM and why many Malaysian Spirit-filled Christians are drawn to the newer teachings.

6.3.1 Evangelicalism

Anderson records that AGUSA has moved toward evangelicalism which has a global impact on AG worldwide, AGM included.⁵¹ Evangelicalism in the AG context means particularly in institutionalisation, accepting training from non-Pentecostal seminaries,

⁵¹ The evangelicalisation of Pentecostals has been going apace since AGUSA joined the National Association of Evangelicals (founded in 1942) in 1948. AGM's national leadership began in 1974, and continued with the classical Pentecostal theology, beliefs, preaching, teaching, and emphases mainly from the direct influence of the AGUSA. Thomas Zimmerman (1912-1991), General Superintendent from 1959 to 1985 with his emphases on church growth and identification with Evangelicalism, as Anderson records, 'Zimmerman ... longest serving general superintendent ... stressed church growth, identification with evangelicalism and presided over AG's transition to a middle American popular denomination.' Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 54.

using more evangelical scholarship, and mellowing down on the Pentecostal distinctives. The theological scope is this: evangelicals and Pentecostals share the same core Christian theology, united by the Apostles' Creed and the Holy Spirit, even though denominations have certain distinctions in doctrines, sacramental and eschatological views. Pentecostals are different mainly because of their strong emphasis on pneumatology. AGUSA's identification with evangelicalism had direct impact on AGM, who also became well established in the evangelical circle as AGM joined the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) and Guneratnam became a committee member in 1985.⁵² Since 1980s, AGM has moved toward evangelicalism in interdenominational fellowship, increasing exposure to evangelical scholarship especially in theological training of ministers, and by late 2000s accepting ministers trained from non-Pentecostal seminaries, and the crossing-over of Christians from non-Pentecostal background to AG churches.

Ecumenism has led to AGM embracing wider evangelicals, which has led to a dilution of AGM's pneumatology in practice. As AGM draws closer to general evangelicals, they lose their distinctive focus on the Spirit. Surveys show that some AGM ministers are concerned over the influence from the evangelical which dampens the practice of Pentecostal distinctives for both BHS and tongues as its initial physical evidence. There are rejections on the need of speaking in tongues,⁵³ or only for private,⁵⁴ some downplaying tongues due to certain evangelicals' cessationist views.⁵⁵ Teh states, 'Evangelicals question our Pentecostal view on the BHS because it is only based on Luke-Acts, in particular to speaking in tongue as the initial physical evidence of being filled

⁵² Tan Sri Guneratnam served as committee member in NECF (1985-1987), Vice-Chairman (1998-1990, 1992-1994), and Chairman (1994-2006). Rev. Ng, second President of BCM served as NECF council member (2004-2016). AGM's second General Superintendent, Rev. Dr Leoh (2000-2008), and current third General Superintendent, Rev. Ong (2008-present) continues to emphasise on church planting and church growth, as well as maintaining strong affiliation with Evangelicalism. Rev. Ong serves in NECF since 2016 and is the current Vice-Chairman of NECF.

⁵³ Survey: SV-92-C4e.

⁵⁴ Survey: SV-81-C4e.

⁵⁵ Survey: SV-65-C4e.

with the Holy Spirit. They interpreted being filled with the Holy Spirit as salvation-initiation, not as empowerment for service.⁵⁶

As discussed earlier, since AGM grew and stabilised in the early years and gradually accepted to be part of the interdenominational network in the church growth period in the 1980s, there has been good relationships with other denominations. This interdenominational engagement is ecumenical. BCM also later joined the NECF on 4 December 1989, and became one of the founding members of the Malaysian Association of Theological Schools where there is good networking with evangelical seminaries. Pioneers informed that there was improved acceptance level from mainline churches and the relationships became more diplomatic and less judgmental, and discussions were mostly non-theological and practical. This lifted AGM's reputation with mutual respect in public and interdenominational meetings. Inadvertently, AGM has gradually mellowed down and not expressing much Pentecostal values and practices when in public.⁵⁷ This is a dilemma: fellowshiping with other denominations is good, but it comes with challenges and requiring discernment.

AGM's increasing exposure to evangelical scholarship views provides many good and solid biblical scholarship but lacks emphasis on Holy Spirit. The use of new delivery methods in BCM, such as using more evangelical textbooks, and having adjunct faculty who are non-Pentecostals with strong emphasis on the Word and lacking focus on the Spirit has caused gradual shift in the spiritual atmosphere of AGM churches in the 1990s. Furthermore, the fact that evangelical theologians debate BHS, glossolalia, and eschatology, means that Pentecostal churches are emphasising it less as they do not want to get caught up in controversies. As the result, some Pentecostal churches became more typically 'evangelical'. A consequential factor in the theological training of ministers is

⁵⁶ Survey: SV-6-C4e.

⁵⁷ Collective interview data: CA-4, CA-5, CA-25, CA-44; TE-16. See chapter five, section 5.4.3.2 Interdenominational Relationship.

the decreasing use of scholarly books from a Pentecostal perspective and focus on the topics of Pentecostalism and the Holy Spirit. The initial theology of the AGM was inherited from the early missionaries. Earlier reference books were those written by Pentecostal scholars and theologians such as Nelson,⁵⁸ William,⁵⁹ Horton,⁶⁰ Pearlman,⁶¹ and Gee.⁶² By mid-1970s, the default systematic textbook was by the dispensationalist but non-Pentecostal, Thiessen.⁶³ Gradually, BCM switched to books from evangelical scholars for classes on Systematic Theology – authors such as theologians Erickson and Bloesch among others. AGM has learnt and benefited much from evangelicalism especially the AG ministers from 1980s to present are mainly trained using evangelical scholarships.

In addition to ecumenism, pastoral training plays a role. Interview data reveals that since 2000, AGM started accepting pastors who were trained by non-Pentecostal seminaries, and they also downplayed the role of the Spirit.⁶⁴ There is a need for ‘reeducation’. As AGM is a fellowship and member churches are autonomous, the level of emphasis depends on the pastor, the leader, and the full-time students.⁶⁵ Alongside ecumenism, Christians who are not Pentecostals come to AGM churches, and their more restrained behaviour dilutes everyone else’s. As a result, there is decline in practice of Pentecostal distinctives and lack of emphasis on Pentecostal heritage.⁶⁶

In the wider context, the AGUSA’s decisions and positions also directly affected the AG movement worldwide. This had consequences on the practice of Pentecostal

⁵⁸ Nelson, *Bible Doctrines*; Nelson, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*.

⁵⁹ Williams, *Systematic Theology*.

⁶⁰ Horton, *Book of Acts*.

⁶¹ Myer Pearlman, *Let’s Meet the Holy Spirit* (Springfield, MO, 1935); Pearlman, *Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible*.

⁶² Gee’s writings include: *Pentecost; A New Discovery; The Fruit of the Spirit; The Pentecostal Movement; Concerning Spiritual Gifts; Upon All Flesh; All With One Accord; Fruitful or Barren?; Spiritual Gifts*. See chapter one fn. 18.

⁶³ Henry C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, rev. edn (Grand Rapids, 1979).

⁶⁴ Collective interview data: TI-54, TI-58; TE-6.

⁶⁵ Collective interview data: TI-46.

⁶⁶ Collective interview data: TI-35, TI-36, TI-57.

distinctives. Poloma in her study on AGUSA finds that AG's acceptance by the evangelicals was at the expense of compromising the beliefs and practices of Pentecostal distinctives.⁶⁷ Cartledge's study on AG Australia highlighted, 'Fifty years later the mention of such practices as "personal prophecy", or "apostolic ministry", is often consigned to the theological dustbin as being "Latter Rain"!'⁶⁸ The consequences of AG's rejection and cutting off relations with the Latter Rain churches resulted in AG's realignment to be evangelical and moving towards the other end of spiritual spectrum of formality in church services, adopting evangelical programmes, and having ministers and Bible college staff trained at evangelical seminaries. This has accelerated AGUSA moving towards sophistication and declining in Pentecostalism, both Pentecostal values and manifestations. The Spirit-baptised members of AGUSA declined drastically.⁶⁹

Synan recorded:

Many Pentecostal scholars, historians, and theologians felt that the Pentecostals paid a steep price by becoming so close to the mainline evangelicals. In order to gain acceptance, they charged, the Pentecostals changed their original theological base to include many features that were not native to the Pentecostal theological culture and tradition. As a result, there was a slow decline in the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit in many Pentecostal churches ...⁷⁰

In the same way, AGM having close relations with AGUSA, their more conservative position and moving closer towards evangelicalism has directly impacted AGM. After three decades of evangelicalism resulting in the dampening of Pentecostal fervour, Ong asks, 'Is AGM 'evangelical Pentecostal or Pentecostal evangelical? ... Since God has given us the BHS, we should be confident and not refrain from practising and sharing our

⁶⁷ Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads*, p. 242. She states, 'The marriage between evangelicalism – and even a more conservative fundamentalism – with the Assemblies of God is not without great cost to charisma. The Assemblies of God was accepted not because of its distinctively charismatic and experiential theology but in spite of it ... the leaders of the Assemblies of God have downplayed distinctively Pentecostal beliefs and practices in order to be accepted by the evangelical world. While the strategy may be institutionally sound, it tends to be lethal to charisma.'

⁶⁸ A resolution disapproving the doctrines of the New Order of the Latter Rain was adopted by AGUSA in 1949, <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/Endtime-Revival---Spirit-Led-and-Spirit-Controlled>, accessed 6 April 2020. See document's p. 2, fn. 2.

⁶⁹ Cartledge, *Apostolic Revolution*, pp. 48-52.

⁷⁰ Synan, 'Streams of Renewal', pp. 350-1.

God-given Pentecostal distinctives even among other denominations and non-Pentecostals.⁷¹ The leadership stresses that it is crucial for AGM to uphold its Pentecostal identity and not lose its Pentecostal distinctives within the evangelical family.

I agree with Ong that too much evangelicalism can dampen the Pentecostal fervour and in fact Pentecostals have the theology of the Holy Spirit and rich spiritual experiences to offer the evangelical family. In fact, Pentecostals ought to be bold to share the spiritual dimension of Pentecostal spirituality with the larger Body of Christ.

6.3.2 Charismatic

Charismatic Movement is the Second Wave of Spirit renewals among non-Pentecostals churches. Generally, Charismatics emphasise spiritual gifts, body, and demonology. AGM pioneers and senior ministers' expressed their primary concerns about the Charismatic influence: The erosion of the main classical emphasis of the purpose of BHS as empowerment for missions; the different interpretation of speaking in tongues as just one of the spiritual gifts and not initial physical evidence of BHS and only for private use; and although enabling an expressive spiritual experience in worship, the Charismatic worship or contemporary worship somewhat erodes the rich Christian theology and trinitarian doctrines contained in liturgy and hymns, and its inclination toward a more self-centred worship. However, as the worship music 'industry' develops over the decades with increasing awareness on the importance of sound theology in the lyrics, more contemporary worship artists have been focusing on God-centredness with fuller theological and gospel content in their compositions which are used for congregational singing in contemporary church.⁷²

⁷¹ Interview with Rev. Ong; collective interview data: TI-49.

⁷² For example, Chris Tomlin, Matt Redman, Phil Wickham, Keith and Kristyn Getty, Stuart Townend, Shane and Shane, Selah, among many others.

Ong relates that there is a broad distinction between Pentecostals and Charismatics. The distinctiveness of classical Pentecostalism is the gospel, witnessing and missions, with the spiritual gifts as demonstration of power to accompany and confirm the gospel. Many Charismatics confine the practice of spiritual gifts within the church and ministering to believers and for their spiritual growth, thus more ingrown.⁷³ Chan N.C. shares his concerns over the theological and missional drift in Spirit-baptism. The Charismatic influence has affected AGM's Pentecostal distinctives.⁷⁴ He observes that there have been lots of cross-hybridisation among the Pentecostals, non-Pentecostals, and Charismatics that the lines are no longer distinct.

Many in churches cannot tell the differences and there has been a decline in the emphasis on BHS (preaching and altar call for BHS, tarrying meetings, praying for BHS) generally as compared to the pioneering years to mid-1980s. The Charismatic's theology, practices and emphasis on Spirit-filled, anointing, touched by the Holy Spirit, and speaking in tongues, are different from Pentecostal's BHS and its purpose, although they may use similar terminology. Also, there is theological diversity among Charismatics. For AGM, BHS is empowerment of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of missions.⁷⁵

Secondly, AGM ministers claim that the Charismatic influence brings about the erosion of the distinctiveness of glossolalia as the initial physical evidence of BHS, which is the distinguishing mark of classical Pentecostalism and AGM. Charismatics believe in

⁷³ Interview with Rev. Ong; collective interview data: TE-21; TE-3.

⁷⁴ Interview with Rev. Dr Chan N.C. He remarks, 'I think many Pentecostal churches are a little bit confused because of much blending of Pentecostal and Charismatic influences. They mix the Charismatic perspective on the spiritual gifts, all of us know that it is very much more expanded beyond the so-called nine gifts that the Pentecostals refer to in Corinthians. We merge that with Pentecostal distinctives without understanding the philosophical or assumptions behind the different interpretations. Okay, now I'm not in disagreement with a lot of the perspectives that the charismatics bring in but what I'm concerned about our next generation pastors is that they may not clearly understand the certain distinctives, and perspectives, and assumptions that provide the basis for the Charismatic Movement against the Pentecostal. When I say against, I say in contrast to the Pentecostal movement. The Charismatic Movement is essentially a movement in the '50s that emphasises very much on church renewal. Whereas our Pentecostal root, the emphasis was the Great Commission and Missions. And so therefore, the theological foundations and the presuppositions behind it are different and generally, many pastors and many churches today, they do not understand the difference.'

⁷⁵ Interview with Rev. Dr Chan N.C.

BHS but speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift or for private only.⁷⁶ There is different interpretation and understanding of 1 Corinthians passage on speaking in tongues among Charismatics from mainline evangelical background, that it is a spiritual gift and for private use. Many churches prefer to speak in intelligible language, some members question the need for speaking in tongues,⁷⁷ and some refrain from speaking in tongues in public worship.⁷⁸ Pioneers and senior pastors see glossolalia as initial evidence of BHS being a distinctive under threat as Charismatics see tongue as a spiritual gift.⁷⁹

The dispute on tongues as initial evidence of BHS has been long debated in biblical scholarship and topic of contention even since early Pentecostalism.⁸⁰ Glossolalia becomes an issue when AGM has influx of members from other denominations and charismatic churches, and ministers trained in non-Pentecostal seminaries as they have different biblical interpretations and convictions.⁸¹ S. Ng remarks, ‘Some pastors doubt the importance of BHS and speaking in tongues, and accept Charismatic beliefs ... The leadership is aware of the dangers of the movement slipping away from our heritage.’⁸² There has been an abandonment of glossolalia to a considerable extent among the current generation who are generally sceptical, scientific-minded, secular-minded, and lack interest in the supernatural. There is a sense of embarrassment about speaking in tongues. Churches at large which are more seeker-sensitive have cut back on the supernatural and

⁷⁶ Collective interview data: TE-4, TE-21.

⁷⁷ Collective interview data: TI-51.

⁷⁸ Collective interview data: TI-40.

⁷⁹ Interviews with Rev. Dr S. Ng and Rev. Wong Y.M.; Surveys: SV-13-C4e; SV-21-C4e; SV-17-C4e; SV-C4e. As analysed in Stage 1, glossolalia is the most questioned by the current generation in the surveys, particularly on its necessity, purpose, relevance, effectiveness, disputes between Pauline interpretation by Evangelicals and Charismatics, and Pentecostal’s Luke-Acts normative interpretation, a sign or gift, public or private use, confusing for unbelievers, not for everyone, no evidence of fruit of the Spirit in the person, scientific explanation, rationalisation, cessation, and so on.

⁸⁰ See chapter three, section 3.2 Glossolalia.

⁸¹ Collective interview data: TI-58, TI-51, TI-40.

⁸² Interview with Rev. Dr S. Ng.

spontaneity of the Spirit. They become overly concerned about the audience's response rather than believing in the power of the Holy Spirit to work in people's lives.⁸³

Barrett recorded, Charismatic has different theology and practices compared to classical Pentecostals. Charismatics emphasises on BHS and all spiritual gifts, Pauline's sense of *charismata*, signs and wonders, extraordinary powers, and speaking in tongues is optional.⁸⁴ According to Hamon, Charismatic Movement is the combination of beliefs and practices from Pentecostal and the 'Latter Rain Movement' which he considered as 'truth'.⁸⁵ Hamon claims that the fivefold ministries have been restored in church history: the evangelist in 1950s (deliverance evangelism), the pastor in 1960s (charismatic renewal), the teacher in 1970s (faith teaching movement), the prophet in 1980s (prophetic movement) and the apostle in 1990s (apostolic movement), and he represents the renewal of 'prophets, prophetic ministry and warfare praise'.⁸⁶

As I compare the Pentecostal and Charismatic beliefs, emphases, and practices, I agree that there are differences. However, in the Malaysian context, there has been much blending over the decades. The differences may be more distinct in the early formative period when AGM was planting churches extensively, but from mid-1980s onward, the boundaries gradually fade with much crossing over both sides. W. Ma reviews that Asian Pentecostals are different from the early classical Pentecostals where the 'ultimate

⁸³ Collective interview data: TI-42, TI-43.

⁸⁴ Barrett, 'The Worldwide Holy Spirit Renewal', pp. 395-6. Classical Pentecostals (in the case of AGM) believe in postconversion spiritual experience of BHS, tongues as 'initial evidence' of BHS, supernatural gifts, ability to prophesy, divine healing through prayer, glossolalia and interpretation of tongues, 'singing in tongues, singing in the Spirit, dancing in the Spirit, praying with upraised hands, dreams, visions, discernments of spirits, words of wisdom, words of knowledge, emphasis on miracles, power encounters, exorcism (casting out demons)', 'deliverances, signs, and wonders' and proclaim the full gospel of Christ as Savior, Holy Spirit Baptizer, Healer, and Returning King.

⁸⁵ Hamon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement*, p. 42. See chapter three, fn. 104. The early classical Pentecostal's 'Latter Rain Movement' was based on their distinct hermeneutics yet fundamentally from Joel 2 on 'The Latter Rain' doctrine. That was different from this newer 'Latter Rain Movement' or 'New Order of the Latter Rain' movement which emerged in the 1940s and catalytic for the Charismatic Movement in the 1960s.

⁸⁶ Hamon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement*, pp. 45, 50.

purpose of the Spirit's coming: empowerment for witness (Acts 1:8)' is no longer the main thrust. He states:

Perhaps with the influence of Charismatic theology (often less, or even non-missionary, but with a renewal emphasis on individuals and churches) in the later part of the previous century, Asian Pentecostals have a more self-centred, blessing-oriented theological outlook than the true classical Pentecostals. Of course, the new Asian context contributed to this theological orientation. However the trend obviously betrays the very purpose of the Spirit's work among God's people to make a self-giving missionary people.⁸⁷

On the other hand, I view that Charismatic influence provides some spiritual value to AGM especially the strong focus on the Holy Spirit, supernatural, spiritual gifts, and prayer. The Charismatic's strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit brings a balance to AGM's decreasing emphasis due to evangelicalism for more than 30 years. There is also the broadening of pneumatological understanding, particularly on the spectrum of spiritual gifts and Pauline teachings on the Holy Spirit instead of classical Pentecostal's limited focus on Luke-Acts. Although BHS as empowerment for missions may not be primary as compared to AGM's pioneering period, charismatic churches in Malaysia generally still engage in missions. Perhaps the crossing over between Pentecostals and Charismatics has resulted in mutual influences. But now, both sides are rather similar. I see that there are mutual valid enculturation and responses particularly when both are sharing common networks of certain high-profile international guest speakers and conferences.

6.3.3 Charismatic Worship or Contemporary Worship

One of the most influential elements of the Charismatic Movement is the strong charismatic worship or contemporary worship styles mainly from Australia, UK, USA, and etc., which has impacted AGM's emphasis, style, and global worship trends, which has both positive and negative impact. Although it brings a sense of intimacy with God and there is a unison in global worship style, contemporary worship has effectually shifted

⁸⁷ W. Ma, 'Asian (Classical) Pentecostal Theology in Context', in Anderson and Tang, eds., *Asian and Pentecostal*, pp. 78-9.

worshippers from God-focused to self focused and self-expression, resulting in dilution of theological content. The global contemporary worship styles has been impacting AGM especially the young generation since the church growth period until present.⁸⁸

Some AGM ministers have raised concerns on some major setbacks of contemporary worship culture and charismatic worship style. Firstly, contemporary worship songs can be rather ‘me’-centred instead of ‘God’-centred and lack theological content.⁸⁹ Secondly, contemporary music may also lack in the richness of theology as compared to the classical hymns which earlier pioneers used to sing. Thirdly, contemporary worship trends if adopted with strong emphases on the music top charts, popularity of music albums, musical grooves and technicality, worship bands, and styles of worship, may result in the lack of focus on awe and reverence and true worship unto God. Ong and Wong Y.M. commented that an area of lack in contemporary worship may be some song lyrics being more self-focused from self-expressions and content may lack balanced and fuller theology as compared to classical hymns.⁹⁰

I agree with the good side of charismatic worship that brings forth an encounter and intimate relationship with God as Thomas Smail (1928-2012) claimed it enables the worshipper to enter into the ‘immediacy, intimacy, freedom and joy in the near presence of God’ which the Holy Spirit brings.⁹¹ Smail described the spontaneous singing in tongues as ‘singing in the Spirit’.⁹² When the Pentecostal or charismatic congregation

⁸⁸ Collective interview data: TC-10, TC-11. Billboard.com, ‘Year-End Charts Top Christian Artists’, 2019, <https://www.billboard.com/charts/year-end/top-christian-artists>, accessed 20 July 2020. The latest contemporary worship artists and bands in the top charts are Bethel music, Jesus Culture, Elevation Worship that encourages Worship Experience, Casting Crowns, Lauren Daigle, for King & Country, Kanye West, MercyMe, Skillet, Hillsong United, Hillsong Worship, and etc. Charismatic and contemporary worship culture in its business marketing aspects has become an industry.

⁸⁹ Collective interview data: TC-10, TC-11, TC-12, TI-52.

⁹⁰ Interviews with Rev. Ong and Rev. Wong Y.M.

⁹¹ Smail, Walker and Wright, *Charismatic Renewal*, pp. 109-10.

⁹² Smail, Walker, and Wright, *Charismatic Renewal*, pp. 109-10. Smail described, ‘Singing in the Spirit by-passes the rational faculties; it reminds us that alongside the praise of the renewed mind there is the praise of the renewed heart that, when it is being evoked by the Spirit, expresses not simply our superficial feelings, but engages the deep primal emotions at the hidden centre of our being in our self-offering to the living God. Such praise is direct, spontaneous and simple. It escapes from a complicated conceptuality and a second-hand dependence on such liturgical resources as prayer-books and hymn-books, and responds in

worships in spirit and in truth, there is anointing and power of the Holy Spirit that brings healing, joy, peace, restoration, and intimacy in the tangible presence of God. Asamoah-Gyadu affirms that the ‘pneumatic Christianity’ recovers true worship ‘for encountering a living God who truly inhabits the praise of his people.’⁹³ Ward describes the contemporary worship songs are ‘means to a personal encounter with God’ and intimacy with God is expressed and experienced, therefore singing the songs in ‘a time of worship’ is central to the charismatic worship theology and practice ‘as the mass is for Catholics and sermons for the Protestants.’⁹⁴

The valid enculturation and blending of the global worship styles is creating a sense of oneness in global Christianity. There is also a strong blend among Pentecostals, Charismatics and the evangelicals, and a stronger sense of ecumenism. Ingalls relates global worship to music ‘brands’ by artists and bands, and western worship songs with the characteristics of pop/power ballads usually used for the ‘worshipful (spiritual, personal, centripetal) atmosphere’.⁹⁵

On the other hand, contemporary churches moving away from Christian traditions, liturgies, and lectionaries, in their freedom of worship and expression, if not careful, may face the danger of being imbalanced in their church services and selection of worship songs and preaching of the Word, lacking emphasis on the Trinity, Christology, the gospel and Christian doctrines. This criticism has been almost from the beginning of the movement when the so-called ‘gospel songs’ replaced traditional hymns in Pentecostal worship which may trace back to the 19th century holiness camp meetings. I concur with

immediacy and freedom to the contact with the living Lord that the Spirit makes possible and, in joyous serenity, rejoices in and meditates upon his poured-out grace and his revealed glory.’

⁹³ Johnson Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context* (Oxford, 2013), p. 33.

⁹⁴ Pete Ward, *Selling Worship: How What We Sing Has Changed the Church* (Milton Keynes, 2008), p. 199.

⁹⁵ Monique M. Ingalls, ‘Local Praise, Global Worship: The Role of Music in Localizing Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity Worldwide’, Baylor University, presentation in Parallel Session 5, GloPent Conference 2020, University of Birmingham, 31 October 2020, <https://bham-ac-uk.zoom.us/j/81178379960>, GPC20201031-S5.

scholars like Ruth, Smail, Percy, Ward, and Evans who also argued on these setbacks. A study done by Ruth on the trinitarian content in contemporary Christian worship repertoire from Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) discovers that most songs omit a trinitarian dimension and theological contemplation on the triune God.⁹⁶ The main criteria of popular contemporary worship songs is determined by, ‘Whether a song truly expresses the heart seems a higher concern than doctrinal content.’⁹⁷ Ruth finds the contemporary worship songs displace ‘Jesus Christ as mediator between humans and God the Father’ as the central focus of worship is the ‘exalted, divine Christ’, and the primary end is worshipping the Son through the music.⁹⁸ Similarly, Smail observed that Charismatics have ‘often switched the emphasis from the Son to the Spirit as the sovereign source of renewal, power and spiritual gifts and fruit.’⁹⁹

AGM used to sing hymns in the pioneering period, later also followed the contemporary worship styles from the 1980s to present, but in recent years, there is a comeback to some modern hymns made popular by worship artists, which provide a richer theological content which the older generation prefers. Percy finds that some songs tend to be dualistic in nature, not *didactic* in helping people to learn theology like Wesley’s hymns, but ‘*existential* – to help people experience God in new ways.’¹⁰⁰ Evan

⁹⁶ Lester Ruth, ‘*Lex Amandi, Lex Orandi*: The Trinity in the Most-Used Contemporary Christian Worship Songs’, in Bryan D. Spinks, ed., *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer: Trinity, Christology, and Liturgical Theology* (Collegeville, 2008), pp. 343, 351, 353, 534. *Lex Amandi, Lex Orandi* means the law of love determines the rule of praying. Ruth states, ‘The composers frequently describe worship as authentically singing to God from one’s heart to express true affection directly to God; they often use a cluster of related terms to emphasize the affective dimension of worship. Terms like relationship, closeness, intimacy, and the immediacy of divine presence are common. Composers who write songs that express their heart and create a sense of closeness with God do not see a need for the Trinity.’

⁹⁷ Ruth, ‘*Lex Amandi, Lex Orandi*’, p. 353.

⁹⁸ Ruth, ‘*Lex Amandi, Lex Orandi*’, p. 354.

⁹⁹ Thomas Allan Smail, *The Forgotten Father: Rediscovering the Heart of the Christian Gospel* (Carlisle, 1996), pp. 19-20.

¹⁰⁰ Martyn Percy, *Words, Wonders and Power: Understanding Contemporary Christian Fundamentalism and Revivalism* (London, 1996), pp. 63-4. Dualistic means contrasting light/dark, captivity/freedom, worldly woes/bliss of heaven, God’s presence/absence, healing/sickness, filling/emptiness, and the structures of the song is monotonous and self-indulgent, with ‘I’, ‘me’, ‘we’, ‘us’.

states that other times, charismatic worship can be a performance practice, and in some, it has become ‘a purely experiential, feel-good focal point for the soul.’¹⁰¹

Ultimately, I advocate a balanced Christian theology in worship and agree with the AGUSA position that true worship focuses on the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Worship is primarily praising and glorify God, ‘recognizing God for who He is and what He does’ and secondarily about the worshippers. This is in contrast to the imbalanced theology and focus in certain charismatic and contemporary worship.¹⁰² The challenge is how to ‘sell’ this to the newer generation whose attention span is extremely short, visually oriented, and gravitate to simplistic and punchline presentations. Ultimately, as Evans states, ‘If the Church is to remain authentic in their worship, Christians will need to remember this [God looks at the heart (1 Sam. 16-7)], and be constantly seeking to shape their own hearts into a heart of worship.’¹⁰³

6.3.4 Third Wave (NAR and INC)

From 1980s, Third Wave¹⁰⁴ influences has blended into AGM’s leadership initiatives through conferences and healing rallies with international speakers. In more recent decades, AGM has been very open to Third Wave’s ‘apostolic’ and ‘prophetic’ ministries, fivefold ministry, signs and wonders, miracles, healings, and embraces them in view of the strong manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts. This is evident

¹⁰¹ Mark Evans, *Open up the Doors: Music in the Modern Church*, Studies in Popular Music (London, 2006), p. 169.

¹⁰² AGUSA, ‘Worship in the Bible’, Position Paper, 13 August 2008, <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/Worship-in-the-Bible>, accessed 6 April 2020.

¹⁰³ Evans, *Open up the Doors*, p. 169.

¹⁰⁴ Barrett, ‘A Chronology of Renewal’, p. 438; and Barrett, ‘The Worldwide Holy Spirit Renewal’, p. 382. Third Wave started in 40 major evangelical churches, ‘emphasizing power evangelism, power encounters, power healing, et al.’ ‘Third Wave has reached 295 million neo-charismatics, biggest among the three waves in 2000.’ See C. Peter Wagner, *Apostles and Prophets: The Foundation of the Church* (Ventura, 2000), pp. 108, 133. It is also known as the Neo-Charismatic Renewal, and started by the Vineyard movement led by John Wimber, Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Anaheim, California and the prophetic movement by ‘Kansas City Prophets’, with close association from 1988, where the prophetic era began. The prophets under Mike Bickle of Kansas City Fellowship were Bob Jones, Paul Cain, John Paul Jackson, Jim Goll and many others.

in the ‘power conference’, ‘power encounter’ rallies, ‘releasing the anointing for the supernatural’, ‘impartation of faith and power’, ‘breakthrough seminars’, and so on, organised by AGM national leadership.¹⁰⁵

Unraveling the underlying theologies, historically, AGUSA and classical Pentecostals view the Latter Rain movement being one of the catalysts of the Charismatic Movement. Third Wave has morphed from it. In 1948, emerged the Latter Rain Movement or the ‘New Order of the Latter Rain’ movement.¹⁰⁶ AGUSA viewed it as aberrant and adopted a resolution disapproving its doctrines in 1949,¹⁰⁷ and AGUSA moved towards evangelicalism. Barrett recorded that this ‘hyper-faith movement’ became catalytic in the emergence of Charismatic Movement in 1965.¹⁰⁸ Synan detailed the uneasy relationship between the mainstream (e.g. Catholic) Charismatic namely Hank Hanegraaff and Ole Anthony, and this extreme group of ‘hyper-faith’, now ‘Word of Faith’ movement, on the materialism and flaunting ‘airplanes, fancy cars, and expensive mansions’. However, the poor masses need salvation and deliverance, believing Jesus is the answer. Synan observed, ‘The prosperity gospel is indeed a very attractive message to the poor.’¹⁰⁹ This hyper-charismatic traits and practices are revived by restorationists

¹⁰⁵ Besides Pentecostal conferences, Tan Sri Guneratnam and subsequently Rev. Dr Leoh have been very open to organising huge conferences and seminars by international speakers namely Rev. Cartledge, Rev. Blessings, Bishop Heward-Mills, and Pastor Yoder from the Third Wave. Details of conferences have been discussed in chapter five (Stage 2), section 5.2.2.3 Contemporary Blends of Global Culture. The primary data on Third Wave influences in AGM are gathered mostly from archival materials in recent decades as they contain more details on the theology and ethos.

¹⁰⁶As mentioned earlier, in other strands of Pentecostalism, the concept of ‘latter rain’ took on different directions, like the aberrant the ‘Latter Rain’ movement. See chapter three fn. 104. Burgess, McGee and Alexander, eds., *DPCM*, s.v. ‘Latter Rain Movement’, pp. 532-4; and Hamon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement*, p. 129. They believe and practice the restoration of ‘apostles’ and ‘prophets’, and the practice of ‘prophetic presbytery’, the prophecy and laying on of hands, spiritual gifts could be revealed and activated within believers (based on 1 Tim. 4:14; 1:18) and personal prophecy.

¹⁰⁷ AGUSA, General Presbytery of the Assemblies of God, ‘Endtime Revival – Spirit-led and Spirit Controlled’, Position Paper, 11 August 2000, <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/Endtime-Revival---Spirit-Led-and-Spirit-Controlled>, accessed 6 April 2020. Presently, this document is not listed on position paper webpage but the pdf is available on the website. ‘Endtime Revival–Spirit-Led and Spirit-Controlled A Response Paper to Resolution 16’, This statement was adopted by the General Presbytery of the Assemblies of God on August 11, 2000, EndtimeRevival.pdf, see document’s p. 2, fn. 2, <https://ag.org>, accessed 7 September 2021.

¹⁰⁸ Barrett, ‘A Chronology of Renewal’, p. 431.

¹⁰⁹ Synan, *Eyewitness*, pp. 119, 113-26.

in the Third Wave in 1980s and has morphed into Wagner's NAR movement,¹¹⁰ also known as the 'Second Apostolic Age' especially from 2001, as Wagner defined.¹¹¹

AGM has been influenced by the apostolic and prophetic movement of the Third Wave in relation to the NAR movement¹¹² which some scholars like Samuels, term as the 'Fourth Wave' of the Holy Spirit,¹¹³ especially those emerging after Wagner. The most prominent influence in contemporary times is the prayer movement in Malaysia since 2010 which will be discussed later.

Despite it being a morphing of the Latter Rain Movement, the Third Wave (NAR and INC) is the largest influence that has permeated and changed the landscape of global Christianity affecting around 600 million Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Spirit-filled Christians. Barrett identified Assemblies of God along with Methodist and Baptist and other African, Asian, and Latin American congregations, as 'doubly counted First/Second/Third Wavers', as 'all these congregations exhibit charismatic and pentecostal phenomena.'¹¹⁴ This shows that the influences of Spirit renewals in the last century have become quite mixed globally.

In the diverse revivalist movements and Spirit renewals, some Charismatic and Third Wave's theology and practices differ from classical Pentecostal's and certain teachings deviate from the core beliefs of AGUSA and biblical truths.¹¹⁵ Pentecostal

¹¹⁰ Wagner, *Apostles and Prophets*, pp. 79-82, 108-9, 113-4; Hamon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement*, pp. 42, 45, 50.

¹¹¹ Jacobs, *Reformation Manifesto*, p. 9. Foreward by Wagner.

¹¹² Synan, 'Streams of Renewal', p. 539. 'Third Wave of the Holy Spirit' was coined by Wagner, professor of church growth and School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary, USA.

¹¹³ Peter Samuels, 'Future Trends of the New Apostolic Reformation in the Post-Covid-19 World', Birmingham City University, presentation in Parallel Session 4, GloPent Conference 2020, University of Birmingham, 31 October 2020, <https://bham-ac-uk.zoom.us/j/87239142518>, GPC20201031-S4.

¹¹⁴ Barrett, 'The Worldwide Holy Spirit Renewal', pp. 400-9. Most of those who are Spirit-filled from non-Pentecostal churches in the charismatic renewal within mainline non-Pentecostal denominations, are classified as Neo-Pentecostals to differentiate from the classical Pentecostal, especially in the Charismatic Movement from 1950s-1990s. Most of the Spirit-filled believers in the Neo-Charismatics (Third Wavers, independents, post-denominationalists, neo-apostolics, networks) from 1960s-1990s are nonglossolalic, and they do not identify themselves with 'pentecostal' or 'charismatic', though classified by outsiders as 'quasicharismatics', and has spread to 225 countries.

¹¹⁵ See AGUSA, 'Endtime Revival-Spirit-Led and Spirit-Controlled A Response Paper to Resolution 16', *EndtimeRevival.pdf*, <https://ag.org>, accessed 7 September 2021. Specific 'deviant teachings disapproved'

theologians and scholars have argued on the drifts in Pentecostalism. Thus, the influx of these influences has caused theological tensions and mixed responses within AGM as it has been evangelicalised for decades. This prompts a real need for AGM to take stock on the hybridisation of these external influences, to address the theological differences, and to bridge the gap in order to move forward as a Pentecostal movement in the Malaysian context. The first port of call to counter this challenge will be theological education, both in the college and General Council. AGM's effort is crucial to mitigate the influence and restore the founding vision.

6.3.5 United Prayer and Interdenominational Relationships

In ecumenical diversity, one of the most current factors of the influx of Charismatic and Third Wave influences in contemporary AGM is the rise of prayer for national revival through united prayer and intercession among some Malaysian churches, and AGPC being the driving force of AGM's prayer movement 'mandate' since 2014. In a strong interdenominational relationship, AGM plays a vital part in steering the prayer movement and organising revival prayer rallies through AGPC and this has been one of the strongest contemporary emphases.

The Third Wave and INC influence has been permeating charismatic churches in Malaysia, NECF, Prayer United (PU), and AGM since 1980s and more intensely from 2010s to present particularly with the NAR manifesto, teachings, and practices in prayer movement, prophetic prayer conferences, revival prayer rallies, solemn assemblies, and 'strategic level spiritual warfare'.¹¹⁶ The underlying NAR theology has been introduced

include: 'The overemphasis on identifying, bestowing, or imparting spiritual gifts by the laying on of hands and naming, supposedly by prophecy, specific gifts; The problematic teaching that present-day offices of apostles and prophets should govern church ministry at all levels; The practice of imparting or imposing personal leadings by means of gifts of utterance; Wrestling and distorting Scripture through interpretations that are in opposition to the primary meaning of biblical passages; Excessive fixation on Satan and demonic spirits.'

¹¹⁶ Jacobs, *The Reformation Manifesto*; Jacobs, *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy*; Jacobs, *Deliver Us from Evil*; Murphy, *The Handbook for Spiritual Warfare*; Wagner, ed., *Territorial Spirits*; Wagner and Pennoyer,

mainly through the prayer movement in Malaysia led by Suubi and Mulinde as the churches across denominations see the need for revival in Malaysia and the transformation of the nation.¹¹⁷

Apostle Suubi, from Kenya, exercising apostolic leadership over nations, makes a clarion call to Malaysian churches, advocating the answer to revival is spiritual warfare and intercession to stop God's judgement upon Malaysia. Since then, he has been exercising apostolic authority and leadership over the prayer movements in Malaysia and influencing the spiritual leaders in Malaysia. Over ten years now and ongoing, and he comes to Malaysia every year to conduct prayer conferences, prayer school, revival rallies, and solemn assemblies.¹¹⁸ Suubi has been the key preacher and prayer revivalist in Malaysia since early 2010s and initiating prayer movements in some churches in Malaysia.¹¹⁹

In April 2021, AGPC introduced to the field its partnership with Malaysia United Firewall (MUFW) with a new website and online platform launched for nationwide 24/7

Wrestling with Dark Angels. Suubi, The Unbeatable Prayer, Governmental Anointing including The Unbeatable Power in a 40 Day Fast.

¹¹⁷ 'About Ps Julius Suubi', biodata. Elder Khoo Kay Hup endorsed, 'FGA-KL has started her 24/7 watches now and it is ongoing with great fervency mainly because of Ps. Suubi's prayer school training he conducted for us. Now more than 400 [people] have signed up ... and everyday people are still signing up.' Suubi, moves in 'prophetic and apostolic mandate' has travelled to Malaysia and at least 25 nations teaching in large churches to bring about 'community transformation'. 'Ps Suubi believes that the future belongs to the intercessors and was instrumental in strategic birthing of the Canberra House of Prayer for All Nations in Australia's Capital in 2010.' 'Highway of Holiness Ministry International was founded by Apostle Julius Suubi in the year 2000. The lord spoke to him to raise up an army that will bring about the end time glory to cities, nations and continents. The ministry is setting the nations ablaze with the fire of intercessory prayers. Suubi is actually known as the Apostle of Prayers and God is taking him to nations for teaching, equipping and awakening the saints in the areas of intercessory and warfare.' <https://www.highwayofholinessintl.org/>, accessed 20 June 2020. Full Gospel Assembly (FGA) Kuala Lumpur, the largest charismatic church in Malaysia, is among the first to come under the mentoring of prayer revivalists, Suubi and Mulinde, to lead in prayer conferences and revival rallies since early 2010s. As FGA KL is also a member of the NECF, Apostle Suubi's influence has permeated some other Spirit-filled churches in NECF including churches in East Malaysia, and AGM. See section 6.5.1.5 on New Focus on Prayer for Revival. Malaysia has been going through some political turmoil, economic downturn, social issues, religious and racial tensions, and so on, and churches see the need for united prayers.

¹¹⁸ AGPC Revival Prayer Rally and Solemn Assembly with Apostle J. Suubi, 6-7 November 2020, Zoom, <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82487126770?pwd=cmYyK05pdFc0RlFXajVMWU1JaHN2QT09>, AGPC-RPR/SA2020110607. During the Covid-19 pandemic 2020-2021, he speaks at solemn assemblies and revival prayer rallies online from Africa.

¹¹⁹ AGM newsletter: AGPC, 'Prayer First, Revival Follows', 15 September 2013, AGM, *AG Connect*, Energise! Extend! 2013-2014, Issue 3/2013, p. 6, AC2013-3.

prayer initiatives with the theme ‘Arise and Build’ based on Nehemiah 2:18. This is a united prayer movement in the form of prayer discipleship and partnership of ‘prayer altars’.¹²⁰ This contemporary focus on prayer movement has fostered stronger 24/7 interdenominational united prayers for the nation and 24/7 praise and worship via Zoom and social media. MUFW is playing a coordinating role in establishing unceasing united national prayer and building a ‘firewall’ of prayer around cities, towns, states, and Malaysia with its vision from Zechariah 2:4-5, amidst the Covid-19 pandemic and national crises.¹²¹ The participating churches, prayer networks, some from overseas, are building up momentum and concerted effort of 24/7 prayer, praise and worship, throughout the nation. Believers see that the Holy Spirit is uniting the larger Body of Christ in building this ‘firewall’ of prayer and intercession. Within a brief timeframe, the 24/7 ‘firewall’ is formed in desperate times of Covid-19 pandemic and national crises, as churches and prayer networks earnestly join in heart and spirit to pray for Malaysia.¹²²

¹²⁰ Email from AGPC, 13 April 2021, introducing new website: <http://agpc.malaysiaunitedfirewall.com>. This ‘firewall’ is an interdenominational ‘national prayer altar’ and movement anchored by AGPC and SIB, together with a core team from various denominations and churches. The soft launched was held on 1 March 2021, led by Ps. Dr Lew Lee Choo of SIB and the core team. From 1 March to 17 May 2021, 359 Malaysian churches are represented by 2,840 registrations, 21 prayer networks, 105 pastors, and already reached 99% of 24/7 coverage. AGPC announcement during AGM 53rd Business General Meeting 2021, ‘For Such a Time as This – Esther 4:14’, 1 June 2021, <https://zoom.us/j/99241024653>.

¹²¹ The MUFW ‘firewall’ of 24/7 prayer has been launched since March 2021 and 24/7 praise and worship for 40 days from 30 May to 9 July 2021 themed ‘The Time of Your Visitation’, as the ‘kairos’ moment and means for God to answer the prayers of intercessors, to save the country and send revival. MUFW 24/7 ‘firewall’ encourages prayer of unison, prayer of one accord, partnership of prayer altars, and prayer covering for churches. Ps. Dr Lew shared the three points about the ‘Firewall’ where ‘Jesus is the commander in chief, the church coming together in one voice, and the foundation is consecration.’ MUFW Biblical references are Zech. 2:4-5; Neh. 3:1-32; Joel 3:16; Jos. 3:2-4; Lk. 5:36-39; 19:41-44; Rom. 8:6; 2 Chro. 30:23-31:1; Phil.1:27; and etc. The goal of 24/7 is yielded hearts, allowing the Holy Spirit to take over. See website: Malaysian United Firewall, www.malaysiaunitedfirewall.com, accessed 16 June 2021. The ‘Scriptural base for night-and-day prayer’ are Ps. 121; Lev. 6:12-13; Isa. 1:6-8; 56:7; 62:6-7; Lk. 18:7-8; Rev. 4:8-11; Lam. 2:18-19; Gen. 2:15; Jn. 17:12; Ezek. 22:30. Rev. C. Chan from AGPC forwarded Global Prayer Resource Network, ‘A Biblical Mandate for 24/7 Prayer’, <http://www.globalprn.com/wp-content/uploads/A-Biblical-Mandate-for-24-7-Prayer.pdf>, accessed 16 June 2021.

¹²² As AGPC-MUFW progresses in building the ‘united firewall’, there may be a need to bridge the gap to other non-Spirit-filled main line denominations with different theological positions and convictions. At this moment, participants are mostly from Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Spirit-filled churches. There is also a need to bridge the gap to those who have reservations about specific prayer strategies and methods in view of the mixed responses of ministers. Even though Pentecostals tend to emphasise on practical approaches to mobilise prayers, certain parties have some real concerns on theological issues of Third Wave and Fourth Wave influences (underlying theologies). I strongly believe that bridging the gap in a two-way communication and understanding can strengthen the unity in prayer for the nation. See chapter seven, section 7.4.3 on Bridging the Theological Gap.

Although united prayer movement for the nation has not originated from Pentecostal root,¹²³ it has become part of the contextualised Malaysian Pentecostalism due to the changes in the social-cultural and religious contexts of Malaysia. Intercessors nationwide are seeking God to heal the land and to send revival. So, while AGM concerns the theological drift, others may worry about a Pentecostal ‘invasion’.

6.4 Pragmatism: Sociocultural Influences

The second theoretical theme reasoning the Second and Third Wave of Spirit renewals are well accepted by AGM in different times and have much blended into the movement is pragmatism in sociocultural influences. Continuing the theme of ecumenism in a sense – AGM under national leadership has kept and enhanced international connections. There have been strong international relationships with leaders from global movements, as well as united interdenominational network with Malaysian churches under national Christian bodies, namely NECF, CCM, CFM, and independent churches. Besides, AGM amongst other Malaysian Churches are somewhat influenced by diversified emphases including the prosperity gospel from 1980s onward particularly during the church growth period due to social needs and changes in the midst of economic growth of the country.

6.4.1 International Relationships

An influential factor for the influx of external theologies of global movements is the close international network and relationships. Invitation of prominent international speakers to preach, teach, conduct conferences and rallies is a cultural practice of AGM and Malaysian megachurches. The General Superintendents of AGM national leadership have good relationships and influences in both international and national arenas.

¹²³ Synan, ‘Streams of Renewal at the End of the Century’, in Synan, ed., *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 359-60. Cited Wagner, *The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 13, 15, 18-9, 54. Wagner stated, ‘I see myself as neither a charismatic nor a Pentecostal.’

Guneratnam¹²⁴ and Ong¹²⁵ hold significant leadership roles in various institutions and organisations. These long significant relationships in the international and national levels since the very beginning of AGM's national leadership under Guneratnam in 1974 shows good mutual influences among movements and denominations, involving spiritual leaders from various global movements of the Second Wave and the Third Wave. AGM has established close relationships with evangelicals, Pentecostals, Charismatics, Cho (Pentecostal-charismatic and Third Wave), as well as Third Wave NAR leader from CGI (Wagner also served on directors board),¹²⁶ among many other leaders.

6.4.2 Social Needs in Economic Growth

The trend of prosperity gospel which penetrated global Pentecostalism as mentioned in chapter three, also influenced the Malaysian churches and Pentecostals in general. Ng observed that Cho brought a distinct change in the spirituality among Charismatics and Pentecostals with the prosperity aspect in 1980s.¹²⁷ However, the context of Korean Pentecostalism is different from Malaysian context.

¹²⁴ Church Growth International (CGI) – Regional Director for South East Asia 1976 to present; Founder of Asian Institute of Ministries (AIM) 1985; International Charismatic Consultation on World Evangelization (ICCOWE) – Executive Committee Member 1994-2007, Advisory Council Member 1993-1997; World Assemblies of God Relief Agency – Member, Board of Directors 2001-2006, International Chairman 1993-2000; World Assemblies of God Fellowship – Vice Chairman 2000-2011, Executive Committee Member 1989-2000; Pentecostal World Fellowship – Secretary of the Presidium 2001-2010, Presidium Member 1995-2000, Advisory Committee Member 1986-1995, Chairman 2011 to present; Global Christian Forum – Executive Member 2008 to present; Empowered 21 Global Council Member 2010 to present. At national level, he served as: National Evangelical Christian Fellowship of Malaysia (NECF) Chairman 1994-2006, Committee Member 1985-1987, Vice-Chairman 1998-1990, 1992-1994; Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) Chairman 2001-2005, Vice-Chairman 1995-1998, Honorary Secretary 1999-2000. And presently, This list is not exhaustive. 'A Tribute to Twenty Years of Leadership (1974-1994)', Book of Tribute in Appreciation of General Superintendent, Rev. Dr Prince Guneratnam for 20 years of Superintendency, The General Council Assemblies of God of Malaysia, 1994; Calvary Church (Assembly of God Kuala Lumpur), '30 Years of Faithful Service: Committed to His Call, Compelled by His Love', 2002; *Calvary Church 40th Anniversary* magazine (1968-2008).

¹²⁵ This list is not exhaustive. And presently, Rev. Ong serves in the World Assemblies of God Fellowship 1998 to present; Chairman 2011, World Assemblies of God Relief Agency 2014 to present; Advisory Council Member of Pentecostal World Fellowship 2013 to present; and at national level, he is serving in: NECF since 2016 and later Vice-Chairman to present.

¹²⁶ Mark R. Mullins, 'The Empire Strikes Back', in Karla O. Poewe, ed., *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, Studies in Comparative Religion (Columbia, 1994), p. 90.

