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An historical overview of women in ministry within the Elim Pentecostal Church in the second half of the twentieth century.

This paper will be presenting an historical sketch of the role of women in ministry within the Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance (Elim) in the latter half of the twentieth century. Focussing on the issue of ordination (hence leadership and governance), women have moved from a background role to being accepted for ordination. This journey within Elim has taken many decades of theological discussion. Sitting within global studies on women in Pentecostalism, this paper is unique in its focus on the UK. It adds to other, non-UK studies, by giving a detailed analysis of the process, foregrounding the journey that Elim took.

Methods: Archive search.

Key words: Elim; women; ministry; history; doctrine.

Introduction

This paper analyses the place and role of women within the Elim Pentecostal Church during the second half of the twentieth century. As such it is a continuation of a previous paper in which I analyse the first half of the twentieth century.¹ After a brief summary of the first half of the twentieth century, I will then present the continuing and convoluted journey which Elim undertook to lead them to ordain women in 1999.

Tracing the history of the contributions and impact that women had on various Pentecostal movement worldwide is a growing field of academic study. Much, for example, already exists concerning women in America.² Similarly some works trace

¹ Carter, "An Historical Overview of Women in Ministry within the Elim Pentecostal Church in the First Half of the Twentieth Century."

² For instance: Blumhofer, "That Old-time Religion"; Blumhofer, "Women in American Pentecostalism"; Cavaness, "God Calling"; Qualls, God Forgive Us for Being Women.

women's roles within Hispanic Pentecostalism,³ Asian Pentecostalism,⁴ Australian Pentecostalism,⁵ Canadian Pentecostalism,⁶ and African Pentecostalism.⁷ Most of these choose to recount specific stories of women, and/or discuss the changing attitudes or debates that have hindered or released women. Hardly any such work has been completed for the UK.⁸ This paper adds to the global Pentecostal study of the historical role that women have played, by focussing on the Elim Pentecostal movement within the UK.

Background – the first half of the 20th Century

Similar to most Pentecostal movements, women were actively engaged in ministry in Elim from early days in 1915. During this early work, Elim, at that point known as the Elim Evangelistic Band, was, as the name demonstrated, evangelistic. The passion for spreading the gospel had no gender restrictions, and women worked alone, as well as alongside men.

and including a global aspect: Alexander, "Beautiful Feet: Women Leaders and the Shaping of Global Pentecostalism."

³ Espinoza, "Third Class Soliders' - A History of Hispanic Pentecostal Clergy women in the Assemblies of God."

⁴ Cao, "Gender, Modernity, and Pentecostal Christianity in China."; Ma, "Changing Images - Women in Asian Pentecostalism."

⁵ Grey, "Torn Stockings and Enculturation."

⁶ Holmes, "A Never Ending Canadian Pentecostal Challenge: What to Do with the Women."

⁷ For instance: Hoehler-Fatton, *Women of Fire and Spirit*. and a more recent account in South Africa: Attanasi, "Constructing Gender within Global Pentecostalism."

⁸ Except that which has been written by myself: "An Historical Overview of Women in Ministry within the Elim Pentecostal Church in the First Half of the Twentieth Century"; "Women in Ministry within the Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance." And to a limited extent: Kay, "A Woman's Place Is on Her Knees."

However, as the governmental structure of Elim was formed, so the role and place of women became restricted. This is both evidenced in the way in which women were presented in print (their names separated from men), and how they were limited in their voting capacity.

Various discussions and debates were proposed (and some were held), on the ministerial capacity in which women could operate. Frequently the issue was postponed, on one occasion because of WW2. The end of the first half of the twentieth century concluded with women restricted from being ordained and thus not given the same status as their male ministerial counterparts. Some women chose to serve on the foreign missionary field, some remained serving at home under those restrictions.

1950s – 1960s – all quiet on the women front

Unlike the previous decades in which there had been discussions and committees considering the role of women in ministry,⁹ the decades of the 50s and 60s were notably quiet on this topic. In 1951 the discussion turned from the ordination of women, to the involvement of women in local church groups, called 'sisterhoods'. Any recorded discussion focussed on minor details for those local meetings. Although women were still occasionally accepted as ministers, there is no formal debate or consideration of their role in leadership or ordination through these decades. On some level this reflects the post-war period of consolidating and rebuilding in which there was an emphasis on the growth of families. Hudson indicates that Elim had not lost its evangelistic zeal, with 83 new churches pioneered in the first twenty years since the end of the war.¹⁰

⁹ Carter, "An Historical Overview of Women in Ministry within the Elim Pentecostal Church in the First Half of the Twentieth Century."

