

AN OTHERWISE POSSIBILITY:  
TRANSLATING THE INSATIABLE CALL OF A  
PENTECOSTAL PRAIRIE PASTOR

BRUCE SHELVEY

*Abstract*

*Using examples from the personal memoirs of a small-town prairie pastor, Ernest Shelvey, the paper argues for “otherwise possibility” as a way to translate his call to ministry. Shelvey’s openness to “life in the spirit,” an eschatological “may be” that legitimized an uncertain way of being in a modern world, became the means through which he heard, understood, and voiced the unfamiliar and strange. As an assertion of an open history, one that was “not yet” determined by a human will, this orientation, as theorized by philosopher Richard Kearney, “possibilized” God into Shelvey’s everyday experience and in so doing created a spiritual space for generosity, potential opportunities to redeem human action, and hope for an alternate future beyond what could have been predicted.*

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow  
of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy  
rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Psalm 23:4 (KJV)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit  
comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in  
Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the  
ends of the earth.

Acts 1:8 (NIV)

A God of “possibility” made a first appearance to seven-year-old Ernest Shelvey during the height of the Great Depression in 1934 on a small farm near Brandon, Manitoba. The future pastor returned home from school on a cold winter day to discover his distraught mother tending to his deathly ill father. In hushed tones, Eva Shelvey recalled how Hal had staggered nauseous and dizzy out of the warmth of his blacksmith shop, equipped with a one-cylinder engine that ran the trip hammer and other machinery, and into the house, where the young full-time farmer

and part-time Bible teacher now lay suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning. As Halhad's condition worsened, he called his family to his bedside where he quoted Psalms 23:4, prayed fervently for God to intervene, and at times broke into a "beautiful unknown language." And then, even with Eva pleading with him not to leave her with five small children under the age of eight, he said "Good-bye." Ernest, the eldest son, watched sweat cover his father's face and hands and waited for the final end. Suddenly, Halhad opened his eyes, demanded a hand basin, and expelled all of the poison from his body. When Ernest accompanied his father to the barns later that night to tend to the animals and milk the cows, he believed that God had heard the "cry of the family" and had "completely and miraculously healed" his father.<sup>1</sup>



Ernest Shelvey and Halhad Shelvey circa 1940.<sup>2</sup>

Secure agricultural metaphors and predictable cycles of ploughing, sowing, and reaping formed much of the context of Ernest's early life and should have, by custom and tradition, fixed his agricultural vocation. As his father's righthand man from a very early age, Ernest

---

<sup>1</sup> Ernest Shelvey, "Biography of Reverend Ernest Halhad Shelvey" (Personal Journal, Copy in the possession of the author, no date), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Photos throughout this article are courtesy of Ernest Shelvey.

had cultivated, harrowed, seeded, mowed, and raked the fields. Twice a day he fed, cleaned, watered, and hand-milked cows, and then cranked the milk separator to produce cream. At six years old, his father sat him behind a four-horse team and told him to “Land,” or plow a straight first furrow, by establishing and maintaining a point on the horizon. After the budding farmer plowed a crooked line on his first attempt, a life lesson followed from his father: “Keep your eye on the goal, and do not look back!” But God’s presencing in the world had transformed, shifted, and hybridized this eldest son of a farmer’s religious, cultural, and social location. Ernest would later state when serving as a pastor with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) that Halhad Shelvey’s healing in the winter of 1934 provided “solid evidence . . . that God does perform miracles, and it also became one of my favorite illustrations of God’s power to heal in later years of my ministry.”<sup>3</sup>

The healing of Halhad Shelvey made an indelible mark on young Ernest’s spiritual formation. While it may be easy to dismiss the evidentiary basis of being healed from carbon monoxide poisoning, what is undeniable is that to a future Reverend Shelvey such “signs and wonders” produced a possible outcome other than the one presented by a simple reading of the past. History became, not the predetermined consequence of cause and effect, but rather the unpredictable unfolding of God’s will on earth. As a translational framework for everyday experience, such otherwise possibility provided a different compass point to navigate his way towards future ministry. In rejecting the definitive modern rationalism informed by the Hegelian “it was,”<sup>4</sup> Shelvey embraced an eschatological “may be” that legitimized an uncertain way of being in the world.

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Merold Westphal in his interlocution with Richard Kearney writes the following about “an essentially Hegelian doctrine of the Trinity”: “It’s only Hegel, and following Hegel, Vattimo and Altizer who interpret(s) the Incarnation as the death of God the Father and the bringing of the deity completely to earth. And then the death of Jesus is the death of any particular deity on earth. In other words, the Resurrection is simply the discovery that the earthly divinity is the human community and not to be equated to any human individual, such as Jesus.” Taken from Richard Kearney and Jens Zimmerman, eds. *Reimagining the Sacred: Richard Kearney Debates God* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2016), 231.

*Translating Calling as Life in the Spirit*

As a wager on an open history, Shelvey's call reinforced an alternative perspective of temporality and this shaped a way of being in the world. A narrative "not yet" determined by a human will allowed for a radical openness to life in the Spirit. But what, more precisely, amounted to an eschatological reading of Shelvey's everyday experience? What future shaped his spiritual world? And did an orientation towards a different potential transform his religious, denominational, and personal narrative? Engaging these questions requires a religious hermeneutic such as the one articulated in Richard Kearney's *The God Who May Be*. By putting flesh onto a position that "privileges a God who possibilizes our world from out of the future,"<sup>5</sup> Kearney offers a relational alternative to the historical positivist definition of 'being,' and posits other possibilities than those offered through the empiricism of "that which has been."<sup>6</sup> His work helps us place Shelvey's challenge to the "classic metaphysical tendency to subordinate the possible to the actual as the insufficient to the sufficient" and shows us how he encountered "The God of the possible ... who is passionately involved in human affairs and history." In such a conception "this God is much closer than the old deity of metaphysics and scholasticism to the God of desire and promise who, in diverse scriptural narratives, calls out from burning bushes, makes pledges and covenants, burns with longing in the song of songs, cries in the wilderness, whispers in caves, comforts those oppressed in the darkness, and prefers orphans, widows, and strangers to the mighty and the proud." Kearney's theory of interpretation filters Shelvey's pastoral ministry in small town communities in Manitoba and Saskatchewan through the lens of historical possibility, itself made real by an