¹²⁷ Interview with Rev. Ng. See Hamon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement*, pp. 132-3. In the 1970s, there is the rise in Faith message, prosperity, word teaching, propagated by Oral Roberts based 3 Jn. 1:2 on

Cho was a strong Pentecostal-Charismatic influence in Asia from 1970s.¹²⁸ Cho's influences was tremendous in Malaysia and AGM especially during the movement growth period from 1980s to 2000s, as churches were concentrating on church growth, leadership and management structure, prayer ministry, and ministerial growth. Besides the church growth strategies and cell group systems, Cho's influence of prosperity gospel and 'threefold blessings of salvation' with a strong 'Word of Faith' element was prevalent among Malaysian Christians along with the well-acceptance of the Second and Third Waves due to the social needs. The social desire for economic growth in the society welcomed the idea of Cho's teachings of 'soul prospering', 'prosperity in all things', 'a healthy life' from 3 John 2, word of faith, *rhema* word and so on.¹²⁹

In the original context, Korean Pentecostalism grew in the second half of twentieth century in a war-torn country that had been through the Japanese colonial rule, the Korean War (1950-53) and military dictatorship since May 16 coup d'état in 1961. In the post-Korean war context, the Koreans were suffering from devastation, loss of lives, belongings, rights, and freedom. They were living in hardships, national poverty, and suffered many illnesses, a seemingly 'hopeless context'. Cho's 'gospel of need' consisting of the fivefold gospel and threefold blessings of salvation became Korean Pentecostal's blessing theology that appealed to the poor and marginalised as they found hope, healing, and blessings of salvation for all aspects of their lives. The Protestant

seed faith principle of sowing and reaping finances; Robert Schueller on positive living and success principles; 'prosperity preachers', 'Faith message teachers' or 'Word People' and teachings on 'divine healing' like Kenneth Haggin, Kenneth Copeland, Hobart Freeman and Fred Price.

¹²⁸ Barrett, 'The Worldwide Holy Spirit Renewal', in Synan, ed., *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, p. 390. Barrett classified Yoido Full Gospel Church, Seoul Korea, Third Wave Neo-Charismatic (independent, postdenominationalist), but Cho was more known as Pentecostal.

¹²⁹ See Cho's influence in chapter three, section 3.4.2.3 Contemporary Understanding, and chapter five, section 5.2.2.2.1 Church Growth Strategies. See Anderson, *Introduction*, pp. 217-21; Yonggi Cho, *Salvation, Health and Prosperity: Our Threefold Blessings in Christ* (Altamonte Springs, 1987), pp. 8, 11-2; Mullins, 'The Empire Strikes Back', in Poewe, ed., *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, pp. 87-102. Mullins describes Cho's influences include prayer movement, prayer mountain centres, all-night prayer meetings, prayer and fasting, exorcisms, healing services, positive thinking, 'Threefold Blessing of Salvation' (3 John 2) – soul prospers, blessings, health; home cell groups; BHS and spiritual gifts; church growth conferences and seminars; power evangelism; signs and wonders.

theology of ‘the people of God’ (*Minjung*), Cho’s theology of ‘the good God’ (*Joeushin Hananim*) and the concept of the present kingdom of God ‘here and now’ becomes the contemporary holistic view of life where prosperity is a divine blessing. Korean Pentecostalism grew remarkably in the midst of rapid urbanisation and socio-economic growth as people found security, hope, and blessings in God.¹³⁰

The prominent influence in Korea Pentecostalism was Cho, who established Yoido Full Gospel Church (YFGC) under the Assemblies of God of Korea (AGK) in 1973, formerly Daejo Church in 1958, and then Seodaemun Church in 1961. The growth of Korean Pentecostalism was remarkable especially with Cho’s emphases on Spirit-baptism empowering world missions and church growth. YFGC has also been actively involved in social welfare projects. YFGC has become the largest single church in the world with 830,000 adherents and AGK being the highest missionary sending agency to the world. Yung Hun Choi remarks, ‘Cho emphasised world mission as an outworking of Spirit baptism.’¹³¹ By 2012, AGK had sent 900 missionaries to 78 countries, of which, YFGC had sent 712 missionaries to 62 countries.¹³²

In comparison with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the country had also gone through long decades of war and persecution after WW2. There was the Vietnam War (1955-75) followed by a ‘dark decade’ (1975-88) of Christian persecution and political

¹³⁰ Sang Yun Lee, ‘The Kingdom of God in Korean Pentecostal Perspective’, in Synan and Yong, eds., *Global Renewal Christianity* (2016), pp. 143-57; Lee Young-Hoon, ‘The Korean Holy Spirit Movement in Relation to Pentecostalism’, pp. 509-26; Hyeon Sung Bae, ‘Full Gospel Theology and a Korean Pentecostal Identity’, pp. 527-49; and Anderson, ‘The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia’, in Anderson and Tang, eds., *Asian and Pentecostal*, pp. 9-10; Hwa Yung, ‘Mission and Evangelism’, in Kim, ed., *Christian Theology in Asia*, pp. 261-4; Anderson, ‘Contextualization in Pentecostalism’, p. 33. *Minjung* theology is Korean’s liberation theology which concerns the marginalised and oppressed society. Anderson points out the evangelical concerns that certain ideas and trends in ‘contextual theologies’ such as *Minjung* theology could lead to a form of syncretism in ‘a placing of the social and political context above God’s revelation.’ Cho’s interaction with the elements of Korean Shamanism and Confucianism in his preaching and teaching made Pentecostal easily relatable to the masses with strong traditions and indigenous religious roots.

¹³¹ Yung Hun Choi, ‘Yonggi Cho’s Influence on Pentecostal Theology in Korea’, in Austin, Grey, and Lewis, eds., *Asia Pacific Pentecostalism*, pp. 39-40.

¹³² Choi, ‘Yonggi Cho’s Influence on Pentecostal Theology in Korea’, p. 40. Cited Young-hoon Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea: Its Historical and Theological Development* [Korean] (Oxford, 2009; Korea, 2014), pp. 267-8.

oppression. The context of Vietnamese has more similarities with Korea which had suffered devastation and poverty. In the 1980s and early 1990s, prosperity gospel and charismatic influences had penetrated the Socialist Republic of Vietnam through smuggled books and Christian training materials, namely Cho, Hagin, Ralph Mahoney, among others. After the Vietnam-US diplomatic relations were normalised in 1995, more foreign missionaries have brought in the Word of Faith movement. Books and training materials by Joyce Meyer, Benny Hinn, Jack Hayford, Reinhard Bonnke, and others were well-received by the Vietnamese Pentecostals and evangelicals in view of the hardships in post-war socio-economic conditions and state's restrictions on religious activities.

In the 2000s, Vietnamese Pentecostals focus on teaching of wealth and social influence. Wagner's Third Wave influence of kingdom dominion in public spheres and prayers for social transformation gained popularity. As Vietnamese economy improves, Vietnamese Pentecostals become more engaged in transnational mission, evangelism and social ministry. In Vietnamese context, prosperity gospel and Third Wave influence on social transformation worked well in meeting the social needs of poverty and structural injustice.¹³³

Malaysian context differs much from Korean and Vietnamese contexts in terms of social needs. Although Cho's CGI and prayer movement have impacted AGM movement growth, the understanding and application of Cho's prosperity gospel and teachings on Holy Spirit have different implications in Malaysia. For the Koreans and Vietnamese, prosperity gospel has been the theology of hope and 'gospel of need' in their despair, and helped them in upward social mobility. Malaysian Christians have not suffered prolonged war periods, national poverty and desperations as the Koreans and Vietnamese. As such, Cho's theology and teachings have been well-received and understood differently as

¹³³ Vince Le, 'The Pentecostal Movement in Vietnam', in Synan and Yong, eds. *Global Renewal Christianity* (2016), pp. 181-95; James Hosack and Jason Morris, 'Pentecostalism in Thailand and Vietnam', in Austin, Grey and Lewis, eds., *Asia Pacific Pentecostalism*, pp. 150-73.

prosperity gospel by mostly middle-class society in the Malaysian context which brought about the focus on blessings, health, wealth, and prosperity.

AGM ministers view that one of the strongest consequences of ‘prosperity and blessing’ messages is that churches have grown to become more ‘inward-looking.’¹³⁴ Ng observes that over the years, there has been a distinct shift from the emphasis of Spirit-baptism with its link to missions to spiritual and material blessings. People in AGM churches have begun to seek the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in order to be blessed, rather than to be witnesses sent out to do ministry and mission as in previous decades. It is a shift from an outward-looking mindset to an inward-looking one: ‘What can Holy Spirit do for me?’¹³⁵ In better socio-economic conditions, Christians in general are becoming more complacent in their comfort zones, inward looking, seeking blessings, good health, prosperity, personal wellbeing, less evangelistic and outreach. Yong experiences that people nowadays are generally less ‘hungry’ for God and kingdom of God, but responding to altar-call for personal needs.¹³⁶

I agree with the Pentecostal theologians, W. Ma, Warrington and Stronstad, that the ‘blessing’ part is affecting global Christianity in contemporary times. The prosperity gospel in the midst of economic growth in Southeast Asia has attracted generally the

¹³⁴ Collective interview data: TI-45, TI-50.

¹³⁵ Interview with Rev. Ng. He shares, ‘I think there are aspects of the Holy Spirit’s work is emphasised in terms of blessings, in terms of direction. In terms of that, I think the prosperity, healing, and blessing part become more prominent ... ‘What can I get out of it?’ But in the earlier years, I think the Holy Spirit has to do with missions, serving God, empowered to be witness, to be powerful testimony, and envision a victorious Christian life. I think that there’s a sudden shift in emphasis towards ‘What the Baptism of the Holy Spirit can do for me, in blessing me?’ rather than, ‘I want to serve God, I need the empowerment to serve God.’ I think there is a distinct. To me, there is a shift in emphasis, become more inward looking ... People will come to the altar in those days to seek God, to love God, to serve God, and tarry before the Lord. Now, people just come to the pastor or preacher to lay hands on them and to bless them ... Cho Yonggi brought that distinct aspect of the prosperity thing in 1980s. At one time, Pentecostals never consider wealth as part of the spirituality. Now, if you’re spiritual, you must be healthy, you must be wealthy, you must be blessed, and all that. You must be able. The money thing can be a big problem I think in church today. And sometimes Charismatic-Pentecostals are associated rightly or wrongly with the prosperity gospel, but it was never that way before. It was so much more empowered by the Holy Spirit to be witnesses, and wealth was not an issue, things like that. [BHS is] Power to do God’s work.’

¹³⁶ Interview with Pastor Joshua Yong, 26 April 2017.

‘middle-class’ Christians as Hefner’s study reveals.¹³⁷ W. Ma laments, ‘It is rather unfortunate that Pentecostal churches have had phenomenal church growth but have failed to provide the next clear theological goal beyond blessings and beyond “me”.’¹³⁸ Warrington states ‘the danger that Pentecostals are increasingly being less evangelistic and more complacent.’¹³⁹ Whilst there are exceptions, Stronstad observes the deteriorating Pentecostal spirituality and spiritual climate of the contemporary church at large.¹⁴⁰

Besides prosperity gospel, charismatic influences and secularisation also influence the social needs. A setback in subsequent ‘waves of the Holy Spirit’ renewals is the stirring up of more excitement and hype of some believers to seek after the ‘experience’ of the powers and manifestations of the Holy Spirit, the ‘worship experience’, personal ‘spiritual experience’ in receiving and exercising spiritual gifts, rather than seeking God’s kingdom and his righteousness. Many church goers of this postmodern society have become self-seeking, and as the scholars have examined, this is rather universal, which has to a certain extent permeated the Malaysian church landscape as well.

In the global context, key theorist of secularisation, Cox observes that Pentecostal movement is a form of ‘religious secularisation’. Pentecostal is an urban religion, expanding and thriving in Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. The power of the

¹³⁷ Robert W. Hefner, ‘Religious Resurgence in Contemporary Asia: Southeast Asia Perspectives on Capitalism, the State, and the New Piety’, *Journal of Asian Studies* 69, no. 4 (Nov. 2010), pp. 1031-47, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40929282>, accessed 1 March 2021.

¹³⁸ W. Ma, ‘Asian (Classical) Pentecostal Theology in Context’, in Anderson and Tang, eds., *Asian and Pentecostal*, p. 79.

¹³⁹ Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London, 2008), p. 262.

¹⁴⁰ Stronstad, *Prophethood of All Believers*, p. 123. He states, ‘In fact, in too many places the Church views itself as a didactic community rather than as a prophetic community, where sound doctrine is treasured above charismatic action. Indeed, the preaching and teaching of the word displaces Spirit-filled, Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered ministry. The Spirit of prophecy has been quenched and the gifts of the Spirit have been sanitized and institutionalized ... As a prophetic community God’s people are to be active in service. But all too often the Pentecostal, Charismatic Movements focus on the experience, the emotion and the blessing more than they do on Spirit-filled, Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered service. This shift in focus from vocation to personal experience, from being world-centred to self-centered, renders the service of the Pentecostal, Charismatic Movement just about as impotent as the service of the contemporary non-Pentecostal, non-charismatic church. This focus on experience rather than on service is like selling one’s birthright of Spirit-empowered service for the pottage of self-seeking experience and blessing.’

Spirit works in the lives of believers and meeting their needs, both the poor and middle-class.¹⁴¹ Cox views that the theory of secularisation and modernisation of the West believed to result in the ‘decline of religion’ had collapsed. Contrastingly, there are religious renaissance, the rise of Pentecostal spirituality, and primal spirituality in many parts of the world. The new religious movements are ‘creative series of self-adaptations by religions to the new conditions created by modernity’, which Cox terms as ‘transformation of religion’. He views that Pentecostal Christianity is a ‘much larger mutation of religion’.¹⁴² According to Cox, ‘secularisation tends to take a cultural form’ and in the Third World it tends to lead to a form of liberation theology, where theology is necessary but only after the practice and discipleship.¹⁴³

Similar to Cox’ view on the dispersal of divine presence in the form of ‘religious secularisation’, Lovemore Tagorasei who studies the church in Zimbabwe argues that the modern charismatic Pentecostalism in Africa context is reviving Christianity in Africa in the form of ‘religious secularisation’ in beliefs and practices. The Pentecostal gospel and discourses emphasise on blessings ‘here and now’, particularly health and wealth, engaging with secular ‘this-worldly’ matters, temporal human needs and issues more than ‘post-mortem’ matters. The secular culture, values, and elements are covered in religious language and religious garb. The ‘religious secularisation’ of Pentecostal theology and

¹⁴¹ Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, pp. 3-17, 81-122. Pentecostalism is a global vehicle in restoring primal speech, primal piety and primal hope.

¹⁴² Harvey G. Cox and Jan Swyngedouw, ‘The Myth of the Twentieth Century: The Rise and Fall of Secularization’, *JJRS* 27, no. 1/2 (2000), pp. 3, 4, 5, 9, 10. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30233638>, accessed 16 January 2022; Cox, *Fire from Heaven*. See Michael J. Crosbie, ‘The Sacred in the Secular City: A Conversation with Harvey Cox’, volume 47, issue 3 (2014), Faith & Form, IFRAA, <https://faithandform.com/feature/sacred-secular-city-conversation-harvey-cox/>; and Volkan Ertit, ‘Secularization: The Decline of the Supernatural Realm’, *Religions* 9, no. 4:92 (2018): 1-18, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9040092>, accessed 16 January 2022.

¹⁴³ Harvey Cox, ‘The Secular City 25 Years Later’, <https://www.religion-online.org/article/the-secular-city-25-years-later/>, accessed 16 January 2022.

practices involves health, wealth, individualism, pleasure/music and media, which attracts the secular society but open doors to ‘consumerism’ and ‘worldliness’.¹⁴⁴

Pentecostal contextualisation in Malaysia involves the form of ‘religious secularisation’ and I agree with Cox’s and Togarasei’s arguments. AGM also started and grew in urban areas, adapting to the surrounding and cultures, the modern culture and times, along with the secular values and elements. In the formative period, AGM as a CPM emphasised on post-mortem doctrines, holiness, ‘the last days’, crisis evangelism and missions, tarrying meetings, and so on. The emphases have shifted as AGM morphed into CPCM, which focuses more on secular values and elements such as modern outlook, modern church buildings, contemporaneous messages, some form of prosperity gospel on blessings in Christian living, modern media technologies, secular worship style, seminars and conferences, being relevant, seeker-friendly, and attracting the young generation.

In contextualisation, I see that Pentecostal gospel redeems the social cultures. Pentecostal movements are easily adaptable to secularism and modern culture and trends, as God’s presence and works of the Holy Spirit are manifested in individuals’ daily lives. AGM is constantly moving with the times and continues to be relevant to the secular society. Togarasei stresses, ‘The churches’ appropriation of secularism helps bridge the gap between the secular world and the church.’¹⁴⁵ As the church focuses on making the gospel relevant in meeting social needs, the priority of discipleship and theological education is vital.

¹⁴⁴ Lovemore Togarasei, ‘Modern/charismatic Pentecostalism as a form of ‘religious’ secularisation in Africa’ *Studia Historiae Ecclesasticae*, volume 41, no. 1, (2015), pp. 56–66, Research Institute for Theology and Religion University of South Africa, <https://www.upjournals.co.za/index.php/SHE/article/download/95/161>, accessed 16 January 2022.

¹⁴⁵ Togarasei, ‘Modern/charismatic Pentecostalism’ p. 63.

6.4.3 Spiritual Worldview of Malaysia and Universal Context

Many Malaysian Charismatics, Pentecostals, and Spirit-filled independent churches and believers are drawn to Third Wave's 'strategic level spiritual warfare' and 'territorial spirits' due to their exposure of beliefs and experiences of the spirit realm in the multireligious and animistic contexts of Asia and the majority world. A uniting factor in the prayer movement with intense strategies and methods is the identification and relatability of demonology and spiritual warfare teachings in the midst of yearning for revival, to 'awaken' the church, and transform the nation. There has been a strong sense of nationalism amidst political turbulence, social injustices, and Islamisation.¹⁴⁶ Survey shows that 41 percent of participants were from Buddhism, Taoism, and Hinduism background. Ministers shared their spiritual experiences of the reality of the spirit world they were from in this multireligious and animistic spiritism cultural context.¹⁴⁷

Looking at the 'universal' context of the spirit world, I agree with the theologians, Chan, Yeh, Tiéno, and Hwa Yung on the spiritual worldview of the majority world. Chan highlights that the Asian church exists in the midst of 'ancient family-based religious communities' where the home is the 'primary locus of religious life'. The pervasiveness of animism is seen in the Asian spirit at the grassroots level in the practice of ancestral veneration, prevalent in Asia and Africa. For example, the 'Japanese indigenous Christian movements' even provides alternative Christian rituals in the communion of saints, different from the Confucian and Taoist ancestral rites, but reinterpreted as 'cultural expression of filial piety'.¹⁴⁸ Chan stresses the sensitivity to the spiritual world in this region: 'In Asia the world of spirits is very much a part of everyday

¹⁴⁶ See 5.4.4 Malaysian Social Influences.

¹⁴⁷ Interviews with Rev. Philip Mathius, Rev. Fiona Mathius, 27 April 2017, Rev. Arthur Sakara Bani, 28 April 2017; Rev. Caleb Chan, 25 May 2017; Rev. Ong; and surveys. See chapter five, section 5.2.1.3 Spirituality and Worldview.

¹⁴⁸ Chan, *Grassroots Asian Theology*, pp. 163, 188-204.

life'.¹⁴⁹ It is possible the Holy Spirit simply replaces benevolent (ancestor) spirits and the Third Wave teaching best fits this shift. Recent studies by Yeh and Tiénou also acknowledge that the spirit world is a reality in the majority world theologies, particularly in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, which have strong religious contexts of shamanism, animism, paganism, witchcraft, polytheism, and folk religions.¹⁵⁰ Hwa Yung argues based on Hiebert's concept, a missiological anthropologist, there are three tiers in the biblical and Asian worldviews of realities. He asserts, 'there is also a middle level of "Folk or Low Religion" which consists of beliefs in the local deities, ancestral and other spirits, demons, astrology, and the like who or which act in the world. As this middle level is absent in the Western mind, Western theology has little or no answers for the problems arising here [Two-Thirds World].'¹⁵¹

The adaptability of Pentecostal Movements in contextualisation could redeem cultures in responding to primal religious worldviews. Anderson provides the Korean example of the prayer mountain being culturally relevant to Korean religions like shamanism and Buddhism where the belief of good spirits lived, and Christianity especially in Old Testament. He expresses, 'There are hundreds of Christian prayer mountains all over the South Korea ... Christianity is contextualized by taking the good practices of ancient religions and transforming them with biblical Christian meanings.' This is an example of contextualisation of Korean Pentecostalism in embracing Korean

¹⁴⁹ Chan, *Grassroots Asian Theology*, p. 156.

¹⁵⁰ Allen L. Yeh and Tite Tiénou, eds., *Majority World Theologies: Theologizing from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Ends of the Earth*, Evangelical Missiological Society Series, no. 26 (Littleton, 2018).

¹⁵¹ Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas?* p. 59. See P.G. Hiebert, 'The Flaw of the Excluded Middle', *Missiology: An International Review*, 10:1 (1982): 35-47, on the different worldviews of Western, Bible and Indian/Two-Thirds World. 'High Religion' (upper level) deals with rational beliefs which relates to God or theistic beings acting in the spiritual world; and the 'Low Religion' (lower level) being the state of naturalistic sciences seeing the world under the control of impersonal forces. Besides the upper and lower levels, the biblical and Asian worldviews (including Latin America and Africa) also have the middle level of reality where 'the spirit and the physical worlds intersect actively'. For comprehensive bibliography on worldviews, see Hwa Yung's book.

religious context.¹⁵² The prayer-mountain movement of Korea is widespread in Asia, including Malaysia.

It is quite natural for many Malaysian Christians to accept Pentecostal, Charismatic and Third Wave teachings on the spirit realm and spiritual warfare, particularly exorcism and ‘power encounter’. However, exceptions to the many traditional evangelicals and modern generation with Western secularised education where emphases on demonology and spirit world are less relevant to them.¹⁵³

At the same time, the survey shows that 32 percent of participants are from other denominational background before joining AGM, i.e. evangelicals, Roman Catholics, and Charismatics; and 26 percent of participants being the second-generation born in AGM.¹⁵⁴ This data indicates that AGM demographic consists of Christians from different denominational background and different generations. This definitely impacts the variants of spiritual worldview and convictions among ministers and members.

6.5 Relevance: Theological Drifts Influenced by the Third Wave

The third theoretical theme reasoning the increasing tension and gap between the espoused Pentecostal theology and current practice is relevance, particularly the embracing of Third Wave influences in practice. AGM upholds the SFT of classical Pentecostalism. On the surface, the changes are not in the professed core beliefs of classical Pentecostal theology, but the gradual changes in the level of emphasis and the

¹⁵² Anderson, ‘Contextualization in Pentecostalism’, p. 36.

¹⁵³ Exceptions to the many Christians who are more grounded in the traditional Evangelical theology and biblical understanding. Another exception is the postmodern generation and younger generations who are more sceptical against matters regarding the spirit realm. Factors on generational gap, the change in spiritual dynamism, and young generation’s mindset are discussed in chapter five, section 5.4.1.2 Generational Gap; 5.4.1.3 Change in Spiritual Dynamism; and 5.4.2.2 Postmodernism and Its Philosophical and Sociocultural Influences in Malaysia. As I chat with my younger students, I find that most of them are unable to relate to the prayer movement which involves mostly believers from the older generation like their senior pastors and older church members. As second or third generation Christians, they are unable to relate to the cry for revival as they have not experienced that before. They find it hard to connect or relate to the ‘prayer for revival’ theme or agenda.

¹⁵⁴ Surveys.

nature of practice, impacted by external theological perspectives and practices. Certain practices of Pentecostal distinctives related to BHS have been evolving over the historical periods from classical formative period to contemporary emphases as analysed in earlier finding chapters. The morphing of distinctive practices are gradual with emerging tensions and gaps between the current practice and the espoused. In contemporary times, underlying AGM's changes in emphases and practices are certain theological drifts strongly impacted by the Third Wave's prayer movement, prophetic and apostolic movement.

6.5.1 Prayer Movement

One impactful changing nature in this movement growth period is the beginning of the new prayer and intercession ministry in 1980s, followed by prayer movement in later decades, from 2007 to 2020s, as analysed in Stage 1. The significant role of AG Prayer Commission (AGPC) has been more intense especially from 2010 to 2020, initiating the prayer movement and 24/7 prayer altars, revival prayer rallies and solemn assemblies to pray for revival and transformation of the nation. AGPC's motto is 'Creating a Spirit-empowered prayer movement that will impact lives and transform nations.'¹⁵⁵ As reported, it is known that Ong is 'a strong leader with an 'apostolic-prophetic mantel' that is respected nationally and internationally.'¹⁵⁶ He stresses the importance of AGM's

Prayer Movement led by AGPC:

Prayer Movement becomes religious and powerless when it loses touch with God's voice. AGPC will continue to grow even more powerfully as our leaders and intercessors seek to hear from heaven God's will, His unique plans and strategies He has in store for Malaysia. And in doing so, we enforce God's will to, "*Be done on earth as it has been done in heaven*" (*Matt. 6:10*).¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ AGPC, '24-7 Prayer Initiative: Come let's join our hearts together for Malaysia!' AG InTouch app, 14 June 2020, AGPC20200614-IT.

¹⁵⁶ Rev. Ronnie Chin, Assistant General Superintendent's Report, AG Biennial Report 2014-2016, p. 9, BR2014-2016-51-AGS.

¹⁵⁷ Rev. Ong, General Superintendent's Report, AG Biennial Report 2014-2016, p. 5, BR2014-2016-51-GS.

Examining deeper into the underlying theology of the contemporary prayer movement reveals different theology, ethos, and practice of the Third Wave in 1990s and its fruits in 2000s onward.¹⁵⁸ AGM's newsletters reported new emphasis on Joel 2, mandate, new theologies and strategies, and new prophetic intercession, new parlance, new understanding on revival and many new teachings and practices.

6.5.1.1 New Emphasis on Joel 2

The new emphasis on Joel 2 emphasises on solemn assembly before the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit is a new development, from the Third Wave influence, as compared to the espoused Pentecostal theology derived from Joel 2 – Acts 2 based on the Day of Pentecost, the fulfilment to Joel's prophecy on the outpouring of the Spirit. There is a 'twist' in emphasis from the espoused hermeneutics.

Since 2014, there have been regular Solemn Assemblies organised by AGPC at district levels, and also practised by some charismatic churches in NECF, particularly FGA KL since 2010. In recent online revival prayer rally and solemn assembly on 6-7 November 2020 during Covid-19 pandemic, NECF and PU sent their leaders from various denominations with representatives from East Malaysia to participate in these meetings to pray in unity. The call for solemn assembly is based on Joel 1-2, when the people repent before the Lord, God will relent judgement, send revival, and heal the land.¹⁵⁹ AGM newsletter records that national solemn assembly based on Joel 2:12, 'Return to the LORD...' with network of churches nationwide were held regularly where

¹⁵⁸ Wagner, *Apostles and Prophets*, pp. 17-9, 110, 112. According to Wagner, there has been a growing prayer movement since 1970s with the 'planting the seeds of prayer', progressing to 1980s 'budding of prayer', 1990s 'blossoming of prayer (global prayer movement), and 2000s, 'fruit of prayer'. In 1991, the Global Prayer Movement is formed with AD2000 United Prayer Track of the AD2000 and Beyond Movement coordinated by Wagner (10/40 Window for unreached people group), the International Spiritual Warfare Network, and Prayer Warrior series.

¹⁵⁹ AGPC, 'Revival Prayer Rally with Julius Suubi', 'A New Season, Passion, Vision', Zoom online, 6-7 November 2020, <https://ag.relate.my/events/register/25>, AGPC20201017-IT. AGPC's Bible references to prayer includes: 2 Chron. 7:14; Matt. 6:9-10, 1 Tim. 2:1-2; Lk. 18:1; Jer. 29:7; Gen. 15:18; Psa. 102:15, 1 Kgs. 18:30.

Suubi called the people to ‘repentance so as to build strong personal, church, and national altars.’¹⁶⁰

In the light of Joel 2 – Acts 2, the significance of the prayer movement for revival (Joel’s prophecy) is the text before the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit. Suubi teaches the way to revival is the solemn assembly with true repentance and seeking God to heal the land and send revival. This is the contemporary application of Joel 2, in solemn assembly and praying for revival and transformation of the nation, which is a broadened application to the early Pentecostal’s reference to the promise of early and latter rain, and classical Pentecostal’s focus on its fulfilment on Pentecost. Third waver, Cerullo stresses that the call to church’s confession and repentance is also a part of prayer movement, particularly in ‘solemn assembly’ and also using Joel 2 (verses 18, 23-26) and 2 Chron. 7:14, for God to release the immense outpouring of his Spirit.¹⁶¹ AGPC has been organising ‘solemn assembly’ since 2014 to present and prayer rallies for revival using Joel 2. We can see that the foundational Scripture of Joel 2 (Joel’s prophecy) is central to AGM whether in prayer or in revival, with a new application on repentance prayer before revival, which is a new focus on earlier verses as a condition to God sending revival to Malaysia. This is a new interpretation and application of Joel 2 in prayer movement.

6.5.1.2 New Mandate

In the light of the espoused classical Pentecostal theology and emphasis based on Joel 2 – Acts 2, there is a shift in focus of mandates from the Great Commission and full gospel from early AGUSA missionaries (from First Wave) to the new mandate of prayer movement of the Third Wave (and Fourth Wave).

¹⁶⁰ AGM newsletter: Teong Soo Cheng, ‘National Solemn Assembly: “Return to the LORD ...”’, 7 March 2015, AGM, *AG Connect*, Issue 1/2015, p. 7, AC2015-1b.

¹⁶¹ Morris Cerullo, *The Last Great Anointing* (Ventura, 1999), pp. 83-4.

AGM newsletter records in 2014, AGPC receives the ‘mandate’ from Suubi to ‘ignite a prayer movement nationwide’, which is to raise an ‘army of intercessors’ and form the ‘national altar’, with Solemn Assemblies, Revival Prayer Rallies, and 24/7 prayer altars to pray for the revival and transformation of Malaysia. AGPC also receives the ‘commission’ ‘to pray till we see God’s Word come to pass.’¹⁶² Since then, AGPC has been initiating a nationwide prayer movement which has been gaining momentum under the ‘apostle’ leadership of Suubi.¹⁶³

It is urgent to look into the underlying theology of the mandate. The NAR movement and ‘Reformation Manifesto’ formulated and propagated by Wagner, Jacobs, and their associates believes in the ‘Seven Mountain Mandate’¹⁶⁴ which seems like a morphed form of ‘dominion theology’. Jacobs proclaims, ‘The reformation mandate is infused into every part of the nation through the praying, teaching, working “army of the Lord.”’¹⁶⁵ Wagner advocates that nation and social transformation is the paradigm shift ‘to proclaim that God’s kingdom is coming here on earth as it is in heaven, and it is

¹⁶² AGM newsletter: Tham Eng Cheng, “‘United to Transform’ Prayer Conference’, 10-13 September 2014, AGM, *AG Connect*, Together We ... 2014-2016, Issue 2/2014, p. 7, AC2014-2. In the 1980s, Tan Sri Guneratnam has started the Prayer Tower in Calvary Church. Dr Leoh has established the prayer commission, AGPC in July 2007, for the need of prayer movement in AGM as global prayer movement has become prominent in 1990s. Larger AGM churches have prayer and intercessory department and ministry.

¹⁶³ AGM newsletter: AGM, *AG Connect*, Issue 3/2013, p. 12, AC2013-3. AGM started to invite Suubi to conduct ‘Breakthrough Prayer Conference’ on 3-5 December 2013 and subsequently Annual Prayer Conference till present.

¹⁶⁴ Jacobs, *Reformation Manifesto*. Third Wavers believe that the church and believers are being given the ‘mandate’ to transform the nations by being the ‘agents of reformation in society’ and be the working ‘army of the Lord’ through strategic prayer, spiritual warfare, prophetic prayer intercession, prayer movement, renewal, and so on, in order to bring about social transformation for God’s kingdom to come here on earth. The NAR movement and Reformation Manifesto believes in ‘territorial or geographical spirits’, the restoration of the offices of apostles and prophets of the NT, ‘strategic-level spiritual warfare’, ‘kingdom of God coming here on earth’, ‘*rhema* word’, ‘endtime revival’, and so on. They teach that ‘God’s movement’ is ‘waking up the sleeping church’ to be reformers in society, that believers are given ‘a mandate’ to reform the nations by affecting the ‘seven gates of society’, namely the gates of government; media and communications; marketplace; arts; education; family; church and ministry. God’s kingdom will come on earth with strategic prayer to reform and transform nations.

¹⁶⁵ Jacobs, *Reformation Manifesto*, p. 17.

coming more rapidly ... [by] social transformation and city taking and cultural mandate and retaking **dominion** and ministry in the workplace.’¹⁶⁶

The ‘seven mountain’ idea started from two similar revelations which Loren Cunningham of Youth With A Mission (YWAM) and Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ believed they received from God in 1975 in slightly different terms, ‘seven pillars’ and ‘seven kingdoms’. Cunningham, a Pentecostal, called it ‘seven spheres of influence’. 25 years later in 2000, Cunningham met with Lance Wallnau, who then coined the ‘Seven Mountain’ strategy and concept. Neocharismatic apostles and prophets are teaching this strategy extensively. It is the strategy to win the nations for Christ with believers influencing the seven critical arenas that shape and transform a nation.¹⁶⁷

Christerson and Flory classify the Third Wavers and INC’s ‘7 mountains’ theology ‘sounds like theocracy’, and believing in the post-millennial theology. In their minds, God’s kingdom can come to earth before Christ returns.¹⁶⁸ This new theology implies that

¹⁶⁶ C. Peter Wagner, foreword in Jacobs, *Reformation Manifesto*, pp. 9-11. Word bolded for emphasis. Wagner, who was Presiding Apostle of International Coalition of Apostle, urged believers to ‘join the ranks of those kingdom-minded and kingdom-motivated servants of God whom He longs to use to change our world!’ Jacobs proposes that ‘Jesus was looking for *kingdoms* to change.’ See Peter Wagner, *Dominion! How Kingdom Action Can Change the World* (Grand Rapids, 2008).

¹⁶⁷ Seven Mountain Alliance, ‘The Seven Mountains’, <https://sevenmountainalliance.webs.com/the-alliance>; ‘The Seven Mountains’, <https://www.the7mountains.com/> Generals International, ‘The Seven Mountains of Societal Influence’, <https://www.generals.org/the-seven-mountains>; Phillytod.org, ‘Summary of the 7 Mountain Message’, <https://www.phillytod.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Summary-of-the-7-Mountain-Message.pdf>; Dale M. Coulter, ‘Neocharismatic Christianity and the Rise of the New Apostolic Reformation’, 18 January 2021, <https://firebrandmag.com/articles/neocharismatic-christianity-and-the-rise-of-the-new-apostolic-reformation> ; Elly Hardy, ‘The “modern apostles” who want to reshape America ahead of the end times’, 19 March 2020, <https://theoutline.com/post/8856/seven-mountain-mandate-trump-paula-white>, accessed 6 March 2022. It was reported that around the same time Cunningham shared the vision, his wife watched a nationally televised interview, and saw Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984), American evangelist and Presbyterian pastor spoke on the same vision that Christians ought to engage in every area of life and secular culture in truth and love in the nation. This idea can be traced back to Calvinist theologians, Rousas John Rushdoony’s (1916-2001) ‘theonomy’ and Abraham Kuyper’s (1837-1920) ‘vision of cultural transformation’, who promoted John Calvin’s (1509-1564) concept of ‘sphere sovereignty’ or, referring to the cultural spheres as the kingdom of God.

¹⁶⁸ ‘The “Prophets” and “Apostles” Leading the Quiet Revolution in American Religion: A Christian movement characterized by multi-level marketing, Pentecostal signs and wonders, and post-millennial optimism,’ interview by B. Smietana with Brad Christerson and Richard W. Flory, *Christianity Today*, 3 August 2017, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2017/august-web-only/bethel-church-international-house-prayer-prophets-apostles.html>, accessed 25 May 2020. Also see Brad Christerson and Richard W. Flory, *The Rise of Network Christianity: How Independent Leaders Are Changing the Religious Landscape* (New York, 2017), pp. 96-7. However, IHOP believes in premillennial. They see Israel as the centre when Jesus returns to reign 1,000 years on earth. That is the purpose of 24/7 houses of prayer in strategic locations to bring Jesus back sooner, salvation for the Jews and that End Time prophecies on Israel will be fulfilled.

Christ's return depends on the church and sounds very work-based theology and not much room for grace or God's sovereignty.

AGUSA's position paper states that 'Kingdom Now or Dominion theology' is an errant theology that 'Jesus will not return until the Church takes dominion of the earth back from Satan and his followers. By taking control, through means possible, of political, ecclesiastical, educational, economic, and other structures, Christian supposedly can make the world a worthy place for Christ to return and rule over. This unscriptural triumphalism generates other related variant teachings.'¹⁶⁹ The NAR's Reformation Manifesto of Christians having dominion in the 'Seven Mountain Mandate' or 'Seven Gates of Society' seems to be a morphed form of the dominion theology, somewhat downplaying the gospel.

It is vital for Pentecostals to fulfil the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) and bear witness to Christ in every arena of society, to be the 'salt of the earth' and 'light of the world' (Matt. 5:13-16), with the empowerment of the Spirit in BHS (Acts 1:8, 2). The difference between the Reformation Manifesto and modern-day missions is that the former emphasises in having dominion in every sphere through spiritual warfare and raising the Lord's 'army'.

Modern-day missions emphasise practical ministry, social justice, and good works where the gospel is central. Modern missions have also changed to make a difference in the nations, transforming communities, economy, alleviating poverty, engaging in social concern works, involving in marketplace ministries, speaking against social injustices and involving in every sector of life. AGM's focus on missions, the centrality of the gospel, prayer and intercession for missions should not be overtaken by the emphasis on prayer

¹⁶⁹ AGUSA, 'Endtime Revival – Spirit-led and Spirit Controlled', Position Paper, 11 August 2000, <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/Endtime-Revival---Spirit-Led-and-Spirit-Controlled>, accessed 6 April 2020, EndtimeRevival.pdf, <https://ag.org>, accessed 7 September 2021.

movement mandate for spiritual warfare, but prayer for missions and doing good works should go hand-in-hand with the preaching of the gospel.

6.5.1.3 New Theologies, Strategies, and Methodologies of Spiritual Warfare

Suubi's 'apostleship' and Jacobs' 'prophethood', and their strategy-based theology, with authoritative power over nations, spiritual power, open heavens, spiritual warfare strategies, institutionalised prayers with 24/7 strategy, 24/7 prayer tower, worship and prayer as strategy for revival, exercise prophetic prayer for transformation of nations, releasing prophetic words over peoples and nations, prophetic prayers and setting up 'territorial altars' (spiritual warfare against 'territorial spirits'), and conducting prayer conferences, and many more, are clear theology, teachings, and practices of the Third Wave and NAR founded by Wagner with the new apostolic and prophetic movement and the fruits of it. The NAR leaders usually network among themselves as INC.¹⁷⁰ These influences have penetrated some Spirit-filled denominations and churches in the nation, and not just AGM. These teachings and practices appeal to Malaysians seeking methods and practical ways toward praying for national revival.

Third Wave theology believes that the future of the nation belongs to the intercessors, using strategies and methodologies to pull down evil strongholds. AGM newsletter reports in 2014, Suubi taught in 'Transformation Prayer Conference' on personal, corporate and national transformation through restoration of broken prayer altars, namely the 'Personal Altar', 'Family Altar', 'Church Altar', and the 'Territorial Altar', as 'wake up call to churches to restore their prophetic voice for city transformation, leading to national transformation.'¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ See Christerson and Flory, *Rise of Network Christianity*. Many AG churches in the USA, especially some large ones, for example, Bethel, joined the NAR theological and INC ecclesial stream.

¹⁷¹ AGM newsletter: AGPC, 'Arise & Pray! Transformation Prayer Conference with Apostle Julius Suubi', 11-13 March, 2014, AGM, *AG Connect*, Energise! Extend! 2013-2014, Issue 1/2014, p. 5, AC2014-1.

AGM newsletter reports that in the same year, Suubi, Jacobs and her husband Mike, conducted “‘United to Transform” Prayer Conference’, where AGPC received the mandate. Suubi challenged the people to ‘establish 24/7 prayer sessions’. He prophesied that ‘in the next 5 years, many 24-7 intercessors would be raised up, that God would raise 12,000 intercessors through the AGPC and that people would donate their houses/properties for the establishing of prayer towers.’ The ‘24-7 Strategy’ is based on the following theology:

1. Every move of God requires prayer according to the level of darkness in that nation.
2. 24/7 is God’s idea. (Leviticus 6:13)
3. Continuous 24/7 prayers keep the heavens open continually.
4. To check wickedness. (Matthew 13:24-25)
5. Continuous prayer releases continuous traffic of angels. (Luke 1:11-12; Revelation 8:3)
6. To establish the promises of God over the nation. (Isaiah 62:6)¹⁷²

In the third year conducting AGPC’s prayer conference in 2015, Suubi taught:

The corporate vision of transformation can only be realised through unceasing prayer, pleading to God for revival in our land. So, let us speak about revival, talk about revival, preach about revival, pray about revival and challenge the people. We believe that this is the only way to bring down the fire of revival to transform our nation ... He [God] will break down evil strongholds over our land.¹⁷³

In interdenominational conference, Suubi prayed for the establishment of the ‘territorial altars’ and corporate prayer for revival ‘for God to heal and transform the nation.’¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² AGM newsletter: Tham, “‘United to Transform” Prayer Conference’, pp. 6-7, AC2014-2. The attendance was from 850 during the day, and 1,000-2,000 at night. Suubi also taught that ‘God is calling His people to return to the priestly ministry (Exodus 19:3-6). This priesthood is to be born out of a covenantal relationship with Him. Only then can the laws of the land be changed.’ And the ‘Characteristics of the Effective Priest’ includes ‘Authority – a priest bears the authority of God over the people. Intercedes to have authority.’ And ‘Lives a life of separation that releases spiritual power.’ He also taught that ‘He [God] is looking for a “Nazarite”, the set-apart one – one who is willing to lay down all for Him and His Kingdom. God is going to use us on His own terms. God is going to revive Malaysia on His own terms.’

¹⁷³ AGM newsletter: Teong Soo Cheng, ‘A Prayer Movement that Transforms’, AGM, *AG Connect*, Together We ... 2014-2016, Issue 1/2015, p. 6, AC2015-1a. See Janey Hii, ‘Encountering God in Penang’, 15-17 October 2015, AGM, *AG Connect*, Together We ..., Issue 3/2015, p. 8, AC2015-3. In another prayer conference in Penang, Suubi taught that ‘territorial altar should comprise pastors from the various local churches, thereby forming a “territorial church”. So, when we pray as a territorial church we would have authority over the city because its unity would unleash God’s resistance against the evil powers.’ Suubi states that ‘the importance of having a territorial altar planted in Penang to resist the many demonic altars in the city. Therefore, the church must arise and be confrontational in our prayers in order to take the city back for God such that Penang will be known as a City of Revival that will see souls being added to God’s kingdom.’ ‘He saw Penang as the “umbilical cord” of Malaysia. And because of Penang’s strategic location, she had attracted many unholy altars. Therefore, there was a great need to repent and to ask God for mercy, with united prayer and fasting.’

¹⁷⁴ AGM newsletter: Tham Eng Cheng, ‘Encountering God in Kuantan’, 20-22 October 2015, *AG Connect*, Together We ..., Issue 3/2015, p. 8, AC2015-3. AGPC also jointly organised prayer conferences with other churches from Kuantan Pastor’s Fellowship (interdenominational) to join Suubi, participating churches including Wesley Methodist Church and Grace Charismatic Centre, Kuantan Baptist Church.

According to Third Waver, Cerullo, ‘The future belongs to the intercessor! God is anointing and placing intercessors in strategic positions around the world and is commissioning them to wage war in the Spirit and to tear down the enemy’s stronghold through strategic warfare prayer.’¹⁷⁵ Third Wave’s theology of spiritual warfare is the ‘territorial’ demonic forces or geographical spirits, taking and transforming the cities and nations through intercession and ‘strategic level spiritual warfare’.¹⁷⁶ Wagner suggested their hypothesis on ‘Territorial Spirits’ meticulously.¹⁷⁷ Christerson’s and Flory’s research reveals that Wagner received much opposition from other theologians at Fuller and parted ways with Wimber who also disagreed with the theology of ‘territorial demons’.¹⁷⁸ In support of Wagner, Jacobs also writes a training manual for militant

¹⁷⁵ Cerullo, *Last Great Anointing*, pp. 67-8. In pp. 63-4, chapter three on ‘The Future Belongs to the Intercessors’, Cerullo writes, ‘The hour has come when God is positioning the Church, calling out intercessors and end-time spiritual warriors to wage war in the heavenlies on behalf of the cities, people groups, nations and entire continents. One of the major distinctions of this end-time prophetic prayer anointing God is releasing is a new dimension of spiritual power and authority in our prayers ... Church, God is placing the future, the spiritual destiny of nations in our hands! The future will belong to those who walk in this new end-time prophetic prayer anointing to exercise power and dominion through prayer to take the nations for the kingdom of God!’

¹⁷⁶ The three levels of spiritual warfare: Objective offensive level (world evangelism and reaching the unbelievers with the gospel), subjective personal level (protection of self and family from demonic warfare), and Christian level (free demonized Christians from demonization). Ed Murphy, ‘We are at War’, in Wagner and Pennoyer, eds., *Wrestling with Dark Angels*, p. 54. Strategic-level spiritual warfare covers many aspects and technique of spiritual warfare. Charles Peter Wagner, ed., *Territorial Spirits: Insights on Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare from Nineteen Christian Leaders* (Chichester, 1991).

¹⁷⁷ C. Peter Wagner, ‘Territorial Spirits’, in Wagner and Pennoyer, eds., *Wrestling with Dark Angels*, p. 77. Wagner defined ‘Territorial Spirits’, ‘Satan delegates high ranking members of the hierarchy of evil spirits to control nations, regions, cities, tribes, people groups, neighborhoods and other significant social networks of human beings throughout the world. Their major assignment is to prevent God from being glorified in their territory, which they do through directing the activity of lower ranking demons.’ Also see Wagner, ‘Territorial Spirits’, pp. 73-4. He emphasised on spiritual warfare, defeating ‘territorial spirits’, dealing with territorial demons and enemy in society, understanding principalities and powers, possessing cities and towns, battle in the heavenlies, binding the strongman, prayer power, ‘territorial spirits’ and evangelization of hostile environments, the subjection of the invisible powers, and etc. Wagner agreed with Timothy M. Warner, professor of Mission at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, who delivered the annual Church Growth Lectures, sponsored by School of World Mission of Fuller Seminary in 1988 with the theme ‘The Power Encounter and World Evangelization’ that ‘territorial spirits’ prevents the spread of the gospel and the Great Commission. Warner stated, ‘I have come to believe that Satan does indeed assign a demon or corps of demons to every geopolitical unit in the world, and that they are among the principalities and powers against whom we wrestle.’ See Wagner, ed., *Territorial Spirits*.

¹⁷⁸ Christerson and Flory, *Rise of Network Christianity*, pp. 28-9. Cited C. Peter Wagner, *Wrestling with Alligators, Prophets, and Theologians: Lessons From a Lifetime in the Church* (Ventura, 2010). Based on Christerson’s and Flory’s research, Cindy Jacobs introduced the idea to Wagner that not only pray for individual’s healing and deliverance from demonic forces but also taking cities and nations by spiritual warfare against ‘territorial spirits’ that have influence over nations and populations. So in 1989, Wagner designed the Holy Spirit Track, the Spiritual Warfare Track, and the Prayer Track, on strategizing evangelising globally. He also formed a ‘Spiritual Warfare Network’ which developed the ‘strategic-level

intercession.¹⁷⁹ The ‘strategic’ spiritual warfare has its impact on the denominations. W. Ma suggests that the impact of personal-level spiritual warfare, such as inner-healing, intergenerational curse/blessing, etc.,¹⁸⁰ has more grassroots impact, changing pew-level theology, e.g. God/Holy Spirit just replacing the ancestor spirit. Dean Halverson affirms the pervasiveness of animism in major world religions including Christianity. People seeking God for personal benefits originates from animistic perspective. Animism beliefs include ‘personal spirit-beings’ in one geographic location and ‘impersonal spiritual forces or energy’ ‘infuses special objects, words, and rituals’.¹⁸¹

AGUSA position on ‘Spiritual Warfare’ addresses that there is no solid basis for the teaching of territorial demonic activity. There is ‘no biblical evidence that every city or geographical entity is ruled by a demon.’ Spiritual warfare is about putting on the full armour of God to stand against the devil’s schemes (Eph. 6:11-17). It is incorrect to ‘deduce a set formula for encounters with the demonic’, meaning ‘strategic-level spiritual warfare’ and prayer strategy is not applicable. However, congregations are to engage in spiritual warfare in corporate intercession, to battle the world at the systems or structural level such as government, cultural traditions. AGUSA believes in praying in the Spirit in spiritual warfare (Rom. 8:26-27; Eph. 6:18; Jude 20).¹⁸²

Western worldview and evangelical understanding of the Spirit are more sceptical regarding spiritual warfare methods, strategies, the literal interpretation and application

spiritual warfare (SLSW), consisting of Cindy Jacobs, John Dawson, president of YWAM, Jack Hayford, Argentinian evangelist Ed Silvano, and etc.

¹⁷⁹ Jacobs, *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy*. First edition published in 1991. She teaches on the call to intercede, the ministry of intercession, prayer leaders, the language of intercession, prophetic intercession, personal prayer partners, intercessory praise, corporate intercession, prayer watches and walks, possessing the gates of the enemy, reforming nations through militant intercession, and etc.

¹⁸⁰ W. Ma, ‘A “First Waver” Looks at the “Third Wave”’, pp. 189-206.

¹⁸¹ Dean C. Halverson, ‘Animism: The Religion of the Tribal World’, *IJFM*, vol 15:2 (Apr.-June 1998), pp. 60-1, https://ijfm.com/Archives/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/01_Halverson_05.pdf, accessed 18 January 2022.

¹⁸² AGUSA, ‘Spiritual Warfare and the Believer’, Position Paper, 30 July 2019, <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/Spiritual-Warfare-and-the-Believer>, accessed 6 April 2020; EndtimeRevival.pdf, accessed 7 September 2021.

of the Scripture on visions, strategies, and methods which seem to be taken out of the original biblical contexts for present literal application, fancy PDV which may not be altogether Scriptural. Man-made works and efforts undermine the gospel truth and the power of the cross as Jesus Christ has won the victory and defeated all powers of darkness. Many influenced by the Western theology do not focus much on the spirit realm and demonic powers.