¹⁰ "The Development of British Pentecostalism," 52.

However the Pastors of those new churches would have been male, with women having only a supporting role.

The 1970s – 1980s – women in discussion

Doctrine of the Church Committee

In June 1970 a conference decision was made to set up a Doctrine of the Church Committee. This committee was tasked with discussing a vast topic, taking many years to cover a variety of subjects; ranging from ‘The uniqueness of the Pentecostal Movement’ to ‘Inter-racial Fellowship’.¹¹ The committee initially consisted of 8 men, who were split by location (4 near London, and 4 near Cheltenham). The various meetings across the years indicate a core of 5 men,¹² with an additional 3 who were not listed originally who joined on occasion. With such a large remit, there were even discussions of producing a book; however when the final report was presented to the Conference in 1976 in which some summaries were made, an explanation was given that due to ‘death, retirement, removal abroad and the pressures on their time’,¹³ the committee had been reduced to two persons only, and that discussions could not continue.

The ‘First Interim Report’, in 1972, lists the dates of the first 13 meetings and the topics that had been discussed at those meetings. In December 1971 the topic of ‘women deacons’ appears on the agenda. In the Interim Report, which includes a summary of a few topics, the discussion regarding deacons does not specifically mention gender, and therefore never really addresses the topic of ‘women deacons’.

¹¹ “The Doctrine of the Church, First Interim Report,” 1.

¹² J.T. Bradley, G. Canty, D. Cartwright, E. Corsie and G.W. Gilpin.

¹³ Doctrine of the Church Committee, “Annual General Conference Agendas and Reports,” 27.

However, under the heading ‘The Government of Elim,’ leadership is assumed to be male, with ‘men’, rather than ‘women’ being mentioned.¹⁴ A significant step forward in the discussion was made in 1974, to which I now turn.

‘Opportunity of Service for ladies’

Commented [JC[1]]: Up to here – checking for long sentences

Having been commissioned earlier in the decade, the Doctrine of the Church Committee was given a specific focus in May 1973. At the Representative Session it was proposed (by Pastors Hawkes and Woodfield) that ‘Opportunity of Service for ladies’ be presented in more detail in 1974. This started a journey of discussion for the committee to explore the ministry of women in more detail, as I will soon explain.

However, before detailing the various reports, the first thing to note is the change in language from earlier times in Elim. Initially any reference to women, in either minutes or in the publication *The Elim Evangel*, used the term ‘sisters’. As a contrast the men were generally referred to as ‘brothers’. The Conference minutes in the 1970s, when referring to specific women, would either simply use their name (first and surname), or include the title ‘Miss’ if they were unmarried. Specific men were referred to with the title ‘Pastor’, or ‘Minister’. Where women were being described generally, then the term ‘ladies’ was adopted. Men, however, were not referred to as ‘gentlemen’, rather as ‘men’ or ‘brother ministers’.¹⁵ Although this is a minor observation, it does cause a further separation of the women from the men. Referring to the women as ‘ladies’, whilst not equally referring to the men as ‘gentlemen’, categorizes the women in a way that, although probably aimed at giving them dignity and respect, actually

¹⁴ Doctrine of the Church Committee, “The Doctrine of the Church, First Interim Report,” 5.

¹⁵ Elim, “Annual General Conference Minutes,” May 1974, 4.

further enhanced inequality. Interestingly the Doctrine of the Church Committee Report adopted the term 'women'.

January 1974 – 'What place can be found for women in the service of God in Elim'

On Friday 20th January 1974 a meeting was held by the committee to discuss 'What place can be found for women in the service of God in Elim'.¹⁶ Prior to the convening of this meeting, one of the members, George Canty, produced a 3-page piece entitled 'The place of women in Elim'.¹⁷ Some of his work fed into the immediate discussion and was later used in the final report; although as I later show, the amendments to and omissions from this are informative.