---

<sup>5</sup> Richard Kearney, *The God Who May Be: A Hermeneutics of Religion* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Historical theorist Callum Brown reminds us that the modernist system of empiricism is the notion that "all knowledge has to be proven before it can be accepted." As an implicit recognition of *a priori* knowledge, it "relies solely on experience (or observation or reading) of knowledge." Once combined with inductive reasoning and allowed to shape the content of everything from nature to culture, including religious experience, the function of the disciplining of History was to "replace the divine order of things." For a broader discussion of the implications of empiricism on knowledge formation as an objective historical narrative centred around neutrality, chronology and ordering see Callum Brown's *Postmodernism for Historians* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 2005), 12-32.

eschatological orientation that shaped a view of the present that promised in the present “to bring life and to bring it more abundantly.”<sup>7</sup>

The immanent presencing of God’s Spirit, a kind of “Second Coming,” illustrated to Shelvey that His Kingdom was at hand. Kearney argues that this hope in a transfiguring God disclosed to believers like Shelvey “the eschatological potentials latently inscribed in the historically im-possible.”<sup>8</sup> And so, Shelvey’s memoirs and recollections of fifty years of ministry read like the publicly performed oral testimony of a convert or congregant, wherein he narrates a different outcome than the one he had initially scripted.<sup>9</sup> In stretching the eschatological substance of a lived-experience beyond the end of history, his testimony of a Spirit-filled world of alternative opportunity displayed an immediate reciprocity between God and humanity<sup>10</sup> and brought into stark relief the false actuality of the past tense as a *fait accompli*. Shelvey’s narrative of limitless purposefulness reveals a flexible theological framework that brought vitality to his ministry. Experiential signs and wonders naturalized life in the Spirit as a way of being in the world, and the call to be a conduit of God’s power to change the here and now came to be the early power of the Pentecostal message.

As is evident in Shelvey’s memoirs, encounters with a God of possibility acted as a kind of spiritual decolonizing that usurped the normative authority wielded by religious traditions and unsettled its gatekeepers’ attempts to establish control over the eternal future. According to Kearney, when an orientation towards “the divine perhaps” hovers over “every just decision or action,” it “ensures that history is never over and our duty never done.”<sup>11</sup> Even though much of the young pastor’s early theological training came from his father, known locally as a self-taught dispensationalist equipped with a well-used Scofield Reference Bible,<sup>12</sup> his own exposure to Spirit-filled events

---

<sup>7</sup> Kearney, *The God Who May Be*, 1-2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Scholars have utilized oral performative theory to analyze the role of testimony in Pentecostalism. For an example see Linda M. Ambrose, “Aimee Semple McPherson: Gender Theory, Worship and the Arts,” *Pneuma* 30:1-2 (2017): 105-122.

<sup>10</sup> Kearney, *The God Who May Be*, 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Mittelstadt argues that the early days of Pentecostalism relied upon a narrative interpretation of the Bible, wherein people interpreted their spiritual formation based upon their understanding of scripture. In contrast, mainstream

appeared more important to his religious lived-experience. The boyhood evidence that convinced Ernest to question the standard presuppositions and traditional prejudices could be found in acts of forgiveness, where an enemy was turned into a friend; in manifestations of signs and wonders, where people were healed and experienced glossolalia; and in forms of generosity, where giving was the norm even during the desperation of the Great Depression.<sup>13</sup> Such emancipatory events and examples served to free Shelvey from the prescribed past where rivalries and insults too often turned to violence, where natural consequences of physical and spiritual disease ended in death, and where scarcity led to competition. In his years of formal ministry with the PAOC, these object lessons compelled him to believe in other possibilities. Shelvey's self-aware obedience to living a life in the Spirit contributed to the appeal of the Pentecostal movement because it represented an association of hundreds of pastors like him who remained distinct and unique in their own commitment to signs and wonders.

Pentecostalism's manifestation at this time in history assured Shelvey that he could live out a religious narrative centred upon an ethereal "spirit-filled" world, especially with the belief of a life-world where each individual is free to make the world a more just and loving place, and each believer responsible to connect to the divine "unprejudiced becoming" or goodness as a way of abnegating evil.<sup>14</sup> As succinctly summarized by Kearney, such a perspective revealed "history to be a divine venture, and human adventure," when no preordained course of action predetermined a particular outcome. Functioning within this liminal space of history (that could be directly accessed because of his participation in it) required Shelvey to constantly adapt, change and remain open to alterity. Even after the PAOC as a religious institution became concerned about conformity and socialization in the 1940s and 1950s, Shelvey kept the movement's

---

Evangelicalism stressed the context of the Bible to authorize a specific narrative that conformed to a theological structure that legitimized a way of living. See his "Scripture in the Pentecostal Tradition" in *Canadian Pentecostalism: Transition and Transformation* edited by Michael Wilkinson (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2009), 123-141.

<sup>13</sup> Ernest Shelvey, "What I've Learned and Know of My Father – William Halhad Shelvey" (Personal Journal), 6-7.

<sup>14</sup> Kearney, *The God Who May Be*, 5.

theological, ethnic, gendered, and social diversity at the core of his ministry.<sup>15</sup> Unlike religious expression established by one's own willing in the physical world, Shelvey ordered his own life-world around events of prophesy, miracles, tongues, and other signs and wonders. And he invited all others to join in the flow of the ever-present Spirit of God in the world. Participating in "the call" included the desire to bring as many people as possible into contact with this Spirit so that an uncertain future could be transformed in the present.<sup>16</sup>

Such a spirit-filled experience is difficult to locate within traditional historical cause and effect frameworks that privilege interpretation and explanation over translation and negotiation. Based on Kearney's references to the God of possibility, I contend that Shelvey's insatiable call did not amount to a formal behavioural structure that predetermined how he would interpret past and present action and even his own agency. Rather, as a religious expression Pentecostalism took shape in the immediacy of the spiritual encounter and exchange, which translated into history constantly being mediated by God's generous will, cooperative purpose, and spacious design. Theoretically speaking, a translation is, as Paul Ricoeur argues, "linguistic hospitality," a space within which practices like speaking in tongues, miracles and spirit dancing are not subject to absolutes and essentialism. The application of Kearney to Shelvey's lived experience, therefore, is not an attempt at correspondence, nor is it a definition, but rather an initial attempt to find compatibility with what has become known as a Pentecostal expression. Shelvey's life-world is not to be found in a "demonstrable *identity* of meaning," but in an "equivalence without identity" that can only be "sought, worked at, supposed."<sup>17</sup> Evidence of an ability to translate religious, spirit-filled, life-worlds will

---

<sup>15</sup> Michael Wilkinson, "Pentecostalism in Canada: An Introduction," in *Canadian Pentecostalism*, 4-5.