In this empirical study of the Malaysian context, I see the tension between the Western influences and Asian/Malaysian understandings of the Spirit and spiritual warfare. I also see the tension between the Pentecostals and Charismatics on one side, and mainline evangelical denominations on the other, on their different theological understanding and emphases on prayer. To a certain extent, I have to disagree with the Western worldview influenced by Enlightenment, philosophy, science, secularisation, and have lesser thought on the spirit world, compared to Asian worldview.¹⁸³ In this study on contextualised Pentecostalism, I see the reality of the supernatural, the demonic forces and evil spirits. Christians ought to engage in spiritual warfare and be united in prayer for the nation, cities, communities, families, and individuals. Most critically, Asian religious context plays a vital role in accessing outside influences including the AGUSA positions. There is power in corporate prayer.

I agree with the theologians of the majority world and Asian contexts like Chan, Yeh, Hwa Yung, and Tiénoú as argued earlier, as most populations are familiar with the spirit world.¹⁸⁴ The belief in the demonic realm and ‘territorial spirits’ controlling the natural world is a reality in Malaysia due to the strong animistic influences and primal

¹⁸³ See W. Ma, ‘Asian (Classical) Pentecostal Theology in Context’, in Anderson and Tang, eds., *Asian and Pentecostal*, p. 71; Amos Yong, ‘The Demonic in Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity and in the Religious Consciousness of Asia’, in Anderson and Tang, eds., *Asian and Pentecostal*, pp. 93-128.

¹⁸⁴ See section 6.4.3 Spiritual Worldview of Malaysia and Universal Context. Chan, *Grassroots Asian Theology*, p. 156; Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas?* pp. 57-62; Yeh and Tiénoú, eds., *Majority World Theologies*.

religiosity. The state of desperation amidst national crises has driven many patriotic Malaysian Christians to engage in spiritual warfare and united prayer for the nation. This is the reason why the Third and Fourth Wave influences of prayer movement and ‘strategic level spiritual warfare’ such as solemn assembly, 24-hour prayer and worship, prayer drives, prayer walks, spiritual mapping, prayer altars, prophetic prayer, and so on are generally well-received by most Charismatics and Pentecostals in Malaysian context.

In this Malaysian context, I would argue against the Western worldview in regard to the spirit world and demonic activity. Although there is no solid Scriptural basis on ‘territorial spirits’, the demonic realm is real and the demonic activity can be anywhere. The Spirit of God is above all demonic powers and therefore many believers join in the ‘army’ to battle the enemy through spiritual warfare and intercession on behalf of Malaysia and the peoples of this land.

Therefore, contextualised Pentecostalism becomes the emancipation of churches and believers for the Spirit of God is above the power of demons and sets people free from the bondages, addictions, sin, idolatry, fear of demons, spiritual oppressions, and so on. In nationalism and patriotism, Christians believe in God’s sovereignty and supremacy in authority above the powers and principalities which have influences in the country, in politics, economy, social, public squares, communities, families, and personal lives. The emancipation of churches and believers mobilises the united prayer movement for God’s healing and restoration of the nation and peoples. Ultimately, when churches and believers join in heart, mind, and spirit to pray for the nation, I have faith that God will pour out his Spirit upon Malaysia, bringing salvation, liberty, righteousness and revival in the land. In this respect, I think contextualised Pentecostalism in Malaysia and the majority world has this to offer the Western theology.

I stress the biblical-theological truths that God listens to believers’ prayers not because of any right strategy, method, approach, way, or strategic level. God answers the

prayers of the righteous in accordance to his will. In prayer and intercession, believers ought to pray unto God before his throne of grace, instead of spending extended time fighting with the devil. Christ has already won the victory by the power of the cross, in his death and resurrection. All evil powers are subjected to Christ's authority. Christ's and the Holy Spirit's power is above the darkness, above the powers of the world, above the politics, economy, institutions, and etc. Christ's victory is complete. It is finished. God is ruler of all kingdoms and nations. God is sovereign above all kings and powers on earth. God is the creator, maker of heaven and earth, and ruler of the universe. That is the gospel of Christ and the liberating power of the cross that we proclaim. Strategies and methodologies are overemphasis on the works of man to save the nation.

I fully agree with the Pentecostal theologians' views of Chan and Onyinah in earlier part of the chapter, that all the prayer strategy and methodology actually trivialise the gospel.¹⁸⁵ In the majority world, Pentecostal movements are highly adaptable to the primal religious worldview.¹⁸⁶ This poses challenges of what Cox describes as ““excessive and unhealthy” fixation on demons’ particularly in his reference to the Third Wave influence. He cautions Christians of two opposite dangers, those not believing in the spirit world and those fixated with it.¹⁸⁷

6.5.1.4 New Terminology

In the last decade, there is a shift in Pentecostal parlance to Third Wave parlance and ethos on ‘apostolic’, ‘prophetic’, ‘mantel’, ‘army’ of intercessors, ‘strategies’, God’s plan and God’s will for the nation. There has been much blending of Charismatic and Third Wave influences among Spirit-filled churches including Pentecostals. AGM takes on

¹⁸⁵ See section 6.2.2 Global Theologians Seeing the Drifts. Chan, ‘Pentecostalism at the Crossroads’, in Synan and Yong, eds., *Global Renewal Christianity*, pp. 379-92; Onyinah, ‘Spiritual Warfare’, in Vondey, ed., *Pentecostal Theology*, pp. 322-9.

¹⁸⁶ Chan, *Grassroots Asian Theology*, p. 201.

¹⁸⁷ Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, p. 285.

these new parlances without much consideration of the presuppositions and theological differences, particularly in the ecumenical efforts in united prayer movements and national revival movements. The commonality of BHS, spiritual gifts, and the supernatural, makes it easy for Spirit-filled Christians in Malaysia to welcome new teachings, ethos, spiritual terminology, and practices from various Spirit renewals.

There is also major shift in classical Pentecostal parlance of ‘latter rain’ in reference to revivalism to a more popular Third Wave parlance of ‘fire’ underlying Suubi’s teaching. In prophetic prayer conferences conducted by Suubi, he taught the song ‘Fire, fire, fire fall on me.’ AGM newsletter reports, Malaysia’s NECF, CCM, and AGPC worked together in united prayer to celebrate Jubilee Prayer Celebration on 15 September 2013 to pray for ‘fresh fire and a new awakening with passion for God and for souls’, in conjunction with Malaysia’s 50th Malaysia day (1963-2013) on the theme ‘Thy Kingdom Come – Our God Reigns’ culminating of NECF’s annual 40-day of fasting and prayer.¹⁸⁸ These are Third Wave parlances with different ethos. With the fading of ‘Latter Rain Doctrine’ in classical Pentecostalism, ‘fire’ becomes a common terminology of Charismatic Movement and Third Wave describing the power of the Holy Spirit, and well accepted by Pentecostals although pioneers and more senior ministers who are strongly grounded in classical Pentecostalism still use the concept of ‘latter rain’ to describe revival.

Third Wave has new strategies, perspectives, and language for missions, which are very different from classical Pentecostal parlance and meaning. Wagner taught at Fuller

¹⁸⁸ AGM newsletter: AGPC, ‘Prayer First, Revival Follows’, 15 September 2013, AGM, *AG Connect*, *Energise! Extend! 2013-2014*, Issue 3/2013, p. 6, AC2013-3. Suubi prophesied, ‘1. God would stir up the hearts of many Christians to cry for freedom and revival; 2. God would raise up many more leaders; 3. Oppression and darkness would increase. Now is the time, therefore, that the Church of Malaysia must urgently pray to overcome the darkness and oppression, so as to prepare the way for revival where countless souls will come into the Kingdom miraculously. As we each commit to pray, we will assuredly see God’s revival come!’

School of World Missions where missiologists learnt to engage in ‘spiritual warfare, spiritual mapping, identifying ‘territorial spirits’, etc.’ According to Chan:

Mission is understood as power encounters; proclaiming the good news is translated into expanding the kingdom of God into enemy territory; prayer is the tool for tearing down spiritual strongholds etc. The language of warfare narrowly restricted to the demonic realm has become dominant mode of expression in mission thinking and practice among many modern Pentecostals and Charismatics.¹⁸⁹

The strong use of warfare or demonology language seems to be blaming everything on the demon. Chan suggests, ‘Against this dangerous misuse of demonology language the Christian tradition offers a richer and more nuanced vocabulary when it distinguishes between the world, the flesh, and the devil.’¹⁹⁰

I observe that the Third Wave’s new parlance in many aspects of Christianity reveal theologies, ethos, meanings, and practices which are totally different from Christian traditions as well as classical Pentecostals. Their strong influence has permeated Pentecostals and Charismatics globally, including Malaysian context and AGM. This adds to the theological drifts in AGM from the classical Pentecostalism.

6.5.1.5 New Focus on Prayer for Revival

Pentecostalism is a revival movement. However, a stark change happens to the meaning of ‘revival’ between the formative period and the contemporary times. Revival in classical Pentecostalism steers toward spreading of the gospel, igniting zeal for evangelism and missions; whereas nowadays AGM embraces the Third Wave’s revivalist movement with elaborate workings of ‘strategic level spiritual warfare’, and prophetic intercession as the ultimate way toward ‘revival’ and ‘transformation of nation’ seems to have taken over the contemporary focal point. Their strong emphasis on ‘strategic level spiritual warfare’ downplays the centrality of the gospel and Pentecostal distinctives.

¹⁸⁹ Chan, ‘Whither Pentecostalism?’, in Anderson and Tang, eds., *Asian and Pentecostal*, pp. 583-4.

¹⁹⁰ Chan, ‘Whither Pentecostalism?’, p. 584.

In 2010s, the AGM leadership has been focusing on the theme of revival especially at the present time. Most respondents in qualitative research show the desires, prayers, and yearning of AGM ministers and leaders for a spiritual revival in Malaysia as a whole and in AGM. AGM's biennial report mentioned the strong desire and anticipation for a spiritual revival in the nation.¹⁹¹

Malaysian citizens are concerned about the political instability with religious and racial tensions, economic downturn, and social issues, which stir churches to pray for God to heal the land and send revival. AGM ministers also recognise the spiritual condition of present generation, the decline in young generation responding to God's full-time call and the need for revival to reignite the zeal and passion to serve God especially in fulfilling the Great Commission.¹⁹²

In contemporary times, AGPC is leading at the frontline to engage 10,000 intercessors¹⁹³ and mobilise prayer strategies toward revival and national transformation, as taught by Suubi, whose beliefs are influenced by Third Wave, namely Wagner, Jacobs, and Bickle's IHOP. Christerson and Flory assert that the Third Wave and IHOP's belief is that the 24/7 prayer movement 'will bring revival to the world and hasten time when Jesus will come back to earth to finish the redemption of the planet.'¹⁹⁴ The primary focus on 'strategic level spiritual warfare' to bring revival and transformation of nations is totally founded on different theology and ethos about

¹⁹¹ Rev. Ong, General Superintendent's Report, 'A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement', AGM Biennial Report 2016-2018, p. 5, BR2016-2018-52-GS. See chapter four, section 4.1.3.2.6 Revival Prayer Rally.

¹⁹² Interviews with Rev. Ng; Rev. Soh; and Pastor James Quan, 10 April 2017.

¹⁹³ AGPC reported it has enlisted around 6,000 intercessors from AGM and other denominations. AGPC Revival Prayer Rally and Solemn Assembly with Apostle Julius Suubi, 6-7 November 2020, AGPC-RPR/SA2020110607.

¹⁹⁴ Christerson and Flory, *Rise of Network Christianity*, p. 37. The Third Wave associates the means to revival through strategy for spiritual warfare, with elaborate building of prayer altars to battle against different levels of demons and geographical demons or 'territorial spirits', based on the NAR manifesto of Wagner and Jacobs with their company of prophets and apostles. In fact, their influence is global permeating many Charismatic and Pentecostal movements, and Spirit-filled independent churches, there is now the fruits of similar characteristics in 'fourth wave' of new apostolic movements in many continents and nations.

revival, eschatology, and prayer compared to classical Pentecostalism's prayer for missions.

AGPC stresses its prayer initiatives are all geared towards 'revival': to mobilise daily, weekly, and monthly prayers, to establish '24/7 prayer altars', 'build prayer altars' and 'national altars' (spiritual warfare against 'territorial spirits') everywhere because of idolatry defiling the land, to unite Malaysian churches to pray, to conduct 'prayer drives'¹⁹⁵ in town, city, districts to bless the nation, conduct revival prayer rallies and solemn assemblies (based on Joel 2), focusing on 'revival' and transforming the nation through strategic prayers.¹⁹⁶ The 'mission-centred' element is no longer in the forefront.

This is a major theological shift and focus from gospel-centred and mission-centred to strategic-level spiritual warfare-centred. AGM focuses on the contemporary spiritual warfare movement for transformation of nation compared to early years where the gospel is central in transforming lives, community, culture, and nation.¹⁹⁷ AGPC reported that a good number of intercessors of 6,000 have joined the 'army' and putting strong emphasis on 'prayer altars'. In contrast, prayer is foremost in Pentecostal spirituality where missions had been the heartbeat of AGM with 'Missionary Prayer Band' at BCM from the formative period until 2016. However, prayer and intercession has shifted to the

¹⁹⁵ AGPC, 'Prayer Drives in conjunction with 100 Days Prayer Strategy', '100 Days Fast to Feast in His Presence 18 July – 25 Oct 2020', AG InTouch app, 17 July 2020, AGPC20200717-IT; 'National Prayer Drive: Blessing the Land. Genesis 15:18', 31 August 2020, 18 July 2020, AGPC20200718-IT. The prayer strategy in prayer drives is based on the understanding, 'The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly (Jos. 14:9).', and 'be strong and eat the good things of the land and leave it to your children as an everlasting inheritance (Ezra 9:11-12),' with the understanding that 'God gives promises and Abraham gives altars. In every covenant, altars convert the promises into reality.'

¹⁹⁶ AGPC Revival Prayer Rally and Solemn Assembly with Apostle Julius Suubi, 6-7 November 2020, AGPC-RPR/SA2020110607; AGPC Prayerlink email, July 2020, AGPC202007-E; AGPC, 'Combined Malaysia Prayer Altars this coming Saturday, 5th Sept 2020', AG InTouch app., 3 September 2020, AGPC20200903-IT. Scripture: Jer. 29:7, 1 Kgs 18:3. In this Covid-19 pandemic season, from July 2020, AGPC has launched 'Malaysia Prayer Altars' (formerly known as Petaling Jaya Prayer Altar) 24/7 prayer initiatives, monthly combined prayer rallies via Zoom meeting as a 'territorial altar' for corporate prayers by people from different churches to pray for the city and nation. The Scripture is related to the NAR manifesto, 'Ask of Me and I will give you the nations (Malaysia) for your inheritance ... (Psalm 2:8)'.
¹⁹⁷ This seems to run at cross-currents with the idea that BHS, glossolalia, etc. are now more for individual hearts and personal edification than for evangelism.

emphasis on ‘spiritual warfare’ and ‘prophetic intercession’ instead of praying for missions. There is also a shift from waiting on God in ‘tarrying meetings’ where believers’ focus is upon God, to spiritual warfare, ‘prophetic prayer conferences’, ‘prayer altars’, and overemphasis on demons and spirits. Advancing the gospel is not central in their agenda and manifesto compared to prayer strategies and methods as means to revival and transform nations.

In the light of the espoused theology and practice, this seems to be a redirection of focus from the original biblical mandate and commission Jesus gives his disciples, ‘The Great Commission’ (Matthew 28:19-20) to the mandate of prayer movement and building united ‘national altar’. This is a vast difference between AGM’s formative period where gospel is central, and contemporary times with lesser emphasis on the gospel due to diversification of focus. Christians ought to pray and intercede to exercise their faith in God and let his Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Christians cannot twist God’s arm to send revival using certain strategy or method of prayer. Being organised in mobilising prayer is good but the prayer structure and network is not the means to the end. God is sovereign in pouring out his Spirit and bring revival as he wills, as it is written, ‘the wind blows where it wishes’ (Jn. 3:8).

6.5.2 Prophetic Movement

In contemporary times, PDV a theme from Joel 2 – Acts 2, has shifted from the call to missions to prophetic movement with new national prophecies, new prophetic intercession, and enigmatic PDV. Teh shares that speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues (as prophetic utterances) were common practice in worship services in the early years.¹⁹⁸ In the 1990s, the global Third Wave and INC influence has

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Rev. Teh.

given prominence to prophetic prayer movement and prophetic ministries.¹⁹⁹ Jacobs leads a group of ‘prophets’ in the prophetic movement who exercise prophetic leadership over nations by releasing national prophecies.²⁰⁰ National prophecies and personal prophecies became popular and fill the void of the declining classical Pentecostal practice of prophetic utterance in the form of speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues.

6.5.2.1 New National Prophecies

National prophecies by Third Wave (NAR leaders or INC) have been penetrating Malaysian churches and Assemblies of God in this region. In ‘Prophetic Prayer Conference’ by C. Jacobs with Dominic Yeo, General Superintendent of AG Singapore in 2012, it is reported in AGM newsletter that the Lord has given ‘several specific prophecies for Malaysia’ that He will begin to do ‘outstanding exposures’ among the younger generations.²⁰¹ Notice the sociocultural dynamics of her prophecies. She emphasises on educated young people as they will be potential reformers in the ‘Seven Mountains of Culture’ to transform the nation.

I have observed that in releasing prophetic word on ‘great awakening’ or coming revival in a nation, NAR ‘prophets’ and ‘apostles’ apply a conditional clause that if it

¹⁹⁹ At the turn of the century after Wagner has passed on, a ‘Fourth Wave’ emerging from the fruits of the Third Wave influence with new prophetic and apostolic movement promotes prayer movement, institutionalised prayer, 24/7 prayer tower, prophetic prayer, ‘strategic level spiritual warfare’, and national prophecies.

²⁰⁰ AGM newsletter: “‘Reign through Prophetic Prayer’ Conference’, 2-4 August 2012, AGM, *AG Connect*, Energise! Extend! 2013-2014, Issue: Inaugural 2012, p. 3, AC2012-In.

²⁰¹ AGM newsletter: “‘Reign through Prophetic Prayer’ Conference’, 2-4 August 2012, AGM, *AG Connect*, Energise! Extend! 2013-2014, Issue: Inaugural 2012, p. 3, AC2012-In. Jacobs prophesied, “(Malaysia) will be a Holy Nation, set apart” for Him. God’s church is at “a turning point, standing as the hinge of history”, where our response to His call to prayer will determine if the door opens to all that God wants to do in Malaysia, or if it will be shut for years to come. We are in God’s Kairos time now, meaning we are at the verge of a great awakening where signs and wonders, and miracles will be released upon the nation, bringing phenomenal growth as people become open to the Lord. The Lord also spoke specifically about a revival that is going to break out in the campuses/colleges and among the young people – those less than 35 years old in our midst – who will be awakeners, revivalists and reformers like Martin Luther. The people of God were reminded that God is giving us the opportunity to live in His Spirit’s power as seen in the Book of Acts, but we must be willing. As He challenged us through His prophet, “*Transition is a serious time. It could go one way or the other. So it’s up to you to pray, it’s up to you to stand.*”” There were 850 participants. AG Singapore also has strong relations with Third Wave influencers.

does not happen, it is because the people did not pray enough. Jacobs' prophecy and declaration, 'It could go one way or the other. So it's up to you to pray, it's up to you to stand.', seems to have similarities with Suubi's and other revivalist prophesying that revival will happen in Malaysia, but if it does not happen, it is because the church did not pray enough hence God would not relent his judgment upon the nation.²⁰² Conditional prophecy becomes the practice of modern prophets and apostles in the international arena.²⁰³ In a way, conditional prophecies challenge people to pray and work toward the fulfilment of the prophecies. AGPC and united prayer movements are commissioned to pray until these national prophecies on revival and transformation in Malaysia come to pass.

In "'United to Transform" Prayer Conference' 2014, Jacobs released more national prophecies on the 'Great Awakening coming to Malaysia'²⁰⁴ and 'Malaysia shall be a singing nation.'²⁰⁵ Here, the new prophetic movement also uses Joel 2 on the 'former

²⁰² AGPC Revival Prayer Rally and Solemn Assembly with Apostle Suubi, 6-7 November 2020, AGPC-RPR/SA2020110607. For example, Suubi shared that in 2010, he came to Malaysia, fasted and prayed, he saw and prophesied that Malaysia's cup of iniquity is getting full and darkness is over the land due to sins of idolatry, so he prophesied and urged that intercession is needed to plead for God to relent his judgement upon the nation and send revival. Otherwise, the cup of iniquity will eventually be full and God's judgement will come upon the country.

²⁰³ Wagner, *Apostles and Prophets*, pp. 133-5. Conditional clause that NAR or INC 'prophets' and 'apostles' tend to use in national prophecies follows the incident of the unrealised-revival of England prophesied by Paul Cain, one of the Kansas City Prophets, in an earlier prophetic movement led by Wimber under his Vineyard covering, that has caused much disillusionment, disappointments, and distrust. This has resulted in the Ernie Gruen Controversy, a Kansas City pastor, in his critique, 'Documentation of the Aberrant Practices and Teachings of Kansas City Fellowship.' Cited Bill Jackson, *The Quest for the Radical Middle: A History of the Vineyard* (Cape Town, 1999), pp. 198-234. Perhaps this kind of prophecies on revival for a nation with seemingly added conditions and disclaimer statement are being released in national prayer conferences and revival meetings to avoid any negative implication should the revival is unrealised.

²⁰⁴ AGM newsletter: Tham, "'United to Transform" Prayer Conference', p. 7, AC2014-2. Jacobs prophesied, 'There is a Great Awakening coming to Malaysia. My glory is going to wash Malaysia from the north, to the south, from the east to the west. The Lord God said, "I am going to pour out My Spirit, the former and the latter rain; together I am going to hit schools. It's going to hit, particularly, look to the coast line of Malaysia. 'I am coming,' says the Lord, 'to visit the coast. And it's not going to stay because I am coming like a mighty tsunami of glory,' says the Lord. 'And I am coming in such a way as you cannot imagine,' says the Lord.'

²⁰⁵ AGM newsletter: Tham, "'United to Transform" Prayer Conference', p. 7, AC2014-2. Jacobs prophesied, 'Malaysia shall be a singing nation. I AM going to bring the love of music that you naturally have as a nation, says God. That I AM going to use you to worship Me and remember last night I prophesied that even God used Planetshakers in Australia, that God is going to raise up a new sound in Malaysia. There's going to be songs that can be sung around the world.' Jacobs released national prophecies that 'There is a Great Awakening coming to Malaysia,' and 'Malaysia shall be a singing nation.' AGPC received the commission 'to pray till we see God's Word come to pass'. Jacobs shared, 'The key to revival is

rain' and 'latter rain' motives, and 'I am going to pour out My Spirit' as per Joel's prophecy on revival, but the underlying theology of NAR manifesto is very different from classical Pentecostal theology. In Jacobs' prophecies, she touches on the 'gates of society', specifically the words 'young people', 'campus/colleges', 'schools', 'music', 'worship', 'coastline', etc., as per her 'Reformation Manifesto' where the church needs to reform and transform the nation by influencing the 'seven gates of society'.

In chapter three, classical Pentecostal theology based on Joel's prophecy always relates revival or the outpouring of the Spirit to BHS leading to missions and preaching of the gospel;²⁰⁶ and glossolalia relates to Spirit of prophecy and prophetic speech.²⁰⁷ Whereas, NAR and INC's national prophecies are often about revival and transformation of nations through prayer movement, 'strategic level spiritual warfare', and intercessions, calling the church to be 'awakeners', 'revivalists', and 'reformers' without mention about the gospel and missions, or even BHS. I strongly affirm that advancing the gospel should be the central focus and the Malaysian Church should not lose focus on the Great Commission in the midst of praying for revival.

6.5.2.2 New Prophetic Intercession

In prophetic intercession, Jacobs advocates the understanding of God establishing servants in specific geographical regions to prophesy and pray prophetically, warring in the heavenlies, against the powers of darkness over their areas assigned.²⁰⁸ Prophetic intercessors believe they are watchmen God raises up to take the cities and nations for transformation, by spiritual battle, overcoming 'territorial spirits', breaking strongholds,

Worship.' She also stressed, 'We are to have a strategic plan, not merely a tactical one. God wants to build a national 24-7 worship/prayer movement.' Mike shared the 'steps for the promise/prophecy to be fulfilled: 1. Identity in Christ – "I believe"; 2. Covenant relationship; 3. Strategic path – asking God for strategies, turning intercession into ACTION.'

²⁰⁶ *Apostolic Faith*, vol. 1, no. 5 (January 1907), p. 4, AF1907-1-5.

²⁰⁷ R.P. Menzies, *Speaking in Tongues*, pp. 16, 158.

²⁰⁸ Jacobs, *Voice of God*, pp. 229-56. Chapter ten on 'Warring in the Heavenlies'.

doing prophetic acts, prophetic worship, prophesying and speaking God's message against the strongholds of cities and nations. Jacobs emphasises, 'the prophetic word is catalytic in bringing changes to societies, cultures and, of course, the Church and nations.'²⁰⁹

I view that prophetic intercession and spiritual warfare is distinctly important in Malaysian context, as many Christians are having the spiritual worldview of the majority world, being sensitive to the spirit world, and believing in spiritual warfare to defeat the powers of principalities, spirits, and demons.²¹⁰ However, I must stress that even though prophetic intercession and spiritual warfare has its place, but these should never be above the authority of Scripture and the gospel. The Scripture, gospel, BHS, missions and evangelism should remain central focus in Christianity.

6.5.2.3 New Enigmatic PDV

The contemporary PDV from 1980s to present are more enigmatic as strongly influenced by the Charismatic and Third Wave's new prophetic movement, particularly 'releasing' of prophetic word and impressions, 'personal prophecy', 'words of knowledge', and having prophetic conferences. Without Acts 2 interpretation, Joel passage itself would not have a strong 'outreach' element but more on the prophetic unction. The changes in ideas and nature of PDV practised in AGM are influenced by the different ethos from the First Wave (Pentecostal), Second Wave (Charismatic renewal) to Third Wave (Neo-Charismatic Movement)²¹¹ from classical formation period to present times.

²⁰⁹ Jacobs, *Voice of God*, p. 231.

²¹⁰ See section 6.4.3 Spiritual Worldview of Malaysia and Universal Context.

²¹¹ From 1980s, personal prophecies have been made popular practice in the new prophetic movement in 1980s and 1990s by Jacobs, Bill Hamon, and the network of 'prophets' in USA. See Springer, ed., *Riding the Third Wave*. Introduction and Afterword by Wimber, pp. 246-52; Hamon, *Prophets and Personal Prophecies; Prophets and the Prophetic Movement; Prophets Pitfalls and Principles*, ed. by Paul Thigpen; Jacobs, *Voice of God*; Smail, Walker, and Wright, *Charismatic Renewal*.

There is a shift from the PDV of earlier classical formative period where PDV received are often directed to one's calling for service and missions. There is a new kind of visioning in the present times compared to the earlier kind of more literal form of PDV. Some ministers typically shared the visions they received from God now not so much in the form of imagery, but more enigmatic in the form of words, insights, ideas, desires, burdens, inner promptings, and plans.²¹² The Third Wave practice of personal prophecies which covers every aspect of life has shifted the spiritual atmosphere in many churches as more ministers are exercising their prophetic gifting and people are responding to altar-call to be prayed for and the Holy Spirit ministers through the 'release' of prophetic word by the pastor or speaker.²¹³ This has changed the nature of PDV to be enigmatic as well, more on impressions, and often the need of confirmations, and the increase in body ministry in churches.²¹⁴

The rise of prophetic movement in the 1980s and popular trend of 'releasing' personal prophecies²¹⁵ has a strong influence in Malaysia and some Spirit-filled believers are attracted to practise the gift of prophecy pretty loosely. Tan S.A. shares her concerns on the Third Wave influence happening in Malaysia where many churches (charismatic/independent) are into it but some PDV are strange and flaky.²¹⁶ As such, these kinds of PDV may not be true or reliable and all prophecies ought to be tested by

²¹² See chapter four, section 4.3 VoS.

²¹³ Interviews with Rev. L. Chin, Rev. R. Chin, Rev. Phillip Wee, 11 April 2017, and Rev. Michael Jalleh, 16 April 2017.

²¹⁴ See chapter four, section 4.3 VoS.

²¹⁵ See discussions in chapter four, section 4.3 VoS.

²¹⁶ Interview with Pastor Tan S.A. She says that some people are chasing after prophecies and dreams, and 'some people take it to mean some strange things' such as a dinner she attended, an artist/painter used 'prophetic art' for raising funds for charity, and so on. Some people's PDV are just too far-fetched and drawing people to themselves instead of to God. She expresses, 'The Third Wave is moving through Malaysia so strongly now, beyond Charismatic Movement ... a lot of independent churches are really into it right now. So, we find it [prophetic art] a little bit too far-fetched.' She affirms that God still works and speaks through PDV in great measures individually or corporately to draw people to himself and his 'divine purpose', and there is a place for that and is still happening. PDV should not be like 'fortune telling or as expression of worship.'

Scripture. Despite these new forms of PDVs, AGM pioneers like R. Ooi²¹⁷ and Yeoh²¹⁸ who have experienced the guidance of Holy Spirit through PDVs stress the importance of God-given PDV in ministry and life in today's context as the fulfilment of Joel 2 – Acts 2 continues on.

Although the nature of PDV changes over time from more vivid imagery to more enigmatic new concepts, VoS has played a significant role in the growth and development of AGM from the formative and pioneering period through to the present times. As for the influences of Third Wavers in new revelations and prophecies, my biblical-theological conviction is that although Pentecostals believe in the Holy Spirit speaking through PDV, all prophetic revelations should be subjected to the authority of the Scripture (Deut. 18:20-22; Jer. 23:16; Matt. 7:15-20; Acts 17:11; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; 1 Thess. 5:20-21; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 1 Jn. 4:1-2).

6.5.3 Apostle and Prophet Office Over Malaysia

The rise of 'apostles' and 'prophets' office over cities and nations has grown in different parts of the world with the widespread of NAR influence. In past decade, Suubi and Jacobs have been exercising their apostolic and prophetic leadership over Malaysia among many other nations.

²¹⁷ Interview with Rev. R. Ooi. The pioneer, former Assistant General Superintendent and first President of BCM asserts, 'I think this [PDV] was what made the Pentecostal different in the journey and in the experience, and that the outpouring of the Spirit according to Joel and Acts 2 continues until today ... I do think it is crucial because hearing the voice of God, seeing a vision or having a dream brings freshness to our daily experience. The church of God by and large in the Pentecostal circle needs to hear God's voice clearly, not just as individuals but corporately, just as in the book of Acts, where the prophets, teachers, and apostles heard God clearly and corporately. They moved in the direction the prophets would prophecy. It is so powerful to look at the church growth in the New Testament ... and the need to understand that God still leads us through signs and prophecies in a very fresh manner.'

²¹⁸ Interview with Rev. Yeoh. The pioneer and former EXCO member stresses, 'PDV, I think it is very, very needful. Very, very needful. Of course, there are a lot of flaky [PDV] and flaky people with a lot of funny dreams and saying or claiming that God said this to me, God told me, but yet there is always that place for the prophetic in our ministry today. I said it is a very vital, important aspect of ministry especially when you're going to undertake a very important project or a decision in your life.'

Looking into the underlying theology, Third Wave restores the fivefold ministries with the recognition of the office of ‘prophets’²¹⁹ and ‘apostles’.²²⁰ Synan listed Wagner’s postdenominational ‘New Apostolic Church’ Movement under the NAR characteristics of ‘new’ features describing the ‘New Testament model of leadership’, and ‘new wineskins’ for ‘a new church age’, and the leaders in this new authority structures are called ‘apostles’.²²¹ Christerson’s and Flory’s research reveal that the Wagner Leadership Institute (WLI) established in 1998 taught on NAR that ‘the kingdom of God will be founded on earth through the rise of apostles who will establish themselves as leaders in the “Seven Mountains of Culture”’.²²²

Cartledge from AG Australia advocates the ‘apostolic revolution’ in AG Australia, critiques that many mainstream Pentecostal denominations followed AGUSA’s evangelicalism and rejecting the ‘Latter Rain Movement’ and apostolic leadership has led to the adverse effect of ‘Pentecostal cessationists’ attitude and stifled by hierarchical or democratic denominational system.²²³ In his study, Cartledge finds that AG Australia accepts the restoration of modern-day apostles and prophets in the movement, but without

²¹⁹ Wagner, *Apostles and Prophets*, pp. 18-9.

²²⁰ Wagner, *Apostles and Prophets*, p. 19.

²²¹ Synan, ‘Streams of Renewal’, p. 377. Wagner convened a conference ‘National Symposium on the Postdenominational Church’ at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California in May 1996. 1. New name (“New Apostolic Reformation”); 2. New authority structures (the leaders are called “apostles”); 3. New leadership training (no seminaries; volunteers, homegrown staff, local Bible colleges, etc.); 4. New ministry focus (“vision driven” [toward the future] rather than “heritage driven” [toward the past]); 5. New worship style (keyboards, music ministry teams, lifted hands, loud praise, overhead projectors, etc.); 6. New prayer forms (concert prayer, singing in the Spirit, etc.); 7. New financing (“finances are abundant, giving is expected ... beneficial ... cheerful”), 8. New outreach (church planting ... compassion for the poor,” etc.)

²²² Christerson and Flory, *Rise of Network Christianity*, pp. 30-1. WLI, ‘international network of apostolic training centers’ has 39 training centres in 14 nations and thousands of students. They teach prophecy, apostolic leadership, evangelism, and social transformation. The core INC leaders teaching and practising NAR theology include Cindy Jacobs, Chuck Pierce (co-founder of WLI, and runs the World Prayer Center and Global Harvest Ministries), Che Ahn (recently took over WLI leadership), Bill Johnson, and Randy Clark. ‘Seven Mountains of Culture’ consists of ‘religion, education, family, media, arts and entertainment, and business.’ Christians will also inherit ‘the largest transfer of wealth in the history of mankind’ for them to ‘bring transformation of the world’. NAR means the shift from denominational to apostolic leadership in the Neo-Charismatic worldwide and the INC leaders function through networking.

²²³ Cartledge, *Apostolic Revolution*, p. 236. He critiques the unfortunate byproduct of AGUSA in suspecting and disputing everything of the ‘Latter Rain Movement’ and to ‘throw out the baby with the bath water’ in the reactionary policy in 1949 instead of finding the middle ground on what is acceptable.

having to use the ‘titles’ or ‘office’ due to controversy on the acceptance and recognition. He claims that the apostolic revolution has brought much blessings to AG Australia and the Pentecostal churches in the country.²²⁴

I fully agree with the fivefold ministries and spiritual gifts in Ephesians 4:11-13 but not the ‘title’ or ‘office’ claimed by many modern-day apostles and prophets as AG scholars argue. In response to the heated question on the apostolic ministry in the twenty-first century, Pentecostal scholars of Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield have studied the restorationists view, evaluated and critiqued Wagner’s and Cartledge’s theology, and examined the restoration of apostle from biblical perspective, in *He gave Apostles: Apostolic Ministry in the 21st Century*, edited by Lee.²²⁵ The AGUSA affirms its position paper on ‘Apostles and Prophets’ in 2001, recognising the modern apostolic ministry in this contemporary age but not the office and title. Menzies argues that as NAR practices ‘unusual authority’ given to individuals rather than the church or group, AGUSA position is that it ought to be functional with no need for the title.²²⁶ Hernando argues that in the NT, the apostolic authority is from God, not from human authority, but the NAR has ‘extraordinary authority’ for modern-day apostles, ignoring Pauline teaching on God’s validation on Paul’s apostleship and his imitation of Christ.²²⁷ And also the criteria for apostleship is important, for which Paul’s apostleship was questioned by some.

AGUSA believes in all ministry gifts (Eph. 4:12, 13). However, AG does not recognise the office and title of apostle or prophet, but affirms ministry function of apostles and prophets. Apostolic function is only in relation to the ‘context of breaking

²²⁴ Cartledge, *Apostolic Revolution*, pp. 54, 381-408.

²²⁵ Edgar R. Lee, ed., *He Gave Apostles: Apostolic Ministry in the 21st Century* (Springfield, MO, 2005).

²²⁶ William W. Menzies, ‘Apostolic in Doctrine’, in Lee, ed., *He Gave Apostles*, pp. 26-46. Although recognising the apostolic ministry which claimed to be more successful in missional work, generally AGUSA is still critical about how biblical is the ‘restoration’ model and still have reservation about the ‘restorationism’.

²²⁷ James D. Hernando, ‘Paul and the Scope of Apostolic Authority’, in Lee, ed., *He Gave Apostles*, p. 107.

new ground in unevangelized areas or among unreached people.’ There is no apostle or prophet in church leadership hierarchy.²²⁸

I uphold the beliefs and practices of the fivefold ministries as gifting and the effectiveness in revitalising the Malaysian churches. Believers should always be open to the exercising of spiritual gifts with discernment and judgement based on Scripture (1 Thess. 5:19, 21; 1 Cor. 14:29) and holding on to spiritual truths. It is paramount for believers to have a balanced Christian theology founded upon the infallible authority of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:21) and sound doctrines with solid biblical hermeneutics, yielding to the works of the Holy Spirit, and to keep in tandem with the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16-18).

6.5.4 Impartation of Anointing

In contemporary times, conferences with huge crowds have become a popular modern trend in a fast-paced world including Malaysia and the understanding of anointing has varied over time. In later decades, the early trait of ‘tarrying meetings’ which can be traced back to the Wesleyan-Holiness movement gradually fades, giving way to the immediacy of ‘laying on of hands’ or ‘touch’ for ‘impartation of anointing’, a practice of the Charismatic Movement and Third Wave, which has its roots from the ‘Latter Rain Movement’.²²⁹ The core value of this movement was the balanced authority one has over others.

²²⁸ AGUSA, ‘Apostles and Prophets’, Position Paper, 6 August 2001, <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/Apostles-and-Prophets>, accessed 6 April 2020. See AGUSA, Scott Temple, ‘The Hyperization of Christianity’, 19 July 2015, <https://news.ag.org/en/Features/The-Hyperization-of-Christianity>, accessed 24 July 2020. AG addresses unbalanced doctrines, excesses, and heretical teaching in the ‘hyperization of Christianity’: Hyper-Faith (1950s) particularly the ‘Latter Rain Movement’, Hyper-Authority (1960) of prosperity gospel, ‘Name it and Claim it’, Hyper-Hope (1980) of ‘Dominionism’ or ‘Kingdom Now’, Hyper-Joy (1990) or ‘Laughing Revival’, and the heresy Hyper-Love (2000) of universalism based on love and support same-sex marriage. The first four hyper-movements or ‘waves of doctrinal hype’ with degrees of heresy impacted many charismatic and Spirit-filled churches.

²²⁹ See chapter three, section 3.4.1.2.4 ‘The Latter Rain’ Doctrine.

In contemporary times, interviews reveal there is no longer ‘tarrying meetings’ for BHS but replaced with the modern trend of large conferences mostly organised at national level or larger urban churches to equip pastors, leaders, and members, on ministries, such as prophetic prayer conferences, church growth, leadership, contemporary issues, and ministerial skills.²³⁰ This is the modern global trend of having renowned individuals as conference speakers. Wright’s studies reveal that one of the main elements of the Third Wave is to ‘equip the saints’, empowering all to be used by God, the ‘impartation of spiritual anointing to others through prayer and touch, and the teaching of methodologies for healing.’ There was a shift from the emphases of Pentecostalism to seeking ‘more dynamic paradigms for the Spirit’s work. Wright states, ‘The phrase “baptism of the Spirit” was gradually displaced by the more functional and flexible notion of “anointing”’.²³¹

Modern conferences with large crowds and firm schedules have time limitations for the speaker to pray for each one. For pragmatic reason, the contemporary style of ‘equipping the saints’ in new, fast, and efficient way is to line the people up to receive the ‘laying on of hands’ by the minister at the altar for the ‘impartation of anointing’, like ‘walking through the prayer tunnel’ in a leadership workshop²³² and ‘fire tunnel’ in ‘Fire Conference’.²³³ These creative trends of anointing leaders and conference participants are introduced by international guest speakers.

²³⁰ Collective interview data: SP-5, CA-37, CD-74, WC-22, SI-1, SC-66, CA-28, SC-57. See chapter four, section 4.1.1.1.3 Early Traits and Practices of AGUSA.

²³¹ Smail, Walker, and Wright, *Charismatic Renewal*, p. 72.

²³² AGM newsletter: Jewel Yip, ‘Refuse to Compromise, Refuse to be Indifferent & Re-fuse with God with Asia Pacific Youth Alive Conference (APYAC)’, 5-7 December 2012; and Phinehas Mathius, ‘Giving Our Best to God: National Worship Conference’, 26 October 2012, AGM, *AG Connect*, Energise! Extend! 2013-2014, Issue 1/2013, pp. 2, 3, 5, AC2013-1. For example, ‘National Worship Conference’ with workshops for 200-300 participants, and Asia Pacific Youth Alive Conference (APYAC) with strategic leadership workshop, for youth representatives from 20 nations in 2012, with the newer practice of ‘walking through the prayer tunnel’; ‘leadership conference’ during AG ministers’ retreat. National conferences with international guest speakers, especially INC leaders are becoming a regular feature of AGM and Spirit-filled churches alike as it is a global trend for modern Pentecostal and charismatic churches alike. AGM has organised many conferences at national level over recent decade.

²³³ AGM newsletter: ‘Ignite the Fire! A morning with Nathan Morris’, 12 May 2014, AGM, *AG Connect*, Together We ... 2014-2016, Issue 2/2014, p. 5, AC2014-2. Morris received a vision from God about

The contemporary method of immediacy or instant ‘impartation of anointing’ just by a ‘touch’ especially in big conferences to ‘equip the saints’ has drifted much from the early Pentecostal practice of ‘tarrying’ where the waiting and focus was totally on God. It is not just the length of prayer time *per se*, but the whole attitude toward God’s presence, BHS, etc. As Anderson describes, early Pentecostals spent days, weeks, and years, waiting in prayer for BHS, the ‘promise of the Father’, and that was the only way.²³⁴ There is no short cut or quick fix to earnestly seeking and waiting on God in developing an intimate relationship with God, and in receiving the Spirit’s empowerment and anointing from God. Indeed, there is the real presence and power of God in the ‘laying on of hands’ and the ‘anointing of oil’, and it is a biblical practice in prayer of healing, anointing, and blessings, as early Pentecostals believed and practised. However, Christians today living in a fast-paced world should not pursue or rely on man and conferences to receive a ‘touch’ or ‘laying on of hands’ for anointing, spiritual gifts, and blessings as many do for God is the giver.

In a postmodern society, busy lifestyle and time constraint also weakens the practice of extended hours in worship, prayer, and fasting. And due to time stress of members, some church camps are even held in alternate years.²³⁵ Besides, C. Wong reasons that church growth with multiple weekend services limits the time to pray and practice the spiritual gifts, making it less common in general.²³⁶ Modern lifestyles with all their

Malaysia. He saw ‘a bowl-shaped arena full of people, and the message that over 100,000 people from various faiths will come to know the true and living God. A mighty harvest would be coming to Malaysia!’ He challenged the ministers and pastors to ‘preach about the blood of Christ and the fire of the Holy Spirit’ to bring in the harvest and Pentecostal fires. He operates in gifts of the word of wisdom and knowledge, and releases prophetic words as he ministers in the power of the Holy Spirit. The annual ‘Fire Conference’ and healing rallies by evangelist Nathan Morris with the first conference ‘Ignite the Fire’ since 2014. In the recent ‘Fire Conference’ 2019, with time constraint and many participants, applying practical methods, Morris also used a similar trend of ‘impartation’ of anointing and ‘revival fire’ like the ‘fire tunnel’ concept of Charismatic and Third Wave influence. Instead of having two lines of people lined up to form the ‘fire tunnel’, the speaker did the ‘impartation of anointing’ with the whole audience in BCM auditorium queued up in a long and fast moving line to be laid hand upon by him with just a quick ‘touch’ on everyone in 2019 (which I attended).

²³⁴ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, p. 66.

²³⁵ Collective interview data: TC-26, TC-27. See chapter five, section 5.4 Sociocultural Factors.

²³⁶ Interview with Rev. C. Wong.

demands and modern churches with all their programming do not leave time for ‘tarrying meetings’ and earlier Pentecostal practices. These are some reasons the Third Wave’s emphases on equipping the saints and impartation of anointing are popular in contemporary times.

Although there has been seemingly much enculturation of external theological influences particularly from the revivalist movements, AGM needs to consider its biblical-theological implications. All the new teachings, underlying theologies, emphases and practices in the contemporary times have changed and drifted much from the classical Pentecostal emphases. Indeed, the tensions and gaps between the espoused and current practices have been increasing over the decades. Theological tensions have also grown considering the underlying theologies of the Charismatic and Third Wave practices which have blended into the AGM movement.

6.6 Summary of the Findings

Theologically, AGM has progressed and developed over six decades with much diversification in the expression of the Christian faith. AGM has gradually shifted from a revival movement and missionary movement in the earlier decades to having strong focus on prayer movement in contemporary times, especially from 2010 to present. There are both positive contributions and negative elements in the changes.

For AGM, there is a valid enculturation, expansion and deepening in the understanding of Christian theology and richer biblical hermeneutics in the embrace of the evangelical family since 1980s. However, becoming more evangelical in the midst of modernisation and diversification of emphases in church growth process, Pentecostal fervour has been decreasing over the decades with lesser emphases and practice on the classical Pentecostal distinctives. In the increasing gap, newer waves of Spirit renewals have been streaming in as AGM embraces the influences from the charismatic and hyper-

charismatic movements due to the commonality of being Spirit-filled, seeking for revival and to reignite the emphasis on the power and works of the Holy Spirit. In valid enculturation and valid responses, there has been the widening spectrum of the understanding of the Spirit, spiritual gifts, and strong focus on spiritual warfare from the dominant waves. The pressing need of AGM and the Malaysian churches seeking revival and transformation of nation since last decade has fostered stronger unity among churches through prayer movement.

Whilst there are positive contributions and influences among the larger family of Christianity interdenominationally or internationally, there have been theological drifts and tensions in AGM over time with the influx of new teachings and practices which differ from classical Pentecostalism. Although AGM upholds the SFT, there have been changes from Pentecostal fervour and gospel-centred to emphases on spiritual gifts, bodily ministry, and national revival movement. There is a drifting from the purpose of BHS as empowerment for life and service or missions to blessings, impartation of anointing, and new theological influences from the Third Wave, particularly new concepts of prophecies and ‘strategic-level spiritual warfare’ for revival and transformation of nation in contemporary times.

Pioneers are seeing AGM as ‘a mixed bag’ of hybridisation of external theological influences, while global theologians are seeing these blending and theological drifts in the global Pentecostalism. There have been much morphing and mutations of Pentecostalism due to evangelicalisation, charismatisation, Third Wave influences and its fruits. The global dominant waves of Spirit renewals have influenced AGM and Charismatic or Spirit-filled churches in Malaysia. In the midst of AGM’s progress and development, there are theological drifts from the classical Pentecostal’s key theological themes of Joel 2 – Acts 2 with new understanding, concepts, and different underlying theologies. All these resulted in a blurred Pentecostal identity and boundaries of

Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Spirit-filled churches over time. Hence, many participants show concern on the importance of preserving AGM's Pentecostal heritage and identity in the midst of changes.

In conclusion, the new knowledge generated is the theoretical explanations of ecumenical diversity, pragmatism, and relevance, in the theological development of contextualised Pentecostalism in Malaysia. These theoretical themes determine the reasons AGM has been adopting certain theologies, strategies, methodologies, and practices from Charismatic and Third Wave NAR while still professing the espoused classical Pentecostal theology. In contemporary times, there seems to be stronger emphases on new methods and practices than to examine the presuppositions of these external teachings and theological influences. There have also been stronger international and interdenominational relationships in the country.

Although revivalism and prayer movement have its crucial place and significance in mobilising prayer and intercession for the nation, these emphases should not overshadow the centrality of the gospel and missions which is Pentecostal distinctive. Pentecostal spirituality has always been about the centrality of BHS and missiology rather than on prophecy and demonology. Classical Pentecostals engage in exorcism and spiritual warfare (no strategic levels), but the main focus is the Great Commission. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ that brings transformation. Through it all, I advocate the upholding of a balanced Christian theology founded upon Scripture and remaining open to the workings of the Holy Spirit is paramount for Christianity.

Chapter Seven

Stage 4 – The Way Forward

7.1 Introduction

As analysed in earlier finding chapters, the EXCO is visioning a new image of CPCM in the following aspects: reigniting the Pentecostal fervour and spiritual vitality of AGM in contemporary times; progressing in modernisation and relevance to current generation and society; employing new missional strategy in church planting and social concern ministry; focusing on revival prayer rally; and preserving the Pentecostal heritage or ‘DNA’.¹ The changes over six decades encompasses some evolutions, valid enculturation in relation to external theological influences, and theological drifts with increasing tension between holding on to the classical Pentecostalism and becoming relevant in the contemporary context. If the gap is wide, Pentecostal spirituality would be endangered.

Stage 4 on the way forward aims to propose the future direction in raising the new generations in AGM with Pentecostal spirituality which ignites the missional passion in fulfilling the Great Commission in this twenty-first century. Stage 4 envisages to answer the sub-question: What will be AGM’s transformative role and practices in the future as it continues to develop its theology and to shape the strategies of its mission for the next generation? In this chapter, I will make suggestions on significant strategies and transformative roles in four domains, namely spirituality, identity, education, and holistic missions, to resolve the tension and move forward for the next generation. The suggestions are my assertions based on the combination of views from participants, Pentecostal theologians and scholars.

¹ See chapter four, section 4.1.3 Contemporary – CPCM and EXCO’s Vision. Pentecostal pneumatology includes other emphases such as spiritual gifts, spiritual warfare, divine healing, and so on, but this dissertation will focus on the key theological themes from Joel 2 – Acts 2 in relation to AGM context.

Contemporary Pentecostalism in Malaysia involves the importance of upholding the contemporary Pentecostal spirituality, preserving the Pentecostal identity, enhancing the transformative role of Pentecostal theological education, and progressing in holistic and integral missions. The four domains in the way forward are selected based on the findings in previous chapters and the following reasons: There has been a general decline in classical Pentecostal distinctive practices and fervour with the widening spectrum of emphases within AGM and the influx of global trends and influences over recent decades. As such, maintaining Pentecostal spirituality is paramount in the life of Spirit-baptised church and believers in contemporary times. Spiritual discipleship is far-reaching for the next generation to have strong beliefs, articulations, and practices of Pentecostal spirituality and distinctives. Pentecostal theological education at Bible colleges and church level is vital in raising ministers, leaders, and believers with strong conviction in Pentecostal theology, spirituality, and practices. Holistic missions are the outward expression of the Spirit's empowerment in fulfilling the Great Commission in new frontiers and bringing transformation. A holistic theological understanding and spiritual experiences of the Pentecostal distinctives of BHS and glossolalia enable the new generation in AGM to convincingly advocate and effectively practice its Pentecostal spirituality which propels them to missional passion and engagement in this twenty-first century.

Moving forward requires unity in diversity and synergy within AGM. There are four elements of diversity based on the findings: Generations, denominations (as AGM is a movement, there are ministers and members from various denominational background), contexts (Malaysian sociocultural and religious contexts are complex and diverse), and influx of diverse theological trends. Therefore, theological and practical suggestions are made in the light of these diverse elements which need to be united through the four domains of spirituality, identity, education, and holistic missions in order for AGM to

thrive as a CPCM in the present and future. The unity in diversity can be achieved through the synergy of transformative roles of the AGM leadership, national Bible colleges, and churches.

My overarching proposal on the way forward in reducing the tension and gap between Pentecostal beliefs and current practice is coming back to the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 suited for the present and future contexts. This chapter addresses the theological themes of ‘contemporary Pentecostal spirituality’ based on Joel 2 – Acts 2 in the present setting. Although the understanding and practice may evolve through the century, the theological themes from Joel 2 – Acts 2 remains the core of AGM’s Pentecostal theology, identity, and spiritual heritage from classical to contemporary. In remaining Pentecostal, AGM has to uphold the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 as Pentecostalism continues as a revival movement until Jesus comes again!² There are many aspects of Christian theology in emphases and practice today, but neglecting or digressing from the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 means losing the Pentecostal theology, spirituality, distinctives, and identity.

7.2 Contemporary Pentecostal Spirituality: Centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2

Without the outpouring of the Spirit and centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2, there is no Pentecostalism. I suggest the way to concretise the espoused Pentecostal theology to maintain AGM’s DNA and Pentecostal distinctives is to emphasise on a ‘contemporary Pentecostal spirituality’ based on modern holistic understanding of the doctrinal distinctives and key theological themes from Joel 2 – Acts 2 beyond the limited classical view.³ The limited classical view on BHS and glossolalia has mainly caused global Pentecostals and AGM to embrace many external theological influences and trends which

² Micro level action plan is not intended in this discussion as it is the jurisdiction of the autonomous churches within the AGM fellowship.

³ See chapter five, section 5.3.1.2 Limitation of Classical View on BHS and Glossolalia.

dilute the Pentecostal fervour. Earlier chapters reveal that over time, the gap between Pentecostal identity and practices have grown wider in the midst of diversity and modernisation. As AGM upholds the classical Pentecostal spirituality derived from the biblical and spiritual experiences of the key theological themes of Joel 2 – Acts 2, I suggest that AGM maintains its Pentecostal spirituality in contemporary context by embracing the holistic Pentecostal theology with broadened understanding of the distinctives developed by contemporary theologians. This is not discarding the classical view but enhancing and broadening of Pentecostal’s doctrinal distinctives. Perhaps it will be much easier to be said than done, as AGM’s trajectory demonstrates.

I propose that AGM embraces the ‘contemporary Pentecostal spirituality encompassing the holistic theological understanding of the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 and the centrality of BHS and glossolalia. Contemporary Pentecostal spirituality is key to Pentecostal living. Firstly, it produces love, zeal, and passion for God and his Kingdom expressed through the preaching of the full gospel and spiritual experiences; secondly, it directs Pentecostal ecclesia, missions, and ministry for the extension of his Kingdom. The centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2, BHS and glossolalia, and their related key theological themes and practices are crucial in maintaining holistic Pentecostal theology and spirituality. Theology affects the overall perspective, outlook, and practice of missions, church, and ministries in contemporary context.

Since AGM’s formative period to contemporary times, the classical Pentecostal theology and practices have been professed and upheld, as stated in the SFT, derived from the foundation scripture of Joel 2 – Acts 2. The fulfilment of Joel 2 in Acts 2 is affirmed by NT scholars like Marshall, Peterson, Barrett, and others, as well as Pentecostal scholars namely Arrington, Horton, among others.⁴

⁴ Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 73; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ed. by Carson, p. 40; Barrett, *Acts*, p. 135; Arrington, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 27; Horton, *Book of Acts*, p. 38. The centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 on the outpouring of the Spirit is not just fundamental in early Pentecostalism and AGM’s formative

AGM, like its spiritual forebears in the West, understands Joel 2 and Acts 2 as foundational to their being Pentecostal, that BHS accompanied by glossolalia being part of the fulfilment of the outpouring of the Spirit. Ministers especially pioneers view the relevance of Joel 2 – Acts 2 in every generation and the classical Pentecostal distinctives as AGM’s DNA in missions, ministry, and service. They believe in the centrality of BHS, that although AGM has progressed and developed over the six decades, the movement still needs the ‘supernatural dimension of the Holy Spirit’. The reality of spiritual experiences of BHS is for today and the outpouring continues in the last days.⁵

Theologically, the declining practices of Pentecostal distinctives discussed in Stages 1-3 brings AGM to re-emphasise the Pentecostal fervour in present times, but there is crucial need to steer the movement toward a holistic biblical-theological understanding of the Pentecostal distinctives. Contemporary theologians have over the decades examined the limitations of the classical view on BHS and glossolalia in Luke-Acts and have developed modern integrated hermeneutical approach of the whole Scripture and pneumatology which have broadened and expanded the doctrinal distinctives. It is only in embracing the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 and Pentecostal distinctives theologically, then AGM is able to uphold its Pentecostal spirituality and practice as a CPCM.

7.2.1 Contemporary Pneumatology on Holistic Doctrinal BHS

I strongly suggest that the first way forward in contemporary Pentecostal spirituality is to establish a holistic doctrinal BHS beyond the limited classical view of Luke-Acts pneumatology. This requires the transformative roles of the Bible colleges and churches

period, but also for contemporary Pentecostals in these last days as the outpouring of the Spirit will continue in greater measure until Jesus comes again. The outpouring of the Spirit is associated with Spirit-baptism. In the New Testament and in intertextual reading of the Scriptures, ‘I will pour out my Spirit’ in Joel’s prophecy 2:28-32 signifies God pouring out the ‘Holy Spirit’ in Spirit-baptism, a new and powerful way, as adapted and affirmed by Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21; 2.1-2).

⁵ Interviews with Rev. Dr S. Ng, Rev. R. Ooi, Rev. J. Ooi, Rev. R. Chin, Rev. P. Lee; and Rev. Brian Ranjan, 20 April 2017.

in embracing, teaching, and practising the broadened doctrinal distinctives as has been developed by contemporary Pentecostal theologians. The Pentecostal distinctive, particularly the BHS is neglected to a certain extent in the life of second-generation Pentecostals.⁶

R.P. Menzies argues that traditional pneumatology was heavily Pauline which is the Spirit's work on soteriological function in conversion–initiation and spiritual gifts. He makes a clear distinction that Pentecostal theology based on Luke-Acts is BHS being the Spirit's empowerment for witness which is solely missiological. Menzies has not mentioned the soteriological function in Luke's pneumatology but has brought Luke-Acts Spirit-empowerment to enrich the existing pneumatological understanding.⁷ Indeed, this distinct classical view on Luke-Acts for Spirit-empowerment has fuelled the Pentecostal missions over the past century. However, demarcation between biblical texts with specific pneumatological functions leads to a limited view.

In recent decades, there has been advanced hermeneutical development of the broader view by contemporary theologians. Recent studies shed new light on BHS in a holistic integrated approach on the Scripture and pneumatology, and a fuller biblical-theological ramification than the limited classical view of receiving 'empowerment for witness' that is confined to Luke-Acts pneumatology. In the development of a more holistic understanding of BHS, the central doctrine in Pentecostal theology, contemporary theologians, Macchia, Chan and Turner, use the integrated approach on Scripture, NT pneumatology, especially the importance of Pauline pneumatology, and the larger framework of trinitarian theology, which has broadened and enhanced the classical view

⁶ Collective interview data: CA-40.

⁷ Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield, 1994), 235-9. See Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, pp. 85-7.

of BHS, with broader meaning and theological significance than empowerment for witness in Luke-Acts.⁸

Macchia argues the centrality of BHS distinctive in global Pentecostal theology and identity.⁹ In the broader context, Macchia views BHS as the ‘crown jewel’ and a theophanic experience of God, ‘*being in Christ*’ and ‘*functioning in Christ in the power of the Spirit*’.¹⁰ This function, presence and illumination, was the traditional pneumatology, often ignoring the equipping aspect, which Pentecostalism recovered.¹¹ Chan advocates BHS and glossolalia must be interpreted and understood with integrated pneumatology within the larger framework of trinitarian theology.¹² And Turner, also examined the broader emphases of the Spirit from John and Pauline pneumatology.¹³ These hermeneutical developments do not contradict the classical views, but broadens, strengthens, and enhances the central doctrines of Pentecostals.

In fact, the SFT have been expanded over the years to include more than just empowerment for service and missions as stated therein. There is a broader understanding of BHS which is the deepening relationship with God.¹⁴ Pentecostals should not depart from the statements but actually affirming the expanded statements and continue to

⁸ See chapter three, section 3.1 BHS for details on holistic understanding of BHS.

⁹ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p. 21.

¹⁰ Macchia, ‘Sighs Too Deep for Words’, pp. 55-60. See Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, pp. 14-5, 64, 72-80, 86-7; Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, pp. 12, 49; Turner, *Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, pp. 37-56, 110. Macchia expands BHS’ boundaries of theological significance in the eschaton and the whole process of soteriology, encompasses regeneration, sacramental, empowerment, sanctification, koinonia, and eschatological; covering the concept of the kingdom of God overarching a whole range of theological themes of the Spirit-baptism and its centrality in Pentecostal theology.

¹¹ R.P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*.

¹² Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, pp. 55-6; Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, pp. 12, 49. Chan stresses that the doctrine of BHS relates to the revelational encounter and relationship with the triune God, and that power is only a result of that, and the ‘last days’ being the age of the Spirit in the full development of the trinitarian doctrines.

¹³ Turner, *Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, pp. 37-56, 110.

¹⁴ AGM, Annex 1, p. 94, AGM-CBLr20160531. BHS includes, ‘experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (Jn. 7:37-39; Acts 4:8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Heb. 12:28), an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:42), and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost (Mk. 16:20).’

emphasise on BHS and praying for people to be Spirit-baptised more regularly. BHS has to once again be prominent in church services, cell groups, and ministries.

The theological response to the limitation of classical view of BHS and glossolalia is to look at the broader framework of the purposes and works of these central doctrines developed through modern biblical hermeneutics. There is a broader framework of the purposes and works of the BHS but has not been much emphasised in AGM over the decades. AGM should develop an expanded or revised teaching of BHS so that the adherents in movement wide would have a more developed understanding of BHS and deepen their relationship with God. It is pivotal to understand and teach the ‘contemporary Pentecostal theology’ which is the broader and fuller biblical-theological perspectives on the Pentecostal’s distinctive.

Theologians emphasise that BHS is the ‘Crown Jewel of Pentecostal distinctives’,¹⁵ as it is a theophanic experience of being filled with the presence of the God, a spiritual encounter and relationship with the triune God.¹⁶ Chan and Macchia argue that Pentecostals tend to emphasise on experience but limited in explaining ‘the “revelation” of the triune God, a “theophany” of the God of history and the eschaton’ as the narrowly defined ‘endowment of power for life and service’.¹⁷ As theological studies advances, the understanding on the centrality of BHS and its theological ramifications has deepened and widened exceedingly, covering the whole concept of the kingdom of God. BHS is the central doctrine of AG worldwide and many other Pentecostal-charismatic denominations alike, its fullest meaning has to be examined, understood, established, and the ‘theophany’ of the Trinity experienced by all.

Therefore, national Bible colleges in preparing ministers and leaders, should include the expanded contemporary Pentecostal theology in the Pneumatology and

¹⁵ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p. 20.

¹⁶ Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, p. 49; Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*.

¹⁷ Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, p. 10; Macchia, ‘Sighs too deep for words’, pp. 47-73.

Pentecostal Foundation courses, as well as providing effective practical sessions on Pentecostal distinctives. It is not just imparting the knowledge but the whole spiritual experience, conviction, and spirituality, so that they can lead the movement and disciple churches in Pentecostal spirituality.

Participants suggest that church pastors ought to emphasise more on Pentecostal teachings and practice through church education, discipleship, ministries, and life groups, as well as giving room for the Holy Spirit's leading, working, and manifestation in church services, prayer meetings, and small group fellowship. There is a need for the relevant practice of Pentecostal distinctives in contemporary times. Churches need to have 'inhouse terms' in ways visitors can understand, such as Q&A print out with Scriptural references. Pastors need to preach and demonstrate BHS, churches need to practise it regularly, the Bible colleges need to stay Pentecostal and emphasise on Pentecostal ministry. AGM needs to bring back waiting in the presence of God in this fast-paced contemporary world as there is no short cut to Pentecostal spirituality and the practice of spiritual gifts.¹⁸

7.2.2 Contemporary Pneumatology on Indispensable Glossolalia

I suggest that the second most valuable way forward in Pentecostal spirituality is to uphold the indispensable glossolalia in belief and practice with the broadened functions of glossolalia beyond the limited classical view of evidence. Glossolalia has to be emphasised, theologically understood, and spiritually experienced in order for members to have spiritual conviction in practising it.¹⁹ Pentecostal theologians affirm AGUSA's distinctive doctrine on glossolalia being the initial physical sign or evidence of BHS.²⁰ In

¹⁸ Collective interview data: WL-25, WB-35, WC-52, WC-35, WC-22.

¹⁹ Chapter three focuses more on the espoused classical Pentecostal view on glossolalia. This chapter on the way forward focuses on the contemporary Pentecostal spirituality.

²⁰ See McGee, ed., *Initial Evidence*; and Menzies and Horton, *Bible Doctrines*. 'Evidence' is dated language, although it still remains in the title of AGUSA's and AGM's SFT no 8.

fact, speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues were common practice in worship services in the early years.²¹ Interviews show that nowadays, many churches do not practice glossolalia in main services anymore, but focus more on praise and worship, and order of service, and there is not much spontaneity in the leading of the Holy Spirit.²²

Contemporary Pentecostal theologians study the holistic biblical-theological understanding of function of glossolalia being more than just an initial physical evidence of BHS and spiritual gift. Chan discusses BHS in relation to glossolalia as initial evidence and suggests the integrated or canonical approach of the whole of Scripture²³ and New Testament pneumatology of both Lukan and Pauline to develop and establish the fuller meaning of the central Pentecostal doctrines, namely BHS and glossolalia.²⁴

Contemporary scholars like R.P. Menzies, Arrington, Horton, Chan, and Fee, have studied other spiritual dimensions of glossolalia, which give a broader understanding of this Pentecostal distinctive. It is not restricted to ‘initial evidence’ of BHS, but also include other dimensions of Christian spirituality. There are at least four developments: Firstly, the broader function and dimensions of glossolalia in prayer and sacrament. Chan clearly identifies, ‘Initial evidence and not Spirit baptism as such as in fact the Pentecostal’s distinguishing mark.’²⁵ Chan distinguishes dual functions of glossolalia, which is tongues as initial evidence of BHS, and tongues as “prayer language” or “sacrament” of the Spirit’s presence.²⁶

Secondly, glossolalia is the inaugural signs of the prophetic Spirit. Some scholars like Menzies, Stronstad, and Arrington, view speaking in different tongues is prophetic

²¹ Interview with Rev. Teh.

²² Collective interview data: CD-75, CD-78.

²³ Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, p. 49.

²⁴ Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, pp. 44-6.

²⁵ Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, p. 3.

²⁶ Chan, ‘The Language Game of Glossolalia’, p. 94. See Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, p. 13. Glossolalia has more evidential value than the classical Pentecostal’s concept as the sign of BHS in a passive dimension, but it is also prayer which is the active dimension of the Christian life. There are some classical Pentecostal distinctions between the initial BHS evidenced by glossolalia and the use of glossolalia as prayer need in the spiritual life of believers.

speech given by the Spirit through BHS and it is a fulfilment of Joel's prophecy that in the last days all of God's people will prophesy.²⁷ However, some scholars are not agreeable to the view of glossolalia being a prophetic speech.²⁸ The Spirit of prophecy is significantly linked to PDV as prophesied by Joel that believers do receive revelation from the Spirit through prophecy, dreams, and visions. Thirdly, the broader understanding of glossolalia is derived from other related Scriptures which reveals that glossolalia plays prominent roles in Christian spirituality.²⁹ Fourthly, the significance of glossolalia is not just found in classical Pentecostalism as they claim discontinuity with the larger Christian tradition, but actually both BHS and glossolalia have roots in the larger Christian spirituality and Christian tradition even centuries earlier. Chan reveals that the Catholic charismatics find the root of their experiences of BHS and glossolalia in their own

²⁷ R.P. Menzies, *Speaking in Tongues*, pp. 16, 158. Menzies affirms, 'In Acts 2.17-18 (cf. Acts 2.4) speaking in tongues is specifically described as a fulfilment of Joel's prophecy that in the last days all of God's people will prophesy' and are 'end-time prophets that Joel anticipated.' Glossolalia is 'inspired speech associated with worship and prophetic pronouncements.'

²⁸ Arrington, *Acts*, p. 23; Horton, *Acts*, p. 33. More specifically for Pentecostals, Arrington argues that the inaugural signs of the prophetic Spirit (vv. 17-18) are the Spirit's enabling or spiritual experience of 'speaking in different tongues' (vv. 9-11), which Horton describes as the utterance given by the Spirit and not from the minds.

²⁹ Fee, 'Toward a Pauline Theology of Glossolalia', pp. 24, 28-9. See Fee, *Gospel and Spirit*, p. 98; R.P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, pp. 246, 254-5; R.P. Menzies, *Speaking in Tongues*, pp. 157-68. The Pauline texts shows that Paul terms glossolalia as 'speaking in tongues' in 1 Corinthians 12 – 14, as 'unintelligible utterances inspired by the Spirit' (12:30; 13:1; 14:2, 4, 6, 13, 18, 23, 27, 39) and not known human languages (xenolalia) as tongues need interpretation (14:6-19, 28; 12:10, 30). Gordon Fee summarised Paul's teachings on glossolalia in 1 Corinthians, as Spirit-inspired utterance (1 Cor. 12:7-11, 14:2); not likely an earthly language; unintelligible speech (14:14, 14:16) which has to be interpreted in public; regulated for community use (14:27-28; 14:32) and speaker not in 'ecstasy' or 'out of control'; speech is directed to God in 'prayer, song, blessing (praise) and thanksgiving' (14:2, 5, 28); Paul discourages use in public but encourages intelligible words instead (14:1, 3-5, 6, 9, 12, 16, 19, 24-25, 28); and 'a gift for private prayer' for edification (14:4). Fee also explains, the book of Acts and Pauline theology provides a twofold understanding of glossolalia which is a 'sign', 'initial physical evidence' of BHS, and 'spiritual gift', 'prayer language', or 'a message in tongues'.²⁹ Fee challenged the initial evidence doctrine and said that it is not 'normative' but 'repeatable'. R.P. Menzies disagreed with Fee and defended the initial evidence as Luke's pneumatology expressed speaking in tongues as the gift of Pentecost or BHS, and Pauline pneumatology taught that tongues is for personal edification for Spirit-filled believers, thus tongue is a sign of being filled with the Spirit. This theological debate has caused quite a stir among the Pentecostals. R.P. Menzies highlights the significances of glossolalia in a more holistic Christian spirituality derived from Mark, Luke-Acts, and Paul's letters. He draws out six importance of the gift of tongues: as experiential sign of connection to the apostolic church, Christians' identity as end-time prophets as prophesied by Joel, signifying the diversity of multiethnicity united in Christ, 'a powerful vehicle of communication' and intimacy with God reminds believers of his presence, reminds believers the need to rely on the Holy Spirit, and reminds believers of a transcendent God who desires to communicate with them.

spiritual tradition.³⁰ It is relevant to study these spiritual experiences before the Pentecostal revivals to establish more coherent theology on these central doctrines.

Ultimately, I agree with contemporary theologians that there is a need to develop a coherent theological explanation for this central doctrine of glossolalia, which is very lacking in churches today. Although glossolalia is a distinguishing Pentecostal distinctive, the development of this central doctrine is not without challenge.³¹ A survey conducted by Lewis in the USA reveals that initial evidence being the main theological reason many Pentecostal scholars left their denomination.³² Chan explains that this experiential truth has not been adequately defended by traditional proof-texts, but it is the very core element of Pentecostal experience³³ and remains in the SFT until present. According to Anderson, today, glossolalia is believed to be for personal edification, but many Pentecostals seldom practice speaking in tongues.³⁴ Although there had been debates on the doctrine of glossolalia as the initial evidence of BHS since early Pentecostalism until today, classical Pentecostals mainly AG, hold on to this fundamental truth.³⁵ And while the SFT is accepted in theory, the distinctive doctrine of the initial evidence is either not taught or not as extensively practised.

³⁰ Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, pp. 11-2. These will be discussed in section 7.3.2 Pentecostal Discipleship.

³¹ Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, pp. 3, 5-6. Studies mostly in the USA have shown that even before and during the formative years and development of the SFT in the first half of twentieth century, the 'initial evidence' doctrine has been disputed in the USA and also discussed by Pentecostal scholars in the second half of the century. This in fact being the main cause for its split from the Holiness movement. However, the evangelical and mainline Protestantism seem to have stronger traditions and biblical arguments, which resulted in many Pentecostals leaving the traditional Pentecostal beliefs such as initial evidence doctrine and also leave the Pentecostal churches due to suspicions and fall back to evangelicalism.

³² Paul W. Lewis, 'Why Have Pentecostal Scholars Left Classical Pentecostal Denominations?' *AJPS* 11 (1-2), 2008, p. 76.

³³ Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, p. 3.

³⁴ Anderson, *Introduction*, p. 182.

³⁵ See Anderson, *Introduction*, pp. 184-90. Chan has addressed these Pentecostal distinctive issues comprehensively, particularly the 'Glossolalia as "Initial Evidence"' in chapter three of *Pentecostal Theology*, pp. 40-72, and *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*; Chan, 'The Language Game of Glossolalia', pp. 80-95. See Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., 'An Emerging Magisterium? The Case of the Assemblies of God', *PNEUMA: JSPS*, vol. 25, No. 2, Boston, Fall 2003, pp. 164-215. These have been carefully studied and argued by Pentecostal scholars and theologians, which will not be debated here. The scope of my thesis will discuss more on AGM's espoused, professed, and practised theology.

Chan enlightens that the logical relationship between BHS and glossolalia can be established in a coherent theology if the doctrine of BHS is broadened to include charismatic and soteriological dimensions. This involves integrated pneumatology, where BHS is understood in relation to revelation and personal intimacy with God as the source of empowerment for missions, and glossolalia interpreted within the larger context of Christian mystical tradition. Glossolalia is not just evidential but more importantly bringing transformation to persons and communities.³⁶

I strongly advocate the theological expansion and spiritual practice of glossolalia as it is a pivotal part of Pentecostal spirituality beyond the limited classical view. Bible colleges and church ministers need to teach and advocate that BHS is a ‘theophanic’ experience of God’s presence, and glossolalia is the Spirit language to communicate with God in his holy presence. Glossolalia is the privilege of speaking or praying in Spirit language that connects believers in intimate relationship with God and communication with him in his tangible presence, which is pivotal in Pentecostal spirituality (Romans 8). It is also often during speaking in tongues or praying in the Spirit that God speaks through the VoS especially in: prophecies and visions, word, prompting of the Spirit, thought; giving guidance or direction in missions, ministry, and life; or providing words of wisdom, encouragement, comfort, hope, love, and assurance. God speaks when believers pray in the Spirit. Glossolalia cannot be neglected as it sharpens or sensitises believers to hear from God through the VoS. In fact, it is one of the most intimate ways of communicating with God, in alignment with Scripture and God’s will. I strongly advocate that glossolalia being the distinguishing mark of Pentecostals is totally indispensable.

Glossolalia with its foundational texts in Acts as the fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy, has broader functions and dimensions than just ‘initial evidence’ of BHS. Its root being

³⁶ Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, p. 41.

part of the larger Christian tradition, and its centrality in Christian spirituality like prayer, sacrament, and relationship with God. Glossolalia being interconnected with BHS as ‘an experience involving a special kind of relationship with God’,³⁷ and being the distinguishing mark of Pentecostals, it deserves careful attention of theologians to develop and articulate its theology in a coherent and meaningful manner as it continues to stand as the central doctrine of Pentecostal distinctive, and its spiritual experiences preserved as a central part of Christian life. AGM’s distinguishing doctrinal distinctive is glossolalia.

I strongly suggest that AGM embraces the contemporary Pentecostal theology which expands the classical view, in order that the congregation and new generation will have a holistic biblical-theological understanding and spiritual experiences of this indispensable distinctive. Pentecostal spirituality can only be maintained with the centrality of BHS and glossolalia, which ignites missionary fervour. As such, the transformative roles of Bible colleges and churches are vital in teaching and practising the holistic and fuller functions of glossolalia in contemporary Pentecostal spirituality in order that these doctrinal distinctives truly become the indispensable spiritual experiences of the current and next generation as Pentecostals. This is an audacious proposition. In the current doctrinal makeup, speaking in tongues is almost exclusively connected to BHS. As the latter loses its prominence in church life, so will be tongues. It needs a radical expansion of the benefits.

7.2.3 Spirit-baptised Church and Believers: Trinitarian Perspective

AGM’s contemporary churches need to pay attention to three key areas which at times can be found lacking or declining over the decades as analysed in earlier stages: the

³⁷ Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, p. 45.

trinitarian theology, Pentecostal spirituality, the gospel and missions.³⁸ AGM needs to intentionally inculcate in the present and younger generations to having the trinitarian perspective. AGM churches ought to be intentional in upholding a balanced trinitarian theology in worship³⁹ and fellowship with the triune God and nurturing the church members in develop strong Pentecostal spirituality that is rooted in the intimate relationship with the triune God individually and corporately. One way is to teach the Apostles' Creed to the whole congregation and recite it often so that members truly know and have strong convictions on the core of the trinitarian Christian theology.

In classical Pentecostalism, there is strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ as in the full gospel of Jesus as Saviour, Spirit-baptiser, Healer, and Coming King,⁴⁰ but lacks the focus on God the Father. The dispensationalism which Pentecostals uncritically adopted, has a role to play. Anderson and Asamoah-Gyadu relate that most Pentecostals and AGM believe in 'pneumatological Christology'⁴¹ Pentecostals believe in the real presence of Christ as the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. As most of the AGM churches, with the influence of Charismatic or contemporary worship, Third Wave, and also moving away from church traditions including church liturgy, congregations are losing a balanced trinitarian theology and worship. When church worship service only focuses on Christ or Holy Spirit alone, at times unknowingly the church loses the true worship of the triune God.⁴²

My suggestion is that Pentecostal spirituality and contemporary worship needs to be trinitarian. In a trinitarian perspective, Black, a minister of the Apostolic Church of the

³⁸ See section 7.2.4 on Centrality on the Gospel and Missions; and 7.3.2 on Spiritual Discipleship.

³⁹ Collective interview data: WC-43, WC-36.

⁴⁰ Dayton, *Theological Roots*, pp. 21-2.

⁴¹ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, p. 67; Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, p. 13.

⁴² See chapter six, section 6.3.3 Contemporary Worship.

United Kingdom, relates that the church is ‘the Body baptised by Christ in the Spirit’ and ‘filled with all the fullness of God’.⁴³ He argues:

If Pentecostal theology and experience is to be true to some of its earliest roots, then it should be rooted in sacramental worship, as the Christ who is present at his Table pours out his Spirit upon his church, filling his people’s hearts with the Father’s love, and causing the assembly to rejoice together in their Triune God.⁴⁴

I suggest that churches also need to be more ecumenical in embracing the larger Christian traditions which are of trinitarian perspectives and spiritual liturgy which are core to Christian theology and practice. This is not to suggest the order of service or liturgy as the traditional mainline denominations, but to observe fuller Christian theology throughout the church worship services, in Bible classes, life groups or ministries, and discipleship. At the same time giving freedom to the Holy Spirit for the supernatural works through the ministries of spiritual gifts, healing, miracles, PDV, and so on. Some churches may be moving too far away from ‘Christian traditions’ to the detriment of the congregation and young generations being not sufficiently grounded in Christian theology, and their relationship with God may lack the trinitarian doctrines and worship, especially when the choices of contemporary worship songs are mostly self-expression and lack theological content.

Missions and ministries ought to flow out from the relationship with the triune God, be compelled by God’s love, and being led by him through VoS, even without the ‘crisis’ eschatological fervour or ‘The Latter Rain’ doctrine which has waned in the second half of last century. Intimate relationship with the triune God through BHS ought to fill the theological gaps of the early classical understanding and motivations.

There also needs to be the inclusive of the triune God in the teaching and practice of Pentecostal spirituality and distinctives, particularly BHS and glossolalia, not just as

⁴³ Jonathan Black, *The Theosis of the Body of Christ: From the Early British Apostolics to a Pentecostal Trinitarian Ecclesiology*, Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, volume 37 (Leiden, 2020), p. 223.

⁴⁴ Black, *Theosis of the Body of Christ*, p. 244.

‘endowment for life and service’ and ‘evidence of BHS’ like the limited classical view. Churches need to embrace the broader and fuller theological aspect as developed by contemporary Pentecostal theologians. Priority has to be given to the teaching and exercising the Pentecostal doctrines and distinctives, and members to boldly exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and given opportunity to serve in various ministries and missions.

Contemporary theologian, Macchia, in the introduction of his new book, *Spirit-baptized Church: A Dogmatic Inquiry*, affirms the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 on the promise of outpouring of the Spirit, in the initiation of Pentecostal ecclesiology as ‘The Spirit, from Pentecost to Christ’s return, is thus an undeserved gift that keeps on giving. This gift, this promise, is at the core of what we call “the church.”’⁴⁵ The Spirit is ‘The gift of communion with God is also a communion in God with all others.’⁴⁶ He defines the Spirit-baptised church as:

The church is the sign and instrument of Christ and of his kingdom in the world. The church is constituted by the means used by Christ to baptize others in the Spirit, to address others with the gospel and to incorporate them into communion and vocation. The institutions of canon, proclamation, sacraments, spiritually gifted ministries, and mission are established by Christ and birthed in the Spirit to be used as the means by which the Triune God self-imparts to the world and draws the world into the divine embrace.⁴⁷

Macchia addresses the church birthed by the Spirit is trinitarian, and emphasises on the centrality of BHS, the gospel and missions, sacraments, and spiritually gifted ministries. An essential reminder for AGM is the ‘classic mark of the church’ highlighted by Macchia, the Nicene Creed: ‘We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.’⁴⁸ It then goes much deeper to touch ecclesiology.

⁴⁵ Frank D. Macchia, *The Spirit-Baptized Church: A Dogmatic Inquiry*, T&T Clark Systematic Pentecostal and Charismatic Theology (New York, 2020), pp. 1-2, 5. Macchia advocates the Pentecostal view of Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., “Pentecostal Ecclesiology,” in T&T Clark Handbook of Ecclesiology, ed. Kimlyn J. Bender and D. Stephen Long (Edinburgh, 2020, forthcoming then).

⁴⁶ Macchia, *Spirit-Baptized Church*, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Macchia, *Spirit-Baptized Church*, p. 210.

⁴⁸ Macchia, *Spirit-Baptized Church*, p. 125.

I suggest that although AGM seeks to preserve its Pentecostal heritage and distinctives or distinguishing marks as a movement, it is only part of a catholic church, as Jesus prayed, ‘that they may be one even as we are one’ (John 17). AGM should continue to be united in diversity within the movement, and among the Malaysian churches, and to view that all are one body in Christ, belonging to the larger Christian tradition. In fact, Pentecost first happened in the early church as in Joel 2 – Acts 2 and continuing till the present and into the future. Although known as a historical root of classical Pentecostalism, Pentecost did not begin at Azusa Street as that was just one of the significant revivals in the last century. Pentecostals and AGM belong to the larger Christian tradition. Christianity is the ‘catholic’ (universal) church. Beyond the lines of differences, AGM has the dimension of the Holy Spirit in BHS, glossolalia, and spiritual gifts to offer the larger Christian tradition.

7.2.4 Centrality of the Gospel and Missions

AGM in the classical formative period emphasised on the centrality of the gospel and missions, and this is also one of the main distinctives of Pentecostals.⁴⁹ I advocate the way forward is to re-emphasise on the centrality of the Word and Great Commission in the contemporary context. Earlier chapters inform that the preaching and teaching in the past few decades has diversified and shifted from the full gospel and missionary emphasis of classical Pentecostalism and lack focus on the gospel and the Great Commission.

External theological influences and practices have permeated AGM in the past three decades and brought about major shifts in focus and main emphases concerning Pentecostal distinctives. Chan N.C. reveals that AGM has been much influenced by the

⁴⁹ See chapter four, section 4.1.1 Classical Formation, 4.1.2 Movement Growth, and 4.1.2.1 Homogeneity, and chapter five, section 5.3 Missiological Factors.

Charismatic Movement which affected the Pentecostal heritage particularly on mission focus.⁵⁰

There needs to be an awareness of the shifts in focus over the decades and a redirection to the centrality of the gospel and missions in churches. Interviews stress that ministers need to consciously emphasise on the gospel and missions in their preaching and teaching more regularly as the gospel is the core message of the church and missions being the core practice of the Spirit-baptised congregation. Spreading the gospel and missions is the Great Commission which every church ought to fulfil and Spirit-baptised believers are empowered by the Holy Spirit to be witnesses to Christ wherever they go (Acts 1:8).⁵¹

Many pioneers agree that there is no longer that homogeneity of focus and emphases in the AGM churches in regard to the ultimate purpose of BHS, the ‘DNA’ of Pentecostalism. The impact of BHS seems different between the senior and junior ministers. Interviews reveal that senior ministers who experienced BHS are more passionate in devotions, prayer, and seeking God, whilst junior ministers who experienced BHS may not be fully convicted and may lack passion.⁵² Lee, president of BCM, observes that the senior ministers respond in missions work and being kingdom-minded, while junior ministers tend to be more individualistic that BHS is for personal purpose. He states that AGUSA’s position on the purpose of BHS for missions, is subscribed by AGM churches and ministers, but not actualised among the younger generation who experienced BHS. There is lack of teaching, practice, and emphasis on

⁵⁰ Interview with Rev. Dr Chan N.C. He observes, ‘A lot of the “preachers” have high influence ... I think AG[AGM] and Pentecostal pastors do not take sufficient account onto the suppositions of these preachers on their theological and ecclesiological background, and therefore they are not able to differentiate it ... they’re mixed. Now, I’m not against Charismatic teachings. In fact, in order to educate our people, we have to understand the strengths, the charismatic rich is very large on church renewal, body ministry, but in emphasising on that particular strength, you could lose out on your Pentecostal heritage which was on missions and the fulfilment of the Great Commission.’

⁵¹ Collective interview data: WC-18, WC-31.

⁵² Collective interview data: TI-41, TI-53.

BHS and the purpose. Believers are also not trained and equipped with sufficient biblical and theological knowledge and understanding to defend what they believe in, experience, or practice. In view of insufficient intentional traditioning among Pentecostals, younger generation is not emphasising on BHS experience.⁵³

As a Pentecostal movement, AGM has strong emphasis on spiritual experiences. I strongly suggest that the pioneers and senior ministers having the rich spiritual experiences of BHS, glossolalia, spiritual gifts, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in missions and evangelism need to impart this crucial spiritual heritage to the younger generations so that they would not just learn about the faith but to live by faith and walk in the Spirit.⁵⁴ Creating proper platforms like discipleship or mentoring groups in churches for pioneers to share their testimonies on preaching the gospel, evangelism, missions and the practical steps from the inception of a vision from the Holy Spirit to its fruition will inspire and instil the heart of mission among the young generation. They would learn to seek God more, developing sensitivity to the VoS, and be missional in their lives. Inculcating these spiritual experiences through the spiritual formation at Bible colleges is key to raising Pentecostal ministers who will disciple their church leaders and members to preaching and living the gospel and be missional in their lives.

I fully agree on continual strong emphasis on Luke-Acts and the missional cutting edge of missions being distinctive to AGM, but it is not enough to sustain true Pentecostal spirituality. This main emphasis on Luke-Acts should be supported by the whole Scripture which holds and strengthens the Christian biblical-theological truths and doctrines for all time, in this case, to understand true Pentecostal spirituality. In line with contemporary Pentecostal theologians' views, I advocate the holistic development of

⁵³ Interview with Rev. Dr Lee, BCM president.

⁵⁴ Chapter four, section 4.3 on VoS shows a very rich spiritual heritage of the pioneers and senior ministers in hearing the VoS and how the Holy Spirit plays a key role in guiding them in missions, church growth, and ministries.

AGM's pneumatology to cohere with Pauline writings as these epistles reveal Paul's 'true Pentecostal spirituality' as Acts accounts the fruits of it, his zeal and passion in advancing the gospel along with the early church. True Pentecostal spirituality must be rooted in deep and strong intimate relationship with the triune God. It is only in the theophanic spiritual experiences of BHS and relationship with the triune God that real missional heart, zeal, and passion is ignited and the emphasis on centrality of gospel and missions is birthed forth.⁵⁵

7.2.5 A Prophetic Voice in Contemporary Times

VoS playing a significant role in the growth of AGM in the call of ministers, missions, church, and ministries.⁵⁶ I propose the way forward is for contemporary Pentecostals to continue to use this PDV gifting to be the prophetic voice in the church, society, and nation. Ong urges AGM as a CPCM to serve as a prophetic voice for our world as the movement navigates the 'unchartered waters' in our nation today.⁵⁷

Believers need to be the prophetic voice in the nation and community, to stand up and speak for justice, righteousness, and truth, especially in the public square and marketplace. AGM ministers ought to be sensitive to the VoS to bring God's word of truth and life to the community, and to bring God's love and hope to the world. The leading of the Holy Spirit through VoS is crucial in the preaching of God's word, be prompted and guided in ministry, in missions, God's calling, and life. R. Ooi testifies how hearing the VoS is beneficial in preaching.⁵⁸ J. Ooi shares her testimony on how the Holy Spirit leads in VoS in salvation and the ministry of healing, miracles, signs and wonders.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ For emphasis, the holistic and integral missions is discussed in a later section 7.5.

⁵⁶ See chapter one, section 4.3 VoS.

⁵⁷ Rev. Ong, General Superintendent's Report, 'A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement', 52nd General Council Meeting, p. 5, BR2016-2018-52-GS. See chapter one, section 1.2.1 Change in Concepts and Practices.

⁵⁸ Interview with Rev. R. Ooi. See Appendix Seven: Testimonies on VoS, no. 24.

⁵⁹ Interview with Rev. J. Ooi. See Appendix Seven: Testimonies on VoS, no. 25.

These significant testimonies show how the Holy Spirit leads in contemporary times. AGM must continue to teach these spiritual experiences and disciplines to the new generation on reliance upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Hearing the VoS is indeed a very distinct and precious spiritual heritage for Pentecostals.

I suggest that AGM should also be confident to educate the members on VoS which is rooted in Scripture, as classical Pentecostals believe in the outpouring of the Spirit being the Spirit of prophecy. This biblical and spiritual truth has also been affirmed by contemporary theologians.⁶⁰ Believers should not quench the Holy Spirit but discern and judge PDV based on Scripture (1 Thess. 5:19, 21; 1 Cor. 14:29).⁶¹

7.2.6 Revivalism: Pentecostal Perspective

Joel's prophecy on the outpouring of the Spirit is God's promise and sovereign work. God will fulfil his promise and there is no 'strategic level spiritual warfare' or methods to bringing revival or hastening it. The classical Pentecostal view is tarrying, praying, and waiting on the promise of the Father. I propose the contemporary realigning of Pentecostal perspective of revivalism to BHS as a 'theophanic' experience with empowerment to witnessing (Acts 1:8) as God pours out his Spirit among his people, particularly among some young generations who have not experienced BHS nor the

⁶⁰ See Turner, *Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts*, pp. xii, 43-4. Turner, a non-Pentecostal theologian, agrees with the significance of the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy where the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Prophecy that grants PDV as guidance, instructions, wisdom and discernment, and the empowerment for service and missions. Turner views the Spirit of Prophecy in the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy in Acts is not just being universal, but 'for the very nature of the promised gift itself' as in the OT, Judaism, pre-Lucan Christianity or proto-typical Spirit of prophecy. The Spirit grants '*revelatory visions and dreams*' as guidance (Acts 7:55, 56; 9:10-18; 10:10-20; 16:9, 10; 18:9, 10; 22:17,18, 21; 23:11); '*revelatory words or instruction or guidance*' (1:2, 16; 4:25; 7:51; 8:29; 10:19; 11:12, 28; 13:2, 4; 15:28; 16:6, 7; 19:21; 20:22, 23; 21:4, 11; 28:25); '*charismatic wisdom or revelatory discernment*' (Lk. 21:15; Acts 5:3; 6:3, 5, 10; 9:31; 13:9; 16:18); inspires '*invasive charismatic praise*' or tongues (2:4; 10:46; 19:6); and '*charismatic preaching or witness*' (Acts 1:4,8; 4:8,31; 5:32; 6:10; 9:17) or '*charismatic teaching*' (9:31; 13:52; 18:25). Turner argues the gifts of the Spirit in the New Testament including Lucan (Luke-Acts), Johannine, and Pauline, and that the Spirit of Prophecy is '*simultaneously* provides the "life" of the saved community and its empowering for service and mission.'

⁶¹ AGUSA, 'Endtime Revival-Spirit-Led and Spirit-Controlled A Response Paper to Resolution 16', August 11, 2000, EndtimeRevival.pdf, <https://ag.org>, accessed 7 September 2021.

power of the Holy Spirit and understanding its significance in Pentecostal spirituality based on Scripture.

Revivalism is the spiritual phenomenon which ignites missionary fervour and global Pentecostalism since early 1900s. As Pentecostalism is a revival movement, AGM also began with outpouring of the Spirit when revival swept across the country during its formative period as analysed in Stages 1 and 2.⁶² AGM's historical root is traced back to the Azusa Street revival, a powerful outpouring of the Spirit which stressed a strong link between Joel 2 and BHS and spiritual gifts being manifested, and there will be more to come until Jesus' return. Today, AGM believes God continues to pour out his Spirit upon all peoples in different parts of the world and will do so until that Day. And the prophetic movement, spiritual gifts and manifestation of the works of the Spirit as experienced by many people groups is part of that continuing work of God. Ong states, 'But between Azusa [Street revival] and the last days, there will be many more outpourings.'⁶³

AGM believes that Pentecostals today are living under the 'latter rain' but one believes that the latter rain is not poured out to the same extent all the time (there were 'lapses'). There are times when the rain almost became a drizzle, or just an occasional shower (if I may extend the analogy). So, there is a need to pray for revival, for more 'rain' to come. There are variations in the understanding of the latter rain and the more educated ones will understand 'latter rain' in terms of salvation-history rather than chronological history. Ministers like Chan N.C. view the 'latter rain' as the progressive and ongoing eschatological fulfilment of Joel's prophecy repeated in many different places and among people of all nations, understanding that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is a global phenomenon seeing acceleration and intensity in the last 50 years. He says, '[There is] an acceleration of the phenomenal where God pours out his Holy Spirit

⁶² See chapter four, section 4.1.1.6 Revival, 4.1.3.2.6 Revival Prayer Rally, and chapter five, section 5.2.1.1 Revival and Early Missional Strategies.

⁶³ Interview with Rev. Ong.

on all flesh ... again and again ... at different places at different times, different levels of intensity ... Christianity is global ... we're seeing the fulfilment of Joel ... at an accelerated rate, as parousia, and as Jesus comes.'⁶⁴ Ranjan speaks of Joel 2 or the latter rain being repeated everywhere, 'We hear the same manifestation, the same signs taking place, with all the influx of refugees moving to Europe, many of them testified they have dreams and visions of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, God is always doing this work and he will continue to do this work.'⁶⁵

Leoh makes reference to the 'lapses' in outpouring of the Spirit or revivals in church history, and to 'heavier' latter rain in 1970s in Malaysia but not at other points of AGM history. Many were baptised in the Holy Spirit during the revivals which resulted in pioneering work and growth of AGM. Leoh affirms the need for more revivals, 'It [Joel 2] is definitely the fulfilment of what Christ has promised to us and the impetus for the AG and other Pentecostal Charismatic Movement ... the latter rain ... the outpouring and everywhere people were just being baptised in the Holy Spirit ... it should be a continuing experience.'⁶⁶ As AG and AGM began as a revival movement, there is the constant yearning for revival. I have faith that God will pour out his Spirit on Malaysia in his time and ways. The gospel should be the central focus and the Malaysian Church should not lose focus on the Great Commission in the midst of praying for revival.

In the last decade in AGM, the Third Wave revivalist movement interprets the revival theme as directly linked to repentance in the earlier part of Joel's text in a literal manner. The 'present-day apostles and prophets' have new interpretation and 'spiritualising biblical events and history' in Joel 2 as a mandate before the promise of revival. Under the mandate given by Apostle Suubi, AGPC calls for solemn assembly, national repentance, and revival prayer rally. For example, the recent AGPC's call for

⁶⁴ Interview with Rev. Dr Chan N.C.

⁶⁵ Interview with Rev. Ranjan.

⁶⁶ Interview with Rev. Dr Leoh.

revival prayer rally in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, economic and political uncertainties in the nation.⁶⁷ This shows that for AGM, whether it is revival or repentance, Joel 2 remains central until today. This is the teaching and mandate for prayer movements given by modern-day apostles and prophets.⁶⁸

God looks at the sincerity of hearts in seeking his kingdom and righteousness for the nations but not at mandates, manifestos, historical models, strategies, methodologies, prophetic prayer conferences, and works of man that bring revival. Old Testament events like solemn assemblies may be examples for fasting, prayer, and intercession, but Scripture does not instruct spiritualising it as a ‘mandate’ for today. A modern-day prophecy and teaching is not above the authority of Scripture. Revival is the work of the Holy Spirit, not man’s ways.

There is continual yearning for revivalism in AGM especially among certain senior ministers and leaders, and the revival theme at the national level as they reminisce the pioneering period and see the need for Holy Spirit to revive the movement and the Malaysian church. With the increasing networks of global revivalist movements and in Malaysia more intensely over the past 10 years, AGPC, PU, and other prayer networks have been faithfully leading prayer movements. Revival Fire Movement (RFM)⁶⁹ and

⁶⁷ AGPC, ‘Revival Prayer Rally’ 21 Mar. 2020, 21 Days Fasting and Praying, InTouch AG, 11 Mar. 2020, AGPC20200311-IT. Joel 2 – Joel’s address to both priests/ministers of the Lord and elders, inviting them to call a solemn assembly (2:15), marked by consecration, fasting, lament and repentance, in order to seek the LORD’s mercy in a time of national calamity (2:12-17). So Joel urged, ‘Yet even now,’ declares the LORD, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments’ (2:12). He promised that God would relent and restore (2:13-14). Not only that, the LORD promised his presence and will pour out his Spirit or send revival, and salvation to mankind as a whole (Joel 2:28-32).

⁶⁸ ‘Spiritualizing Biblical Events and History’ is listed as one of the ‘deviant teachings disapproved’ by AGUSA, under ‘Wrestling and distorting Scripture through interpretations that are in opposition to the primary meaning of biblical passage’ in accordance to ‘Endtime Revival–Spirit-Led and Spirit-Controlled A Response Paper to Resolution 16’, This statement was adopted by the General Presbytery of the Assemblies of God on August 11, 2000, EndtimeRevival.pdf, <https://ag.org>, accessed 7 September 2021. See chapter six, section 6.5.1.2 New Mandate.

⁶⁹ Lim Lee Sah, ‘Christian Spiritual Revival In Malaysia’, 9 January 2020, Christianity Today, <https://christianitymalaysia.com/wp/christian-spiritual-revival-in-malaysia/>; Dr Paul K.P. Ang, The Arsenal of Fire Global, ‘The Mission of Revival Fire Movement (RFM) Malaysia’, 14 July 2021, <https://arsenaloffire.blogspot.com/2021/07/the-mission-of-revival-fire-movement.html>, accessed 23 September 2021. RFM was founded by Dato’ Chua Jui Meng (former politician), Rev. Raymond Mooi (School of Acts president), and Rev. Augustine Saang on 2 January 2020, based on Jesus’ prayer for unity,

MUFW are the latest local networks emerging. However, at local church level, the young generation actually have little identification with the revival theme, revival prayer rallies, and prayer movement. Revivalist movements and prayer movements are instrumental in mobilising prayers and intercessions, but the main focus should not drift from the Great Commission and Scripture.

Most of the young people nowadays have not experienced revival before and few may only hear stories about the revival in the 1960s-70s. Although many young people have attended youth camps that foster spiritual experiences such as Huge Camp or Elisha Camp, generally, Joel 2 – Acts 2 and revivalism still has not much resonance with them. It is also not much emphasised in churches. In a way, there is a generational gap in terms of spiritual experience, theological understanding, Pentecostal practices, burdens, passions, and expectations. There is also a certain gap between the emphasis on revival rallies at national level and the autonomy of churches.

As such, I propose the way forward that ministers ought to preach, teach, and educate the congregation and young generation on the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 and Pentecostal theological themes, and the meaning of revival in Pentecostal perspective with mission focus. Revivalism is understood as the continuous fulfilment of Joel's prophecy on the outpouring of the Spirit. There is a difference between real revivals when God pours out his Spirit upon all flesh and revivalist movements based on man's works and strategies toward revival. Pentecostal revivalism is of great essence for maintaining or reviving spiritual vitality of churches and members, igniting zeal and passion for missions, evangelism, and church growth.

John 17:21-25. It is affiliated with Revival Fire Network (RFN) Singapore, set up on 21 May 2021 by Rev. Dr Paul Ang and others, to build a global revival prayer movement.

7.3 Pentecostal Identity

I suggest the upholding of ‘Pentecostal identity’, incorporating the ‘Contemporary Pentecostal Spirituality’, with the expansion of biblical-theological understanding and practices to the traditional Pentecostal heritage. The necessity of changes in Pentecostal spirituality is not contradictory between the classical and contemporary, but enhancement and enrichment to AGM’s ‘Pentecostal identity’. Upholding the ‘Pentecostal identity’ in contemporary times encourages ministers and believers to remain in their Pentecostal DNA yet being flexible to make their practices relevant to theologies and social needs at present in Malaysia.