<sup>16</sup> It is worth noting that Shelvey did not represent the "fulfilment of God's Kingdom" in a framework that included an apocalyptic vision with the "certain future" of the return of Christ and "judgment day," but rather through ambiguous and open references to the "Second Coming" of Christ. On various Pentecostal eschatologies see Peter Althouse, "The Landscape of Pentecostal and Charismatic Eschatology: An Introduction," in *Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatologies: World Without End*, edited by Peter Althouse and Robbie Waddell (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010), 1-12.

<sup>17</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *On Translation*. Translated by Eileen Brennan (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 22. Italics in the original.

be found, according to Kearney (and through the lens of Ricoeur), to be the “incompletion,” wherein translation, “understood as an endlessly unfinished business, is a signal not of failure but of hope.”<sup>18</sup>



Ernest Shelvey after his graduation from Bethel Bible Institute (1949)

The oral and performative history of this spiritual vanguard is hardly recognizable within the formal academic field of Pentecostal studies and difficult to understand outside of the legibility given by Kearney’s expansive hermeneutic.<sup>19</sup> The lived-experience of the Spirit

<sup>18</sup> Richard Kearney, in his introduction to Ricoeur, *On Translation*, xx. See also Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History and Forgetting*. Translated by David Pellauer (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2005), 657.

<sup>19</sup> Ronald A. N. Kydd, “The Contributions of Denominationally Trained Clergymen to the Emerging Pentecostal Movement in Canada,” *Pneuma* 5:1 (1983): 17-33. Interestingly, Kydd, a former faculty member at Central Pentecostal Bible College, celebrated the careers of Henry Charles Sweet, Thomas Thomson Latto, James Eustace Purdie, and Daniel Newton Buntain, all of whom were educated in other theological contexts, and were early ‘leaders’ in the denomination because of their prior training. Another example of the stress on exemplary leadership as an



seems an odd fit when reproducing standard modern religious-historical discourse that emphasizes creedal origin, linear structures of spiritual awareness, naturalizing religious order, and certain eschatological ends. Allan Anderson, Professor of Pentecostal Studies at the University of Birmingham, recognized that much of the early writing of Pentecostal history has been characterized by “historiographical imperialism and ethnocentrism” and called for the “hitherto voiceless and often nameless ones to speak” in order to rectify the ongoing problems of “division, parochialism, racism and ethnocentrism.”<sup>20</sup> Interpretations of the religious life-world of Pentecostalism tended to reinforce Anderson’s findings by representing the “call” as an adherence to a Christian denominational structure that defined the movement’s spiritual practice.

Scholars have been challenged to represent the grassroots belief in a possible God that inspired PAOC’s ministerial staff and perhaps even account for much of its extensive growth in the post-War period.<sup>21</sup> Because Canadian Pentecostalism itself has emerged as a recognizable movement, in the words of sociologist and globalization specialist Michael Wilkinson, “rooted in specific local cultures” generalizing from any single pastoral narrative is fraught with difficulty. Shelvey’s experience is one of the many histories spoken into existence by the 3,000 credential holders who served in over 1,000 congregations and provided “spiritual renewal” for some 232,000 self-identifying “spirit-filled” believers in the PAOC as it grew from a “marginalized, obscure movement to the most powerful reconfiguration within [Canadian] Christianity” by 2001. In recognizing the irenic nature of the PAOC as it developed its denominational identity,<sup>22</sup> Wilkinson and others have opened up the possibility that many, perhaps most, Pentecostal local pastors took their association from something other than a single institution and their inspiration from a wide range of religious practices.

---

explanation for the growth and vitality of the PAOC is Thomas William Miller’s “The Significance of A. H. Argue for Pentecostal Historiography,” *Pneuma* 8 (1986): 120-58.

<sup>20</sup> Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004), 183. See especially his chapter “The Writing of Pentecostal History,” 166-183.

<sup>21</sup> For an example of a Pentecostal history that attempts to legitimize itself based upon its connection to standard historical Pentecostal discourse see Enrico Carlson Cumbo, “‘Your Old Men Will Dream Dreams’: The Italian Pentecostal Experience in Canada, 1912-1945,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 19 (2000): 35-81.

<sup>22</sup> Wilkinson, “Pentecostalism in Canada,” 4-7.

It is now problematic for official historical accounts of the movement to speak of an American origin at Azusa Street, or a theological foundation within the doctrinal differences as represented by “founders” Charles S. Parham and William J. Seymour,<sup>23</sup> or for Canadian Pentecostals a spiritual epicentre at the storied Hebden Mission in Toronto.<sup>24</sup> Alternative explanations for the everyday practice of local PAOC ministers includes the denomination’s open eschatological perspective with its theological elasticity, its believers’ equality, and its global reach.

Nevertheless, the scholarly and denominational interpretations of the tension between direct divine revelation and the authority derived from the individual spirit-led experience on the one hand, and the authority of the PAOC’s doctrinal statements that demanded compliance and conformity on the other, have emphasized the initiation of pastors into an appropriate and recognizable Pentecostal form. That much of this scholarship does not access the lived experiences of the hundreds of grassroots pastors that ministered in local, and often marginalized, contexts, is an example of the persistence of historical interpretations that emphasize foundational events, church growth, and apostolic leadership.<sup>25</sup> One should not assume this omission is purposeful; it is the product of the very restrictions imposed by the functioning of a modernist, positivist historical structure that only *sees* what is of *consequence*. In such a framework of understanding, “calling” is (merely) adherence to vocational or professional standards of conduct. In contrast, Kearney speaks of “the call” as requiring a *carnal* response, a “*thinking in the flesh*,” a wager that is a hermeneutic act of the free will.<sup>26</sup>

New theoretical positions being applied to the Pentecostal experience illustrate well that to “be called” amounted to accepting an

---

<sup>23</sup> An accounting of the theological disagreements and the racialization of American Pentecostalism can be found in Ashon T. Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2017), 212-217.

<sup>24</sup> William Sloos, “The Story of James and Ellen Hebden: The First Family of Pentecost in Canada,” *Pneuma* 32 (2010): 181-202.