One of the main contemporary emphases of CPCM is to preserve the Pentecostal heritage or fondly called ‘AG’s DNA’, reigniting the Pentecostal spirituality and passing it on to the next generation.⁷⁰ As AGM grows and transitions from a CPM to a CPCM, there are measurable advancements in terms of church growth, ministerial expansions, modernisation and relevance in changing times, diversification of holistic missions and social concern ministries, new outreach approaches, and so on. In the midst of the movement’s development, there are also emerging issues and challenges in maintaining the Pentecostal fervour and heritage for the new generations. The crux of the issue is the widening gap between the espoused and the believed and practised, and the real need to pass on the Pentecostal spiritual heritage to the current and future generations.

In line with the CPCM, I strongly propose the way forward for AGM is in preserving its Pentecostal spirituality from which flows the new generations of vibrant Pentecostal community, robust Pentecostal ecclesiology, missiology, and ministry in the twenty-first century and beyond. Upholding the ‘Pentecostal identity’ would determine the future direction of AGM in theology, missiology, ecclesiology and ministerial aspects.

⁷⁰ See chapter one, section 4.1.3.2.7 Pentecostal Heritage.

Nurturing the young generations involves inculcating strong Pentecostal conviction and spiritual discipleship through teaching, strong emphases, and practices. There needs to be intentional teaching of the contemporary Pentecostal theology toward a holistic theological understanding of BHS and glossolalia, and the centrality of Joel 2 in shaping their Pentecostal spirituality. This project will always be conscious of various outside influences, and how to discern God's gift and extra-biblical teachings.

7.3.1 Pentecostal Conviction

In moving forward, ministers suggest that AGM leadership needs to form a strategic planning team to ensure the preservation of Pentecostal heritage in long-term and raise younger ministers that shares strong Pentecostal conviction.⁷¹ The transformative roles of Bible colleges and church pastors and leaders are crucial to instil Pentecostal conviction and practice of the distinctives.

In view of the general decline in Pentecostal fervour, there has been progressive efforts at national level through Youth Alive Malaysia (YAM) since 2001, annual Pentecostal conferences, youth camps like Elisha Camp, Huge Camp, and the launch of 'iBelieve' in 2017, which is the 16 Fundamental Truths guidebook and Bible study tool for youths.⁷² In 2010s, there is fruition from these long-term emphases in raising the young generation as more young people have responded to God's call for full-time ministry and the demography of BCM full-time students has changed in recent years, consisting more school leavers, pastors' kids, and young adults. Yeoh sees the come back, 'In terms of revival messages, revival emphasis, prayer emphasis, and one of the things we're seeing that is coming back again is young people responding to full-time ministry again ... For many, many years, we didn't have young people coming into full-time

⁷¹ Collective interview data: WL-17, WL-50, WL-7.

⁷² Collective interview data: WP-1.

ministry.⁷³ Indeed, I have the privilege of teaching more young people in BCM over recent years and many have also participated in this research. There is still tremendous work needed in raising the new and future generations in Pentecostal spirituality.

I see that main issues among congregations and young generations in diminishing Pentecostal fervour⁷⁴ can be gradually resolved or minimised by concerted effort of Bible colleges, leadership, church pastors, ministerial leaders, and church members. Preserving holistic Pentecostal spirituality for coming generations involves the teaching and practice of the expanded SFT and contemporary Pentecostal theology that provides holistic theological understanding of the broadened and enhanced classical Pentecostal distinctives. There needs to be intentional discipleship and practice on Pentecostal spirituality at churches, emphasising more on Pentecostal teachings and spirituality among the congregation and young generation.

7.3.2 Spiritual Discipleship

I suggest that ‘spiritual discipleship’ is the key for AGM to preserve the beliefs and practices of Pentecostal theology and distinctives, and passing on the holistic Pentecostal spirituality to the next generation. Intentional ‘spiritual discipleship’ in theology and practice is needful for inculcating strong Pentecostal conviction in the lives of congregation and current generation. Chan relates his concept of ‘Pentecostal traditioning’ to focus on the need for genuine Pentecostal doctrinal development of coherent theology and having a traditioning structure where these fundamental truths can be systematically passed on to the next generation.⁷⁵ In addition to Chan’s argument, I

⁷³ Interview with Rev. Yeoh.

⁷⁴ Interviews with Rev. Yeoh, Rev. Dr Chan N.C., Rev. Dr Lee, Rev. Soh, and Rev. Ong; and surveys: SV-22-C4e, SV-58-C4e, SV-20-C4e, SV-33-C4e, SV-86-4Ce, SV-38-C4e, SV-10-C4e: ‘a mixed bag’ of theologies, practices, and ethos; reason over experience; Pentecostalism taking ‘a back seat’ as surveys reveal; a mixed congregation from different background and religious experiences.

⁷⁵ Chan, *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, p. 7.

propose ‘spiritual discipleship’ that encompasses more than just passing down the theology systematically, but focusing on both the doctrines and engaging vibrant practice of Pentecostal distinctives in forming the contemporary Pentecostal spirituality in the next generation. I suggest that the contemporary focus in AGM context should emphasise on the ‘practice’ and ‘spirituality’ as much as learning the theology. The main reason is that the current generation in AGM may have some knowledge of Pentecostal distinctives through churches but mostly lacking in spiritual experiences of the Pentecostal spirituality.

I advocate that spiritual discipleship involves a few dominant aspects: the theological development, structure, and spiritual experiences. The EXCO acknowledges that the Holy Spirit is the ‘greatest bridge’ in relating to the young generation, and there should be more emphasis on the spontaneity of the Spirit and the supernatural. Ministers suggest that passing down the BHS experience needs to be done in demonstration, education, and inspiration for the younger generation. Not only should Pentecostal distinctive be taught to the younger generation but they should also have the personal spiritual experience. Spiritual formation and discipleship should begin with BHS and living a Spirit-filled life, and dependence upon the Holy Spirit.⁷⁶

BHS and glossolalia, being the central doctrines and distinctives of the Pentecostals, particularly AG, play prominent roles in Pentecostal spirituality and actually has roots in the larger Christian spirituality and Christian tradition. Whilst most Pentecostal, charismatic, and mainline denominations are moving into the ‘contemporary’ mode, a number of Pentecostal scholars are arguing for retrieval of Pentecostal ‘sacramental’ heritage. Black argues that the BHS and inception of the Church began from the Pentecost event, church members are being Spirit-baptised into the Body (Acts 2, 1 Cor. 12:13),

⁷⁶ Collective interview data: WC-8, WC-29, WC-42, WC-48.

and Pentecost ecclesia lives in the Trinity, and not just a metaphor of the Body of Christ.⁷⁷

Black also sees the importance of church as Eucharistic fellowship and the centrality of the Lord's Supper in the early apostolic church in Acts 2:42, the bread and wine is substantial as feeding on the blood and body of Christ. The Breaking of Bread is closely linked with the exercise of spiritual gifts and speaking in tongues in the Eucharistic gatherings in line with 1 Corinthians 14:26.⁷⁸

Black, Castelo, McDonnell, and Montague are among the scholars with sacramental views in their studies on the BHS. Castelo finds the oldest traditions of this sacramental practice of Spirit-baptism and pneumatological speech or tongue can be traced back to Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.⁷⁹ McDonnell and Montague states, 'In the synoptics, Jesus' being anointed with the Holy Spirit from the moment of his baptism sets the pattern for Christian initiation, which is essentially a "baptism in the Holy Spirit."⁸⁰

I suggest that AGM be open to a larger historical exploration of Pentecostal experiences that go before Azusa Street revival, maybe throughout church history, in order to understand BHS, glossolalia, and preserve AGM's Pentecostal identity. This discovery goes before the limited classical view of BHS as empowerment for missions and glossolalia as initial physical evidence of BHS as inherited from the early missionaries.

I agree with Chan there needs to be a development of Pentecostal Tradition and doctrine in the rediscovery of early Pentecostalism's sacramental and mystical tradition, through retrieval (*ressourcement*) and updating (*aggiornamento*). Chan in his essay affirms the discovery of the sacramental and mystical dimension of Pentecostal theology

⁷⁷ Black, *Theosis of the Body of Christ*, pp. 49, 50, 242.

⁷⁸ Jonathan Black, 'The Church as Eucharistic Fellowship: A British Apostolic Contribution toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology', *JEPTA*, 2009, 29:2, 78-89, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1179/jep.2009.29.2.007>, accessed 13 June 2019.

⁷⁹ Daniel Castelo, *Pneumatology: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London, 2015), p. 100.

⁸⁰ Kilian McDonnell and George T. Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 2nd rev. edn (Collegeville, 1994), p. 350.

goes way back before its Holiness-Keswick traditions to the larger Christian tradition.⁸¹ He affirms, ‘Only as Pentecostal churches begin to revitalize their tradition through *ressourcement* will they be able to preserve their Pentecostal identity. The emphasis on Pentecostal theology as mystical is a helpful step towards articulating a Pentecostal tradition.’⁸²

Although AGM and most classical Pentecostals find their roots in the Azusa Street revival in the early 1900s, the original ‘Pentecost’ roots can be traced way back to the Day of Pentecost and early church in Acts 2. Historically, theologically, and technically, Pentecostals have a longer history than most Pentecostal scholarship suggest. Contemporary theologians on ‘sacramental’ heritage, Black, Castelo, McDonnell, Montague, and Chan, consider the historical extension and the strong connection between BHS and glossolalia, using early church Pentecostalism’s sacramental and mystical resources, for the articulation and development of Pentecostal core beliefs.⁸³ Therefore, there needs to be theologizing of Pentecostal traditioning, beginning with its roots in Pentecostal doctrines, in retrieving and updating of Pentecostal core beliefs. There needs to be the recovery of Pentecostal sacramentality, ‘Pentecostalism is a *physical spirituality*’,⁸⁴ drawing from larger Christian tradition in both the sacramental and mystical dimensions.⁸⁵

For AGM, in order to pass on the Pentecostal spirituality to the next generation, spiritual discipleship should always be both in theological articulation, understanding, and real spiritual experiences. Most times, the second-generation learns about Pentecostal distinctives but not experiencing it fully, therefore lacks conviction. And by just teaching

⁸¹ Simon Chan, ‘Tradition: Retrieving and Updating Pentecostal Core Beliefs,’ in Wolfgang Vondey, ed., *The Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology* (Abingdon, 2020), pp. 101-2.

⁸² Chan, ‘Tradition’, p. 102.

⁸³ Chan, ‘Tradition’, p. 102.

⁸⁴ Chan, ‘Tradition’, p. 101.

⁸⁵ Chan, ‘Tradition’, p. 102.

the limited classical view from SFT is no longer effective in this contemporary setting as there is more to Pentecostal theology and practices than the espoused.

I strongly suggest a biblical example of ‘true Pentecostal spirituality’ being the apostle Paul, the main apostle of vast missionary endeavours taught Pentecostal spirituality of a Spirit-filled life and church through his letters. Although Pauline pneumatology may not be a favourite portion for classical Pentecostals who traditionally prefer to be identified or branded with Luke-Acts, embracing the Scripture holistically is the answer to preserving AGM’s true Pentecostal spirituality and identity in contemporary times, as the way to true Pentecostal spirituality is richly found in Paul’s life and writings, and even the Pentecostal spirituality of the early Christian traditions. Therefore, it is crucial to pass on to the new generations the emphasis on the whole canonical Scripture and not just classical Pentecostal’s favourite focus on Luke-Acts and limited classical views. Pentecostal spirituality should be formed holistically based on the whole Scripture and the whole counsel of God.

Pentecostal identity is often shaped vis-à-vis other church traditions. The ‘ecumenical’ engagements has eroded AGM’s distinct identity and theology due to hybridisation of beliefs and practices. Too much of evangelicalism dampens the focus on the supernatural and charisma, losing the Pentecostal fires. On the other end, Pentecostals tend to embrace all kinds of Spirit-movements’ teachings and practices without biblical-theological evaluations resulting in much drifts. Pentecostal spiritual discipleship is vital.

In the way forward, I strongly suggest that there needs to be the Pentecostal conviction and spiritual discipleship of the holistic Pentecostal spirituality in trinitarian relationship, the exercising of spiritual gifts, giving room to the Holy Spirit, and focus on the whole integrated Scripture. It is spiritual discipleship that is able to preserve true Pentecostal spirituality, from where flows Pentecostal living, ecclesia, missions, and ministries.

7.4 Pentecostal Theological Education

Pentecostal theological education is far-reaching in raising new generations of Pentecostals, particularly the theological understanding of a broader framework of the purposes and works of the doctrinal Pentecostal distinctives, which has not been much emphasised in AGM. Contemporary Pentecostal theologians using modern and advanced biblical hermeneutics has broadened and strengthened the classical view of BHS and glossolalia. A holistic Pentecostal theological education is much needed for AGM to thrive in its Pentecostal spirituality and preserve the Pentecostal heritage for future generations in this century. The transformative roles of Bible colleges, leadership, pastors, ministers, and lay leaders in churches are significant to ensure the ministers-in-training, church workers, and all church members are well-equipped with holistic biblical-theological understanding of Pentecostal spirituality, particularly the spiritual experiences and exercising the Pentecostal practices.

7.4.1 Teaching and Advocating Pentecostal Position

AGM Bible colleges ought to be intentionally firm in teaching and advocating the Pentecostal position, beliefs, and practices of the distinctives which assumes Pentecostals' confident identity, in order to raise new generations of Pentecostal ministers and leaders for the future. AGM ministers have raised their concerns over the transformative role of Bible colleges in Pentecostal emphasis in the movement.

The main reasons are as follows: The blending of other theological influences which has blurred the distinctives.⁸⁶ There is a vast difference between ministers who

⁸⁶ Interview with Rev. Dr Chan N.C. He expresses, 'Nowadays, there's a convergence and hybridisation of different streams of Pentecostalism, Charismatics, Neo-Pentecostals, and others, it's very difficult to draw the lines of distinctions. Distinctives are lost in all the merging that's happening, therefore it depends on the influence of the particular Pentecostal church to think and read critically. We should have a Pentecostal Foundation to explain the differences.'

receive training in BCM and non-Pentecostal seminaries in upholding the practice of Pentecostal distinctives. The importance of ministers being equipped at a Pentecostal seminary as it is crucial for AGM movement to maintain the Pentecostal heritage in the churches.⁸⁷ P. Lee shows concern for the Pentecostal identity of AGM movement which grants membership and credentials to those from other seminaries without Pentecostal foundations and convictions.⁸⁸ Ministers also observed the importance of providing a standard Pentecostal doctrinal position in the seminary training of AGM ministers instead of teaching all the various theological views and letting the students decide – as has been the trend in recent decades.⁸⁹ Similarly, S. Ng also notices the changes in the way the Bible school teaches over the decades, stressing the increasing liberty today as compared to the pioneering period. He insists that AGM Bible schools should teach very clear Pentecostal positions instead of letting the pastors decide their own interpretations.⁹⁰

The AGM leadership views that the Bible colleges are responsible to instil personal conviction of the local pastors and Bible college students or ministers-in-training, to teach and emphasise BHS in the local churches and to build Spirit-filled Pentecostal churches. What is really fundamental is that the Bible colleges need to stay Pentecostal and emphasise on Pentecostal ministry and practices as the church pastors need to preach and demonstrate it, and ultimately the churches need to practice it, so that they are able to pass on the Pentecostal heritage.

The EXCO recognises the need for the Bible Colleges to re-emphasise the Pentecostal heritage on the distinctives and missions. The movement needs to address the erosion of Pentecostal values starting at Bible colleges. Maintaining the Pentecostal heritage in the next generation needs to be done via the pulpit, the Bible colleges and local

⁸⁷ Interview with Rev. P. Lee.

⁸⁸ Interview with Rev. Dr Lee.

⁸⁹ Interview with Rev. C. Chan.

⁹⁰ Interview with Rev. Dr S. Ng.

churches. There need to have closer dialogue and communication among the local churches, pastors, and the Bible colleges. This is one of the strengths of BCM, national Bible school, in having the synergy with the leadership.⁹¹ How to execute programmes to accentuate this theological agenda requires close partnership between the college, denominational leadership and local churches.

7.4.2 Contemporary Pentecostal Theology

I propose that AGM being a CPCM needs to embrace the holistic theological understanding of BHS and glossolalia based on advanced contemporary hermeneutics, which has expanded, enhanced and enriched the classical Pentecostal view. It has also broadened the functions, dimensions, and meanings. The Pentecostal theological education must be updated and enhanced with the holistic theology and spirituality accordingly.

Participants suggest that as the AGM national Bible colleges are established to train ministers and leaders, it is fundamental to be the source of education and training for Pentecostal theology and practice, preserving Pentecostal heritage, preparing ministers for missions, providing holistic training and equipping for the contemporary world. Inclusivity of the more holistic contemporary Pentecostal theology and hermeneutics in Pentecostal Foundation, Holy Spirit, and Biblical Hermeneutics courses is needed in understanding the contemporary developments of Pentecostal theology in theological education. Thus, future ministers and leaders will be well-equipped with holistic theological understanding of Pentecostal distinctives.⁹²

⁹¹ Collective interview data: WB-35, WB-40, WB-46, WB-47, WB-53, WC-27.

⁹² Collective interview data: WB-45, WB-54.

7.4.3 Bridging the Theological Gap

Unity in diversity can be achieved in greater measure through dialogues, forums, and mutual communication. I see the need of leadership, theologians, biblical scholars, and pastors to address the ‘elephant in the room’, which is the theological differences of many new teachings of subsequent Spirit renewals. Addressing current issues and mixed responses among ministers is paramount toward fostering unity in the contemporary movement and prayer for the nation.

Over six decades, the influx of external theological influences has both increased the theological gaps as well as impacting a hybridisation of teachings and practices that some ministers and congregations cannot tell the differences anymore. There is an increasing theological tension and gap between the group that holds on to the espoused classical Pentecostal views and the group that progresses on to embrace new waves of Spirit renewals, revivalist movements, and global trends. There are also increasing theological gaps and different wavelengths between the more senior ministers and the younger generation who may not relate to the ‘classical’ or espoused. There is also a need to bridge the gap to the younger generation who have not experienced ‘revival’ and do not relate to praying for revival. At the Bible college level, there should be curriculum changes, preparation of the faculty, and production of research along the line.

I suggest a two-way bridge that will allow everyone to participate in the nationwide united prayer in freedom, putting aside differences in biblical-theological convictions. I propose that there needs to be an updated Pentecostal theological education in addressing these undercurrents and unspoken fragmentations in order for the whole movement to move forward in the same direction. Bridging the theological gap will also enhance unity in diversity among interdenominational Malaysian Church in united prayer for the nation. In a timely manner, the EXCO has newly established their AG Theological Commission for developing a distinctively Malaysian Pentecostal theology and to provide theological

responses to current issues in the local context.⁹³ Self-theologising as a contextualised Malaysian Pentecostal movement in addressing theological issues is crucial to help AGM move forward amid contemporary complexities.

This brings us to the final highlight on the future directions, which is the importance of moving into holistic and integral missions.

7.5 Holistic and Integral Missions

AGM in its formative and pioneering period has been very strong in missions, particularly church planting, door-to-door evangelism, healing rallies, evangelistic rallies, revival meetings, and so on. In the movement growth period, there has been much diversification, including new frontiers in missions, moving into more social concern ministries due to sociopolitical reasons and new ideas of missions. Holistic and integral missions is the way forward.

Chan N.C. emphasises, ‘Christian mission is always about faithfulness to the context.’ Serving the changing contexts requires the addressing of needs, relevance, adaptation, and retooling.⁹⁴ He states:

Christian mission should always be holistic and integrated. We cannot separate the spiritual from the physical and psycho-social dimensions of life. The preaching of the gospel cannot be divorced from the totality of what individuals and communities go through. When communities and families are suddenly in forced situations of hunger, we need to provide food and basic needs. When prolonged lockdowns, joblessness and forced changes lead to emotional breakdowns and domestic conflicts, we need to provide resources to help people cope with depression and build psycho-social health.⁹⁵

In contextualisation, W. Ma relates some common traits in Asian Pentecostal movement whereby there is ‘the interaction between the Pentecostal movement and its new-found

⁹³ Email from EXCO, 29 July 2021. The AG Theological Commission for AGM has its first meeting on 29 September 2021. Initial topics lined up: Position on Gender; Online Church or Post-Covid Church; Church and Politics; Progressive Christianity; Apostles and Prophets; Vaccination and Plagues; Hypergrace; Immortality.

⁹⁴ Chan N.C., ‘What did not change and should not change in a changed Covid-19 World’, AsiaCMS REACH 2021, (Kuala Lumpur, 2021), p. 2. Rev. Dr Chan N.C., Executive Director of Asia Collaborative Mission Services (AsiaCMS) and AGM pioneer, specialises in intercultural missions. AsiaCMS is associated with Church Mission Society, UK, and global CMS.

⁹⁵ Chan N.C., ‘What did not change and should not change in a changed Covid-19 World’, pp. 2-3.

environment, that is the Asian cultural religious “soil” on the one hand, and the contemporary “weather” (including the politico-economic) on the other.’ Ma notes that ‘Asian classical Pentecostalism is not so “classical”, that is, it does not always reflect the early Pentecostal beliefs and practices faithfully. This discrepancy is often found among the non-English speaking Asian nations.’ Furthermore, the Charismatic theological influences (less missionary focus but more on renewal emphasis), ‘Asian Pentecostals have a more self-centred, blessing-oriented theological outlook than the true classical Pentecostals.’ Ma mentions the Malaysian Pentecostalism where evangelism to majority Muslims is prohibited by law as well as racial tensions, Pentecostal churches are more actively involved in social concern ministries and programmes, like drug rehabilitation centre, orphanage, home for the elderly, kidney dialysis centre, and so on, which are successful and creative ways in demonstrating God’s love in action.⁹⁶ Indeed, AGM being a contextualised Pentecostal movement has undergone the processes as Ma theologises.

There has been a shift in missionary motivation and emphases: from classical emphasis based on eschatological fervour and missionary endeavours, to contemporary emphases of diversification. AGM has been progressing in new perspectives of mission over the decades, but generally there is still a decline in missions. Chan N.C. enlightens:

Contemporary Pentecostalism in Malaysia means that we shift from a narrower perspective to a broader perspective of God’s mission. We shift from the old perspective of American roots and evangelicalism on the separation between the spiritual and ‘the non-spiritual’ or secular, and the whole emphasis on merely church planting and evangelism, to now engaging with the socioeconomic. Contemporary also means having a more accurate understanding of what missions is all about, based on a more holistic and biblical perspective of mission. The core of contemporary Pentecostalism is the empowering of the Holy Spirit for the cause of mission. While maintaining our earlier strength in evangelism and church planting, we also need to understand missions from a more holistic perspective in the sense of integral mission.⁹⁷

This is in line with the global trends of missions. W. Ma in his study on ‘The Theological Motivations for Pentecostal Mission’ concludes:

⁹⁶ W. Ma, ‘Asian (Classical) Pentecostal Theology in Context’, in Anderson and Tang, eds., *Asian and Pentecostal*, pp. 60-1, 77-8, 81. See chapter five, section 5.4.4 Malaysian Social Influences.

⁹⁷ Interview with Rev. Dr Chan N.C.

Classical Pentecostals have the most theological and institutional resources. In non-western lands, they look radically different from their North American or European ‘mothers’, who are not necessarily growing. This is a serious challenge to their century-old theology and constantly institutionalizing ethos. Yet they may also empower the rest of the Pentecostal-charismatic churches. Together they should continue their engagement in new frontiers of mission because to remain faithful to the scriptures, to Pentecostal spiritual heritage, and yet be relevant to the immediate context will pose a significant challenge to emerging Pentecostal mission communities throughout the world.⁹⁸

In contemporary times, AGM is still passionate about missions and moving to new frontiers and arenas, and new approaches to preach the gospel. In the interview, Chan N.C. provides invaluable missional insights for AGM to move into holistic and integral missions in this twenty-first century.

Firstly, churches ought to be contemporary using the digital platform for missions, (certainly crucial in the Covid-19 pandemic and endemic.)⁹⁹ In AsiaCMS REACH, stressing that ‘*Christians can live out the global unity that we have in Christ*’, he testifies, ‘The wonders of the internet, and the apps that go with it have allowed us to find out about each other, connect, build relationships, collaborate on projects, and share resources. We are positioned to bridge the gaps; not merely to help each other, but to better serve our world together. This was powerfully lived out ... at the peak of the Covid-19 crisis ...’¹⁰⁰

Secondly, churches should actively impact the larger community in relating with the government and business sector.¹⁰¹ Thirdly, involvement in elevation of poverty of underprivileged communities by mobilising business and social entrepreneurs.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ W. Ma, ‘The Theological Motivations for Pentecostal Mission’, in Lee and Ma, eds., *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, p. 39.

⁹⁹ Interview with Rev. Dr Chan N.C.

¹⁰⁰ Chan, N.C., ‘What did not change and should not change in a changed Covid-19 World’, p. 3.

¹⁰¹ Collective interview data: WC-24; Interview with Rev. Dr Chan N.C., ‘Having reached a certain level of influence, we need to go beyond evangelism and church planting, to greater responsibilities in the larger community of Malaysians. Our understanding to be contemporary also means being a responsible part of the larger community and being a part of the nation, and even being a responsible global citizen.’

¹⁰² Collective interview data: WC-24; Interview with Rev. Dr Chan N.C., ‘Integral mission today is the understanding that missions, evangelism, and church planting is very much connected with all of life and we are living in a pluralistic society. Mission goes beyond proclamation, with much sensitivity in understanding the people of other faiths, work, belief, and practice. We are living in a world where there is increasing gap between the rich and the poor, and we do recognise that the eradication of poverty or to help or assist people in the journey of human flourishing requires an understanding of mission that is more than just evangelism and church planting. This brings in an entire new paradigm, requiring fresh skill sets,

Fourthly, engagement in macro involvement.¹⁰³ Fifthly, to reach the unreached people groups where there are pockets of unbelievers, beyond the socioethnic boundaries.¹⁰⁴ (For example, Malaysia has become a vast harvest field due to influx of six million immigrants/migrant workers from various nations.¹⁰⁵) Sixthly, ultimately the emphasis on AGM's Pentecostal heritage of missions and the purpose of BHS as empowerment for missions.¹⁰⁶ Some churches have been reaching out to the society as 'salt and light'.¹⁰⁷

AGM's current strategies for missions include: Churches are encouraged to mobilise their members and engage in church planting. The new strategies for church

different types of vocation and expertise in different fields, yet we are Pentecostal, we stress on the infusion and the work of the Holy Spirit where in the past has been regarded as secular ... We are also seeing the mobilisation of business and social entrepreneurs who help the underprivileged communities. These are examples of integral mission and Pentecostal empowerment in these areas.'

¹⁰³ Collective interview data: WC-24. Interview with Rev. Dr Chan N.C., 'Looking from a more holistic and integrated perspective, AG Malaysia has always been practising missions and ministry. AG Malaysia churches were some of the earliest involved in drug rehabilitation ministries. The initial practice of social concern ministries began with all these rehabs in the course of reaching out to people with needs. The challenge now is to have a helicopter view, looking at missions and ministries holistically, and how to progress beyond the piece-meal engagement to a broader picture of macro involvement, and this would require deeper thinking through.'

¹⁰⁴ Collective interview data: WC-28.

¹⁰⁵ Collective interview data: WC-26; Interview with Rev. Dr Chan N.C., 'It is to re-emphasise what mission is all about. Now, you have a fresh understanding of mission, because the mission world has changed. Primarily, in its early years, missions is going to the uttermost part of the earth. But right now, the uttermost part of the earth or everywhere you go already has Christians and pockets of unbelievers. The real need to talk about is the unreached people groups, boundaries, social-ethnic boundaries and really getting the gospel out across over every single boundary.'

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Rev. Dr Chan N.C., 'If moving from its Pentecostal heritage means not emphasising on the Holy Spirit, I would say no. We have maintained that part of heritage. But where we've lost on the heritage is on missions. To me, I look at it as two distinctive things. The charismatics and our churches even until now, have always emphasised on being touched by the Spirit and being open to the Spirit. But the question is: What for? For what purpose? And I think if we are not careful, we will move away from that ... We will move away from that heritage, because to me, missions is the call of the Pentecostal heritage, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the engine behind it.'

¹⁰⁷ Agape Community Church, <https://www.facebook.com/agapegospelassembly>, accessed 10 December 2020. Rev. Paulus Wong shared about the 'Love Seremban' initiatives, in BCM chapel service on 29 August 2019; Metro Tabernacle A/G, <https://en-gb.facebook.com/metrotab>, accessed 19 July 2021; Glad Tidings Sunway, <https://en-gb.facebook.com/gtsunway1>, accessed 19 July 2021. Some recent examples: Agape Community Church has organised missional efforts in impacting the community, engaging in community services, and building relationships with the society in the city and vicinity, such as 'Love Seremban Charity Carnival' in 2017, 'Community Care Initiative' in providing mobile clinic to small towns, and 'Community Food Tree' in providing food for the poor, 'Tuition Centre' for children in need in 2018. In 2020, the church has initiated 'Agape Care Package' in response and relief to families during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, and crisis response to flood victims in residential areas. Metro Tabernacle A/G and Glad Tidings Sunway along with many other churches have set up food banks and supplying food packages and groceries to the needy during the extended Covid-19 pandemic full lockdown in July 2021. The *Orang Asli* (native) ministry is one which some AGM churches have been involved in for few decades such as helping them in settlement, agriculture, and resources. More AGM churches have been moving in this missional direction to impact society.

planting are to have ‘church planting team’, bivocational pastors and workers. Other strategy for church planting would be community engagement, and now focusing on East Malaysia. Churches need to re-emphasise the Pentecostal heritage of missions. Pentecostal is very gospel-minded, doing evangelism, discipleship, and missions ought to be the priority in churches. There is a need to re-emphasise on Pentecostal hermeneutics and pneumatology based on Luke-Acts, that Pentecostal movement is known for empowerment of the Holy Spirit in missions and evangelism. The EXCO claims that Holy Spirit’s empowerment for missions is AGM’s distinguishing mark or distinctive.¹⁰⁸ Perhaps AGM should also encourage more cross-cultural mission work overseas. That was the Azusa Street ideal, which produced a large number of what is called ‘one-way ticket missionaries’ especially to Africa.

AGM needs to stride forward as a CPCM in the power of the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel, and advance toward integral missions or holistic missions, embracing both the evangelism and social responsibility. CPCM needs to be a missional movement with every church being a missional church to reach out in practical ways. Wong Young Soon encourages Malaysian Christians to play the role in building compassionate communities and organise compassionate services in charity, development, and advocacy for the voiceless. Churches need to invest funds in equipping God’s people in ‘social work, community development, rural or urban development, counselling, healthcare, education and early childhood education, and special needs education.’¹⁰⁹ Mercy ministry is to do practical missions where the need is: to help the poor, feed the hungry, reach out to the marginalised and the suffering, care and protect the weak and vulnerable.

Other new areas of missions are marketplace ministries and nation-building. Chan N.C. also states, ‘In the last two elections in Malaysia, some Pentecostal Christians were

¹⁰⁸ Collective interview data: WC-9, WC-10, WC-11, WC-12, WC-13, WC-14, WC-27, WC-32, WC-33.

¹⁰⁹ Wong Young Soon, ‘The Role of Christians in Building Compassionate Communities’, in Hwa and Ting, eds., *Christians and Nation-Building in a Pluralistic Society*, pp. 93-5.

getting involved as lobby groups, pressure groups, and even directly in politics as part of their calling. In the past, Pentecostals would just pray.’¹¹⁰ Hwa Yung encourages more Christian involvement in nation-building, to be the ‘salt of the earth’ and light of the world’ (Matt. 5:13-14) in this pluralistic society, and be a blessing to the nation. He urges, ‘If the Christian community is to truly live with holiness and with integrity, take a clear stand for compassion, justice and social righteousness, and strive to be agents of reconciliation in the midst of all the ethnic, religious and sociopolitical divisions, we can indeed become God’s instrument of transformation for this nation.’¹¹¹

The core elements of contemporary Pentecostal missions is the relevance of the gospel to the community and young generations without compromising the full gospel. It is only with the right Pentecostal spirituality that believers are filled with zeal and passion for missions, just as how the Spirit led many AGM pioneers in missions and church growth. Land highlights that ‘Pentecostal spirituality as missionary fellowship’ in having ‘a passion for the kingdom’ is ignited through BHS and glossolalia, relationship with God, and praying in the Spirit, but the heart of it is love.¹¹²

Although AGM has been actively involved in both local and overseas missions, I advocate that an even wider vision on ecumenism in faith and mission collaborations in the international arena is instrumental for AGM in this twenty-first century to be impactful in the nations. AGM should have a larger vision and concertedly work towards fulfilling the common call of world Christianity, particularly ‘The Edinburgh 2010 Common Call’ emerged from the centenary of the World Missionary Conference.¹¹³

Ultimately, I strongly propose that autonomous churches unite in sharing common missionary vision and resources (workers, finances, strategies, network and etc.) as a

¹¹⁰ Interview with Rev. Dr Chan N.C.

¹¹¹ Hwa Yung, ‘The Church as a Blessing to the Nations’, in Hwa and Ting, eds., *Christians and Nation-Building in a Pluralistic Society*, pp. 1, 7, 8.

¹¹² Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, pp. 163-75.

¹¹³ ‘Common Call’, Preface, in Lee and Ma, eds., *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, pp. xiii-xiv.

movement on a long-term basis to advance the gospel and holistic missions in the nation and fulfilling the Great Commission. Also, there will be powerful synergy in interdenominational unity of the Malaysian Church in sharing resources for the gospel and missions.

Bible colleges play a significant role in ‘preparing lives for missions’. Contemporary theological education should refocus on preparing lives not just for ministries, but for holistic missions in new approaches. Missions had been the original and primary focus during AGM’s formative and pioneering period, churning many missionaries, evangelists, church planters, and ministers. Amos Yong suggests, ‘a theological education that serves the church ought to facilitate participation in this divine mission ... the missiological and the pentecostal go together’. Referring to Acts 1:8 and Joel 2 – Acts 2 on the outpouring of the Spirit ‘upon all flesh’, he advocates that the Pentecost and ‘Pentecost vision for theological education’ is for the ‘church catholic (universal and ecumenical)’.¹¹⁴ Indeed, AGM as Pentecostals and its Bible colleges should always prioritise Spirit-empowered missions especially for current and future generations, and even expand the ‘Pentecost vision’ to the larger body of Christ through theological education and have interdenominational united vision for missions. There is a synergy in an ecumenical collaboration in holistic and integral missions in building the nation together.

7.6 Conclusion

In line with the CPCM vision and new image, this chapter serves as a PDV for the next generation as it provides suggestions and applications in both theology and mission (practice) to resolve the tensions between holding on to the classical Pentecostalism and

¹¹⁴ Amos Yong, ‘Theological Education between the West and the “Rest”: A Reverse “Reverse Missionary” and Pentecost Perspective’, *AJPS* 24.1 (Baguio, Feb. 2021), pp. 27-9.

becoming relevant in the contemporary context and to move forward. These suggestions provide a balance to the struggle to maintain the AGM's 'DNA' or Pentecostal identity and distinctives in contemporary times.

The way forward for AGM is in preserving its holistic Pentecostal spirituality from which flows the new generations of vibrant Pentecostal community, robust Pentecostal ecclesiology, missiology, and ministry in the twenty-first century and beyond. The transformative roles in developing and teaching its theology and Pentecostal practices begins with the AGM Bible colleges and leadership, with concerted effort of church ministers, leaders, congregation, and members. Unity in diversity is vital in resolving the tension among ministers who have various theological backgrounds to move forward in the Malaysian context.

Pentecostal spirituality with strong emphasis on the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2, holistic understanding of BHS, glossolalia, Spirit-baptised church and missions is crucial for the new generations to thrive in this twenty-first century. AGM needs to embrace the development of contemporary Pentecostal theology and new missional direction in holistic and integral missions in contemporary times. Only then, the tension between holding on to the classical Pentecostalism and becoming relevant without compromising the gospel in the contemporary context can be resolved.

The new generations need to have a new understanding on the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 in Pentecostal ecclesia and lives of believers. True Pentecostal spirituality is encountering the living God in the 'theophanic' Spirit-baptism and developing a continual intimate relationship with the triune God from whom flows wholehearted love for God in worship and Spirit-led life, mission, and service.

Preserving holistic Pentecostal spirituality is the way forward for AGM to advance and thrive in the twenty-first century and advance in the preaching of the gospel. BHS is

vital as God's plan and purpose for empowerment of the church and its mission to the world to spread the gospel as in Acts 1:8. R. Chin urges:

Well, AG Malaysia and AG worldwide also has always been classical Pentecostal in position, proclamation and practice, so definitely I would say, this is part of our DNA. The Pentecostal beliefs, baptism of the Holy Spirit, initial evidence of tongues, and then the gifts of the Holy Spirit ... All that is still our distinctive and should continue to be our distinctive. Because I don't think we can ever outgrow the need for the supernatural dimension of the Holy Spirit. In today's world, it seems people are more educated, more sophisticated, but you also hear of rising cases of depression, suicide, and people with all kinds of needs that the normal human ways of resources could not touch at all. It definitely needs the intervention of God and the supernatural. So, I think it is definitely part of AG distinctive and DNA which we should maintain.¹¹⁵

The outpouring of the Spirit in Joel 2 – Acts 2 is the foundation of Pentecostal movement's theology and practice of the BHS, glossolalia, spurring the church in missions and service. BHS being central and 'crown jewel of Pentecostal distinctive' as Macchia defines it,¹¹⁶ allows deepening of intimacy with God and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. The centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 and centrality of BHS enables AGM to stride forward in the twenty-first century as a CPCM in the power of the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel, engage in holistic and integral missions, and spread the Pentecostal fires.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Rev. R. Chin.

¹¹⁶ Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, p. 20.

Chapter Eight

Summary and Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to analyse and interpret the historical-theological development of the contextualisation of classical Pentecostalism in Malaysia, particularly AGM as a Malaysian Pentecostal movement, with special reference to the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2. This study establishes the contextual factors and underlying theologies of the changes in concepts and practices in AGM over six decades from a CPM to a CPCM and addressing the increasing gap between the espoused classical Pentecostal theology and its contemporary perspectives and practices. This study also proposes the future forms and directions of Pentecostal distinctives, contemporary Pentecostal spirituality, ecclesial and missional strategies and practices for the next generation. In this conclusion chapter, I intend to explain the attainments, contributions, and influences of this research to the movement. I will describe the academic contributions of this study to new knowledge. Finally, I recognise some limitations in this research and offer suggestions of areas for further study.

8.2 Research Attainments and Contributions

The main attainment of this research is a rich and comprehensive academic understanding of the contextualised Malaysian Pentecostalism, which is new academic contribution to knowledge gap in Malaysian Pentecostal literature on the subject as well as in the Pentecostal scholarship.

This research has achieved the overall purpose of study with new major findings in each chapter, successfully answering the research questions. In chapter three, I have identified seven theological themes derived from Joel 2 – Acts 2, significant in the

development of the espoused Pentecostal theology of AGM. These key themes provide a theoretical backdrop in terms of the general development of Pentecostalism in the global context, and to provide a dialogical platform to compare them with the empirical findings in the Malaysian context. The main findings progress from a degree of complexity to simplicity, advancing from the analysis of voices of the informants in Stages 1 and 2, to interpretation in Stage 3 which is the researcher's voice, and on to application in Stage 4.

Stage 1 analysed and interpreted how classical Pentecostalism has been developed and contextualised by comparing and contrasting the conceptual and theoretical themes consisting of theological emphases in each historical period of six decades based on AGM's milestones from a CPM to a CPCM. This includes the analysis and interpretation of VoS being a significant role of the Holy Spirit in the calling of AGM ministers and guiding them in missiology, ecclesiology, and ministry over the decades, particularly in the growth and development of AGM.

Stage 2 discussed the analytical results and critical interpretations in the previous stage and provides the contextual factors to give accounts on the development of understanding and practices of Pentecostalism from the classical period to the contemporary times. The impacts of the contextual factors on the Pentecostal identity, distinctives, and their practices in the contemporary Pentecostalism lead to the critical reflection in the next stage. The primary implication of the contextual factors on the changes is the tension between the classical understanding and practices of Pentecostalism in contemporary Pentecostalism.

Stage 3 engaged in critical reflection on the theological development of AGM's Pentecostalism and the underlying theologies of its contemporary practices. This theological reflection involves the conversation between the theoretical background in chapter three and the empirical findings in Stages 1 and 2. There are three theoretical themes or explanations on the general theological development of Pentecostalism, which

are ecumenical diversity, pragmatism, and relevance. The critical interpretation of comparing and contrasting the findings in stages 1 and 2 generates new knowledge through differentiating the findings from the existing scholars' theories and knowledge. This is the unique contribution to the body of knowledge and the mission of AGM. The theologising of these contextual factors provides a good balance between the strong demand of keeping the classical Pentecostal identity and distinctives and the strong demand of becoming relevant to the changes in the sociocultural and religious contexts of Malaysia. The engagement of Pentecostal theologians' views enables me to generate theory and knowledge in a critical and argumentative manner as a Pentecostal theologian.

In Stage 4, I introduced four domains, namely Pentecostal spirituality, identity, education, and holistic mission, in proposing the way forward. This stage plays a prophetic role to highlight the positive and negative elements in the contextualised Pentecostal theology and practices; followed by suggestions for radical transformation to break the tension between the classical Pentecostal identity and practices; and to move forward to make them more relevant to the context. Overall, the thesis is about evaluating the contextualised Pentecostal theology and making suggestions for the future direction of Pentecostalism in the Malaysian context.

The following are highlights of the research attainments and contributions:

8.2.1 A New Academic Knowledge of Contextualised Malaysian Pentecostalism

This study on AGM's growth and development from a CPM to a CPCM over six decades from its inception in 1957 to present is original academic research with the uniqueness of AGM's contextualisation in its sociocultural context. It provides a comprehensive understanding of the changes taking place in the perceptible shift from the espoused Pentecostal Theology to its contemporary setting. This study contributes to new academic knowledge of contextualised Malaysian Pentecostalism, using the Swinton and Mowat's

approach and model in practical theology and qualitative research as the theoretical framework for the entire dissertation structure, as well as data from archival sources and written documents, in specific aspects as follows: The construction of the historical-theological development of AGM from a CPM to a CPCM; a contextual analysis and theological interpretation of the paradigm shifts; the preservation of the Pentecostal identity by nurturing holistic Pentecostal spirituality in contemporary times; and the future directions of Pentecostalism and missions for AGM's next generation in this twenty-first century.

This systematic study through the conceptual and theoretical framework is conducted with the interpretation of themes: Firstly, the key theological themes derived from Joel 2 – Acts 2 as foundational Scripture to classical Pentecostal theology which are most relevant in the formation of AGM, and how these themes are used as interpretive lens on the changes in AGM over time. Secondly, the classical emphases of AGM as a CPM during the classical formation period 1957-1974. Thirdly, the changing nature and shifts in emphases from classical to contemporary. And fourthly, the EXCO's contemporary emphases of AGM as a 'CPCM', its official tagline in 2018.

8.2.1.1 A Historical-Theological Development from CPM to CPCM

The analyses and interpretations of primary data produces the themes through conceptual and theoretical framework which formed the historical-theological elements in the chronology on how AGM has developed and transitioned from a CPM to a CPCM since its inception to present with historical milestones, with its situation and complexities. As mentioned, the themes interpreted from the data are the classical emphases in the formative period; shifts of emphases during the movement growth period, and contemporary emphases in recent years with the EXCO's vision on CPCM. These themes help to differentiate emphases and practices in three different periods of growth. As an

integral part of the implicit theology of Joel's prophecy, the research also presents the intrinsic role of VoS in the growth and development of AGM, integrated in the lives and ministries within AGM. As such, this study successfully weaves the historical-theological development, transitions and changes in emphases and practices of the Pentecostal distinctives and VoS over six decades.

8.2.1.2 An Invaluable Insight on the Significant Element of VoS in AGM's Growth and Development

A very unique, dynamic, significant, and most interesting contribution, being my favourite part of this study is a holistic and comprehensive pneumatology arising from a conviction that the VoS mediated by PDV is an essential spiritual element of the theological, missiological, ecclesiological and ministerial aspects of AGM.

Invaluable testimonies and insights of AGM pioneers from the CPM and young full-time Bible college students from the CPCM enlightens the crucial role of the Holy Spirit through VoS in PDV, in God's calling of AGM ministers, and providing guidance and direction in missiology, ecclesiology, and ministerial aspects over six decades. Many AGM ministers are being led by the Holy Spirit through PDV in their calling, church planting, social concern ministries, church expansion, church planning, and ministering to the members. Although VoS is an implicit theology and practice shaped by Joel's prophecy and the concept of PDV has changed from more vivid imagery to enigmatic these days, it has significant impact on AGM's growth and development from inception to present. Looking into the future, the leadership continues to emphasise the importance of PDV, that AGM be the prophetic voice for the church and nation.

8.2.1.3 A Contextual Analysis and Theological Interpretation

This original study also fills the knowledge gap on the contextual analysis and theological interpretation of paradigm shifts in regard to the Pentecostal distinctives, namely BHS, glossolalia, missions, as well as VoS, on how the outpouring of the Spirit in Joel 2:28-32 been interpreted and practised by AGM ministers then and today. This involves the comparison of concepts and practices of the past and present, and the investigation on how concepts and practices change. The thorough analyses and interpretations of the primary data enables the findings of the contextual factors triggering the development of understanding and practices of the Pentecostal distinctives and VoS. This research process has been significant to understand AGM's special sociocultural context, the changing nature and paradigm shifts on the theological practice as the movement morphs from classical to contemporary.

The theological interpretation reveals the underlying theology of the major changes in emphases and practice of Pentecostal distinctives in the midst of the shifts and diversifications taking place in the movement; and how far BHS, glossolalia, and missions have regressed; and addressing the concerns of ministers. The discussion of these issues are original views from the field which will be impactful for the current and future generations to distinguish the Pentecostal distinctives as the core beliefs of AGM. This theological reflection is timely to advocating the contemporary Pentecostal spirituality of the movement in this century as a Malaysian Pentecostal movement.

8.2.1.4 A Contemporary Pentecostal Spirituality for Twenty-First Century

The research presents the need of a contemporary Pentecostal spirituality for twenty-first century, resulting from the theological interpretation and reflection on AGM's Pentecostal spirituality as a CPM and toward a CPCM. The theological factors involved AGM's blending with evangelicalism, Charismatic Movement, Third Wave, and

contemporary influences. The originality of this theological interpretation is a contribution to the movement in understanding the major changes that have taken place over time, particularly on how AGM ministers understand and evaluate both the changes in current theology and practices, and their contextual factors in light of the espoused Pentecostal theology. Due to the hybridisation of these external theologies and influences, many church members including some ministers are unaware and have difficulty to differentiate Pentecostals from other newer movements.

The study proposes a more intentional spiritual discipleship in the preservation of the Pentecostal distinctive, namely BHS, glossolalia, and missions. This study is vital for AGM to continue to be the prophetic voice in the movement, in the nation, and beyond. This involves the transformative roles and responsibilities of the leadership, national Bible colleges, church pastors, leaders, and church members as a whole, in rethinking missions, incorporating the advanced contemporary Pentecostal theology in the Bible colleges' programmes and courses, and to reinforce the teaching and practice of Pentecostal distinctives at church level in raising the next generation of Pentecostals.

8.2.1.5 A Future Direction of Missions for the Next Generation

This study suggests some strategies for AGM's theological development, transformative practices, and the future direction of its mission for the next generation, in hope to prepare the way for AGM as a CPCM to thrive and continue to grow in this century. This study proposes the way forward for the next generation to rethinking missions with the centrality of the gospel in the holistic and integral missions. This is only possible with strong Pentecostal values and spirituality mentioned earlier. In a global context, Wonsuk Ma foresees the future progress of Pentecostal missions as follows:

[T]he latter's [BHS'] empowerment theology, incorporated in the prophethood of all believers, will remain high in Pentecostal theological agendas, if the theology is to remain 'Pentecostal'. The primary purpose of soul-winning is expected to continue, although the Pentecostal horizon in mission thinking and practice has become more holistic and inclusive. At the same time, more locally motivated

theological agendas should surface, such as reconciliation in places where religious and racial conflicts raise tensions.¹

There are many new opportunities for growth and mission that needs exploration and discovery, as well as effective ways for preserving this Pentecostal heritage of AGM in the twenty-first century.

There is a need to continually search for new frontiers and adopt new strategies in missions in a multiracial, multicultural, and multireligious country. For example, the demographics are changing with the influx of more than six million foreign immigration of workers and refugees over the past decade. The nations are now at the very doorsteps of the Malaysian church. There is also a new missional direction for local churches to impact their communities and take opportunities to reach out in practical ways, and through new areas of social concern ministries according to the socioeconomic issues and current needs of society.

8.3 Research Influence

This research is impactful for the AGM movement, the pioneers, young ministers, leaders, and adherents, as well as national Christian literature for the Malaysian church at large, and a new academic contribution to the Pentecostal scholarship.

This research provides a historical-theological background to AGM's contextualised classical Pentecostalism, as well as a comprehensive academic knowledge of Malaysian Pentecostalism over six decades.

This literature serves as a useful influence to the current and next generation on AGM's historical milestones, Pentecostal theology from classical to contemporary, Pentecostal spirituality, Pentecostal heritage of the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2, BHS,

¹ W. Ma, 'The Theological Motivations for Pentecostal Mission', in Lee and Ma, eds., *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, p. 39. Word added in bracket for clarification purpose.

glossolalia, missions, and VoS, and future directions in this twenty-first century. This study provides a comprehensive understanding of AGM for Bible college students, ministers-in-training, lay leaders, and adherents in general.

On the other hand, it also serves as a historical contribution especially to the faithful AGM pioneers and senior ministers as this study encapsulates the six decades of milestones, on how AGM has grown, developed, and progressed since its inception to present. The veterans have been contributing to the growth and development of AGM since the pioneering years and have been serving faithfully for over forty to sixty years. The churches which they have planted decades ago have expanded and are well established, impacting many communities in the country.

This contextualised Malaysian Pentecostalism literature also serves as a new academic knowledge and literature to the Malaysian church at large and the Pentecostal scholarship.

8.4 Research Limitations and Suggestions

This study has achieved its purposes and aims. I acknowledge that the years of this research programme is a limited timeframe and would not be able to cover all aspects of the contextualised Malaysian classical Pentecostalism and AGM's growth and development over sixty years. The primary focus of this study and data collection have been on AGM's emphases and practice of Pentecostal distinctives, BHS, glossolalia, missions, and VoS, particularly with special reference to Joel 2 – Acts 2. I have not collected primary data on other areas outside the research scope. Although this study is a new and significant academic contribution, in view of the scarcity of local research and literature on Malaysian Pentecostalism and AGM, there is still a vast spectrum of research areas for future researchers to explore.

The research limitations include certain methodological problems or research scope. I was not able to collect data from the grassroots because of time limitation and the vastness of the field. The ordinary laity may contain valuable data for many aspects, and I suggest collecting data from local churches for future research to have a more comprehensive understanding of contextualised Pentecostalism or grassroots theology from their own local context. Archival documents are available and future researchers can do many new specific research works on history, historical theology, church growth, missions, leadership, Bible colleges, and etc.

As a researcher who is seemingly an insider, there are certainly limitations involved. Firstly, I have been very cautious throughout the years of this research endeavour to uphold objectivity in the data processing, analyses, and interpretations. I appreciate that this research progresses along with supervisors' guidance and advice, in assuring the quality and objectivity of the whole research methodology and process. The support of AGM leadership in their willing participation and contribution even in taking the time for second interviews affirms the objectivity of this study and research process. The research participants have been very open to share their personal testimonies and experiences, as well as the strengths and weaknesses, the progressions and regressions in specific areas of the movement over the decades. To this, I am truly grateful, for the balanced data helps this study to be all the more objective.

Secondly, I look through the cultural lens that it is quite rare for Asian female scholars to discuss contemporary theological issues pertaining to the local context. I learn along the way that objectivity in research includes addressing some hard issues from the data. The assurance of academic freedom to write the essay on truth² also liberates me to write the thesis objectively.

² Thomas W. Simpson, 'Academic Freedom', Cambridge Papers, volume 27, no. 2, (June, 2018), <https://www.jubilee-centre.org/cambridge-papers/academic-freedom-by-tom-simpson>, accessed 29 August 2020.

Thirdly, some AGM participants may have theological biases in the surveys and interviews as they only expressed themselves from the limitations of the classical Pentecostal perspective. As I serve in BCM and AGM, I may be pressured and influenced to limit my theological views to the primary data. I am grateful for my rich spiritual heritage from the Lutheran tradition and Spirit-baptised spirituality with exposure to the larger Body of Christ that enables me to evaluate theological issues from the broader Christian perspectives. This helps me to avoid theological biases and enables me to analyse and interpret the primary data in the most theologically balanced and objective manner possible and remain faithful to the Pentecostal spirituality.

As this is qualitative research, in the selection of data and opinions, I have selected the most pressing views over general views, which I discern as prophetic voices that make impactful stands and make a difference for the current and future generations. I have not used every testimony or quoted every opinion due to the limited word count in this dissertation. However, the whole data processing is inclusive of every data and source. Data is also generated and reflected in some statistics to provide certain scenarios and the spiritual atmosphere of each historical period.

These limitations indicate many areas for further research, especially in view of the scarcity of Pentecostal scholarship in Malaysia as noted. Indeed, Malaysia is a vast research field. I hope that the AGM Bible Colleges could expand to start a Pentecostal department to encourage more Pentecostal studies and increase its academic resources to raise Pentecostal scholarship in this country and region for the future generations. There is a pressing need of spiritual discipleship and to raise the next generation with strong Pentecostal spirituality. This can be attained with the transformative role of AGM's Pentecostal theological education.

8.5 Conclusion

This conclusion chapter describes how this study has addressed the original research problem and has achieved its purposes and aims. This study systematically presents how the classical Pentecostalism has been contextualised in Malaysia, particularly AGM and suggests the future forms of Pentecostal distinctives and practices for the next generation.

Although AGM has gone through various changes in nature, practice, ideas, perspectives, image, outlook, methods, and contexts from a CPM to a CPCM, as long as the foundational doctrine and theological practice of Joel's prophecy on the outpouring of the Spirit in Joel 2 – Acts 2 remains central to the movement, giving room to the Holy Spirit, and be led by the VoS, AGM will remain truly Pentecostal and a God Spirited revival movement in the twenty-first century and beyond.

The vitality of a holistic Pentecostal spirituality will accomplish God's missions and pass on AGM's 'DNA' to the next generation. R. Chin says:

Looking ahead, I believe greater things are awaiting us – *not because of who we are but because of who God is*. He is a progressive God with a great purpose. Malaysia needs revival and I pray that the Assemblies of God will be a vital part of this revival. All the more reason for us to stay united and true to our rich Pentecostal heritage, not by name or tradition but by practice. This does not mean blindly holding onto our past as our world has changed so much. Methods, processes and systems may change to maintain our cutting edge but the fundamental of “*Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,*” says the *LORD Almighty*’ should always remain our driving conviction. For that reason, the EXCO have focused on the tagline “A Contemporary Pentecostal church movement” rather than the usual 2-year theme.³

The General Council seeks to impact the ministers who would in turn impact their church members. The significant ways in maintaining the Pentecostal heritage in the next generation is through the pulpit, national Bible school in synergy with the leadership, and the local church, to instil the conviction in future pastors-in-training. To be more impactful, this is applicable not only to AGM ministers and leadership, but every church member in the inter-generational congregation. The younger generation learns from the

³ Rev. Ronnie Chin, Assistant General Superintendent's Report, 'A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement', AGM Biennial Report 2016-2018, p. 8, BR2016-2018-52-AGS.

older generation. So, practising holistic Pentecostal spirituality and fervour begins with everyone today.

The ultimate goal of this study is that the new generations will have a new understanding on the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 and centrality of BHS in Pentecostal ecclesia and lives of believers. True Pentecostal spirituality is encountering the living God in the theophanic Spirit-baptism and developing a continual intimate relationship with the triune God from whom flows wholehearted love for God in worship and Spirit-led life, mission, and service, advancing the gospel and spreading the Pentecostal fires.

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7. Thesis

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Qualitative Research Contributors

8. Qualitative Research Participants

List of AGM 95 Survey Participants and 45 Interviewees (See Appendix Three for List of Interviewees)

* Note: 2 interviewees did not fill up the survey.

No.	Surveys and Interviews	Main AG Positions Served/Serving (as at time of survey and interview)
Begun Ministry 1957-1974 to present		
1	Tan Sri Datuk Rev. Dr Prince Guneratnam*	1 st Malaysian AG General Superintendent, EXCO, Pioneer, Church Planter, Senior Pastor
2	Rev. Ng Kok Kee	AG General Secretary, EXCO, 2 nd BCM President Pioneer, Church Planter, Senior Pastor, EXCO, MTBI Principal, District
3	Rev. Terrence Sinnadurai	AG General Secretary, EXCO, District, Senior Pastor
4	Rev. Philip Sung Shi Sheng	Pioneer, Senior Pastor, District
5	Rev. Philip Mathius	EXCO, District Superintendent, Pioneer, Senior Pastor
6	Rev. Dr Samuel Ng Teng Beng	Pioneer, Senior Pastor, EXCO, District
7	Rev. Marcus Tan Pooi Ik	
Begun Ministry 1975-2007 to present		
8	Rev. Dr Vincent Leoh Khoo Beng	2 nd Malaysian AG General Superintendent, EXCO, Pioneer, Senior Pastor
9	Rev. Ong Sek Leang	Present 3 rd AG General Superintendent, Pioneer, Senior Pastor
10	Rev. Florence Teh Siew Lian	Pioneer, Pastor, BCM Dean of Students, Itinerant
11	Rev. Wong Yin Ming	EXCO, District, Pioneer, Senior Pastor
12	Rev. Ronald Ooi Peng Hock	Pioneer, EXCO, District, 1 st BCM President, Senior Pastor
13	Rev. Jasmine Woon Oi Lee	Pioneer, Pastor
14	Rev. Ronnie Chin Choong Tet	Assistant General Superintendent, EXCO, District, Pioneer, Senior Pastor
15	Rev. Fiona Mathius-Lee Saik Eiang	Pioneer, Associate Pastor
16	Rev. Benjamin Yeoh Teng Beng*	EXCO, District, Pioneer, Senior Pastor
17	Rev. Michael Ho Mun Sang	EXCO, District, Pioneer, Senior Pastor
18	Rev. Lawrence Yap Kwee Thong	EXCO, District, Pioneer, Senior Pastor
19	Rev. Dr Chan Nam Chen	EXCO, District, Pastor, Lecturer
20	Rev. Lisa Chin Yoon Lee	Pioneer, Associate Pastor, AG Prayer Commission
21	Rev. Stephen Ong Koon Hong	KL-East District Committee Language Representative, Senior Pastor
22	Rev. Christopher Mun Hin Num	EXCO, Southern District Superintendent, Pioneer, Senior Pastor
23	Rev. Marianne Chow Wai Ching	Pioneer, Associate Pastor
24	Rev. Christopher Pak Cheong Huat	EXCO, Central District Superintendent, Pioneer, Senior Pastor
25	Rev. Clement Wong Yee Hoong	EXCO, Northern District Superintendent, Pioneer, Senior Pastor
26	Rev. Alexander Soh Yoke Siew	EXCO, District, Pioneer, Senior Pastor
27	Rev. Jeremiah Gun Kee Hock	Pastor, AG Prayer Commission
28	Rev. Phillip Wee Chin Hooi	Pioneer, Church Planter, Main Pastor
29	Rev. Michael Noel Jalleh	Pioneer, Senior Pastor
30	Rev. Arthur Sakara Bani	Pioneer, Senior Pastor
31	Rev. Priscilla Tai Seik Mee	District Language Representative, Pastor
32	Rev. Stewart Law Peng Hoong	Pastor

33	Rev. Brian Ranjan S/O Packiry	EXCO, District, Pioneer, Senior Pastor
34	Rev. Caleb Chan Seng Tuck	Assistant Pastor, BCM Board of Director, BCM Alumni President
35	Rev. Connie Chan Pui Chuen	Associate Pastor, AG Prayer Commission
36	Rev. Faith Kam Pui Chuen	District, Senior Pastor
37	Pastor Tan Szet Anne	Assistant Pastor
38	Rev. Peter Lee Wei Meng	Church Planter, Senior Pastor
39	Rev. Victor Lee Tat Yan	Present 3 rd BCM President
	Begun Ministry 2008 to Present	
40	Pastor Bernice Chan Wai Yee	Ministry staff and full-time worker
41	Pastor Lee Mei Young	Ministry staff
42	Pastor James Quan Weng Yew	Pioneer, Pastor
43	Marta Peninting	Pioneer, Church Planter, Lay Leader
44	Pastor Joshua Yong Yew Wai	Assistant Pastor
45	Pastor Theophilos Daniel	Assistant Youth Pastor
	Begun Ministry 1974-2007 to present	
46	Rev. Isaac Chan Chee Wah	EXCO, District, Pioneer, Senior Pastor
47	Rev. Suen Chee Siew Tai	Pioneer, Associate Pastor
48	Rev. Aris Siew Kin Wai	Senior Pastor
49	Angeline Lim Kwi Hong	Ministerial Associate
50	Rev. Lynda Choi Yoke Peng	Pioneer, Pastor
51	Rev. Nirhal D. Philips	Associate Pastor
52	Rev. David Seah Ping Huat	Associate Pastor
53	Rev. Elizabeth Yow Wai Yen	Pastor
54	Pastor Kathrine Koo Yueh Yun	Ministerial staff
55	Juhan @ John Mokija	Pioneer, Ministerial Associate
56	Pastor Donny Tan Tee Whey	Assistant Pastor, AG National Worship Secretary
57	Pastor Amber Wong Phek Wuan	Pastor
	Begun Ministry 2008 to present	
58	Pastor Tabitha Ong Mei Yann	Pastor
59	Rev. Fion Chan Sok Kuen	Pioneer, Pastor
60	Pastor Daryl Yeow Wei Hoong	Pastor
61	Yeoh Keong Jian	Ministerial Staff
62	Pastor Zew Mei Fong	Ministerial Staff
63	Pastor Ooi Chaw Yuan	Pastor
64	Pastor Debbie Ong Meng Foong	Pioneer, Outreach Pastor
65	Vickie Kan Wei Ming	Ministerial Associate
66	Pastor Kenrick Kong Chee Hung	Worship Minister
67	Pastor Low Tee Juan	Youth Pastor
68	Pastor Chee Yu Li	Youth Pastor
69	Maidin Mopin	Pioneer, Ministerial Associate
70	Yosep Suban Tapon	Pioneer, Ministerial Associate
71	Terence Ooi Guan Tseng	Christian Worker, Missionary
72	Pastor Jacinta Chay Yun Fong	Pioneer, Pastor
73	Neo Soon Siak	Assistant Pastor
	BCM Full-Time Residential Students	
74	Jesslyn Ong Tze Xin	Full-time worker
75	Samuel Lim Wen Keat	Youth Leader

76	Luta anak Engkut	Youth Leader
77	Michael Ong Zhong Xian	Full-time worker
78	Christal Lee Wai Chin	Full-time worker
79	Misdawati Sipahutar	Missions minister
80	Julyanus bin Tabled	Church Worker
81	Ian Choo Ee Ern	Youth Leader, Church Worker
82	John Vinod Baskaran	Church Worker
83	Hon Sir Neng	Full-time student
84	Fong Kar Mun	Ministry Intern
85	Stephanus anak Sylvester F. Bukit	Assistant Pastor
86	Levi Asher A/L Donald Anamalai	Youth Worker
87	Joanne Tan Wai Yan	Serving in children's ministry
88	Nally Woo Wei Wei	Church Worker
89	Lavender Ong Bee Wei	Christian Worker
90	Felicia Soh Yi-Wen	Full-time worker
91	Jane Chiang Jue Yu	Youth Leader
92	Christabel Wong Kai Lin	Christian Worker
93	Roger Ti Shih Wei	Ministry Intern
94	David Yeoh Yew Jun	Christian Worker
95	Chiew Si Wei	Full-time Student

List of 9 Second Interviewees:

1. Rev. Ong Sek Leang
2. Rev. Dr Samuel Ng Teng Beng
3. Rev. Wong Yin Ming
4. Rev. Ronnie Chin Choong Tet
5. Rev. Lawrence Yap Kwee Thong
6. Rev. Dr Victor Lee Tat Yan
7. Rev. Dr Chan Nam Chen
8. Rev. Lisa Chin Yoon Lee
9. Rev. Connie Chan Poh Yin

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APPENDICES

Appendix One: Consent Form (second interview)

Title of project: From a Classical Pentecostal Movement to a Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement: A Study of the Assemblies of God of Malaysia with Special Reference to Joel 2:28-32

Consent to take part in qualitative research for PhD Thesis

- I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves survey and/or interview(s), and maybe in providing some materials as primary source for the research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that my identity may be revealed in some parts of the research and thesis.
- I understand that extracts from my survey or interview may be quoted in the PhD thesis.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained by the researcher until the completion of the PhD degree programme and for safe-keeping thereafter.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview will be retained for a minimum of two years from the completion of the PhD degree programme and for safe-keeping thereafter.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

Signature of research participant

Signature of researcher

Signature of participant Date

Signature of researcher Date

Source: Adaptation from 'Participant-consent-form-template.pdf',
<https://www.sampleforms.com/participant-consent-forms.html>, accessed on 23 July 2019

Appendix Two: Second Interview Questions

Qualitative Research – Second Interview (July 2019)

Focus: The Assemblies of God of Malaysia from a Classical Pentecostal Movement to a Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement

1. How do you view the Assemblies of God of Malaysia (AG Malaysia) as a movement today?
2. How would you describe the AG Malaysia as a Classical Pentecostal Movement in terms of its theology and practice?
3. How is the AG Malaysia as contemporary movement different from AG as a classical Pentecostal movement?
4. Could you please explain the significance and distinguishing mark of AG Malaysia's new image being 'A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement'? When has this first been discussed in EXCO and why is there a need for change?
5. When and why has AG Malaysia changed or shifted from classical to contemporary?
6. How do you understand the word 'contemporary' and what are the new emphases as a contemporary church movement?
7. In your opinion, what aspects of the AG Malaysia as a classical Pentecostal movement which need preserving as well as changing?
Follow-up Question: Is there any down-side to being known as a classical Pentecostal movement?
8. How would you describe the similarities and differences or the continuity and discontinuity of the Pentecostal theology and distinctives between the classical and the contemporary?
9. How would you describe the similarities and differences or continuity and discontinuity of the Pentecostal practices between the classical and the contemporary?
10. What are the contemporary issues affecting the practice of Pentecostal distinctives?
11. What are the external factors influencing AG Malaysia's understanding of being 'contemporary'?
12. In what way have Charismatic Movements in general been influencing AG Malaysia's understanding of what it is to be 'contemporary'?
13. Are the Pentecostal distinctives such as Spirit-baptism still being practised as much as the pioneering and church planting era before the mid-1980s or has there been a decline in practice? Are all members being filled with the Spirit and how often do AG Malaysia church leaders pray for people to be 'filled with the Spirit'?

Follow-up Question: If it is decreasing, why is Baptism in the Holy Spirit being neglected at great cost to the Pentecostal witness and church life among 2nd generation Pentecostals?

14. Concerning AG Malaysia's statements of faith, belief and practice, do you think these distinctive doctrines namely the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, the 'initial evidence' of Baptism in the Holy Spirit, and speaking in tongues are really important for the contemporary church movement and are they being taught, practised, and emphasised today?

Follow-up Question: If the distinctive doctrines are not practised as extensively as it was in the past, can you please explain why?

15. Do you think that Baptism in the Holy Spirit for continuing spiritual formation is adequately emphasised today?

16. Can you kindly explain any change in the purpose of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit in the classical understanding as well as in the contemporary understanding and practice?

17. What is your response to the expansion in the Statement of Fundamental Truths, specifically No. 7 on 'The Baptism in the Holy Spirit', No. 8 on 'The Evidence of Baptism in the Holy Spirit', and No. 10 on 'The Church and Its Mission'?

18. Has there been any difference between the senior ministers and younger ones who experienced the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

19. Is there a need for the leadership to reinterpret the AG distinctives, especially on Baptism in the Holy Spirit and tongues to address local situations?

20. Has there been changes in understanding the nature and practice of missions and ministry from classical to contemporary? For example, when has AG Malaysia started to be involved in social concern ministries?

21. Do you think that individuals are involved in mission and personal evangelism today compared with the past?

22. What are the new strategies of church planting today?

23. Is there any trinitarian aspects which have been neglected in the AG churches in terms of the focus on The Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, in worship and preaching?

Follow-up Question: If so, how have they been neglected?

24. AG leadership speaks of the need of revival. What do you mean by revival?

25. Are modern Pentecostals praying as much as the early Pentecostals? Why?

26. What are the ways forward for AG Malaysia as a Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement? What are the specific plans and directions?

27. Do you think that AG Malaysia has moved away from its Pentecostal heritage, like not getting believers to be filled with the Spirit?

Follow-up Question: If so, how will AG Malaysia maintain the Pentecostal heritage in the next generation?

28. In order to study and understand the biblical-theological emphases and trends over the six decades, would you be able to provide the church's sermon topics and themes in the pioneering era, the church growth era, and these contemporary days? Do you have any archival records?

Appendix Three: List of Interviewees

Qualitative Research:

93 Survey Participants : 21 March – 26 May 2017

45 First Interviewees (FI) : 28 March – 26 May 2017

9 Second Interviewees (SI) : 21 July – 28 August 2019

No.	Interviewees	Main AG Positions Served/Serving (Info at time of fieldwork) Date, Time, Place
Begun Ministry 1957-1974 to present		
1	Tan Sri Datuk Rev. Dr Prince Guneratnam	1 st Malaysian AG General Superintendent, former EXCO, Pioneer, Church Planter, Senior Pastor FI: 4 May 2017, 10:45 a.m., 56 minutes. Place: Tan Sri Guneratnam's office, Calvary Convention Centre, Bukit Jalil.
2	Rev. Ng Kok Kee	Former AG General Secretary/ EXCO, 2 nd BCM President FI: 24 April 2017, 10:45 a.m., 1 hour. Place: Café, Petaling Jaya.
3	Rev. Terrence Sinnadurai	Pioneer, Church Planter, Senior Pastor, former EXCO, MTBI Principal FI: 28 March 2017, 11:00 a.m., 55 minutes. Place: BCM, Petaling Jaya.
4	Rev. Philip Sung Shi Sheng	Former AG General Secretary/ EXCO, Senior Pastor FI: 22 May 2017, 11:30 a.m., 40 minutes. Place: BCM, Petaling Jaya.
5	Rev. Philip Mathius	Pioneer, Senior Pastor FI: 27 April 2017, 3:30 p.m., 1 hour 46 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Shekinah Assembly of God, Taiping.
6	Rev. Dr Samuel Ng Teng Beng	Present AG General Treasurer, EXCO, former District Superintendent, Pioneer, Senior Pastor FI: 23 May 2017, 1:30 p.m., 1 hour 26 minutes. Place: Conference Room, Faith City Church, Subang Jaya. SI: 8 August 2019, 1.00 p.m. – 2.30 p.m., 1 hour 30 minutes. Place: Rakuzen, Subang Jaya
7	Rev. Marcus Tan Pooi Ik	Pioneer, Senior Pastor, EXCO FI: 28 April 2017, 2:00 p.m., 48 minutes. Place: Café, Penang.
Begun Ministry 1975-2007 to present		
8	Rev. Dr Vincent Leoh Khoo Beng	2 nd Malaysian AG General Superintendent, former EXCO, Pioneer, Senior Pastor FI: 18 April 2017, 3:00 p.m., 48 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Glad Tidings Assembly of God, Petaling Jaya.
9	Rev. Ong Sek Leang	Present 3 rd AG General Superintendent, Pioneer, Senior Pastor FI: 7 April 2017, 2:00 p.m., 28 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Metro Tabernacle AG, Batu Caves. SI: 26 July 2019, 1:40 p.m. – 2:50 p.m. 1 hour 10 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Metro Tabernacle AG, Batu Caves.
10	Rev. Florence Teh Siew Lian	Pioneer, Pastor, former BCM Dean of Students, Itinerant FI: 28 March 2017, 2:00 p.m., 40 minutes. Place: BCM, Petaling Jaya.
11	Rev. Wong Yin Ming	EXCO, Pioneer, Senior Pastor FI: 19 April 2017, 2:30 p.m., 47 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Subang Jaya AOG. SI: 24 July 2019, 11:20 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., 1 hour 10 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Subang Jaya AOG.
12	Rev. Ronald Ooi Peng Hock	Pioneer, former EXCO, former District Superintendent, 1 st BCM President, former Senior Pastor FI: 27 April 2017, 10:15 p.m., 1 hour. Place: Pastor's apartment, Penang.
13	Rev. Jasmine Woon Oi Lee	Pioneer, Pastor

		FI: 27 April 2017, 10:15 p.m., 1 hour. Place: Pastor's apartment, Penang.
14	Rev. Ronnie Chin Choong Tet	Present Assistant General Superintendent, EXCO, Pioneer, Senior Pastor FI: 26 May 2017, 2:30 p.m., 1 hour 13 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Revival Centre, Kuala Lumpur. SI: 27 August 2019, 3:40 p.m. – 5:10 p.m. 1 hour 30 minutes. Place: Revival Centre, Kuala Lumpur.
15	Rev. Fiona Mathius-Lee Saik Eiang	Pioneer, Associate Pastor FI: 27 April 2017, 3:30 p.m., 1 hour 46 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Shekinah Assembly of God, Taiping.
16	Rev. Benjamin Yeoh Teng Beng	Former EXCO, Pioneer, Senior Pastor FI: 26 April 2017, 11:00 a.m., 53 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Agape Community Church, Seremban.
17	Rev. Michael Ho Mun Sang	Former EXCO, Pioneer, Senior Pastor FI: 18 April 2017, 12 noon, 1 hour 18 minutes. Place: BCM, Petaling Jaya.
18	Rev. Lawrence Yap Kwee Thong	Present AG General Secretary, EXCO, Pioneer, Senior Pastor FI: 20 April 2017, 3:30 p.m., 1 hour. Place: AG General Council Office, Petaling Jaya. SI: 22 August 2019, 3:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. 1 hour 15 minutes. Place: AG General Council Office, Petaling Jaya.
19	Rev. Dr Chan Nam Chen	Former EXCO, former District Superintendent, Pastor, Lecturer FI: 28 March 2017, 2:00 p.m., 40 minutes. Place: BCM, Petaling Jaya. SI: 21 July 2019, 2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. 1 hour 30 minutes. Place: BCM, Petaling Jaya.
20	Rev. Lisa Chin Yoon Lee	Pioneer, Associate Pastor, AG Prayer Commission FI: 26 May 2017, 2:30 p.m., 1 hour 13 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Revival Centre, Kuala Lumpur. SI: 27 August 2019, 3:40 p.m. – 5:10 p.m. 1 hour 30 minutes. Place: Revival Centre, Kuala Lumpur.
21	Rev. Stephen Ong Koon Hong	KL-East District Committee Language Representative, Senior Pastor FI: 13 April 2017, 10:45 a.m., 1 hour. Place: Office, First Assembly of God Church Kuala Lumpur.
22	Rev. Christopher Mun Hin Num	EXCO, Southern District Superintendent, Pioneer, Senior Pastor FI: 26 April 2017, 2:15 p.m., 1 hour. Place: Pastor's office, Tabernacle of Worship, Seremban.
23	Rev. Marianne Chow Wai Ching	Pioneer, Associate Pastor FI: 26 April 2017, 2:15 p.m., 1 hour. Place: Pastor's office, Tabernacle of Worship, Seremban.
24	Rev. Christopher Pak Cheong Huat	EXCO, Central District Superintendent, Pioneer, Senior Pastor FI: 21 April 2017, 3:00 p.m., 1 hour. Place: Pastor's office, Glad Tidings Sunway, Petaling Jaya.
25	Rev. Clement Wong Yee Hoong	EXCO, Northern District Superintendent, Pioneer, Senior Pastor FI: 27 April 2017, 11:00 a.m., 35 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Church of Praise, Ipoh.
26	Rev. Alexander Soh Yoke Siew	Former EXCO, District Committee, Pioneer, Senior Pastor FI: 17 April 2017, 10:30 a.m., 50 minutes. Place: Home school, Puchong.
27	Rev. Jeremiah Gun Kee Hock	Pastor, AG Prayer Commission FI: 3 April 2017, 11:35 a.m., 1 hour 30 minutes. Place: BCM, Petaling Jaya.
28	Rev. Phillip Wee Chin Hooi	Pioneer, Church Planter, Main Pastor FI: 11 April 2017, 2:15 p.m., 2 hours. Place: BCM, Petaling Jaya.
29	Rev. Michael Noel Jalleh	Pioneer, Senior Pastor FI: 16 April 2017, 1:40 p.m., 20 minutes. Place: BCM, Petaling Jaya.
30	Rev. Arthur Sakara Bani	Pioneer, Senior Pastor FI: 28 April 2017, 4:30 p.m., 54 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Gateway City Church, Penang.

31	Rev. Priscilla Tai Seik Mee	District Language Representative, Pastor FI: 28 April 2017, 10:00 a.m., 22 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Penang First Assembly of God (Chinese), Penang.
32	Rev. Stewart Law Peng Hoong	Pastor FI: 12 May 2017, 2:30 p.m., 56 minutes. Place: BCM, Petaling Jaya.
33	Rev. Brian Ranjan S/O Packiry	EXCO, District Committee, Pioneer, Senior Pastor FI: 20 April 2017, 9:45 a.m., 1 hour. Place: Pastor's office, Putera Aman Assembly, Seri Kembangan.
34	Rev. Caleb Chan Seng Tuck	Assistant Pastor, BCM Board of Director, BCM Alumni President FI: 25 May 2017, 11:00 a.m., 48 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Metro Tabernacle A/G, Batu Caves.
35	Rev. Connie Chan Pui Chuen	Associate Pastor, AG Prayer Commission FI: 23 May 2017, 1:30 p.m., 1 hour 26 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Faith City Church, Subang Jaya. SI: 8 August 2019, 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., 1 hour 30 minutes. Place: Rakuzen, Subang Jaya
36	Rev. Faith Kam Pui Chuen	District Committee, Senior Pastor FI: 20 April 2017, 11:15 a.m., 53 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Radiant Life Assembly (A/G), Cheras.
37	Pastor Tan Szet Anne	Assistant Pastor FI: 26 April 2017, 9:30 a.m., 55 minutes. Place: Pastor's home, Seremban.
38	Rev. Peter Lee Wei Meng	Church Planter, Senior Pastor FI: 28 April 2017, 11:00 a.m., 48 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Grace Assembly of God Church, Penang.
39	Rev. Dr Victor Lee Tat Yan	Present 3 rd BCM President, EXCO FI: 5 May 2017, 3:00 p.m., 48 minutes. Place: BCM, Petaling Jaya. SI: 28 March 2019, 10:35a.m. – 11:45 a.m. 1 hour 10 minutes. Place: BCM, Petaling Jaya.
Begun Ministry 2008 to Present		
40	Pastor Bernice Chan Wai Yee	Ministry staff and full-time worker FI: 28 March 2017, 2:00 p.m., 40 minutes. Place: BCM, Petaling Jaya.
41	Pastor Lee Mei Young	Ministry staff FI: 4 April 2017, 2:00 p.m., 1 hour. Place: Jaya One, Petaling Jaya.
42	Pastor James Quan Weng Yew	Pioneer, Pastor FI: 10 April 2017, 3:30 p.m., 40 minutes. Place: BCM, Petaling Jaya.
43	Marta Peninting	Pioneer, Church Planter, Lay Leader FI: 11 April 2017, 2:15 p.m., 2 hours. Place: BCM, Petaling Jaya.
44	Pastor Joshua Yong Yew Wai	Assistant Pastor FI: 26 April 2017, 9:30 a.m., 55 minutes. Place: Pastor's home, Seremban.
45	Pastor Theophiloas Daniel	Assistant Youth Pastor FI: 27 April 2017, 12:15 p.m., 38 minutes. Place: Pastor's office, Church of Praise, Ipoh.

Appendix Four: Samples of Data Collected by In-depth Interview

A. Interview Sample One: First Interview

Interviewee: Tan Sri Datuk Rev. Dr Prince Guneratnam, first national leader of AGM, General Superintendent from 1974 to 2000

Interview setting: Interview was conducted in Tan Sri Guneratnam's Office, Calvary Convention Centre, at 10:45 a.m. on Thursday 4 May 2017.

Purpose of the interview: To collect testimonies on God's call, personal spiritual experiences on how God speaks and leads AGM ministers, the growth of AGM in relation to the move of the Holy Spirit, the emphasis on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and their theological perspectives and practices on the Voice of the Spirit

Interviewer: Good morning, Tan Sri, thank you so much for your willingness to have this interview and contribute to this research.

Interviewee: Okay, go ahead.

Interviewer: Tan Sri, would you kindly share your testimony on how God' called you?

Interviewee: You already have it.

Interviewer: yeah. I know, you had a vision. Would you like to share or describe the vision that you had when you were 13 years old?

Interviewee: It is not 13. It is 12 ... There were some discrepancy, some says 13, some say 12. 13 one I don't know where it came.

Interviewer: your magazine.

Interviewee: Yeah, it is not 13, it's 12.

Interviewer: Would you like to share your experience?

Interviewee: You do have my testimony already, right? ... What do you want to know?

Interviewer: My research is about the Voice of the Spirit ... It's mentioned that you received series of vision of Jesus Christ ... When did you receive or what were you doing when you receive the visions? Were you in prayer or?

Interviewee: No, it was a Revival Service, it was in Penang, it was an AG church, and the church had organised a Revival Service with the man from Hong Kong by the name of Sezto. See, and it was in those Revival Meetings after the Revival Meetings were over, then he would ask those who seek the Baptism of the Holy Spirit to remain. We call that Tarrying Meetings. So the normal Revival Meetings would be the normal time you come 7.00, 7.30, it finishes around 9.30 and those who want the Baptism of the Holy Spirit they remain, we call those meetings after the Revival Meetings, Tarrying Meetings, we don't do that now. So it was in those Tarrying Meetings people seeking for the baptism, it was in those meetings, that I received my call through a vision and the vision was of seeing Jesus and in one of those visions because it was a 3 night Revival Meetings. One meeting was just to have an impression of seeing Jesus. And that stimulated a spiritual desire to seek him more. And then it was on the 3rd night when I had, each night I had a vision of

Jesus, the 3rd night of the vision of Jesus was when he offered me a bible. See, no words were spoken, it's more of us like the scene. Many people like to ask me when I tell them that, 'What does he look like. Is he yellow? Is he brown? Does he have blond hair, black hair, or brown hair?' They like to ask me and you know, it's very, very strange I cannot tell you. And one day, I said to the Lord, 'you know I tell people I have these visions of you and they asked me these questions and I can't tell them whether you were, whether your hair was brown, blond, black, and they asked me how you look like, are you Asian, are you European, are you Middle Eastern? I said I don't seem to be able to tell' and said 'what do I do? They may think that I am making up a story here.'

It is amazing God doesn't talk in audible voice. He gives you through understanding. It comes in understanding so I was saying this in my heart and my mind. I wasn't really saying this in words to God but in my heart I was saying you know, it was like a question mark and in the same manner came an understanding 'the reason you were not able to say is simply because if you can describe Me you will then make an image of Me. You will then put me in a box and say this is what who I am, what I am, so that's why you don't have the ability to tell what My skin colour is, My hair colour is, you know, but when you see me nobody needs to introduce me. You will know me.' And there was another question to him I said, 'How do I know it's you?' He said, 'When you see me, you know me.' Nobody needs to say, 'Here is Jesus Christ.''' And listen, I was only 12. There was no introduction needed, 'When I present Myself, you will know that I am he. And you will not be able to tell whether I am this or that, and then a reason is because nobody ...' Then I said, 'What about John?', then of course later on, I didn't say there and then but later on, I get to know the scriptures better. 'Hey, but John said you have fiery eyes, you know you have long hair', but then he said, 'yeah but do you know that the long hair, the fiery eyes, you really can't put that into a tangible kind of a picture that this is because that is only a description of what My eyes would be like, but you can't make a statue out of that.' So that was my vision. And it was 12, at the age of 12.

You know amazingly when I came out on the 3rd night of my vision of Jesus. Of course I went home after the first night ... The first night was just a vision. The 2nd night, the vision of Christ was such that ... I was blinded not of him, I was blinded by the light that was in that vision. Those lights was such, it came about on the basis that I was travelling on a road, see, and the road was kind of steep like that, and I was at this end trying to get up and I saw the light on this side, and the curiosity within me to say, 'How come it's so bright over here, what is it?' So my blindness was not seeing him, my blindness was the lights that were there. So that curiosity and the desire to find out or to seek, to know, that when I got to the top, the lights that was on this side hit my eyes. Though it was a vision, it affected me literally, so when I came out of that vision ... now a vision and a trance are two different things. Okay, I wasn't in a trance ... except people, sometimes I said 'I came out', they think I was. I wasn't in a trance but I came out of the vision, and the vision the effect of the vision affected me literally, I was blinded, I couldn't see. So my mother had to lead me home. Of course they were a little bit concerned as to whether it was permanent or so forth. Or they thought I was being very mischievous, you know over-reacting, emotional about it. So when I got home, the next morning, my mom went to the market and she knew, I still like mangoes, even today, I can eat mangoes, and she bought some and see how, she said, 'look! There's mango'. She thought I would opened my eyes and go for the mangoes. Then she realised that it was not just an emotional but it was a real experience. It was a very dramatic experience. And of course the church people talked about it, and many of them asked me about it, and you know you felt kind of special. 12 years old, what else, you know. People come and talk with you, you saw Jesus and he gave you a Bible, and you know amazingly you can have spiritual pride.

So I grew up as though I was special, 12 years old, until I became a teenager and started going out with my teenage friends and soon with them, with their influence, so on and so forth. I began to doubt that I was called to preach. I didn't doubt the vision, I doubted my calling. I doubted that I should go into the ministry. And because I doubted that I should go into the ministry that I felt like, then I needed to go along with my friends and to think about what I want to be, you know. And the influence was the songs of that day and at that time Elvis Presley was very popular, Cliff Richard, I used to sing those songs and try to act like him. Until one day a family friend of mine, who used to come to my home, He was from Penang, we were living in Taiping and there was a spiritual emphasis, a series of meeting in Ipoh and he was from Penang, and any time he passes by, he always stops at my home because he was a family friend from the same country where my dad was from, Sri Lanka. So he would stop by and he was like part of the family really. But he was a very elderly man. I don't use the word old, old is for animal and things, elderly is for humans. (laugh!) We like to tell people, 'you are old'. No, we don't tell people old, tell them they are elderly. (laugh!) So he was an elderly man, he stopped by, and being an elderly man, and he had problems walking, you know and I heard a conversation he had with my mom, and he said, 'I have to go to Ipoh, you know, and you think Prince will come along with me and help me?' And those days, bus was a normal transport for people who don't have cars, and I heard that conversation that was going on, so when I heard it I said, 'oh'. And my mom said to him, 'well, you ask him, I have no objection, if he wants to go it's fine.' And I said to myself, 'If he asks me, I'm going to say no'. So at dinner time, we were all talking, and then he came up and telling 'Oh I am leaving tomorrow', and he turned to me and said, 'Prince, will you come with me to, follow me,' So I pretended I didn't know, I asked him, 'Oh how long are you going to be there?' And somehow in seeing him and the way he asked me, I felt sorry for him, so I responded and said, 'Okay, I will go with you, you know but I'm not going to stay. I'll go with you, but I will return, just to accompany you, but I'll go back.' So I went with him and on my way there, I am supposed to take the bus back. One bus will be coming back, that's how the timetable for the services, you know what bus. And there was enough time for this bus to get there then I will catch the bus back. Believe it or not, the bus that was supposed to come back left earlier, and my bus arrived late, that bus left. So I had to stay.

And it was that night in that Revival Meeting that I had no choice, I was there staying with him, I have to go with him, and in that service, God once again in a prophetic word from the preacher, just before he could even preach his message, stood and gave a prophetic word. The prophetic word was very, very simple. He said, 'The Lord loves you. And when he calls you, and he wants to...' It is not an open thing, it's a spiritual emphasis for the church, so he was talking to Christians. He was saying, 'The Lord loves you, he doesn't force anybody to do his will.' When he was saying things like that, it looks like there was nobody in that meeting but me alone, and I looked, and it looked like there was nobody. I was the only one, and it looked like he was addressing me alone, talking to me, not preaching at me, not what you called scolding or...just you know, talking to me 'God loves you, and he won't force you. He leads you, he guides you, and if you would do his will and walk with him,' and when that was going on, in my mind it was personal. It was like a chit chat, talking, and I was saying, 'Yeah you know, I already had said that I don't think I should be a preacher, I don't think God has called me to be a preacher and because of that I have gone out with my friends and I have made statements and conversations that's you know that's not what it is. And I said, I don't think God is going to forgive me for such strong,' ... and as I said that, he was responding back, 'He loves you, he won't force you, he is a forgiving God, he is a God who is able to pick you up from wherever you are.' And so it was very convicting, so convicting that I didn't want to stay in that meeting because I felt so embarrassed, so uncomfortable, and when he had finished, I

looked and I saw that I wasn't alone, I was still with the people over here. And it even made me more troubled. So I left, I didn't even hear his message that he was going to preach. I went back to the room where we were staying, took a bath, and it was kind of late, I was ready to go to bed, and then he came back, the old man, tapped me on the shoulder, he said, 'I know God spoke to you.' Now I was a teenager, I was 17, 16/17 at high school, 'I know God spoke to you'. And when he said that, I began to cry, and weep, because you know how when you feel bad, you feel you've done, you know, you feel convicted, there is a certain amount of pain, and I just wept and wept and wept and wept and prayed. He said, 'You go back and do what God has told you to do.' And that was my turning point, from 12 backslid in between, retouched again through the message and through this old man.

You know when I was in Bible School, he would come to visit me. He passed away. His name is 'Abe Shekanadu'. In fact, he has some relatives here in KL. That's how I came back, when from that point, no turning back.

So what was his voice like? There was no voice spoken. It's an understanding that you just have it. And it cannot be the devil. The devil will not ask you to do things like that, it cannot be an evil spirit. It cannot be demonic. It cannot be human, because human will never want to do what is spiritual because it's carnal. So who else, but it has to be the Holy Spirit, and God. And that, from then on began my journey in serving him.

In fact, before I began to fall with my friends and all, at the age of 12 ... between 12 to 17, or between 12 to 15, somewhere around there. My father had a home, and it has a big verandah in those days, there is no air conditioning, the upstairs house, the top part is normally open, and I would imagine myself standing in the verandah looking out and saying to myself, God has called me, and I would pretend I would be preaching, and I would envision huge crowds. Even with all that, that going out and having my teenage friends, you know. And in fact, I've been asked you know, that how can you have such a vision? You say, you know, with the call of God, having seen Jesus and knowing, and yet you, and again, no voice, no nothing, but God's word, that's where the prayers of Jesus became very real to me, Jesus taught his disciples to pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' And Holy Spirit is saying to me, 'You don't live by experiences alone. Your experiences is not your basis that you stand on. You can have all kinds of experiences but what really sustains you and what really keeps you is my daily bread. Do you have the word? Are you standing on the word? It is the word that you lean on, that you feed on, that gives you the strength. The word strengthens you to do what God wants you to do, not experiences. See, experiences are good but they are not your basis. To make that your foundation for life decision, go back to the word, go back to the word, see, what does the word say?'

Interviewer: How does God lead you or speak to you even in your serving him, in leadership, even in planting so many churches and you know that AG grew to such a vast movement?

Interviewee: Yeah because AG was about not more than, I think there was only about 3 strong churches, one was Penang, one was Ipoh and one was KL, and later on came GT. It was very, very young and it was under missionary, and you know, God just in his good time, the leadership of Assemblies of God begin to see the need for nationals to be involved in the General Council and that it open up to nationals to be part of the Executive Council of the Assemblies of God, and that's how I got in. And that was in 1974 if I'm not wrong. But prior to that, I was vice about a year and from there I become a Superintendent. Now, how do you go about it in the vision? I guess when you're in

ministry, it's a passion for God. You know that...want you to, and somehow I felt church is the key factor of the spreading of the gospel. If there is no church the gospel cannot succeed or cannot be effective. That's why I believe very strongly in local churches and planting churches. That's why even from very young in the ministry, my desire was not so much as in saving souls which is necessary, but seeing churches being planted so that people that get saved have a home to go to. So it is more of a strong passion to serve God that these things began to surface. Yeah.

Interviewer: How do you see the move of the Holy Spirit even in AG movement?

Interviewee: I was just telling him (Rev. Steven Kum), you can't tell how the Spirit moves, even as Jesus himself said, you know, you can't tell which way it comes and which way it goes, the Holy Spirit moves as he so chooses. It is just that you got to be, make sure your heart is right, your mind is right, and the Spirit of the Lord just gives you direction. There's no secret formula. Some people like 'tell me your secret'. I don't think there is any secret because if there is, then God favours people. I mean he has what you call, favouritism, you know. Then he makes distinctions of people but I don't think so. So it's you and your relationship, you know. It's you and ... this is something even God can do because he made us to make choices. And that's what makes us a free moral agent. Unless you exercise your will, will God open and gives you the leading that he wants you to go. See. Some people want me to say 'oh I saw this, I saw that, something, you know I heard this,' I am not discounting any of those that but I don't know. I never had that, it never seem to me that's my experience. Some people hear the voice of God, no I don't hear the voice of God. It's within you and that comes on the basis of how you relate with God. God sees your heart, God sees the desires of your heart, and you see that's very biblical. See. You read David's experiences. David wasn't all that if you want to say being someone who is very spiritual, but David, but this is what God said about David, that 'he is a man after my own heart.' So God sees your heart and that's how he communicates. Not so much as some in fact there is areas that he does but that is very exceptional. Like Moses had a burning bush, nobody had this, it's only him. But we want to make that it is also part and parcel, we also must have burning bushes. There's none. There's only one. And we think that unless there's a burning bush experience, God didn't call me. No! Those are very, very exceptional situations that he does, see. And then you need to study why was it necessary, you have to understand the circumstances, the background, the history, but generally, when God speaks and when God moves, it is on the basis of your relationship, and he sees your heart, and the desire that you have, that's why desires are very important. See. And the Bible says, 'He grants you the desires of your heart.' So, how do you know what's your desire? If you have a desire, you know, it can't be from the enemy, it has to be from God. The devil will never give you a desire to plant churches. Huh, he'll never give you such desire. So where is it coming from? Now isn't that God's way of speaking with you? Leading you? See, it's your desire. See. And the desire is within you and that's your open door for you to help you. When you have that kind of desire, when you have that kind of openness, He then plants those desires within you to know that it is what it is. Same with this building. You know. I can tell you what struggle I had to have this building. When the Lord desired us to move out, to grow, and to establish this building as a testimony. The challenge to have it, you know, I said to myself, you know, 'Can this desire be selfish, can this desire...who wants to come into a building like this that costs so much?' But God puts it in you and you ask yourself, 'If it is then God makes it happen.' See. So this business of what is God's voice: How does he speak to you? How do you know his leading is? They're alright questions but it's no secret. If you really desire and you really want to know, he will show you. It all depends on your relationship, how open, and willing you are.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing that. Have you received any dreams before, or dreams as in sleeping and get a dream that you know that it is of God?

Interviewee: I'm not so much of a dreamer. Not so much of a dreamer.

Interviewer: How about visions? Like in the form of imagery?

Interviewee: I never had any other visions other than the visions that I had when I was 12. I never had any other visions. But I have desires. Like felt motivated, you know, felt a burden for things, but not visions, so I'm not a person who constantly have visions and dreams. No, I don't.

Interviewer: How about receiving prophetic word from God?

Interviewee: Yeah, but that comes in studying and being exposed to messages, reading scriptures, they began to speak very, very distinctively and you know that's the word God is saying to you because, it addresses the thing you are seeking God for, so it's not just out of the blue but that's something that you have, that you're studying the word, and you are listening to sermons, and it comes very, very distinctively, you know, 'Oh!' But hearing a voice, no I don't hear any voices.

Interviewer: How about receiving prophecies that God gives you and you see the fulfilment of it?

Interviewee: I don't believe in prophecies that predict things. To me that's ... that kind ... it all depends what it is, but I am not open to prophecies that tells me that I'm going to be this, I'm going to be that, this will happen to you, that will happen to me. I ... I'm not open to such kind of prophecies and neither do I give such kind of prophecies. If at all I give any prophetic word that comes out that I speak, it is more or less guidance, but not predictions. Because I don't see this very scriptural in a sense that that kind of prophetic word were in the Old Testament. You know. You would find David seeking the Lord, you know, telling him where to go, what to do, those kind of things happened before the coming of Pentecost. But now that we are in the Pentecostal period, the Holy Spirit is within you, he guides you, I don't need to have somebody tell me, who to marry, or where to go, or what. The Holy Spirit is within me, and the Bible says that He comes, He will teach, He will guide. Why do I need somebody give me prophetic word, who I'm going to be, what I'm going to be like, so I'm not open, I'm not saying cannot or wrong or bad or false, I'm just saying I'm not very open to that. I'm more of your relationship, our relationship and how the word of God leads and guides. I'm more in fact if you look into Paul's situation, you will find that there was a prophet by the name of Agabus, who said, 'Paul if you go down to Jerusalem, bad things are going to happen to you. You're going to ...' Paul says, 'Hey, I already knew.' Now, if somebody say this kind of things, it is not I'm waiting to hear you to tell me so that I would know, if you're going to tell me then, I already know. God would have already shown me. There was a period of time where people ran after preachers and those who have prophetic ministry, 'Tell me what God is saying to you about me, can you tell me?' That's fortune telling. I don't think God wants me to be a fortune teller. So if there is a line, no, I don't go there. That's not where I go. You said, 'how do you know what is?' Like I said, it is the Holy Spirit within you whom the Bible says He comes to be a teacher, a guide, and if you're not very sure, does it contradict what the word of God say, is that God is saying to you, or somebody comes to you and say this is what God seems to impress me or say about you, then I would say good, pray that I would also get to know, that this is what, because if he can tell you, why doesn't he tell me when it involves my life? Why is he telling you and not tell me? Unless

I'm a backslider then he can't speak to me. But if I'm living right, why do I need to find out from you what he is saying to me, when it is me? I don't think God needs a third person to speak to, God is God.

Interviewer: Can you share some testimonies on how God spoke to you and lead you, maybe in certain scenario or certain significant things that impacted your life and ministry?

Interviewee: No I don't quite follow you.

Interviewer: That means, any experience or testimony that God has put a word within you and leading you?

Interviewee: And like I say, moving and coming here to CCC (Calvary Convention Centre) is a big step you know and this is what the Lord gave me the faith and gave me the confidence, and showed me that this is what he would like me to do, so when I began to share it, you know, with my leaders, they were 100 percent with me. And people actually who oppose or gave me a very difficult time are not my leaders. There are people who didn't think I should. So all my associate pastors was with me, none of them rebelled or cautioned me or said that maybe this is something I shouldn't be doing, none of them. My board of leaders, none of them, came up and oppose. So I think that's also very, very important because when God deals with you and when he gives you the people to work with and they reaffirm, it also become a very clear indication that that is what God wants you to do. See. But at the same time too, I don't believe in majority rules. See. Because sometimes, majority rule is not the best ruler to go by, and so you got to find people whom God had given you who can stand alongside with you rather than the majority is the ruler. And the reason why God doesn't allow the majority to be because when God does these things, he doesn't do it, he doesn't use congregations and committees, he always uses individuals. All through the Bible, you find that. He never asked Moses to speak to his committee because when he did, he has to meet the committee and they have to vote. So he talks to a man, he said, this is what I want you to do, see. Otherwise they will all go into a voting process. (laugh!) Yes.

Interviewer: Do you have any more ...?