<sup>25</sup> See Michael DiGiacomo’s “Pentecostalism and Charismatic Christianity in Canada: Its Origins, Development, and Distinct Culture,” in *Canadian Pentecostalism*, 15-38.

<sup>26</sup> See *Reimagining the Sacred: Richard Kearney Debates God*. Edited by Jens Zimmerman and Richard Kearney. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2016), 14-15.

invitation to be in relation with otherwise possibility. Ashon Crawley's, *Blackpentecostal Breath*, for example, examines how the parishioners who sat under Pentecostal leadership utilized the practices of whooping, shouting, noise-making, and speaking in tongues to break down societal and cultural norms and to provide a space of freedom and liberty. He takes up the relation of "possibility" itself as a theoretical position: "Otherwise is a word that names plurality as its core operation, otherwise bespeaks the ongoingness of possibility, of things existing other than what is given, what is known, what is grasped."<sup>27</sup> In a tentative step towards extending this theoretical position to "all flesh," I suggest that if "Breath" is the metaphor for otherwise possibility in Black Study then "Calling" is the sign of alternative ways of knowing and being for prairie Pentecostalism. An insatiable call is a reference to the "radical potentiality" of various modes of otherwise possibility. In theory, a calling emerged from the choice to hear, recognize and voice the unfamiliar and the strange. Obedience followed in sounding out this difference in expressions like tongues, prophecy, and words of wisdom. Excess resulted from listening to the openings of other-worldly, miraculous practice which, out of necessity, spilled out of the private spiritual spheres of church and home and into the streets occupied by the other.

Kearney's representational strategies (wherein adaptation informs identity formation, negotiation contextualizes institutionalization, and compromise shapes bureaucratization) point to the movement's eschatological imperative that understands change and transformation as the very basis of grassroots, organic, diverse Canadian Pentecostalism. In adopting Kearney's hermeneutic, I put aside the idea that Pentecostalism is a pure form shaped by a specific origin or fixed on a clear end, and accept it as a series of alterations and adaptations that open the future to a range of opportunities. Scholarship informed by the rhythms of "Spirit-filled life" would, almost certainly, wrestle with the irregularities of racial, gendered, and class-based interactions that came from adhering to an expected religious or secular normative order. If Kearney's "God who may be" adequately translates the otherwise possibility of a historical vision open to opportunity, its evidence may be realized in Shelvey's religious life and practice and, perhaps, in the movement itself as a collective representation of

---

<sup>27</sup> Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath*, 24.

individual experiences of “Spirit-filled living.” What follows is a tentative attempt to employ otherwise possibility as a translation, an opportunistic, flexible legibility, attuned to a faith-based, “spirit-filled” experience.

### *The Possibility of Pentecostalism*

The belief in a God of possibility who constantly invites us to live in a kingdom that will be, or as Kearney puts it, into “the divine perhaps,” called into question all of the normative outcomes usually set by history. For Shelvey, the exposure to the alteration of the normal temporal order at an early age confirmed that “there is a God who hears and answers prayers.”<sup>28</sup> Examples in his memoir include being visited by “an angel, big as life itself” at age six, witnessing no ill effects to his mother after she ingested wheat treated with formaldehyde,<sup>29</sup> seeing his brother Elmer raised from a deadly farm accident, and learning of divine guidance given to his father as he navigated blind through a unexpected “Colorado snow and wind storm” on his way home from the city to the farm.<sup>30</sup> As early as 1949, the young pastor-in-training testified to the speech, movement, and embodiment of these faith-affirming events, including a car that operated for forty-five minutes on an empty gas tank as he and a pastoral couple returned to Saskatoon after holding services in a remote rural area. Miracles, signs and wonders became a consistent part of and an expectation in Shelvey’s ministry. In his fifth pastoral position at Elim Tabernacle in Napinka, MB, he facilitated the healing of Blake Woods, a local elevator agent in Lyleton, after visiting and praying for him. A while later, Woods and his family become “born again believers” in part because of the supernatural event. In Winnipeg, Shelvey conveyed his belief in the generous space of a possible God when recalling the complete healing of eight-year-old blistered and

---

<sup>28</sup> Shelvey, “Biography of Reverend Ernest Halhad Shelvey,” 7 and “Bethel Bible Institute Memoirs” (Personal Journal), 2-3.

<sup>29</sup> Shelvey’s father had recognized his wife’s mistake and prayed quoting from Mark 16:18 (“If we drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them”). The incident occurred at the height of Great Depression when Shelvey was seven years old (“Biography of Reverend Ernest Halhad Shelvey,” 4).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 5. Halhad Shelvey made his way from Brandon to the homestead in Forest, something that Shelvey characterized as “actually a miracle.” Around this same time, Shelvey was saved from sure catastrophe after his father heard audible instructions from God and commanded a fickle horse team driven by a young Shelvey to stop just after the front wheel to the wagon they were pulling fell off.

swollen Nelson Dyck after he contacted poison oak while playing in the bush. He rhetorically asked “Who said that miracles have ceased?” and added retrospectively, “God confirmed His Word with signs following and it had a profound effect on family members and the whole community.”<sup>31</sup>

In practical terms, otherwise possibility worked itself out “in the flesh” of clapping, laughing and dancing in the Spirit, prophetic expressions, miraculous bodily transformations, and speaking in tongues, all of which had been observed, shared and practiced from Shelvey’s childhood. “Miracles of salvation and deliverance” for parishioners, and signs and wonders (from timely words of prophesy from an elderly, discerning woman in Parkside, SK to the healing of their daughter, Judith, in January of 1967 from a confirmed case of nephritis for which there was no cure)<sup>32</sup> infused Shelvey’s pastoral practise. A summary of his time in places like Thompson and Gilbert Plains, MB, where he spent the bulk of his ministry, includes numerous examples of men and women being miraculously “delivered from their bondage” to drugs and alcohol. Representing these events as part of a flow of history of which he was a part gave meaning to Shelvey’s individual pastoral narrative. For example, while serving as District Christian Education Director and at the conclusion of a seminar in Thompson, Shelvey states: “the presence of the Holy Spirit came upon us, and we all sang the Hallelujah chorus in perfect harmony, in different languages, just like the Day of Pentecost!”<sup>33</sup>

An unpredictable future produced a radical openness to the ‘Other’ and a reorientation to a world through the “could be.” From an early age, Shelvey felt an association to Kenya after missionary, Reneta

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 14. The connection between a miracle and a later conversion is a fairly common occurrence in Shelvey’s pastoral narrative. In another case, an angry father of young parishioner who did not appreciate Shelvey’s involvement in his daughter’s water baptism and being “filled with the Holy Spirit,” heard an audible “Don’t touch him” when on his way to give Shelvey “a good beating.” Shelvey records that the young lady was healed of appendicitis and that he “led that man to the Lord a few years later as he laid in a Mesricordia [sic] Hospital bed.”