Interviewee: (laugh!) NO, I don't have anything else, and all the other thing is that you can pick it up from there. So basically, it's the word, it's your relationship with God, and it's within you to know when it is of God, you can be sure, the devil won't ask you to do things like that, neither will self. That's why the Bible say, 'Do not walk in the flesh.' So how do you walk in the Spirit? You walk in the Spirit by what, we are body, soul, and spirit. When you got saved, your spirit was made alive. It was dead when you were in sin, but when you got converted, you became alive. That spirit has been made alive. It's sensitive to what God says. So it's within you. And that Spirit doesn't need to operate the way the flesh operates. But we want to equate the operation of the Spirit in a fleshly or in a carnal way. But, I want to see, I want to touch, that's human. We want to go with our five senses to know whether it's right or wrong, but God quicken that spirit within you so that you are aware that it is Him and then you have, as the Bible says, 'Your word is the light'. So the word is not just the word, but the word is a light, so that's how you know God speaks, so how you know this is of God. So you say, 'How do you know this is of God?' It's through my spirit and the word. See, I've been made alive in Christ, see. And ... that life in Christ responds to the light of God's word. So there's a witness there with your spirit and the word that affirms and you just know. You don't need to touch, you don't need to feel, see. But we want to go that way because we're human, see.

Interviewer: Lastly, what is your biblical perspective on prophecies, dreams, and visions, in today's context?

Interviewee: I just gave you.

Interviewer: Yeah, Yeah ... I mean

Interviewee: It all depends, you know, I don't go with predictions, people predicting things to me that I don't even know, and they're telling me this is going to be. And many times, their prediction is actually taking what the Bible says, and say that's what going to happen to you. But unless it is revealed to me that word is mine, not somebody taking the scripture and quoting the scripture to me and say this is what ... I don't say it's wrong, I don't say cannot, all I say is that is unless that is real you know, if that is what God has said to me, and you're telling me, then I concur. But if I've not heard it from the Lord, and you're giving me a portion of scripture to say that is, 'yeah, thank you.'

Interviewer: How about Joel's prophecy 2:28-32 which talks about the outpouring of the Spirit and then your sons and daughters will prophecy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. How do you view that?

Interviewee: Like I said, not in the context of predictions, but in the context of your life, yeah, I had a vision, and I was a young man then ... (laugh!) Those are visions and dreams, yeah. When you have that desire, then you dream. These things have to be visualised.

Interviewer: So, it is not always in the form of imagery?

Interviewee: No, not necessary. Not necessary. So, I'm not saying that it's we don't have, yeah we dream, but it doesn't have to be a dream dream. It can be something that you visualise. I don't have to go to sleep to get a dream, doesn't need to be in that form. I certainly believe in dreams and visions, but how do you interpret the dreams and visions. Okay, I'm going to leave you. That's about it, right?

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Let me pray with you. (Pray) Father, I just pray for Eva as she takes this responsibility, as she pursues her study in this area, that you will give her the wisdom and the things that she discovers and learns and is exposed that it will be more than academic, that it will be spiritual growth and development in her own personal life. I pray that you bless her and she will succeed in her pursuit for wanting to be a help to those who may one day need to read and learn about the ways of God, the things of God, so bless her and make her your instrument, I pray. In Jesus' name, Amen. Okay Eva.

Interviewer: Thank you, Tan Sri, for your time and your valuable treasures.

Interviewee: Alright, will see you.

B. Interview Sample Two: Second Interview

Interviewee: Rev. Ong Sek Leang, General Superintendent of AGM since 2008 to present

Interview setting: Interview was conducted at Metro Tabernacle (A/G) Desa Melawati church office, at 1:40 p.m. on Friday 26 July 2019.

Purpose of the interview: To learn from the Executive Committee and pastors of the changes of AGM's progression from a Classical Pentecostal Movement to its designated new image of Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement

Interviewer: How do you view the Assemblies of God of Malaysia as a movement today?

Interviewee: The Assemblies of God of Malaysia today is growing and I'm actually very happy with the growth although we always wish it could be even faster. The exciting thing is the fact that many of our young pastors have risen up to take the reins of the churches and we see succession plans happening. As Pentecostals, succession planning is more of an art rather than science, and you can see the composition there. It's very progressive as the older pastors are grooming their successors rather than just leaving everything as it is. Our churches are becoming more contemporary and sharpening their communication tools to be relevant in reaching the present generation. I'm happy with it.

Interviewer: How would you describe the AG Malaysia as a Classical Pentecostal Movement in terms of its theology and practice?

Interviewee: In terms of theology, we are classical Pentecostals. There is a broad distinction between the Pentecostals and the Charismatics. We are charismatic as well in the sense that we believe in the charisma but the classical Pentecostal theology is skewed towards the gospel. Although we emphasise on the Holy Spirit, the main message of classical Pentecostalism is the gospel of Jesus Christ and being a witness in the local church and mission field. One of the distinctiveness of the classical Pentecostalism is the mission work within and around the world. We believe in the spiritual gifts and its purpose for the demonstration of power to enhance, to accompany, and to confirm the gospel. Whereas, for the charismatics, the practice of spiritual gifts is mainly within the local church in ministering to Christians and helping believers to move on in God. Many charismatics today learn from the classical Pentecostals but if they only focus on the local church need, then they become ingrown.

In terms of our practice today, there is a concern. The postmodern world poses a challenge for Pentecostal churches to be seeker-sensitive and to understand the sociological impact in the current generation, thus pressurised to cut back on the supernatural, particularly on the spontaneity of the Spirit.

We seem to be gravitating towards how people are receiving the supernatural rather than believing that the Holy Spirit can work in people's life irrespective of their background. The sociological category such as millennials is true but overrated. We need to recognise the current generation in order to communicate with them, but overemphasis becomes a 'sociological strangulation'. In the book of Acts, the power of the Holy Spirit touched different generations and peoples. The key principle is this: Jesus' disciples, whom some were fishermen. The Bible says that they have been with Jesus although they are uneducated and untrained. I advocate education and training. But it is the power of the Holy Spirit at work. Irrespective of what we have and who we are, irrespective of what the present generations have and who they are today, the greatest bridge is the Holy Spirit.

There is a danger now that our churches are losing the spontaneity of the Spirit and the supernatural. Some of our churches don't speak in tongues anymore. Tongue is just one example. Some churches either have stopped it completely or have specific time for speaking in tongues. Of course, there are still many groups that are allowing the spontaneity of the Spirit.

Spontaneity of the Spirit does not mean that there is no order. Putting order before spontaneity is unbiblical or 'un-New Testament'. In the New Testament theology, spontaneity is governed by order, not order controlling spontaneity. In spontaneity, you are being ordered and guided by the principles in the Word of God.

My challenge to the people is: If you are going to win the world for Jesus Christ, which the classical Pentecostals have a very strong history for that, then we can contribute to the Body of Christ at large. It is not what we have, what they have, who we are, or who they are. It is the Holy Spirit that gives us the power to be a witness irrespective.

Interviewer: How is the AG Malaysia as contemporary movement different from AG as a classical Pentecostal movement?

Interviewee: Okay, the difference is this. We are contemporary because firstly, we engage the reality. Overemphasis on sociological factors becomes social strangulation but we need to recognise the changes. For example, nowadays, some people like more dressed down preachers while others prefer dressed up preachers on Sundays, so we engage that. We don't tell people how to dress and we don't think that we are any less spiritual if we just wear a t-shirt and preach. Paul said by all means save people using every method. So number one, we engage.

Secondly, we employ different methodology that helps us to bring the message across effectively, such as social media. Some pastors can afford a nice hall, proper lightings, good screen, and etc. but some can't though these are not the answers. Again, it's not who we are, what we have, who they want, and what they have, it's the Holy Spirit. So we engage the generation and employ the necessary tools.

Thirdly, we're contemporary as we engage the different ways how people hear the message. Classical Pentecostals boasts about the days when they treat people as if they were ignorant. Classical Pentecostals thrived in the past and had its root among the poor and needy. But it's no longer the case. We realise that people have changed, both the audience and the way they hear the message. Nowadays, we strive to hone our skills in communication and presentation as many people listen with their eyes rather than their ears. Classical Pentecostals in the past strived on long, long services in the presence of the Holy Spirit. And today, we should go on but the problem is the assumption that the Holy Spirit is there just because we preach long, so I'm not too sure whether we preach until the Holy Spirit comes or the Holy Spirit comes then only we preach. I think it should be the latter, Holy Spirit comes we preach. We are aware of people's retention power and busyness, so we don't go behind the pulpit and make sweeping statement like, 'You don't put Jesus first.' I mean you can say that 30 years ago, when people were not connected to anything. Sunday was really a rest day. But nowadays, Sunday is a different world for the parents to work. We are a society that is very strained. People work on Sundays, not necessarily in their job, but on Sundays, they have to work their garden and spend time with their children, because they don't have time. So we have to engage how the people hear the message.

The fourth reason why I say we are contemporary is that we maintain our Malaysian culture. The idea of classical Pentecostal has become quite cultural. A good example, the Assemblies of God United States also calls itself a classical Pentecostal and like many others but actually they have become very contemporary. Much of the classical Pentecostal in the United States and even Europe today has become 'cultural classical'. 'Cultural classical.' That's why there are some Assemblies of God churches in the US and Europe today still sing gospel songs and Scripture in songs. They are still playing the harmonica organ and are against keyboard and synthesizer, and they have a big following too. But it is classical. 'Cultural Classical Pentecostal.'

In today's world, we have to be careful too. We can also be cultural classical Pentecostal. Why? For example, the Australian culture, Hillsong. Many of our churches are behaving like an Australian church. That itself is cultural classical Pentecostal. And some of our churches today are behaving like they are UK or Britain classical Pentecostals. So we are contemporary today because we need to maintain our Malaysian culture. We worship like Malaysians. And I think it is missiologically accurate to say that because when you look into the book of Revelation, it is stated all nations, not one nation, and when you can translate the word nation is all cultures instead of one culture.

These are the few reasons why I believe we are actually very, very contemporary in that sense.

Interviewer: Could you please explain the significance and distinguishing mark of AG Malaysia's new image being 'A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement'? When has this first been discussed in EXCO and why is there a need for change?

Interviewee: It happened approximately four years ago, [2015]. We are the AG Malaysia. The executives are men and woman who have a great passion not only for the movement but for God, and they are actually very open. I really thank God for them, even my predecessor, Dr Vincent and the committee. I served under him and also under Prince Guneratnam for a short time. Prince, Vincent, myself, and the EXCO, we may be classical in doctrine, but are actually very contemporary. We are finding ways. Approximately four years ago, we had a little bit of time in one of our retreats to really think and that's why we begin to systematically and deliberately take action to so-called contemporarized the church.

Interviewer: How do you understand the word 'contemporary' and what are the new emphases as a contemporary church movement?

Interviewee: Contemporary simply means 'incarnate'. I think if Jesus were here today, he would dress like me and would probably use a handphone. In a nutshell, it is 'Jesus incarnate'. And ministry should be incarnational. I mean, what's the point of using a King James Bible when nobody understands it anymore? So, we do whatever we can so that people can expressed 'ah!' that they get our message. So that's my classic definition of contemporary ministry, 'incarnational'.

Interviewer: In your opinion, what aspects of the AG Malaysia as a classical Pentecostal movement which need preserving as well as changing?

Interviewee: Number one, we need to preserve our message. Our message is the gospel. Contrary to a lot of people, they may bolt when I say that, but the Holy Spirit came to bear witness to Him. That's why from the early days of classical Pentecostalism, the

Azusa Street revival had produced one of the most notable gift that have doted our movement, which is 'the evangelists'. Evangelists may not be great pastors and are a bit simplistic in the early days. They may not be great theologians and may even be anti-education in those days, but they preached the gospel. We may not know what we're preaching all the time but we preach it, and God honours it. So number one, we need to preserve the gospel. We need to preach the gospel.

Number two, missions. Jesus said, 'Go into all the world, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and all the parts of the world.' That is no surprise that the Pentecostal movement flourished in missionary endeavours, and the key is the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the One who makes missionaries who are dressed with proper theology and proper understanding. So that's the second, evangelism. First, it's the gospel. Number two, mission.

And the third thing about classical Pentecostalism is that we need to preserve is our love for the community. Jesus has a very strong affinity and if I may even use the word 'biasness' towards the poor. In fact, He is known to be a bit sarcastic for the lack of words, and pointed at the rich when He made statements like 'for the rich man to save his life is like a camel going through the needle's hole', and 'blessed are the poor'. But He's not against the rich. He just made a contrast. I think we need to reach out to the poor and needy. And if you study the classical Pentecostal ministry through the century, you'll find that: number one, we thrive, we were the poor or the poorest, and now we are among the richest. And that is among the reasons why we are getting into all kinds of nonsense like prosperity gospel and celebrity ministry. And more than that, more than our roots among the poor, we've always reached out to the poor. And we are always comfortable with the poor. But now! Aha, we've got to be careful. You know when you're blessed, you must be willing to let go.

Then, our distinctiveness on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues is very, very important. I know there are a lots of theological debates out there but the fact of the matter is, it's a debate. And I always say, 'A man with an experience is never at the mercy of another with an argument.' That is not to say that our espérance should be based upon experience but we have the Scripture. I think Pentecostals should be more confident. Why are we on the defensive? Why is it that when we're in the ecumenical meeting or among the evangelicals and not spirit-filled traditional churches, why is it that we have to tone down our prayer? Why can't they pray louder? Why do we have to put down our hands? Why can't they lift their hands with us? Why can't we meet halfway? I think it's a confidence issue and I think it is not right, because we are going to bless the Body of Christ.

We need to share what God has given to us and that's the reason why He has given the Baptism of the Holy Spirit to us, not only for ourselves, but for the Body. And if we're afraid and shy about what we have from God, then how are we going to share with others? So the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues like any other truth, like any other manifestation, even like any other theological doctrine, has been used, abused, disused, so I don't think we should be shy. We should be confident to brush people who pick on us. I can pick on any other doctrine too except the basic ones like John 3:16 probably. We talk about the mainline churches, I can pick on their doctrine but they don't seem to be affected when we pick on them. And our theologians don't seem to be criticizing their doctrines. But we seem to be very defensive, 'Maybe we should tone down, maybe we should...' I think it's a 'Pentecostal crisis'. Our distinctiveness on the

Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues is the other thing that we need to preserve.

Now, things that we must let go are the old mindset that classical Pentecostal is actually cultural Pentecostal and wanting to be culturally like the believers of the early church. Ministry should be incarnational. We should not look at the Book of Acts and want to be like Peter and John in the way they talk and behave. No, no! I think if Peter and John were around today, they would probably dress like us and talk like us.

We have to realise that we should not be locked into cultural Pentecostalism either in the time-past or even contemporary, to be culturally like Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, or wherever. We should be Malaysian Pentecostal.

Interviewer: Is there any down-side to being known as a classical Pentecostal movement?

Interviewee: I don't think so. The only down-side is when we doubt ourselves and do not appreciate what God has done. I think there is no down-side.

Interviewer: How would you describe the similarities and differences or the continuity and discontinuity of the Pentecostal theology and distinctives between the classical and the contemporary?

Interviewee: I think the contemporary Pentecostal theologians today need to learn from the classical Pentecostals. For example, even our basic theology and pneumatology of Luke and Acts. That's our pneumatology and our hermeneutics. We need to have Pentecostal hermeneutics and pneumatology whereas a lot of Pentecostals right now based their pneumatology and hermeneutics on the Pauline model, which is not wrong either. But the classical Pentecostals do not discount the need of a spirit-filled life which is so well-expounded by Paul and the way Pauline pneumatology is expressed in the local church. As my favourite author is Roger Stronstad, who wrote on the Pentecostal theology of Luke and Acts, the main thing about the Pentecostal movement is power, [which is the] power of the Holy Spirit, specifically in missions and evangelism.

I think the other thing that caused the divide and confusion is that there are a lot of Pentecostals today who are confused between the classical Pentecostal's Luke-Acts Pneumatology and Pauline Pneumatology. Why? Because they are Pentecostals but they are not doing missions and evangelism. The Holy Spirit Baptism doesn't speak to them anymore but as they still feel the need to talk about it, they put both together. So, this is something we got to be very, very clear about in our Pentecostal theology. We need the Pentecostal hermeneutics and Pentecostal pneumatology.

I think in terms of church life, it's very Pauline, even Christian life, it is about being filled with the Spirit and led by the Spirit. I think we should as it is as much the word of God. But classical Pentecostal message is 'power' and we should add that dimension into the Pauline emphasis. So, the question today is, 'Are we first evangelical Pentecostal or are we Pentecostal evangelical?' To me, we are first Pentecostal evangelicals. We are not evangelical Pentecostals but a lot of Assemblies of God people have become evangelical Pentecostals because they do not see the power dimension and evangelism as they don't do evangelism.

The moment the church and the pastor concentrate on evangelism and missions, assuming he is a Bible-believing pastor, he has no choice but to gravitate towards Acts and Luke.

They have no choice. I think a lot of our churches today are missing the point! I don't want to use the word 'backslidden'. We are doing a lot of church life, being 'inward' looking, and we've lost the sense of eternity. Today's focus is rather earthly, emphasising on prosperity and blessing, but very little discipleship, and because of that, Acts and Luke have become merely a theological discussion. But for people who are engaging in missions, evangelism, and discipleship, Acts and Luke come alive!

Interviewer: What are the contemporary issues affecting the practice of Pentecostal distinctives?

Interviewee: Number one, people don't understand what Pentecostal distinctives is. Pentecostal distinctives basically is a set of Pentecostal doctrines. As I say, if you are not interested in evangelism, discipleship, and mission, then, you gravitate into a different set of doctrines. So if you are very gospel-minded, doing evangelism, discipleship, and missions, then you become Pentecostal and emphasise on the Pentecostal distinctives. So, number one, we must understand why Pentecostal movement started. Now, that's how we safeguard it. I think that's the main thing. That is the pivot. Get it right, everything swings in that way.

Of course, the other thing we need to be careful which I said earlier, is that we need to distinguish between the message and the method. But on the other hand, not all methods fit the Pentecostal doctrine. When some people say that they employ a certain method, I always ask them 'Will it affect your Pentecostal distinctive?' 'No, no, no, it's only a method.' 'Really?' 'Really?' I mean if you believe in driving on a rocky road and your journey is going to be rocky, you won't buy a low car that its bottom is going to drop off. You would buy a car with big wheels and that is a 4-wheel drive. So, that's the other thing that Pentecostals need to be careful in the midst of being contemporary.

I give you another example: seeker-sensitive. I've seen the truth, the good thing about seeker-sensitive the classical Pentecostal can learn is please don't treat people like idiots. Treat them with some respect and do everything you can to be able to engage them. But the flip-side of seeker-sensitive is, 'If you are too seeker-sensitive, you can't be Holy Spirit sensitive.'

So we have to be careful. We have to use different tools, but some tools are not suitable for us. Some tools are only suitable in certain ways.

Interviewer: What are the external factors influencing AG Malaysia's understanding of being 'contemporary'?

Interviewee: I think number one is the youth, if you're going to raise up the next generation. We are an aging movement. Thank God we have young people but wish they are faster. So, the youth, the number one.

Two, the emerging culture, which affect even the old people. That's why I don't want to distinguish between the youth and the emerging culture. For example, in terms of technology, for the older generation, they are migrants, but to the newer youth, they are the citizen. So, that's the youth and also the emerging culture. We have to be aware of what we say and how we do it. Lest we are misinterpreted, misconstrued, and with the anti-Christ sentiment around, we have to be very wise as well.

Interviewer: In what way have Charismatic Movements in general been influencing AG Malaysia's understanding of what it is to be 'contemporary'?

Interviewee: The Charismatic Movement influences our theology. The Charismatic Movement is a move of God and we must give credit to it, because when it came in the 70s, it not only spawned the new charismatic churches of which many of them were from Pentecostal churches before and then the Lord led them, but it was also a refreshing challenge and an impetus for the classical Pentecostal to grow. And I think that's one of the reason why movement comes. Not only to start something new, but to probe and to challenge the old. 'Hey, come on! You better sharpen yourself.' And number two, 'You are not the only one. You don't have everything.' So that in one sense is good.

It is really a move of God. But on the other hand, there is a need to understand the core message behind these two. As I said, the Charismatic Movement is the movement of the Holy Spirit at work within the church. Pentecostal movement basically is called the move of the Holy Spirit as a witness outside the church. And if you cannot see the distinction, it will affect your theology.

Interviewer: Are the Pentecostal distinctives such as Spirit-baptism still being practised as much as the pioneering and church planting era before the mid-1980s or has there been a decline in practice?

Interviewee: I think sadly there has been a decline. The reasons as I have mentioned. Either we have become too postmodern or...

Interviewer: How do you view the 2nd generation receiving this Spirit-baptism?

Interviewee: I think number one, the key is the pastor. The pastor needs to demonstrate it. In other words, the pulpit needs to address it. Number two, the church, they need to grow up in that kind of environment so that it makes sense. Number three, it's also our Bible school. Our Bible school needs to stay Pentecostal, I'm a very open Superintendent you know. I'm very open. But we are a Pentecostal school.

We are not a new-kid on the block. We've done it, seen it, been there, we've done all the excesses, I think our Bible school needs to emphasise more on the Pentecostal ministry. Our teachers need to be Pentecostals. I get a bit concerned when our school invites people who are obviously against Pentecostal. I mean it's alright to invite people who are...

Interviewer: as lecturers?

Interviewee: even as lecturers. It may be alright to invite people who may not be Pentecostal like us because there are other dimensions of ministry. But I'm totally against the idea of inviting somebody who's against us, who don't respect us. I mean 'if you don't respect me, why are you in my house?' But if you're not like us, it's alright. The Body of Christ has diversity, there are other things we can learn. So we need to tell these people who come in, 'you need to respect us', because if we don't respect ourselves, people are not going to respect us. So, the pulpit, the pastor, and the school. And also our philosophy of ministry, we need to teach people to pray for people to be baptised in the Holy Spirit. We need to pray for them to receive.

Interviewer: Concerning AG Malaysia's statements of faith, belief and practice, do you think these distinctives doctrines namely the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, the 'initial

evidence' of Baptism in the Holy Spirit, and speaking in tongues are really important for the contemporary church movement and are they being taught, practised, and emphasised today?

Interviewee: I think there are very important for a few reasons. Number one, if we recognise the Pentecostal movement from the Azusa Street or whatever place, we believe it's from God. If we recognise that's the move of God, then we must believe in that. Number one.

Number two, it is very, very important, because in it lies the key to evangelism, discipleship, and missions. You shall receive power to be a witness. Not only to receive power to get healed for yourself, and get prophecy for yourself, power to grow your church, and raise money for your church, but power to raise money for the mission field, and power to move you forward. So, for these two reasons, we hold on to it. There may be other reasons.

Interviewer: If the distinctive doctrines are not practised as extensively as it was in the past, can you please explain why?

Interviewee: Well, as I said, it's the pastor, it's the man, it's the student, and it's the leader. They are the only one who can do it. The Assemblies of God, we are a fellowship, we don't demand. We can question and then we can disagree, and we must, we can tell them and we can deal with them at our policy level, but I don't think we want to go and tell the church what you must do and what you must not do. We can tell them what you should do because you are part of us. But I don't think we can force them.

Interviewer: Do you think that Baptism in the Holy Spirit for continuing spiritual formation is adequately emphasised today?

Interviewee: I think we need to emphasise it even more. But once again, and I don't think it's an issue. In early days, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is for evangelism, missions, very little, in terms of spiritual formation. But nowadays, there is a lot of spiritual formation, so the question is: Do we have the power for witness that leads to spiritual formation? Or it's the other way round, Spiritual formation that leads to power? I think it's both. Many of our evangelical brethren, they believe in the Pauline theology for example. And I think when a person even in history, you find that there are people who were not baptised in the Holy Spirit that had done spiritual formation, but because they wanted to be witnesses, because they read the Bible and they realised they need power, they actually asked for the second experience. We call it the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. So from the evangelical, from the Pauline, they moved to the Lukan and Acts.

And of course, in the Pentecostal movement, you have people who are very strong and all they think about is missions and evangelism, and very little spiritual formation, which is no good either. That's why I advocate that we must draw a distinction. It's not either or, we might have two.

Interviewer: Can you kindly explain any change in the purpose of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit in the classical understanding as well as in the contemporary understanding and practice?

Interviewee: I think positively, in the contemporary, if people really believe in the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, they believe but very little practice. Basically that's it. There

are a lot of Assemblies of God who don't practice it and also don't do what it says they should be doing. Yeah, it's a matter of practice.

Interviewer: What is your response to the expansion in the Statement of Fundamental Truths, specifically No. 7 on 'The Baptism in the Holy Spirit', No. 8 on 'The Evidence of Baptism in the Holy Spirit', and No. 10 on 'The Church and Its Mission'?

Interviewee: I think it is basically the same, I see it as clarification. But, of course, if sometimes you clarify too much, the tendency is try to add words to it that may confuse others. But it's alright, I'm open to it. These are the work of theologians.

Interviewer: Has there been any difference between the senior ministers and younger ones who experienced the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Interviewee: There are significant differences and to me the biggest evident is they are very focused on evangelism, discipleship and missions. That's it. If not, to me that's not Pentecostals. That's our message to the world. Just like the charismatic, their message is the Holy Spirit can move in the church and the cell group. So, to us, the Holy Spirit can move in the world. That's it.

Interviewer: Do you see the difference, like the response, in the older generation, the new generation?

Interviewee: I think the newer generation, the danger is I think even though they believe, they are very caught up, and they don't understand the definition of being contemporary. They don't understand the strength of being contemporary, and unaware of its danger. I give you an example. A person came to me and said being contemporary to him means he tries his very best to dress differently. Another pastor breaks his neck to buy shoes and clothing that he cannot afford. They don't understand being Pentecostal and contemporary, that's the danger of it. And you have a church with only one service. The pastor has a small congregation and then he said, 'Oh, I want to cut down my service to one hour fifteen minutes because so-and-so is doing it.' But the other guy doing one hour fifteen minutes has got six services. I'm not advocating that this pastor should have a three-hour service but come on, it's the thinking pattern that is worrying me. As I said earlier, you have to understand the culture nowadays, we are very busy. But the reasoning is wrong.

Interviewer: Is there a need for the leadership to reinterpret the AG distinctives, especially on Baptism in the Holy Spirit and tongues to address local situations?

Interviewee: No, I don't think so.

Interviewer: Has there been changes in understanding the nature and practice of missions and ministry from classical to contemporary? For example, when has AG Malaysia started to be involved in social concern ministries?

Interviewee: AG Malaysia has always been involved in social concern. In fact, at one time, we were one of the largest, and we are still among the top. But I think the main difference right now is the fact that the demographics of the world have changed, the borders have changed. One notable example is the migrant ministry. So the mission comes to you. Basically, that's the main thing. Because the whole idea of missions is without, so we are still out, but they are within our border.

Interviewer: Do you think that individuals are involved in mission and personal evangelism today compared with the past?

Interviewee: I think we have to do more. I think we are lagging.

Interviewer: What are the new strategies of church planting today?

Interviewee: Church planting has changed. Why? Several reasons. Number one, the worker has changed. Assemblies of God of Malaysia for example. Our movement was hemmed and propelled by a bunch of youths who knew very little but they were empowered by the vision and the fire. So, we knew very little, so we were not very concerned, for the lack of word, maybe we were simple minded, I don't think we were simplistic but we were simple minded. So, I'm not against education, but now the world has changed. People now have more information and are more concerned. They want to know more before they move out. So, sometimes too much analysis bring paralysis to it. So, number one, world has changed.

Number two, the political-social equation has also changed. In Malaysia, particularly those days, Islamisation is not so strong although it was there and Muslims were more tolerant. Also, because we had a Malay culture basically were Muslims. Now we are having a Muslim culture. The Malay culture is slowly being dismantled. So, the sociopolitical has changed. There's Islamisation.

Number three, people now expect more than tolerance. They expect acceptance. People are becoming more ecumenical, using a religious word on society. They are multi-polar. They don't like the idea of one way. Our education system spawn that kind of mentality. People are very open, boundaries are no more boundaries. People are flexible and porous.

And of course, number four, the modern church. I want to be very careful but the modern-day church is in the danger of losing the fire. We have become very religious, very big, and the world has encroached into our churches more than probably 10 years ago. Our churches and preachers need to evaluate carefully what they are preaching. Are we preaching the Word which people need to submit to? Or are we preaching pop-psychology endorsed by the Word, supported by the Word? Are we preaching a lifestyle supported by the Word? Or are we preaching the Word that enhances whatever lifestyle there is?

Another factor affecting church planting today is the area of finances. Nowadays, people have the finances but they spend their money on themselves, rather than being benevolent in heart to spend it with others. So these are some realities that affect church planting today.

Interviewer: Is there any trinitarian aspects which have been neglected in the AG churches in terms of the focus on The Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, in worship and preaching?

Interviewee: I think that is one of my personal main concern. I have a very strong focus on Christology. To me, I'm saved by Jesus, and Jesus will be the centre, and when I go to heaven, I will see the Lamb upon the throne. I don't understand Trinity very well, but today's church has to do with very little of the Father, very little of the Son, and even very little of the Spirit. Surprising? Because today's worship has to do with 'me': I will use the Father because I feel I need somebody to love me. I will sing that kind of song. I will use the Son because the Son promised me. These are not wrong but I feel worship should

be more glorious. It should not only be immanent but it should be transcendent. Immanent is very human, right? You have to be more transcendent as well. Worship should be more declarative, not only devotional, and not only about us. It should be about Him. People should worship God because He is God and it has nothing to do with what He can do for us. But nowadays, 'we worship Him because... of WHAT.' It should be 'We worship Him because of WHO.' We are subservient, He is God. That's how we should worship Him.

Interviewer: How about in preaching?

Interviewee: Same thing. You cannot preach about discipleship if you don't preach the transcendent word. You cannot preach about missions if you don't preach transcendent word. Because the opposite of it is all human. And preaching should not only meet needs. Preach it to glorify God.

Interviewer: AG leadership speaks of the need of revival. So what do you mean by revival?

Interviewee: To me, we actually don't live by revival. We should live by the indwelling power of the Spirit. In that sense, is very evangelical. We should live with the power of the Spirit in us, learn to walk in the Spirit and overcome the desire of flesh. But revival is a fact, it's a time when we really need some help from God above. Somebody said, one of the best definitions of revival is, 'The resuscitation of a dead body, or a body that's threatening to die.' Or 'The resuscitation of the body that is under so much of attack and so much of pain, that he needs a boost of adrenalin.' I think we need that. I think we really need some help. Beyond our ability to pray, we need the sovereign move of God. We pray and God bless us. I think we need a blessing that is greater than our ability to pray for blessing. We need the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, but we need a baptism that is greater than the Baptism in the Spirit for this season to correct and recalibrate the church. Because I really think we are in a big mess. Not only here but around the world. We just need a bit of help. We need help.

Interviewer: What are the ways forward for AG Malaysia as a Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement? What are the specific plans and directions?

Interviewee: One of the things that we decided recently is to take a bold step to start an evangelistic initiative, to go into all the cities and towns to bring the gospel in the power of the Spirit, signs and wonders. We are going to preach the gospel, not only blessings. Recent Nathan Morris' meeting is an example. Through that initiative, we hope to get the people to be more focused on the souls, get our churches to come together and pray more for the souls and be united. It's not an easy task. That's one thing.

And the other thing is we've come up with an initiative to plant more churches. This year itself, we plant around 80-90 churches. So we are believing God for even more churches.

Interviewer: Do you think that AG Malaysia has moved away from its Pentecostal heritage?

Interviewee: I think we have not moved away from our Pentecostal heritage, but we are not practising and not believing as much as from where we came from. And of course, I hope it will not happen but it would happen if this persists on, then we will be asking

ourselves whether we are evangelical Pentecostal or Pentecostal evangelical? Or we are just cultural Pentecostal? Cultural evangelical Pentecostal?

Interviewer: How will AG Malaysia maintain the Pentecostal heritage in the next generation?

Interviewee: The pulpit, number one. And our Bible school. But, I would say, in the past, it's the Bible school, then the pulpit. But I see it's both ways. Because nowadays, our churches have grown, and 'it's garbage in garbage out.' Never underestimate the power of a local church. Local church can dismantle everything that the Bible school teaches. The senior pastor can dismantle. On the other hand, the Bible school can also sow doubts in what the local church is believing in. I think there must be closer dialogue and communication, among the local churches, pastors, and the Bible school, which is one of the strengths of BCM. That's why people ask me why do I emphasise that BCM is the national Bible School. That's our strongest point. BCM, although they have their board and so on, but they are 'subservient' in terms of relationship to the national leadership. The national leadership has a strong say in there. With this synergy, I think we will do very well. And I think we are doing very well now. The process is getting stronger and more compact.

Interviewer: In order for me to study and understand the biblical-theological emphases and trends over the six decades, would you be able to provide the church's sermon topics and themes in the pioneering days, the church growth days, and these contemporary days? Do you have any archival records?

Interviewee: Eva, I don't have. I've got directory of all my sermons, but I may not be the best example.

Interviewer: Would you like to share what were the emphases during the pioneering era? What type of sermon topics that recurs?

Interviewee: Okay, number one, it was 'soul winning'. Number two, 'faith', that was very powerful. We just did not know what could not be done. We didn't understand the word 'impossible' because our faith in God, all things are possible. It emanated from our hearts. We did not study trends. We challenged the trend. And we did not know what it meant to fail, because we were deemed as failures. So to us was faith. So messages of 'evangelism', 'faith', 'giving'. Financial giving: we gave, young students gave. And all these three are linked. We not only gave to our building, we gave to missions. Other sermon topics were 'Missions', 'faith promise', and 'discipleship'.

Our discipleship, nowadays you use the word 'spiritual formation', but we used words like 'quiet time', 'meditation', 'reflections', 'spending time alone', 'seeking God's face' instead of seeking God's hand. Terminology has changed. 'Gateway to Life', was a very popular discipleship material 30-40 years ago, which had been widely used by many Assemblies of God churches, pastors, board members, and many had grown spiritually and benefited from it. There were about 10 lessons on basic doctrines with simple questions and answers and very much Spirit-driven, unlike the Navigators.

Some people said, 'You guys don't believe in spiritual formation.' I said, 'Rubbish, we don't believe in the word that you use. We believe in spiritual formation but is it Spirit-empowered and Spirit-driven? Or is it a programme? And sometimes our terminology is different. In spiritual formation, people will say, 'It's what God does within you before

He does without.’ During those times, we used the words, ‘Seek God’s face, not seek God’s hand.’ The Assemblies of God has an archive, I think the late Lim Yeu Chuen had it. I’m sure you’re able to access it. Faith, giving, evangelism, discipleship, were the main thing.

Interviewer: What were the popular sermon topics during the church growth era, like after the mid-80s?

Interviewee: Similar plus of course the church growth era, the CGI, the Cho Yonggi, and all these, they were basically the Pentecostals, or people who believe in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. But there was one distinctiveness. They were also men and women who had a certain strategy such as ‘Church methods’, ‘administration’, and ‘leadership’. Because if you really want to build a large church, you need to have administration, leadership, and systems. But that group of church growth pioneers, the ‘Holy Spirit man’, ‘discipleship man’, they were ‘men of prayer’.

‘Prayer’ and ‘giving’ were emphasised too. That was the pioneer group. They were able to build great organisations because they had leadership, system, and some of the practical things like administration. So, that enhanced programmes like cell groups, Christian Education, and formalisation of certain methods. But their messages are the same, ‘giving’, ‘prayer’, ‘faith’.

Interviewer: How about today’s contemporary messages? What do you think is the focus?

Interviewee: ‘How to have a better life on earth?’, ‘How to improve yourself?’ All these things are not wrong, but I tell you where it’s leading, ‘Prosperity’. ‘How to become comfortable?’ I think we are losing the soul of Christianity which is eternity. ‘This world is not my home, I’m just passing through.’ Yeah, this is the message today: ‘Survival’. To me, when a person is not afraid to die, he is not afraid to live. That’s what Paul meant, ‘For me to live is Christ, to die is gain.’ I’m not afraid to die, so I’m not afraid to live. Today, this is where the message is: ‘Prosperity’, ‘Blessing’, which is not the core message.

Interviewer: Pastor Ong, thank you for your time.

Interviewee: Sure. A lot of things I spoke from my heart, so I’m surprised. One of the things that God has really helped me is to integrate all my experience together. So, I hope it helps you.

Interviewer: Yes

Interviewee: So, you’re not only hearing sermon, you hear the way I think, you know. Okay.

Interviewer: It has been very inspiring.

Interviewee: Alright, I got to go now. You take care of yourself. Enjoy your drink. Okay, alright, Eva, thank you.

Interviewer: Okay, alright, bye-bye, thank you, pastor.

Appendix Five: Analysis Table: Codes, Variables, and Factors

Codes, Variables and Factors – ‘From Classical Pentecostal Movement to Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement’

Code Labels:

- SP – Situation in Pioneering Days
- SC – Situation in Contemporary Days
- CA – Contextual Analysis
- CS – Church Sermon Focus
- CD – Contextual Analysis – Discontinuity
- TE – Theological Reflection – External Changes
- TC – Theological Reflection – Contemporary Issues
- TI – Theological Reflection – Internal Issues
- WP – The Way Forward – Present Efforts
- WL – The Way Forward – Leadership
- WB – The Way Forward – National Bible Colleges
- WC – The Way Forward – Church Pastors, ministers, leaders, members and individuals
- WS – The Way Forward – Holy Spirit – Revival

Code Labels	Items (Descriptive Codes)	Variables (Subcategories)	Factors (Categories) THEMES
	Stage 1 – The Situation and Its Complexities		
	Practices in Classical Formation:	CPM is rooted in the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 (and Acts 2:16-21) and classical Pentecostal theology.	Classical to Contemporary: There are various changes in the emphasis and practice of Pentecostal theology over the six decades from AGM’s inception in 1957 to present times.
SP – 14	Emphasis on Second coming of Christ and Full Gospel	Espoused Classical Pentecostal Theology: Joel 2 – Acts 2 Foundational Scriptures (Strong emphases on early classical Pentecostal practices)	c) Classical to Contemporary: The growth and development of AGM from the pioneering days to the contemporary days encompasses certain strong emphases and practices in conformity with the spiritual atmosphere then and now, but the core beliefs remains, especially at the leadership level:
SP – 18	Preaching signs and wonders		
SP – 21	Healing and miracles		
SP – 7	Baptism in the Holy Spirit		
SP – 5	Tarrying meeting, Long services in the presence of HS		
SP – 6	Revival Services/Meetings		
SP – 22	Altar Call ministry		
SP – 13	Bible School (AG’s DNA, missionaries establish Bible school) to raise national leadership to pastor churches.	Early traits and practices of AGUSA (Classical Formation): AGM and Bible School	d) Theological Significance of Joel’s Prophecy 2:28-32 in AGM’s Espoused Classical Pentecostal theology and Pentecostal Distinctives
SP – 1	Pentecostalism with western baggage	(Early missionaries brought in the AG traits and practices)	

		of early American Pentecostalism.)	<p>which is AGM's spiritual heritage:</p> <p>i. Baptism in the Holy Spirit (BHS) ii. Evidence of BHS (glossolalia) iii. Missions (BHS's purpose in mission emphasis) Thus, there is re-emphasis on these core beliefs and practices today.</p> <p>c) Voice of the Spirit (VoS) – from first interviews</p> <p>d) Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement (CPCM) – contemporary emphases</p>
SP – 23	Revival times – people are more receptive to the gospel	Spiritual Atmosphere - Revival	
SP – 12	Many responding to the call of God, Bible school was full	Pentecostal distinctives and Fervour (People were spiritually hungry and responsive during revival times.)	
SP – 11	Speaking in tongues		
SP – 10	More vibrant		
SP – 16	Bold faith		
SP – 2	Church planting	Eschatological and Missionary Fervour (Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the empowerment for missions, evangelism, and service/ministry)	
SP – 3	Missions and Evangelism		
SP – 9	Evangelistic and healing rallies, even at Stadium Negara (Cho Yonggi) – youth revival time in Malaysia		
SP – 4	'House-to-house evangelism', 'door-to-door evangelism'		
SP – 20	'open air meetings'		
SP – 15	AG played a role in spearheading the Charismatic Movement through the revival meetings and evangelistic meetings, which subsequently resulted in the mushrooming of independent charismatic churches		
SP – 8	Social concern ministry		
SP – 19	Church setup – cross and curtain behind the stage		
	AGM's Contemporary emphases: (or desires of EXCO)	CPCM's espoused theology has not changed, but demonstrates fundamental change of image, outlook, methods, and practices.	
SC – 61	New Image 'A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement' – churches same new identity	EXCO's Vision of New Image, Tagline, and Changes to be Contemporary Modernisation and Relevance (To be relevant to current generation and young people, and following the trends of technology and society.)	
SC – 36	Malaysian Pentecostal		
SC – 44	Changes and transitions – New Constitution and Bylaw		
SC – 45	To rope in younger ministers and younger people into the ministry		
SC – 40	Succession plans		
SC – 37	Modernisation – Modern tools, methods and technology		
SC – 41	Sharpening of communication tools		
SC – 50	To have global publicity and accessibility via internet and social media. Easy for search and seekers.		
SC – 25	Relevant approaches and methods		Relevance to Society and Present Generation (To draw people to Christ through modern methods and approach.)
SC – 24	Relevant to society		
SC – 26	Reaching out to present generation		
SC – 27	Focus on millennials		

SC – 30	Classical Pentecostal theology	Re-emphasising Espoused Pentecostal Theology (Emphasis on gospel, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit and Word of God)		
SC – 31	Theology remains the same – Jesus Saves, Jesus Heals, Jesus Baptises with the Holy Spirit, and Jesus is Coming Again			
SC – 35	Baptism in the Holy Spirit			
SC – 64	Believing in the power of the Holy Spirit, miracles, signs and wonders			
SC – 51	The power and work of the Holy Spirit in churches and lives.			
SC – 46	Emphasis on preaching and declaring the Word of God.			
SC – 47	Exercise spiritual gifts			
SC – 54	Altar call ministry (and laying on of hands) is a strong feature of AG movement.			
SC – 28	Church planting	New Missional Strategy (Finding new methods and approach to mission and evangelism)		
SC – 29	Church planting strategies: a) bivocational pastor; b) community engagement.			
SC – 33	Missions			
SC – 34	Evangelism			
SC – 57	Evangelistic meetings (e.g. Nathan Morris) and conferences, be evangelical, fulfil Great Commission			
SC – 42	Social concern ministry – diversity			
SC – 43	Migrant ministry			
SC – 65	Friendship evangelism			
SC – 38	New paradigm of missions	Spiritual Atmosphere: Revival Prayer Rally (The need for revival and maintaining the Pentecostal fervour.)		
SC – 32	Prayer movement			
SC – 53	The need to pray for revival and national transformation.			
SC – 39	Contemporary worship			
SC – 60	Pentecostal meetings (Chinese Division), stirring up the church to start believing God.			
SC – 66	Seminars by scholars, apologetics			
SC – 56	To educate our constituency on what the leadership means by ‘A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement’			
SC – 48	Preserving Pentecostal heritage			
SC – 48	Preserving Pentecostal heritage	Pentecostal Heritage Urgent Areas of Concern (The need to maintain the Pentecostal beliefs and practices.)		
SC – 55	Hold on to the core, BHS, miracles, bold faith, church planting, holiness			
SC – 52	To be bold in speaking/praying in tongues publicly.			
SC – 62	Spontaneity in worship			
SC – 59	Need to anchor our dependency on God			
SC – 58	Inter-church prayer united, AG prayer commission – challenge interdenominational network to practice bold faith, and things of the Spirit.			
SC – 63	Remind other denominations that the role of the Holy Spirit is indispensable in church life and practice.			
SC – 49	Recognises the autonomy of the individual churches			Homogeneity vs. Autonomy of churches (Level of emphasis on Pentecostal Distinctive is dependent on church pastors)

	Stage 1: Movement Growth 1980s onward: Complexities in Changing Nature	Complexities in Changing Nature and Shift in Emphases	Contextual Factors: 1. Historical Factors 2. Missiological Factors 3. Sociocultural Factors
	Stage 2 – Contextual Analysis	Paradigm Shifts	
	Stage 3 – Theological Reflection		Factors:
	Classical to Contemporary involved several shifts:		
CA – 1	Shift in emphases and focus in terms of missions, preaching and teaching.	Diversification of Theological Emphases and focus [Theological Practice – Baptism in the Holy Spirit (BHS)]	Paradigm Shifts: i. Theology ii. Missiology iii. Ecclesiology iv. Ministry AGM’s progress from Classical to Contemporary involved several major shifts.
CA – 52	Shift in sermon topic like ‘The Second Coming’ to seminars on ‘End Times Prophecies’ or ‘Signs of the Times’, apologetics		
CA – 13	Lost heritage on missions due to charismatic influence		
CA – 17	Shift in sermon focus		
CA – 12	A decline in the emphasis of BHS		
CA – 22	Shift in the emphasis on BHS from very spontaneous and regular to mainly in church camps and Pentecost emphasis weeks.		
CA – 37	Shift in praying for BHS at regular tarrying meeting to twice a year at church annual camps and Pentecost Sunday		
CA – 48	Shift in the strong emphasis on Spirit empowerment for church planting, evangelism, and missions, and response to full-time calling, a drastic decline over the decades to the point where Bible school gives an award for church planting.	Diversification of Missional Emphases (Limitation of Classical View on BHS: Purpose of BHS is Spirit Empowerment for Missions and Evangelism)	These shifts/changes are reflected in AGM’s change of self-designation from being a CPM to a CPCM and affect its theology, missiology, ecclesiology, and ministerial perspectives and practices. Contextual Factors: 1. Historical Factors a) Contextualised Pentecostalism b) Blending of External Theological Influences 2. Missiological Factors a) Theological Motivation in Missions b) Shift in Mission Ownership
CA – 6	Major shift in practice – BHS impact being outward looking (call to mission work) to inward-looking (service within the church)	Diversification of Missional Approach Diversification of Mission Field	
CA – 50	Shift from door-to-door evangelism, open air meetings, to friendship evangelism		
CA – 30	Shift in the approach to missions and local evangelism from ‘door-to-door evangelism’ and ‘tracting’, to churches organising mission trips for members’ participation, and evangelism programmes like the ‘Alpha Course’ for pre-believers.		
CA – 10	Shift from only church planting and evangelism to also engaging with socio-economy, and integral mission	Diversification of Mission Field – Holistic Missions and Social	
CA – 7	Shift in understanding and diversification of missions and social concern ministry		
CA – 23	Shift in missions, now more social concern ministries, AG Malaysia National Department has a Social Concern Department.		
CA – 24	Shift in approach and methodology of missions and evangelism. Now mission trips and personal evangelism.		

CA – 29	There's a broadening and diversification of missions and social concern ministries, many of which are new frontiers such as medical, kidney dialysis centres, unwed pregnancy and unwanted babies.	Concern Ministries	<p>c) Diversification of Mission Field</p> <p>Other theories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centripetal vs. Centrifugal mission (churches being inward and outward) • Church being modality (local church structure) vs. sodality (missions) <p>3. Sociocultural Factors</p> <p>a) Internal Issues: Church Growth and Diversification</p> <p>b) Contemporary Issues: Modernisation and Secularisation</p> <p>c) Relevance and Relations</p>
CA – 49	Shift in mission emphasis towards greater diversity in social concern ministries.		
CA – 43	People are becoming more aware of social concern ministries nowadays.		
CA – 15	Shift/change in the church planting practice due to worker has changed, political-social equation has changed, expectation of acceptance is higher, more ecumenical, multi-polar, no more boundaries, modern churches more worldly, losing the fire, and area of finances, people less generous	Church Planting Practice and New Strategy (CPCM's New Missional Strategy: Re-emphasis)	
CA – 14	Shift in church planting strategy from solo church planter to group/team church planting and bivocational		
CA – 31	Shift in church planting approach and strategy from conventional way of sending one person to plant a church from ground zero, to having bivocational pastor and community engagement.		
CA – 32	Shift in church planting strategy from one or two persons starting a church in the 70s and 80s, to churches multiplying their cell ministries, church planting by group of people or combination of cell groups.		
CA – 33	Shift in church planting focus area from every township mostly in West Malaysia to East Malaysia.		
CA – 11	Shifts in learned practices and perspectives to actual practices when engaging with grassroots realities.		
CA – 9	Shift from separation between spiritual and secular to a more accurate, holistic and biblical perspective of missions	Church and Ministerial Perspectives	
CA – 38	Shift from being dogmatic or legalistic on outward appearance of holiness (what to wear, etc.) to the sense of true holiness from the heart.		
CA – 8	Shift from Western Pentecostal to Malaysian Pentecostal	Contextualised Pentecostalism	
CA – 16	Shift in focus of worship on who God is to what He can do for us, self-centred	Spiritual Atmosphere: Change in Spiritual Dynamism	
CA – 21	Shift in worship trends and styles, from hymns to scripture choruses, to more contemporary songs, following the trends in the market.		
CA – 46	Shift in worship songs. Old Pentecostal songs more God-centred, about commitment and sacrifice, whereas charismatic songs are more 'me'-centred.		
CA – 18	Shift in dynamism and spiritualism – now seems to be lacking in dynamism and spiritual excitement.		
CA – 40	If not careful, danger of shifting to auto mode when all is well, churches established, matured, sufficient resources, pastors are experienced, becoming complacent and sufficient, lack of dependency on God. BHS is neglected to a certain extent in the life of 2 nd generation Pentecostals.		

CA – 39	Shift in the taking in ministers who are not trained in Pentecostal bible school and having no conviction on the things of the Spirit in practice (late 2000 until present)	Spiritual Atmosphere: Conviction on Pentecostal Distinctives (Personal spiritual convictions of pastors/ ministers/younger generation)		
CA – 41	Shift in the level of conviction of BHS on senior (more passionate and strong conviction) and junior ministers.			
CA – 42	Shift in the level of commitment, sacrifice and devotion to God (in comparison) between senior ministers and younger ministers who experienced the BHS.			
CA – 20	Shift in outlook, up-to-date, modernise the church. Keep up with the trend.	Modernity, outlook, and methods		
CA – 26	Shift in practices and methods from the traditional way of doing things to using modern technology. E.g. Change in public image particularly new logo, website, InTouch AG application (online portal), online tools for administration/registrations/renewal of credential, to have paperless settings, etc.			
CA – 3	Shift in outlook to appeal to the younger generation			
CA – 35	Shift in church setup, more modern and contemporary feel.			
CA – 36	Shift in the church setting, auditorium, modern facility, equipment, tools, and etc.			
	Blending of External Theological Influences Church sermon focus: (Shift in emphases and focus)			
CS – 53	Missions, church planting, end times	Homogeneity in Pioneering Years (1957-mid 1980s) (Homogeneity in focus on classical Pentecostal theology and practice inherited from early missionary)		Blending of External Theological Influences: Church sermon emphases, focus, and trends are much related to theology, beliefs, perspective, conviction, spiritual atmosphere, and the needs of the churches and congregations.
CS – 54	soul winning, faith, giving, evangelism, financial giving, missions, faith promise, discipleship			
CS – 55	Second coming of Christ (sense of urgency), ‘Thief in the Night’ movie, ‘The Full Gospel’, ‘Christ as a Healer’ (Cho Yonggi)			
CS – 56	BHS, the Holy Spirit, Spirit-filled life, Spirit-empower, the working of the Holy Spirit, book of Acts.			
CS – 57	Holiness, Baptism of Holy Spirit, things of the Spirit, church planting, nations	Church growth Strategies (1980s-1990s)		
CS – 58	holiness movement, second coming/Jesus is coming again			
CS – 59	(in First AG Church) Holiness movement, no BHS, no speaking in tongues	Diversity in Movement Growth Years (Church diversification of ministries and emphases resulting in changing		
CS – 60	Cho Yonggi’s strategy ... Church methods, administration, leadership, prayer, giving, faith, enhance programmes like cell groups, Christian Education			
CS – 61	Addressing the need of the culture (church and people)			
CS – 62	How a member can help the church growth, Rick Warren’s ‘ <i>The Purpose Driven Life</i> ’			

		emphases and variations in focus.)	
CS – 63	(in First AG Church) – BHS, Experience of the Holy Spirit, Encountering with God, Doing the Ministry of God (lack in mission focus)	Exposure to New Global Trends Contemporary Blends of Global Culture (2000s) (Blending of Pentecostal, charismatic, non-Pentecostals, resulting in generational growth with less exposure to Pentecostal fervour.)	
CS – 64	Current 2010s (in First AG Church) – spiritual health, emotional health, and social values, prophetic, Rick Warren’s books, charismatic teachings and spiritual gifts (broader range)		
CS – 65	How to have a better life on earth? How to improve yourself? Prosperity, survival, blessing. Lack of gospel		
CS – 66	Wider range of sermon topics		
CS – 67	Still preaching the gospel, the plans of God, love of God for us, and our responsibility to our society, personal growth, church growth, missions, social responsibility		
CS – 68	Unity, prayer, the desire for revival, holiness, relationship with God, church in nation-building		
CS – 69	Unity of multi-generations within the church, spiritual gifts, salvation and end times	Church Autonomy (Pastors’ choices and personal preaching topics)	
CS – 70	Faith life, basics Christian faith, family issues, careers, etc.		
CS – 71	Church themes, Salvation, Christ’s personhood, BHS on Pentecost Sunday, missions, spiritual life, prayer, meeting the needs of people and nation, faith, Bible books series, and topical sermons like armour of God, fruit of the Holy Spirit, and etc., Revelation – seven churches, Beatitudes, the Lord’s prayer, the book of Nehemiah, family life, relationships, etc.		
CS – 72	Who God Is, the means of growth, our Christian responsibility to our community, and then, the spiritual discipline, like quiet time, prayer, how we grow, Acts 2, faith, the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, communion, prayer		
CS – 73	Christian living, prayer, stewardship, Holy Spirit, preach on church theme, Bible book		
	Discontinuity in certain early classical Pentecostal practices		
CD – 74	Waiting upon the Holy Spirit (tarrying meetings)	Discontinuity (Change in spirituality, dynamism, and practical theology over the periods.)	
CD – 75	Speaking in tongues (in some churches or church services) or lack of emphasis.		
CD – 76	Holiness movement		
CD – 77	Disengage with certain ethos, cultural appendages and theological baggage from the AG roots		
CD – 78	Some churches – lose the spontaneity of the Spirit and the supernatural, don’t speak in tongues anymore. (Some limit specific time for speaking in tongues.)		
CD – 79	Evangelism approach – ‘door-to-door evangelism’, house-to-house evangelism’		
CD – 80	‘Tracting’		
CD – 81	BHS and things of the Spirit (some churches)		
CD – 82	‘Open air meetings’		

	Internal issues affecting AGM's Pentecostal Distinctives:	Generational growth with less exposure to Pentecostal fervour.	Church Growth and Diversification
TI – 46	The movement is a fellowship, cannot force the church or pastor to practice the Pentecostal distinctive, but can only tell them that they should do it as part of AG. Level of emphasis depends on the pastor, the leader, the student	Movement vs. Autonomy of churches	External Changes, Contemporary Issues, and Internal Issues are inter-related and overlapping, and inevitable in our modern world. Somehow, they are intertwined and affecting the practice of Pentecostal distinctive, and affecting the Spiritual discipleship of Pentecostal spirituality.
TI – 54	Since late 2000, there have been ministers from other seminary, no conviction on things of the Spirit, and doubt the BHS and speaking in tongues (in practice). They accept the charismatic belief that one can be filled with the Holy Spirit without speaking in tongues	Church Growth and Diversification	
TI – 34	Too many services, programmes, events, unrelated to Pentecostalism. Lack of emphasis by pastors. No time.	Pragmatism	
TI – 38	Pragmatism – adapting other models and examples	Decline in Emphasis and Practice of Pentecostal Distinctive	
TI – 44	Overemphasis on the way to communicate with the millennials becomes a 'sociological strangulation'		
TI – 49	Are we evangelical Pentecostal or Pentecostal evangelical? Or cultural Pentecostal? Or Cultural evangelical Pentecostal?		
TI – 51	Different interpretation and understanding of 1 Corinthians passage on speaking in tongues. Prefer to speak in intelligible language. Question speaking in tongues	Limitation of Classical View on BHS and Glossolalia	
TI – 40	Some members refrain from speaking in tongues in public worship		
TI – 58	There was a season around 10-15 years ago, where young ministers didn't really feel the importance of BHS, question the theology and interpretation. Seemed like a passing phase. Some trained in non-Pentecostal seminaries.	(Difference in Biblical Interpretation of BHS and Tongues)	
TI – 37	Believers are not trained and equipped with sufficient biblical and theological knowledge and understanding to defend the Pentecostal position	Generational Gap	
TI – 39	Insufficient intentional traditioning among Pentecostals	Lack of Spiritual Traditioning on Pentecostal Heritage	
TI – 41	The impact of BHS is different between the senior ministers and junior ministers		
TI – 53	Senior ministers who experienced BHS were more passionate in devotions, prayer, and seeking God. Junior ministers who experienced BHS may not be fully convicted and may lack passion.		
TI – 35	Decline in practice of Pentecostal distinctive. Lack of emphasis on Pentecostal heritage.		
TI – 48	Misunderstanding of contemporary as in dressing differently and doing short services (one hour fifteen minutes)	Misconception of contemporary	
TI – 56	Pastors preaching shorter sermons – following the trend.		
TI – 50	Losing the soul of Christianity which is eternity. Preaching on prosperity and blessings		
TI – 45	Churches doing a lot of church life, being inward looking and lost the sense of eternity.	Inward Looking	

	Earthly focus, prosperity and blessing, little on discipleship		
TI – 52	Contemporary worship songs can be rather self-centred, and lack of theological content or focus on God.		
TI – 42	Practice issue – seeker-sensitive, cut back on supernatural and spontaneity of the Spirit	Seeker-sensitive	
TI – 43	Churches overly concerned about audience’s response rather than believing in the power of the Holy Spirit to work in people’s lives		
TI – 57	Christians from other churches attend AG services but not ready for BHS and speaking in tongues, affecting the ‘Pentecostal atmosphere’ in AG churches, becoming less spontaneous in worship and BHS.	Spiritual Atmosphere	
TI – 36	Not all members are spirit-filled. Not all members hold on to AG position on speaking in tongues.		
TI - 55	Natural response of human beings, economically well, basic needs are met, complacency and sufficiency. Lack in seeking God or needing God or dependency on God. Auto mode		
	Driving forces for change:		Relevance and Relationships
CA – 34	Paradigm shift in using new approaches to be relevant to society and generations today.	Relevance to Society and Present Generation	The main drivers of the major shifts in AGM (whether aware or unaware, intentional or unintentional) are: a) Relevance to society and present generation b) Relationships with other denominations, and c) Sensitivity to the postmodern society
CA – 27	Shift in practices by adapting to the culture and current trends.		
CA – 28	Shift in emphasis and focus on BHS, revival meetings, evangelistic rallies, and church planting to leadership and discipleship, seminars and conferences.		
CA – 51	Shift in the audience, in the pioneering years, AG was a youth movement - members and Bible School students were mostly ‘youth’, evangelism was easier among youths. Now, reaching all generations with barriers and resistance, harder to evangelise.		
CA – 2	Shift in language to modern-day terminology to be meaningful, explain classical theology.		
CA – 19	Shift in approach of ministry to be relevant to the younger generation.		
CA – 4	Shift in the way we relate to other denominations, more diplomatic and less judgmental.		
CA – 5	Shift in external matters (non-theological) and practical aspects		
CA – 25	Shift in the relationships with other denominations and level of acceptance, they have gradually accepted AG from the 1980s onwards.		
CA – 44	Shift in the acceptance level from mainline churches.		
CA – 47	Shift in the congregation from olden times to modern congregation who now question church practices, tongues, etc. Now, pastors need to be sensitive to congregation and visitors.	Sensitivity to Postmodern Society	
CA – 45	Shift in general knowledge of science, psychology, medical, etc, not every condition is spiritual. In the past, every problem/condition is		

	related spiritual and demonic. Now, not every case is spiritual.		
	Contemporary Issues affecting AGM's Pentecostal distinctives:	Modernisation and Secularisation	The infiltration of alternative thinking, belief, practices, and changing trends of society affect AGM's theology, perspective, and practices.
TC – 10	Contemporary worship from Australia, UK, and etc.	Contemporary worship trends	Postmodern Values and Lifestyle Strong and effective Pentecostal preaching, teaching, training, and practice is fundamental to address the contemporary and internal issues in the movement and in maintaining the Pentecostal distinctives. The shifts and changes in the past six decades throughout AGM's growth and development as a Pentecostal movement has impacted and affected AGM's theology, missiology, ecclesiology, and ministerial perspectives and practices. The overall implication is tension and gap from the centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2.
TC – 11	The younger generation is influenced by the praise and worship trends, youth movements, and many other external things		
TC – 12	Contemporary worship, charismatic worship – 'me'-centred; present culture in worship is me-centred.		
TC – 15	Emerging culture – technology. We need to be careful how we engage and communicate. Lest we are misinterpreted or misconstrued	Modernisation, Technology, and Digital Age (People are exposed to all kinds of religions, beliefs, faiths, teachings, philosophy, culture, and etc.)	
TC – 25	Technology brings in info on trends from around the world, and influence of overseas mega churches on what it means to be contemporary		
TC – 8	Modernisation, postmodern movement, internet, information age – Exposed to current issues		
TC – 28	Internet age – globalisation and hybridisation of the different streams of Christianity		
TC – 19	Cultural change and social changes including legality and security factors affecting all denominations, e.g. high crime rate, people are suspicious, affects evangelism	Postmodernism and Its Philosophical and Sociocultural Influences in Malaysia Cultural and societal changes (Affecting the advancing and acceptance of the gospel)	
TC – 22	Cultural and social changes - During revival times, people are more receptive to the gospel. Nowadays, more hesitant and more negative responses to the hearing of the gospel.		
TC – 23	Islamisation and religious sensitivity in the nation affecting the way we do evangelism and missions.		
TC – 24	Challenges from reform tradition and Cessationist views		
TC – 29	Postmodern world and sociological impact in current generation pressurise churches to be seeker-sensitive and cut down on the supernatural and spontaneity of the Spirit		
TC – 30	Sociological category of millennials is true but overrated		
TC – 13	Youth, wish they grow faster, as AG is an aging movement		
TC – 14	Youths who grew up in church, Spirit-baptised and speaking in tongues, when reached college, mix with peers from mainline churches, affected their views and question their practice.		
TC – 32	Openness, inclusiveness in accepting one another's theological views and practices. Young people do not hold tight to Pentecostal views and practices.		
			Young Generation's Mindset

TC – 33	Youths have very different mindset today – morals, everything is relative, there’s no absolute, etc	(Influenced by postmodernity and modern culture)	
TC – 26	Time constraint – weakening to the practice of extended hours in worship, prayer, and fasting		
TC – 27	Time stress of members, church camp in alternate year for some churches		
		Time Constraint (Less time for spiritual engagements)	
Stage 3 – Theological Reflection (Stage 3 is a theological reflection on the changes and contextual factors analysed in Stages 1 and 2. Relevant data sets are already analysed in earlier stages.)		AGM Ministers and Global Pentecostals Seeing the Theological Drifts in Emphases and Practice: Evangelical, Charismatic and Third Wave influences.	
	External changes affecting AGM’s Pentecostal distinctives:	Blending of Pentecostal, charismatic, non-Pentecostals, evangelicals dilutes Pentecostal distinctives.	The practice of Pentecostal distinctive has been declining over the decades due to many reasons from the contextual factors analysed in Stage 2, i.e. historical, missiological, and sociocultural factors. Key themes: Ecumenical diversity, Pragmatism, and Relevance. 1. Ecumenical Diversity: Hybridisation of different streams of Christianity and Pentecostal, especially the Charismatic influence and Third Wave seems to be the strongest factor impacting the theological drifts in distinctive practices, particularly in united prayer and interdenominational relationships. The most current would be AGM’s prayer movement in Malaysia. The levels of beliefs, understanding, and
TE – 1	Boundaries between Pentecostal and non-Pentecostals are getting blurred. Convergence and hybridisation of different streams of Pentecostalism, Charismatics, Neo-Pentecostals, and others	Hybridisation: External influences from the larger Body of Christ in theology and practices	
TE – 7	New generic sociological definition of Pentecostal being people who believe in the supernatural and the expectation of the miraculous		
TE – 20	Some AG churches would copy various ways from other new charismatic churches who are doing well, for the sake of church growth, neglecting our Pentecostal DNA.		
TE – 5	Embracing variety of sciences and spirituality of other traditional denomination		
TE – 6	Ministers trained in non-Pentecostal Bible schools		
TE – 2	Charismatic influence and blending		
TE – 16	Amicable inter-denomination relationships and gatherings do not discuss theology and practices. AG just quiet about it, reserved		
TE – 17	Individual independent churches influencing the landscape of Malaysia		
TE – 18	Spirit-filled movement (DUMC, SIB, Philip Mantofa), prayer movement, greater unity and challenging one another for good		
TE – 31	People don’t understand what is Pentecostal distinctives		
TE – 21	Charismatic influence on tongues is just one of the gifts and not necessarily the initial evidence of BHS, and the purpose of BHS differs. For		

	Pentecostals, BHS will lead to missions and evangelism, empowerment to be witnesses. This is a very critical distinction between charismatics and Pentecostals.	Charismatic influence is major	conviction varies in every church within the movement. 2. Pragmatism: Contributing Sociocultural factors: International relationships, social needs in economic growth, and spiritual worldview of Malaysians. 3. Relevance: Third Wave influences in prayer movement, prophetic movement, apostolic and prophetic leadership over the nation, impartation of anointing. (Data on Third Wave influences and Prayer Movement are mostly from archival materials.)
TE – 3	Charismatic Movement is HS’s work within the church, influences our theology, which is witness outside the church		
TE – 4	Charismatic believe in ‘filled with the Holy Spirit’ or ‘Baptism in the Holy Spirit’ but do not necessarily subscribe to speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of BHS		
TE – 9	Classical Pentecostal has become quite cultural – in US and Europe, ‘Cultural Classical Pentecostal’, esp. in old worship style, songs, older kinds of instruments.	Cultural Classical Pentecostal (Not in Malaysia)	
Stage 4 – The Way Forward		Suggestions for Possible Revised Forms of Practice	
Present efforts to restore Pentecostal heritage:			
WP – 1	Youth Alive’s booklet on 16 Fundamental Truths	Primary concerns of AGM leadership and ministers on preserving Pentecostal heritage and passing on to the next generation.	
WP – 2	Revival services/meetings		
WP – 3	AG Prayer Commission – churches having prayer altars, 24/7 prayer altar, prayer watches, group of intercessors, prayer focus, praying in the Spirit		
WP – 4	Reactivating the church planting efforts		
WP – 5	Seminars organised by EXCO		
WP – 6	The Council tries to impact our ministers who would in turn impact their church members.		
The Way Forward:		Transformative Roles by leadership, national Bible colleges, church: The new strategies to address the changing practices and challenges in maintaining the Pentecostal identity, raising the next generation, and restoring the prophetic voice,	The much needed spiritual revival, reform, and renewal which can only be birthed forth by the Holy Spirit. Often times, it is beyond plans and methods. Man can only do so much. The movement needs the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2 – Acts 2) once again.

		missions, and evangelism in the future.			
WL – 17	EXCO to form a strategic planning team	AGM Leadership a) Strategic planning b) Preserving Pentecostal identity c) Raising young ministers d) Missions and evangelism e) Prayer movement	There is a need to develop AGM's theology and new strategies and reliance upon the Holy Spirit in future developments and missions for the next generation in the twenty-first century and beyond. The Way Forward CPCM in four domains: 1. Contemporary Pentecostal Spirituality: Centrality of Joel 2 – Acts 2 a) Contemporary Pneumatology on Holistic Doctrinal BHS b) Contemporary Pneumatology on Indispensable Glossolalia c) Spirit baptised-Church with trinitarian Perspective d) Centrality of the gospel and missions. e) A prophetic voice f) Revivalism: Pentecostal perspective		
WL – 50	EXCO to always ensure the preservation of Pentecostal heritage				
WL – 7	Recruitment of younger ministers				
WL – 15	To revive church planting efforts				
WL – 39	Evangelistic initiative 2020 – evangelistic rallies or combined evangelistic services in every district and region				
WL – 44	To revive evangelism, to raise local evangelists.				
WL – 49	Prayer movement and evangelism to be re-emphasised to move forward.				
WL – 25	There is a need for the leadership to answer the questions, 'Where is the role of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit in a complex and contemporary world?'	National Bible Colleges a) Pentecostal Theology and practice b) Preserving Pentecostal identity c) Missions training and Contemporary issues	2. Pentecostal Identity: Conviction and Discipleship 3. Pentecostal Theological Education: Teaching and advocating Pentecostal position and Contemporary Pentecostal Theology		
WB – 35	BHS – The church pastor needs to preach and demonstrate it, the church needs to practice it, the Bible school needs to stay Pentecostal and emphasise on Pentecostal ministry.				
WB – 40	Maintaining Pentecostal heritage in the next generation by pulpit, Bible school, and local church. To have closer dialogue and communication among the local churches, pastors, and the Bible school, which is one of the strength of BCM, national Bible school, synergy with leadership.				
WB – 45	Need to prepare Bible school students on contemporary issues and situations, young ministers will be prepared when they go out to the field.				
WB – 46	Need to address the erosion of Pentecostal values starting at Bible School.				
WB – 47	The role of Bible School and local church to instil the conviction in future pastors-in-training able to pass it on.				
WB – 53	To instil personal conviction of the local pastors and Bible school students (ministers in training) to teach and emphasise BHS in the local churches and build Spirit-filled Pentecostal churches.				
WB – 54	Equip our ministers for holistic ministry and church growth in the power of the Holy Spirit. Equip ministers and leaders with contemporary issues like LGBT, and etc.				
WC – 29	Emphasis on the Holy Spirit – the greatest bridge, the spontaneity of the Spirit and the supernatural.			Church pastors, ministers, leaders, members and individuals	4. Holistic and Integral Missions
WC – 8	Traditioning BHS experience in demonstration, education, and inspiration for the younger generation				
WC – 21	Pentecostal Foundation course/lessons should be provided (at churches) to explain the differences				
WC – 27	Need to re-emphasise the Pentecostal heritage of missions				
WC – 41	Need to re-emphasise the Pentecostal distinctive among AG members, and have those who come from non-Pentecostal background to learn the re-interpretation of their understanding on				

	Pentecostal distinctive to AG theological beliefs and practices	a) Spiritual discipleship of Pentecostal heritage to young generation b) Education c) BHS empowerment for missions and evangelism d) Pneumatology and Pentecostal Foundation e) Engage in missions and evangelism f) Prayer emphasis, spiritual gifts, etc.	
WC – 48	Pentecostal distinctive taught to the younger generation should also be practised.		
WC – 51	Education and engagement for the youths on the Pentecostal position so that they would understand and not be influenced by other views, questions on the purpose of praying in tongues.		
WC – 52	To explain inhouse terms in ways visitors can understand, e.g. tongues = prayer language; using simple explanation or Q&A print out with Scriptural references.		
WC – 18	Emphasis on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit as a distinct experience and the goal or purpose of empowerment for God’s mission		
WC – 31	Need to preserve and preach the gospel, do missions and evangelism, preserve our love for the community, and BHS with the evidence of speaking in tongues.		
WC – 35	BHS – The church pastor needs to preach and demonstrate it, the church needs to practice it, the Bible school needs to stay Pentecostal and emphasise on Pentecostal ministry.		
WC – 32	Need to emphasise on Pentecostal hermeneutics and pneumatology based on Luke-Acts, that Pentecostal movement is power of the Holy Spirit in missions and evangelism. This is our distinguishing mark or distinctive.		
WC – 22	Contemporary AG Malaysia should bring back waiting on God in prayer, being prayed for, tarrying in the presence of God, practice of the gifts of the Holy Spirit by the laity		
WC – 33	Pentecostal is very gospel-minded, doing evangelism, discipleship, and missions.		
WC – 28	The real need to talk about is the unreached people groups, boundaries, social-ethnic boundaries and really getting the gospel out across over every single boundary		
WC – 9	Church Planting:		
WC – 10	Church Planting – Team church planting		
WC – 11	Church Planting – Bivocational		
WC – 12	Church planting needs workers		
WC – 13	Church planting – Community engagement		
WC – 14	Church planting – in East Malaysia		
WC – 26	Missions to Migrants		
WC – 24	How churches relate with the government and with the business world, influencing the larger community of Malaysian		
WC – 16	Prayer emphasis		
WC – 20	Emphases on seeking God through fasting and praying, trusting God for miracles, and God’s provision		
WC – 19	Emphasis on holiness, being set apart and living for God completely		
WC – 23	Church to talk about pressures in life and contemporary issues		
WC – 43	To have a balanced trinitarian theology and God-focused worship in churches.		
WC – 36	Worship should be because of who God is, more glorious, transcendent, immanent, and more declarative.		

WC – 37	Preaching is to glorify God, and should not only to meet needs.		
WC – 42	Spiritual formation and discipleship should begin with BHS and living a Spirit-filled life, and dependence upon the Holy Spirit.		
WC – 30	We should be Malaysian Pentecostal, need to maintain our Malaysian culture		
WC – 34	Need to distinguish between the message and the method. Methods must fit our Pentecostal doctrine.		
WS – 29	Emphasis on the Holy Spirit – the greatest bridge, the spontaneity of the Spirit and the supernatural.	Holy Spirit - Revival	
WS – 38	We need revival to correct and recalibrate the church.		

Appendix Six: Themes: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Themes: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

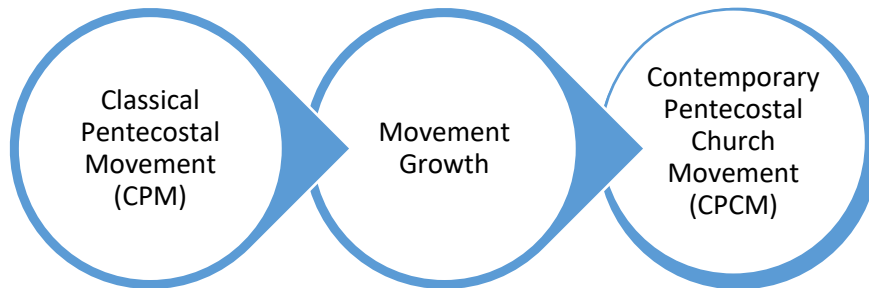


Figure 1: Classical to Contemporary

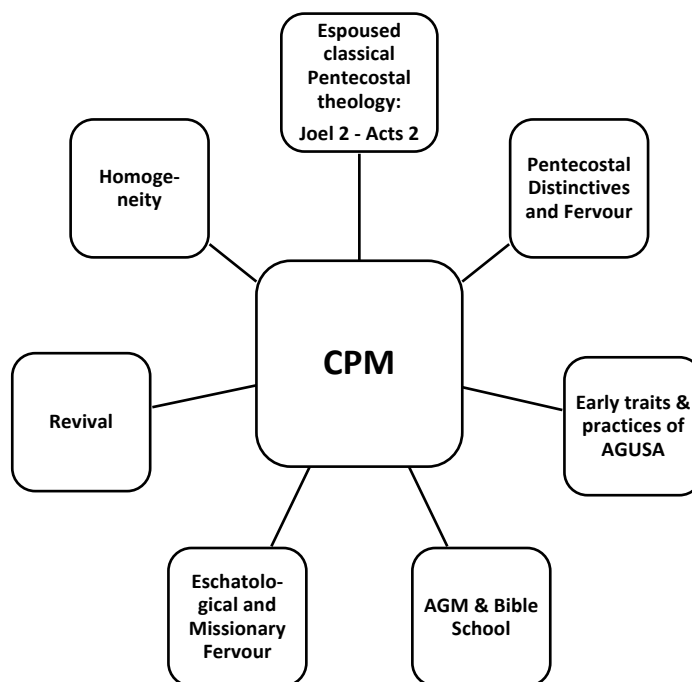


Figure 2: Classical Formation 1957-1974 – classical emphases

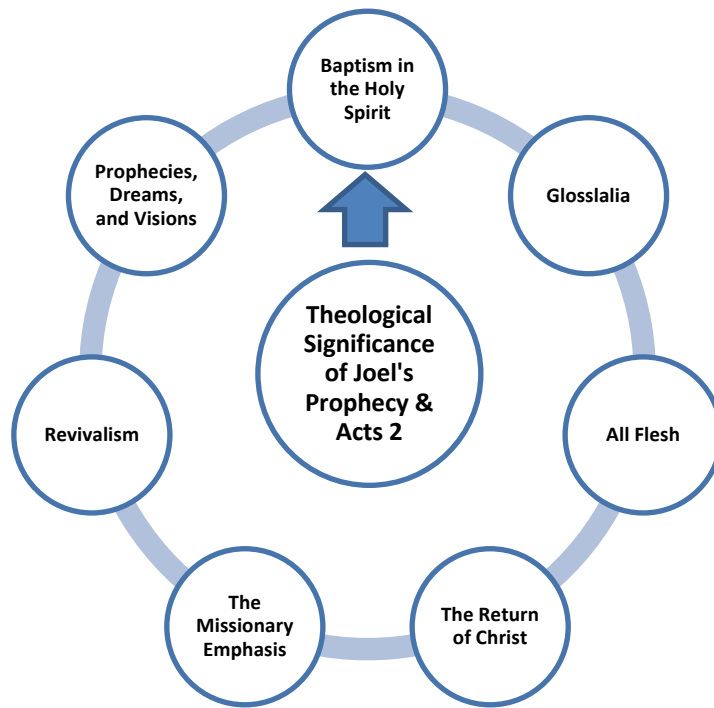


Figure 3: Key Theological Themes of Joel 2 – Acts 2

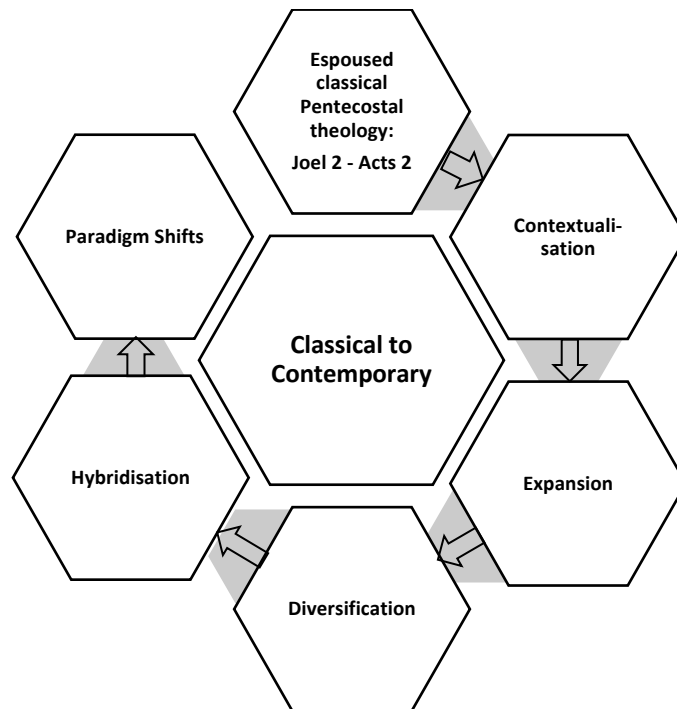
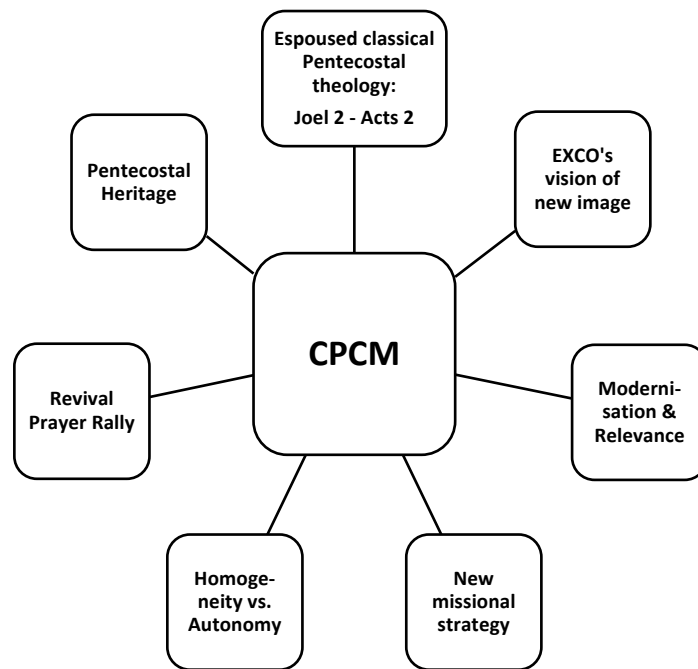


Figure 4: Classical to Contemporary – Complexities in changing nature and shifts in emphases
(CPM homogeneity until mid-1980s)



**Figure 5: ‘A Contemporary Pentecostal Church Movement’
AGM’s official tagline 2018
(EXCO’s desired contemporary emphases)**

Appendix Seven: Testimonies on Voice of the Spirit

1. Tan Sri Datuk Rev. Dr Prince Guneratnam, early pioneer and the first Malaysian Assemblies of God General Superintendent, graduated from BIM in 1966 and immediately began full-time ministry. He received his call at the age of 12, at a three-night series of Revival Meetings in Penang, led by Rev. Luther Sezto from Hong Kong. The Revival Meetings were followed by what are known as ‘tarrying meetings’ for those seeking the BHS, and in each of the ‘tarrying meetings’, Guneratnam received dramatic visions of Jesus Christ. On the first night, he saw a vision of Christ, more as it were an impression which stimulated his desire to seek Christ more. On the second night, in a vision, he was travelling on a steep road to the top of a hill when he saw a bright light on one side and, curious, desired to discover what it was. As he reached the top, he saw Jesus but the bright light blinded him and physically affected his vision. On the third night, he had a vision of Jesus who handed him a Bible. Although Guneratnam regained his eyesight after being prayed for by the evangelist, he doubted his calling in his teenage years, when he was drawn away by the worldly influence of teenage friends. Yet, during those years, and remembering the visions of Christ and his call, he would envision himself preaching to huge crowds as he stood on the veranda of his father’s house. At the age of 16 or 17, he received a prophetic word from a preacher during some ‘spiritual emphasis’ meetings, and was convicted of his call once again. The prophetic word was so personal that he felt he was the only one in that room and that God was speaking to him directly about his love and his will; it was also accompanied by words of confirmation from an elderly uncle whom he accompanied to the meeting; ‘I know God spoke to you. You go back to do what God has told you to do.’, Guneratnam broke down, wept before God, and prayed. That was his turning point and soon after he enrolled in the Bible school and began his ministerial journey. (FI-1. See Appendix Four for Tan Sri Guneratnam’s full testimony.)
2. Rev. Ng Kok Kee, pioneer, former Assemblies of God General Secretary and former President of BCM, received God’s call in 1971 during a church service: through the message preached he felt that God spoke to his heart to serve him. It was simply a sense of ‘What are you going to do with your life? Serve God.’ After that call he too saw a vision of Christ: ‘I saw Christ dying on the cross and saying to me, “I did this for you. Why are you still resisting?” That was the call. I saw Jesus dying on the cross and he spoke, “I died for you, I gave my life for you. What would you give for me?”’ (FI-2)
3. Rev. Dr Vincent Leoh, pioneer and Second AG General Superintendent, received his call in June 1975, when he received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and was immediately filled with passion and tears for the lost. God called him by means of a vision and spoke to him in an audible voice as he was cycling to church. In his own words:

Suddenly, I saw a vision of just three birds. And the characteristics of these three birds were they were looking up to heaven with their mouths open, waiting for the mother bird to drop in the worm or food. And then later on, as I cycled further, the birds were turned into the faces of three people, three men, and then after that, as I cycled on further, they were turned into, as far as my eyes could see, the faces of human beings. All were looking up to heaven with their mouths open. So I just didn’t understand. I asked the Lord, ‘Lord, what is this?’ And then the word of the Lord came to me. And the word said, ‘They are hungry. Feed them.’ So in just five words, ‘They are hungry. Feed them.’ At that time, I knew that God had called me. (FI-8)

4. Rev. Philip Mathius, pioneer, received Christ in 1971, began serving in his local church, and, in 1973, received God's call after a church service. He went home deeply burdened in his spirit, prayed and went to sleep. When still not fully asleep and fully aware of his surroundings, he received a vision of Christ and heard Jesus' audible voice:

Suddenly, there was a vision that came so real that I saw myself right at Calvary's cross ... the blood of Jesus flowing, and I was trembling at the sight of it. And then the voice just came, "I shed this blood not only for you but also for others. And therefore, you need to take the gospel and preach the gospel." And it was so sudden, I just woke up in cold sweat. (FI-5)

According to Mathius, he told the Lord that he felt inadequate for the task. Notwithstanding, the Lord instructed him to go preach the gospel to his neighbour immediately. He obeyed and his young teenage hearer received Christ, a clear confirmation that the Lord had called Mathius. He struggled two more years with his call until he finally resigned from his job, and experienced great peace as he obeyed the Lord's call and enrolled in the Bible school.

5. Rev. Fiona Mathius-Lee Saik Eiang, pioneer and associate pastor in the pioneering period testified although her Christian commitment meant that she faced rejection and was in fact disowned by her family, she grew strong in the Lord, evangelised from door-to-door, and started helping out in an AG church. In 1975-6, she dreamed that she was among stars in the heavenly places, and that the Lord spoke to her, saying; 'Go, ye into the world and preach the gospel.' She knew it was God's call and had many subsequent dreams of preaching to large crowds. At a National Youth Camp in 1975, she saw many visions of blood, fires, and the silhouette shadows of people walking and falling into a pit; as though blinded, something like a magnet was dragging multitudes down into a pit of burning fire. So, she told the Lord, 'Send me to warn them', and responded to God's call to full-time ministry during an altar call at the camp. (FI-15 Wife of Rev. Philip Mathius.)
6. Full-time Student A, received God's call when she heard an audible voice speaking to her, 'You will be a pastor', a call subsequently confirmed by a leader at a camp. (SV-83-B2 English Department.)
7. Full-time Student B heard the audible voice telling him, 'Don't ever doubt labouring in God's field.' (SV-72-B2 Bahasa Malaysia Department. Testimony was given in national language.)
8. Full-time Student C heard an audible voice saying, 'I called you. I want to use this hand (her right hand) to heal people.' She also received prophecy and confirmation from others. (SV-70-B1-2 English Department.)
9. During a personal time of worship and prayer, Full-time Student D heard an audible whisper to the effect that one day God would use him to bring the good news to the unbelievers at his hometown in Sarawak. He testified that he heard God whispered, 'One day I will use you to preach the gospel in your village. He also received a prophecy about his call from a guest speaker. (SV-68-B1-3 Bahasa Malaysia Department. Testimony was given in national language.)
10. Full-time Student E, at age 15, heard God speaking to him in an audible voice about his call to full-time ministry and he responded a few months later. (SV-75-B2 English Department.)

11. Full-time Student F, while fasting and praying, had a dream and visions of Jesus accompanied by an audible voice, of God calling his name very clearly and assuring him that He would bless him and his family when he answered God's call. He shared what took place: 'In a dream, I saw Jesus laying his hands on me and he was holding a sheep and he walked facing me and I knelt before him. I saw him pouring oil on me. In a vision, I saw Jesus and he asked me to preach his word.' He also received personal prophecies of God's affirmation, comfort, and assurance. (SV-74-B1-3 English Department.)
12. Full-time Student G dreamed that he was preaching and that God spoke to him in an audible voice: it was the verse of Scripture, 'Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men, sent from God' (2 Cor. 2:17, NIV). His call was confirmed by his parents and church pastor. (SV-67-B2-3 Chinese Department.)
13. Full-time Student H had a dream: 'I was standing in front of many people, and I saw the place is very dark, but I prayed and preached to them. Suddenly I felt the power from God upon me and all the people fell down and I saw is very bright [light].' Then, God spoke to her about His call as she was reading Isaiah 42:6-7, verses which still 'burn in her heart', 'I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.' A church leader who heard from God also prophesied over her, 'Next year you will become a full-time minister.' (SV-71-B2-3 Bahasa Malaysia Department. Word in bracket added for clarification purpose.)
14. Rev. Terrence Sinnadurai, from the early period, who pioneered and, through raising up young pastors, planted 20 churches. (FI-3.) Rev. Christopher and Rev. Marianne Mun pioneered churches in East Malaysia, then in Seremban. He testified, 'A few pastors and leaders that prophesied over me and also four of the leaders had a vision of me serving God full-time.' (FI-22; FI-23; SV-20-B2; SV-19-D2.) Rev. Phillip Wee testifies receiving a clear direction by 'voice of the Holy Spirit and commitment to obey' which led him in his pioneering and church planting in Southern, Central, and East Malaysia districts. (FI-28.) Rev. Chee Siew Tai was led in her mission work through prophecies. (SV-10-D8.) Rev. Isaac Chan received a personal prophetic word of confirmation from a minister from overseas one year after embarking on a 10-year church planting and expansion project. (SV-7-D3)
15. Rev. Lawrence Yap testified:

At Charis Christian Centre, we have started various ministries, we are strong in community services. We have started things like dialysis centre since '97, we have started orphanage since '89, we have started six other ministries, for example, reaching out to the refugee children, to the marginalised children, to the exploited women including sex workers down in China Town, Petaling Street and medical clinics and all that. And all these I would say were guided by the Holy Spirit. Take for instance, why we started the dialysis centre in '97? It was because God enabled us to purchase five shop lots in a row. The Lord just dropped into my heart, 'The five shop lots are not just going to be utilised only on Sunday.' It was a very clear conviction that the Lord brought into my heart ... the Lord guided me to the need of the kidney patients, 'They are growing, you know, every year by percentage.' ... we are the first to start this dialysis charity centre in 1997. And when I look back, it was definitely divinely inspired by this circumstantial providence and

secondly what the Lord has dropped into my heart ... all the ministries which we have set up were Spirit-inspired and Spirit-led. And, one thing we can proudly say, that God has helped us to become a church without walls, meaning, we are building bridges towards the community, and connecting with them, so that we can show them the way to the kingdom of God.

Another good example will be one of my members who had a dream of seeing our new church building. He saw the land. So he came to me and of course I was sceptical, and I said, 'Well, good for you ... go and look for the land which the Lord has given to you.' And months later, because of his conviction that this is a dream from God, he went to the Land Office, and by divine guidance, he pointed to a place, and then the search was done. The result of a land title was brought to my attention ... the land is available ... And when I saw it, I got a shock. This guy is a new born again believer, in late 60s, and the Holy Spirit used a dream to bring about a revelation, that I wasn't even aware of. And as I am speaking right now, we are at the verge of signing the letter of offer and entering into a Sales and Purchase Agreement for this piece of land, which will potentially become a place where we are going to build our facilities ... measuring about 2.75 acres. (FI-18)

16. Rev. Dr Samuel Ng's testimony goes:

The second very distinct one was the Pos Dipang Tragedy '96, the landslide in the *Orang Asli* camp. I was sitting at home, and this voice that I heard just said, 'Go, go.' ... Yeah, I was reading the newspaper, there was a tragedy, you remember that time there was no social media, so the fastest news you get was through *Star* newspaper. The front page reported the tragedy in Pos Dipang ... Then I remembered Pastor Joshua Lau, he was involved with *Orang Asli* work, I called him. He also said he had the prompting of the Holy Spirit to go. So, both of us went without knowing what to do. I mean it was so dramatic. I drove all the way to Pos Dipang then we were standing by the road side, because the police blocked the place, they barricaded the place. So, we were standing there and we looked at each other, and we whispered to each other, we prayed, 'God, you asked us to come but we are stuck here.' The police won't let us in but amazingly the police chief came, and because we were the two weirdest that stood out from the crowd, so the policeman asked, 'What are you doing here?' So, I told him the story, I said, 'I was at home, I heard God speak to me, I drove here, and I want to go in.' And he just asked us to hop into his police truck, so we went in, and because of that we met up with Samoan and Sanusi, and (now) together they are *Orang Asli* pastors. So that's one very distinct, prophecy, voice of God, and all of us remember. They were also wondering what we were doing there ... then they came out, they went to Bible school, they became our first trained *Orang Asli* pastors, trained in Bible school, and today they are running very successful *Orang Asli* ministry. (FI-6. Pos Dipang is an *Orang Asli* (native) settlement located in Kampar, in the state of Perak, West Malaysia. The landslide and mud flood tragedy happened in the evening of 29 August 1996)

17. Rev. Connie Chan shared:

Basically, we do help, share, and give to the orphanages, but having the manpower going on the ground to do it, has never been the strength of our church. But at the end of 2015, God stirred our hearts to spend more time with him, in prayer and worship like in Acts 2, spending time with him, waiting on him and ministering to him, so we have this 'harp and bowl worship' session in the church, where we just spent time worshipping, and just waiting on him, basically worship and intercession ... One day, the Lord just put in our hearts while we were really enjoying the worship, being in his presence, 'Are we not aware of the people around here so in need? They don't even know anything about God?' ... I don't know whether it is a vision or just an impression but we were just facing that side (pointing out the window) ... within sight ... 500 metres away, there is this low-cost flat around our area here ... So, it's an amazing thing actually and these are the people whom we would not have been in contact with if we didn't take the step of faith according to the prompting of the Spirit. So, God birthed that in us, because of the time of waiting, and I'm always amazed by that. (FI-35)

18. Just years ago, a missionary received his call during personal devotional and prayer time, and was led by the prompting of the Holy Spirit in the direction of missionary work. He testified, 'I was praying and felt God speaking to pack our bags to go to the

mission field. It wasn't a clear audible voice. It was a prompting and strong desire.' His missionary call was confirmed by the message brought by a visiting preacher. Both he and his wife felt that the message was aimed directly at them. They served in a foreign country for a while, and upon return, they helped in starting a social work in farming industry which empowers the native villagers in efforts to help improve their economy in the interior of East Malaysia. (SV-63-B1-3)

19. Tan Sri Guneratnam shared:

Moving here to CCC is a big step. The Lord gave me the faith and confidence, and showed me that this is what he would like me to do. When I began to share it with my leaders, they were 100 percent with me ... That's very important because when God deals with you and when the people you work with reaffirm, it becomes a very clear indication that is what God wants you to do ... When God speaks and moves, it is on the basis of your relationship. He sees your heart and desire. That's why desires are very important. See, the Bible says, 'He grants you the desires of your heart.' So, how do you know what's your desire? If you have a desire, you know it can't be from the enemy. It has to be from God. The devil will never give you a desire to plant churches. He'll never give you such desire. So where is it coming from? Now isn't that God's way of speaking with you? Leading you? See, it's your desire. See, the desire is within you and that's the open door for you, to help you. When you have that kind of desire, when you have that kind of openness, He then plants those desires within you to know that it is what it is. Same with this building. I can tell you what struggle I had to have this building when the Lord desired us to move out, to grow, and to establish this building as a testimony. The challenge to have it, I said to myself, 'Can this desire be selfish? ... Who wants to come into a building like this that costs RM225 million?' But God puts it in you and you ask yourself, 'If it is then God makes it happen.' See, so this business of 'What is God's voice?' How does he speak to you? How do you know his leading? They're alright questions but it's no secret. If you really desire and you really want to know, he will show you. It all depends on your relationship, how open, and willing you are. (FI-1)

20. Rev. Ronnie Chin testified:

We have been praying for a new property for quite a while. We struggled and asked, 'Lord, what's happening? Why so long?' I remember two speakers' prophecies. In a meeting, Cindy Jacobs, called us (Rev. Lisa, his wife) up, and prophesied, 'God is going to give you a building' and she described some of the features ... We took to heart as it was an encouragement to our prayers. And then, another speaker came to our church, also prophesied that God is going to give us a building and he has already prepared it for us. So that was an encouragement that there is already a prepared place, and he described two and three different features of the building. Finally, God just opened the door and we looked at this place (in the new premise). As we remembered those prophecies, it was very much like what was described when we actually saw the building, i.e. how the hall and the ceiling look like, the surrounding area of a busy highway, and that it looks like a multi-purpose building, unlike a normal kind of church building. (FI-7; FI-14; FI-20)

21. Rev. Michael Ho shared that there was one incident when doctors had given up hope on an HIV patient, who was one of my Chinese pastor. The doctor called the family to prepare for his death. As he was praying in tongues for the patient, his tears just flowed, and he knew it was the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The Lord added to the patient's life. Another case as he was praying for an elderly church member who was also dying, the family members have gathered at the hospital to prepare for his death. He prayed as tears flowed, and later the elderly man woke up and lived a while longer. (FI-17)

22. Rev. Ronnie Chin shared:

In a service during worship and altar call time, I would think of how to close the service and very often I will get a vision of something and the interpretation, which would be my key point in making the altar call. More of pictures, mental pictures ... static pictures. For some others talk about how they see things moving, but that has not been my privilege. I would ask the Lord, 'How to interpret this? What does it mean?' I think it struck a chord when I say in the altar call, this is what I see. This is what God is saying and how we should respond. (FI-14)

23. Rev. Lisa Chin shared:

For me, very often God gives a prophetic word or I see the imagery ... I'm a very visual person, so I can see a lot of pictures ... Having been a minister for so long, I think that God would have developed me in maturity. More often, it would be the impression, rather than a vision. When I minister to people, prophetic revelations come very easily for me. (FI-20)

24. Rev. Ronald Ooi shared:

I'm not only Assemblies of God trained, but am also Baptist trained. Yeah, so I've got the Spirit, I've got the Word. My Baptist professors always reminded me, 'Ron, you Assemblies of God people, when you hear the Voice of the Spirit, do find the Scripture to back it up.' ... I carried the baby [granddaughter] and the Holy Spirit just dropped [in me], 'This is the way I carry you.' The gentle, gentle voice, tender gentle Voice of the Spirit. Then I went back to the Scripture, Deuteronomy 1:31, the father will carry you until you reach your destination, and Moses was trying to tell the whole people of Israel that the father would carry you. Just as he carried me, he will carry you. Wow, I mean, this is fresh. I'm not saying every day I hear voices. I'm just saying that God does speak, the Holy Spirit does lead, at crucial moments, even in my daily quiet moments, if we are discipline to stay quiet to read the word, it comes through fresh to you. And that's the word that carries you throughout the day and make you strong, and that's where all my sermons come from ... hearing God. While I appreciate the commentaries, the academic world, theological education, and the libraries, and so forth, I mean the tremendous resources that we have today, but nothing beats hearing the voice of God for yourself when you need to preach the word. That's my experience. (FI-12)

25. Rev. Jasmine Ooi shared:

In 2017, recently we had a healing rally service. There was a lady who was in a wheelchair (for four months). We were all waiting for the evangelist healer to come and pray for the sick but he was very empowering, he asked all of us to pray for the sick instead of waiting for him. So, when I saw this woman on the wheelchair, I just sensed that faith, the Spirit was telling me, 'Go and pray for her.' So, I went and prayed for her. ... And I just felt the faith arise, I just asked her to stand up. This was first time I was doing it. I removed the stop. She stood up. I just touched her knees and she began to walk. She was taking steps, and before you know it, she was running. She was running on the stage there at the altar ... This was one time I just felt very certain the Spirit of God. I was led by the Spirit of God to pray for her and asked her to stand up. And also, after that, I also felt that the Spirit of God led me to pray for people to lead them to accept Jesus, 'This one is ready, give her the message and ask her to receive Jesus.' So felt the leading of the Spirit in that respect. (FI-13)

Appendix Eight: AGM's Tenets of Faith, No. 7, 8, 10.

No. 7 on 'The Baptism in the Holy Spirit':

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit – All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect, and should earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian Church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Lk 24:49; Acts 1:4-8; 1 Cor 12:1-31). This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9). With the Baptism in the Holy Spirit come such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (Jn 7:37-39; Acts 4:8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Heb. 12:28), an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:42), and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost (Mk 16:20).

No. 8 on 'The Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit':

The baptism of believers in the Holy Spirit is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2:4). The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues (1 Cor 12:4-10, 28), but different in purpose and use.

No. 10 on 'The Church and Its Mission':

The Church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfilment of her great commission. Each believer, born of the Spirit is an integral part of the General Assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven (Eph 1:22-23; 2:22; Heb 12:23). Since God's purpose concerning man is to seek and to save that which is lost, to be worshipped by man, and to build a body of believers in the image of His Son, the priority reason for being of the Assemblies of God as part of the Church is: a. To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world (Acts 1:8; Mt 28:19-20; Mk 6:15-16). b. To be a corporate body in which man may worship God (1 Cor 12:13). c. To be a channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Eph 4:11-16; 1 Cor 12:28; 1 Cor 14:12). The Assemblies of God exists expressly to give continuing emphasis to this reason-for-being in the New Testament apostolic pattern by teaching and encouraging believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. This experience: i. Enables them to evangelize in the power of the Spirit with accompanying supernatural signs (Mk 16:15-20; Acts 4:29-31; Heb 2:3-4). ii. Adds a necessary dimension to worshipful relationship with God (1 Cor 2:10-16; 1 Cor 12-14). iii. Enables them to respond to the full working of the Holy Spirit in expression of fruit and gifts and ministries as in New Testament times for the edifying of the body of Christ (Gal 5:22-26; 1 Cor 14:12; Eph 4:11-12; 1 Cor 12:28; Col 1:29).