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 17. As “proof” of the healing of his daughter, Shelvey references Dr. Gerrard from the University Hospital of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, who agreed that only a miracle could explain her amazing recovery. Interestingly, this kind of physical validation of a supernatural event was not a requirement for his belief in miracles.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 19.

Seimens visited the small Glanton Church where he had attended as a youth. Thereafter, in addition to Bible College training, Shelvey prepared for a missionary teaching role by attending Normal School, obtaining a teaching certificate, taking extra summer courses at the University of Manitoba, and gaining experience in Winnipeg's public schools, all the while pastoring full time and raising a young family. Even though G. R. Upton from the National Office in Toronto had encouraged Shelvey through the process, in the end the young would-be missionary was "quite devastated" when the denomination rejected the pastoral couple's application for overseas work. As Shelvey explains: "I could never quite grasp the reason behind their judgment of our ministry, no one of either the District or National Office ever came to interview us, to assess our ministry and teaching abilities, our health status, or inquire of the Call of God on our hearts."<sup>34</sup> And so, at a time when it was the norm to send out religious ambassadors into every corner of the globe, Shelvey responded to this disappointment by inviting in. The young pastor made the foreign somewhat more familiar in his local context by utilizing the King's Park Tabernacle's proximity to the University of Manitoba to provide a welcoming environment for Chinese students, who for several years filled one side of the church. Later, a core group of these converts established an ethnic Chinese church in downtown Winnipeg, for which Shelvey would provide pastoral support.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 13.



Ernest and Bertha Shelvey as young pastoral couple in 1956.

The universality of the Pentecostal spiritual experience, which did not allow for Shelvey to discriminate based upon a single social, racial, gendered, ethnic, or national narrative, would be a mark of his ministry.<sup>36</sup> Doctrinal, social, and cultural modifications had to be practiced in local contexts in which parishioners from diverse Christian backgrounds worshiped in common. In King's Park church, located in a suburb of the diverse city of Winnipeg, a young pastor Shelvey and his new bride Bertha encountered a working class, immigrant congregant; in Prince Albert, SK, they worshiped alongside northern European immigrants; in Gilbert Plains, MB they provided spiritual nourishment to a Ukrainian diaspora that appreciated the Orthodox tradition and harbored deep suspicions of the Canadian state because of their internment experience during World War I; and in Thompson, MB they preached to miners and their families who had been influenced by Baptist traditions in Newfoundland. In all of these contexts, Shelvey did not have the luxury of converting his parishioners to a rigid, dogmatic Pentecostalism, but instead interpreted and adapted PAOC doctrine for

---

<sup>36</sup> The constant restructuring and reexamination at the local level, from its earliest beginnings as a movement in Canada, made reciprocity a part of the PAOC's religious character. For more examples of this diversity within Pentecostalism, especially with immigrant adherents see Michael Wilkinson, *The Spirit Said Go: Pentecostal Immigrants in Canada* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2006).

each assembly. Out of necessity he became much more tolerant of the movement's various expressions as it presented itself in each specific location. Theological diversity extended outside of the church as well. At Thompson in the late 1970s, for example, he was called to the hospital in the early hours of the morning to calm a distressed "aboriginal lady." After a gentle conversation about God, Shelvey recognized that "here was a beautiful 'sister' in the Lord, speaking in another language, worshipping the Lord."<sup>37</sup>

Shared religious experience with people of difference revealed mid-century Pentecostalism at its best as a practice of spiritual generosity. The "outpouring the Holy Spirit" demonstrated itself in Shelvey's life not in narratives of self-sacrifice and limitation but in stories of giving and charity. The position of "living by faith," as Linda Ambrose has written, characterized other religious experiences within the PAOC movement as well.<sup>38</sup> For Shelvey the model of his Spirit-filled mother feeding homeless drifters without reservation at the height of the Great Depression provided solid proof in God's sufficiency to supply all of his physical and spiritual needs. Throughout his ministry signatures for surety on church mortgages, donations of a church organ and other material supplies, return of paycheques to the church when his bi-vocational work supplied the ability to live, and supporting, comforting, and praying for parishioners in spite of time, day or season became Shelvey's response to the God of possibility.

Human agency measured as a response to the generosity of a possible God, encouraged Shelvey to act as if he had a responsibility, or perhaps even a duty, to shape history otherwise. At first glance, the choice to embrace good or to do evil seemed a rather simple binary. However, the freewill option of Shelvey's Pentecostalism depended upon the willingness to think beyond the inevitability of a divisive or isolationist history. As Kearney points out, in such an orientation evil amounted to a refusal to "live by the spirit;" the absence of good and

---

<sup>37</sup> Shelvey, "Biography of Reverend Ernest Halhad Shelvey," 20.

<sup>38</sup> These references to the material provisions of God directly to and through his ministers of the gospel is common in many of the accounts we have from this period. See Linda M Ambrose, "Living by Faith: Family Life and Ministry in the Diary of a Pentecostal Woman Preacher, 1940-1960," *Historical Papers: Journal of the Canadian Society of Church History* (2015): 93-112.



not a deficiency of divine goodness determined the future.<sup>39</sup> Shelvey's personal summons to a God-filled world of reconciliation, an immanence that turned history on its head, revealed itself early of Shelvey's formal theological training within an irenic denomination vulnerable to constant criticism and adaptation. In the spring and summer of 1947 "a grievous split took place" at the PAOC run Bethel Bible Institute in Saskatoon when two of its leaders, Rev. G. Hawtin and Rev. P. G. Hunt, decided to join the Latter Rain (LR) movement and, subsequently, established Sharon Bible College in North Battleford, SK. As an "innovation" within Canadian Pentecostalism, the LR attempted to address what it considered to be fundamental errors in the institutionalization of the PAOC.<sup>40</sup> Initially, Shelvey considered following the charismatic leaders to their new location because of the persuasive argument that "the P.A.O.C. was a dying movement and rotten to the core."<sup>41</sup> However, after receiving the counsel of spiritual mentors such as his father and his local pastor, and reflecting upon the actions and agency of the LR's leadership,<sup>42</sup> he rejected the LR's exclusive claims to religious piety and spiritual authority. Shelvey discerned that he should remain in the fellowship and return to a Bible school stripped bare of its physical and intellectual resources because the PAOC, with its expansive mission, represented best his eschatologically open witness in the world.<sup>43</sup> The LR's attempt, in Shelvey's judgment, to divide and destroy seemed in opposition to the generous space of Pentecostalism, a location which he felt could accommodate all of these different expressions of the Spirit. Interestingly, the false sense of certainty that resulted in the "split" could only be offset by an excess of God's presence. Miracles, speaking in tongues, and other evidence of an outpouring of God's goodness as told in narratives of newness punctuated Shelvey's return to Bethel. "Days of deep moving of the Holy Spirit in the classes and Elim

---

<sup>39</sup> Kearney, *The God Who May Be*, 5.

<sup>40</sup> For a more detailed study of the LR, see David W. Faupel, "The New Order of the Latter Rain: Restoration or Renewal?", 239-264, and Mark Hutchinson, "The Latter Rain Movement and the Phenomenon of Global Return," 265-283 in *Winds from the North: Canadian Contributions to the Pentecostal Movement* edited by Michael Wilkinson and Peter Althouse (Lieden: Brill, 2010).

<sup>41</sup> James R. Goff, Jr. *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville, Arkansas: The University of Arkansas Press, 1988).

<sup>42</sup> Shelvey, "Bethel Bible Institute Memoirs," 1-3.

<sup>43</sup> Shelvey, "Biography of Reverend Ernest Halhad Shelvey," 6.

Tabernacle” filled an often-difficult three-year pastoral training experience.<sup>44</sup>

Shelvey’s discernment of the right side of history constantly possibilized God into the everyday experience, and throughout his ministry the Pentecostal pastor felt compelled to seek reconciliation and healing in divisive and troublesome church contexts. In these situations, like the time the “Shepherding Movement” had caused significant distress in their “new call” to Thompson in 1975, his faith prescribed an outcome of restoration.<sup>45</sup> The eschatological imperative empowered him to encounter spiritual diversity by practicing an otherwise philosophy: “to play baseball in our own field, and leave the others to do the same.” He explains in retrospect that “My heart of hearts has been to not fight with the other person’s efforts, but to build up the Body of Christ that I have the care of, and leave the others in His Hand and work out His purposes as he saw fit.”<sup>46</sup> While guarding against heresy had the potential to move towards isolationism, Shelvey practiced religious inclusiveness, especially when it came to Evangelical denominations. In response to a question about why various denominations existed while supply preaching at Rivers Baptist Church during his retirement, he replied that each church fellowship was different and that “there is nothing wrong with attending one where we find our needs met, our hearts ministered to, and comfort with the Believers who attend. We still find ‘oneness’ in the community of Believers, and yet reach out to people in a different way to bring them to Christ.”<sup>47</sup>

Perhaps most interesting is that Shelvey’s otherwise possibility expressed itself as a movement of grace that opened him up to the surprise and wonder of the unexpected and unfamiliar. He structured and ordered his spiritual imagination around a world that “should be” and this influenced his understanding of right living and public

---

<sup>44</sup> Shelvey, “Bethel Bible Institute Memoirs,” 2-3.

<sup>45</sup> On the Shepherding Movement see David Moore, “Discerning the Times”: The Victorious Eschatology of the Shepherding Movement,” in *Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatologies: World Without End*. Peter Althouse and Robbie Waddell (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010), 273-292.

<sup>46</sup> Shelvey, “Biography of Reverend Ernest Halhad Shelvey,” 20.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

engagement.<sup>48</sup> From his nimble and entrepreneurial bi-vocationalism<sup>49</sup> to his long-standing *Life's Reflections* column in local newspapers, he eschewed the judgmentalism, exceptionalism, and isolationism that many critics identified as characteristic of the PAOC. Shelvey's faith in action pointed to, in the words of Kearney, the "fulfillment of the power of the powerless which bids us remain open to the possible divinity whose gratuitous coming ... is always a surprise and never without grace."<sup>50</sup>

Finally, the uncertain future of Shelvey's eschatological imagination made an accessible history. The time-worn aperture into otherwise epistemologies potentialized the opportunity to redeem human action and instilled hope for an alternate future than that which could have been predicted. Life in the Spirit offered Shelvey the opportunity, in the words of Kearney, to keep "open to hope, even if it is hope against hope."<sup>51</sup> Such a posture, as post-colonial theorist Homi Bhabha argues in his chapter "How Newness Enters the World" kept the future as "an open question."<sup>52</sup> Translated into Shelvey's lived-experience, this amounted to a God of possibility who brought into question fixed religious conventions. It initiated a willingness to accommodate and accept realities outside of the norms of Canadian social and political order. Rather than isolating or shutting off from society, Shelvey's spiritual formation made available "the call" to the prophethood of all Believers. For example, he broke most of the fixed gendered and patriarchal metaphors of his agricultural background in characterizing his marriage to Bertha Miller as a co-labour, and his

---

<sup>48</sup> Michael Wilkinson and Peter Althouse, "Playing in the Father's Love: The Eschatological Implications of Charismatic Ritual and the Kingdom of God in the Catch the Fire World," *Arc* 39 (2011): 93-116. The authors identify the subjunctive as the "as if" world of the kingdom of God.

<sup>49</sup> A partial list of different "vocations" that Shelvey had over the years in order to sustain his pastoral ministry include teacher, agricultural labourer, door-to-door salesman, foster care provider, driver training instructor and Native Bible College faculty member.

<sup>50</sup> Kearney, *The God Who May Be*, 100.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>52</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1994), 212-235.

ministry with her as co-pastoring.<sup>53</sup> The Shelveys' self-described "life-long anointed ministry" legitimized a woman's spiritual authority in local church contexts by recognizing the efficacy of Bertha's gift of evangelism alongside Ernest's gift of teaching.<sup>54</sup> The inception of equality, an exception in male-dominated, Protestant, post-War religious contexts, offered a tentative and uncertain position, especially given the push-back from some congregational settings. However, the proof of its rightness could be seen in the result of what Ernest believed to be God's presence in the world. As Bertha Shelvey retrospectively writes on behalf of the couple: "In the years of ministry we witnessed many conversions, people being filled with the Holy Spirit as well as healings, and a renewed hope of the second coming of Christ. The Call was very clear as we lived by faith and experienced miracles of God's provision physically, spiritually, and financially."<sup>55</sup>

Ernest's recognition of and respect for Bertha Shelvey's journey in and through Pentecostalism is some of the best evidence for his belief in the biblical promise of "a new heaven and a new earth." Born into abject poverty at Fenwood, SK, to Russian/German immigrant parents, Henry and Natalia (nee Schubert) Miller, Bertha, the sixth of nine siblings, achieved grade nine at Alkerton School No. 142. Not unlike Ernest, she experienced eschatological possibilities early on in her spiritual formation. When she was eight, a traveling evangelist, Reverend Brown, "profoundly influenced" her life; he prayed for her and she was miraculously healed from a persistent and irritating rash that had covered her whole body. Thereafter, she "witnessed God's power at work" in camp meetings, youth gatherings, and local congregations where people were "getting saved or born again, filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking in other Tongues, and healed."<sup>56</sup> Bertha herself was "filled with the Holy Spirit and fire and spoke in tongues for hours" and during this time "God revealed Himself in a marvelous way" and she felt the "call to ministry." She attended Western Bible College in Winnipeg, from 1943-1946 and, after graduating and

---

<sup>53</sup> For a good overview and discussion on gender and Pentecostalism see Linda M. Ambrose and Leah Payne, "Reflections on the Potential of Gender Theory for North American Pentecostal History," *Pneuma* 36 (2014): 45-63.

<sup>54</sup> Ernest Shelvey, "Called to Ministry" (Personal Correspondence, Copy in the possession of the author, no date), 1.

<sup>55</sup> Bertha Shelvey, "Questions from Bruce" (Personal Correspondence), 5.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

receiving her “Ministerial Licence for Women” with the PAOC, teamed up with another young Pentecostal pioneer, Martha Reinheimer, to have a “fruitful ministry” in Benito, MB. In learning of the spiritual vitality of the young female clergy, the PAOC moved Bertha, along with co-worker Violet Nelson, to The Victory Church in Altamont, MB, a “very lively and up and coming little country Church.”<sup>57</sup> In 1954, her fellow pastors in the Manitoba District elected her as the Christian Education Director and from 1955-1958 she was appointed the first female President for the Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario District Christs’ Ambassadors (Sunday School and Youth).<sup>58</sup> And it was Bertha who received the “warm invitation to come and minister unto this most needy people the pure word of God, and to take upon yourself the Spiritual instruction and care of this flock” at Kings Park Tabernacle Assembly in Winnipeg, a place of ministry that Ernest later joined after their marriage.<sup>59</sup> Bertha’s obedience to a God of possibility shaped her ministerial journey thereafter, a reality developed from her *initial* location as an ethnically marginalized, uneducated, and impoverished woman who realized the possibility for a belief in “all things to be made new.”

---

<sup>57</sup> Shelvey, “Biography of Reverend Ernest Halhad Shelvey,” 11.

<sup>58</sup> Ephemera clipping, “Who’s Who in the C.A.’s” (Bertha Shelvey Personal Papers, copy in possession of author, no date).

<sup>59</sup> Bertha Shelvey, Personal Correspondence, Mrs. L. Fingles to Miss Bertha Miller (Bertha Shelvey Personal Papers, May 8, 1956).



Bertha Miller while in single ministry in the early 1950s.

Of course, the possibility of the God conceived of by Shelvey as open spaces of equality for Bertha brought limitations. The polarizing dualisms described by Crawley in *Blackpentecostal Breath* shaped the aesthetics of Prairie Pentecostalism when it gathered its own cadence, rhythm, and sound as performed in prayer meetings and worship services. In some of these moments and places, the religious imagination of the pastoral couple could not span the gulf of historical difference that shaped the lives of many marginalized persons. The challenge of sharing in the otherwise spirit that transformed the “force of testimony, song, shout, happiness, dance into otherwise modality, otherwise feel” constricted the opportunity of “radical hospitality” that formed the basis of Pentecostalism.<sup>60</sup> As Crawley argues, within Pentecostalism assumptions about race and sexual orientation, in particular, created blind spots within which evil remained unquestioned. In these spaces of exchange, which rarely make an appearance in the pages of a memoir, the restrictions of inherited dogma or doctrine predetermined the ways in which hospitality, generosity and impossibility could be understood. And Shelvey’s elastic ecumenism could never quite stretch as far as Kearney’s open theology when it

---

<sup>60</sup> Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath*, 22.

interacted with faith outside of the Christian tradition.<sup>61</sup> In the instances of retreat and retrenchment, that open, wide, and spacious life of the Spirit moved steady back towards, in Kearney's words, the "disembodied cause, devoid of dynamism and desire."<sup>62</sup> In these situations, a future controlled and made certain through the theological "will be" suspended the belief in divine possibility and transformed "the call" into an authoritarian reliance on all-powerful, all-knowing and ever-present God that *guaranteed* a certain future.

### *Pentecostals and their Passion for Story*

The eschatological vision of Ernest Shelvey ruptured the modern certainty of human willing, shaped the past and present for an indeterminate future, and conceived an alternate reality out of religious experience and practice.<sup>63</sup> The hope of a different tomorrow inspired a generation of pastors and convinced them to accept the call to a movement and to commit to fellowship. The young men and women occupying Pentecostal pulpits sensed the immediacy of the Spirit and relied upon its vitality to restore and create something new.<sup>64</sup> Perhaps the excess of this religious experience is best expressed in a story from Shelvey's second pastorate in Beaubier, SK where he felt much "futility and frustration, particularly after a Sunday Service." In response, he escaped into the countryside where he visited the Olson family in the

---

<sup>61</sup> Richard Kearney, *Anatheism: Returning to God After God* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011).

<sup>62</sup> Kearney, *The God Who May Be*, 3.

<sup>63</sup> I employ the term "rupture" as a critique of some recent anthropological discussion that have used it as a key trope in Pentecostal Studies to identify (often negative) cultural and social transformations and, more broadly, as a means through which populations adopt new ideas of self-conception, especially in a conversion to "modernity." Shelvey's "rupture" moved from one state of being to another, but in an alternate direction and in doing so challenged the mid-century rational and positivist ideals that would have made miracles an impossibility. See further Simon Coleman and Rosalind I. J. Hackett, "Introduction: A New Field?" in *The Anthropology of Global Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism* edited by Simon Coleman and Rosalind I. J. Hackett (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2015), 13-16.

<sup>64</sup> The teaching of Christ's imminent return did not materialize until later in Shelvey's ministry, primarily with the popularization of the "Rapture" and the doomsday narratives of Hal Lindsay. For an overview see Larry Eskridge, "Evangelicals and the End Times," Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals, Wheaton College, last modified 2012, accessed July 30, 2017. <http://www.wheaton.edu/ISAE/Defining-Evangelicalism/End-Times>.

Maxim area: “When we went to prayer, a young girl by the name of Beverley prayed that God would pour out His Spirit upon them. That prayer was honored, as all those present were filled with the Spirit, some ‘slain in the Spirit,’ others speaking in new languages, and others on their faces before the Lord.”<sup>65</sup> Shelvey believed he answered the call in his encounter with a God of potential, One who could act above and beyond the container of the past but also within the domain of the flesh.<sup>66</sup>

These ‘small openings’ of faith, to paraphrase Kearney, reveal the complexity of the religious expression of Pentecostalism. As Kearney explains, rethinking history as chiasmus, a reading forward and backward where God traverses being, does not provide any guarantees for an orderly past, a predictable present, or a certain future. The ebb and flow of the Spirit combined with the free will of others to choose or deny a God of “the divine perhaps” provided Shelvey with plenty of opportunity to appreciate the failure of hope, especially when signs and wonders disappeared or prayers went unanswered. Prayer did not necessarily constitute change, a reality that “haunted” Shelvey throughout his ministry. From his first pastorate in Preeceville, SK, when a blind man did not receive healing, until into his retirement, when he witnessed the closure or amalgamation of his former churches in Beaubier, Southey, Mazenod, and Parkside in SK, and Oak Lake, Napinka, Elphinstone and Gilbert Plains in Manitoba, all locations that marked an outpouring of the Spirit in his early days of Pentecostalism, Shelvey rationalized his own disenchantment by confirming his belief in a God who, although faithful to his word, was “sovereign [in] all his dealings with mankind.”<sup>67</sup> Sustaining a belief in that possible God meant understanding a call to ministry as a never ending “inward sense of knowing God’s will as a ‘walk of faith’ in one’s journey in life.”<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Shelvey, “Biography of Reverend Ernest Halhad Shelvey,” 8.

<sup>66</sup> Kearney, *The God Who May Be*, 90.

<sup>67</sup> Shelvey, “Biography of Reverend Ernest Halhad Shelvey,” 8.

<sup>68</sup> Shelvey, “Called To Ministry,” 1.





Ernest Shelvey with his son, Bruce, (the author) on their way to 1971 PAOC District Conference.

In translating Shelvey's memoirs through Kearney's "may be," we too might recognize otherwise possibility in the everyday practice of his life and ministry. The narrative is not a divine triumphal entry into human affairs where the very act of interpretation includes a loss of life, vitality and dynamism of a Spirit-filled world. Instead, I have tried to address the challenge of representing the lived-experience of a belief in the Spirit as a negotiation of the religious space *between* the expanse of a possible God and the limitations of religious structures. The constant tension between the pragmatic realities of the received-experience of everyday life and the promise of other ways of being in the world revealed the all-too-human struggles of Ernest Shelvey's ministry on the Prairies. As a first-hand observer to the often-imperfect adaptation, negotiation and compromise of this small-town prairie pastor, I have come to understand that human agency functioning in an excess of history is an otherwise possibility. This advent makes sense out of the leap of faith narrated in Ernest Shelvey's self-described call: "At the ripe old age of 8, I invited Jesus into my heart and life at a meeting held by Rev. Ralf Hornby [sic]. He was holding revival meetings at the Glanton Church. Nine years later I was baptized in water in Bethel Temple in Brandon by Rev. Hornby who had come there to

pastor. That summer I was filled with the Holy Spirit at Manhattan Beach Camp. This event fueled my desire to become a ‘Preacher.’”<sup>69</sup>

---

Appendix:  
Pastoral placements and dates of Reverend Ernest Shelvey<sup>70</sup>

|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| Preeceville, SK                                      | June, 1949-April, 1950       |
| Beaubier, SK   | May, 1950-September, 1950    |
| Southey, SK  | October 1950-June, 1951      |
| Mazenod, SK  | July, 1951-December, 1952    |
| Oak Lake, Manitoba                                   | February, 1953-April, 1953   |
| Napinka/Goodlands/Broomhill<br>/ Turtle Mountain, MB | May, 1953-June, 1956         |
| Winnipeg, MB (Kings Park Tabernacle)                 | June, 1956-July, 1964        |
| Parkside/Shell Lake, SK                              | July, 1964-August, 1969      |
| Gilbert Plains/Grandview, MB                         | August, 1969-October, 1973   |
| Virden, MB   | October, 1973-August, 1975   |
| Thompson, MB   | August, 1975-June, 1979      |
| Grandview, MB  | July, 1979-June, 1982        |
| Gilbert Plains, MB                                   | July, 1979-June, 1989        |
| Rivers, MB   | July, 1989-July, 1995        |
| Fulltime Supply Preaching, MB and SK                 | July, 1995-June, 1999        |
| Elphinstone, MB                                      | June, 1999-December, 2001    |
| Hamiota, MB (Interim)                                | January, 2002-August, 2002   |
| Rivers, MB (Co-Pastor)                               | September, 2006-May, 2009    |
| Elkhorn, MB (Intermittent Pastor)                    | September, 2009-August, 2012 |

I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers at CJPC and my colleagues at Trinity Western University, in particular Michael Wilkinson, for their thoughtful critiques of earlier drafts of this paper. Any remaining errors, omissions, and faults in judgment are entirely my own.

---

<sup>69</sup> Shelvey, “Biography of Reverend Ernest Halhad Shelvey,” 6.

<sup>70</sup> Ernest Shelvey, “PERSONAL HISTORY OF REV. ERNEST HALHAD SHELVEY AND MRS. BERTHA SHELVEY” (Personal Journal), 1.