The non-verbatim record of comments from the first meeting demonstrate a generally positive approach towards women. The notes themselves start with the title, date and records of those present. On this rather rare occasion the list of male pastors began with the term 'Messrs'.¹⁸ Generally titles were ignored for men (except when 'Pastor' was used), whilst women were identified through 'Miss' or 'Mrs'. In fact the notes from the second meeting used the term 'Pastors', and distinguish the one woman as 'Mrs. G. Ladlow'.¹⁹ Mrs Ladlow is identified as the only non-Pastor, and in accordance with the practice of the day, presented with her husband's initial. The final

¹⁶ Doctrine of the Church Committee, "What Place Can Be Found for Women in the Service of God in Elim."

¹⁷ Canty, "The Place of Women in Elim."

¹⁸ Doctrine of the Church Committee, "What Place Can Be Found for Women in the Service of God in Elim," 1.

¹⁹ Doctrine of the Church Committee, "Regarding Women's Service," 1.

report presented to Conference alters this and uses her own initials 'M. M'.²⁰

Furthermore, the record of comments from the first meeting choose to use the term 'women' rather than 'ladies'. This seems like a deliberate decision by George Canty who is ascribed as the note taker in a memo.²¹

In their first meeting, the committee made it clear that they wanted to be informed by the Bible. However, they also noted that culture was an influencer, both in the writing of particular letters in the Bible, describing this as the 'Oriental stamp', and in their own perspective as readers of the Bible. Specific questions regarding the way that Jesus involved women (or did not) were discussed, to which two quotes from one of the earliest female Elim ministers, Miss Adelaide Henderson, were used. The general consensus regarding the Biblical comments were positive towards the involvement of women.

Outside of the Biblical record, reference to Elim's history was made, in which women had been very involved, 'almost full equality of service with men has been practiced in Elim from the beginning'.²² Although, the committee also noted that women Pastors had not generally been accepted by the culture of the time. A strong case was made for the great work that women provided Elim, but restrictions were also noted:

Without female service Elim work would collapse, but no place has been found even for their expressions of opinion or suggestions within our assemblies... The climate of discrimination against women could be affecting the confidence of

²⁰ Doctrine of the Church Committee, "Annual Conference Report: Women and Their Ministry," 16.

²¹ Bradley, "The Doctrine of the Church Committee."

²² Doctrine of the Church Committee, "What Place Can Be Found for Women in the Service of God in Elim," 1.

women, making even capable people reticent. Elim's constitution and nature of ministry creates conditions in which women could not generally become prominent.²³

This quote demonstrates a level of frustration towards the institutional structures and culture within Elim which restricted women from rising to a level to which they were gifted. Later the notes state: 'To limit the main sources of Christian service to men whenever possible is to halve the resources of Elim'.²⁴ These observations took both a pragmatic approach, in their desire to use all available people, and an emancipatory approach, recognising the equality of women; but also recognizing that 'not many take advantage of it'.²⁵

On the whole the notes from the first meeting were positive towards women whilst realising the current restrictions found within Elim, and called for changes to this situation. Even in considering church history, in which 'women had a small place in church affairs', it was noted however that 'many errors were perpetuated, of which this neglect of female help could be one'.²⁶ This largely positive approach towards women was however not the only sound within the notes. There were some undercurrents of tension between the members of the committee, which are best demonstrated by looking at their next meeting.

February 1974 – *'Regarding women's service'*

Prior to the first meeting George Canty had produced a 3-page positive view of the place of women in Elim, prior to the second meeting Ron Chapman produced a two

²³ Ibid., 2–3.

²⁴ Ibid., 4.

²⁵ Ibid., 3.

²⁶ Ibid.

page alternative perspective 'Women and their ministry'.²⁷ Canty's writing influenced one of the three sections of the final report,²⁸ whereas Chapman's influenced the other two. These sections were 'The purpose of womanhood in the economy of God' and 'The place for womanhood in the Church'.²⁹

Chapman's approach was not fully endorsed by the committee. A copy of his paper with handwritten annotations was found in the archives, showing how the committee had disagreed with particular aspects. For instance, Chapman argues that a woman's 'primal destiny' is to be a 'help-meet' to man. This particular opinion was both over-written in the paper, and discussed in the second meeting. The notes from that meeting instead said 'as a human being a woman's primal destiny is not for man but for Christ'.³⁰ The committee clearly disagreed with a number of points that Chapman had raised in his paper. Some of them were entirely removed, for instance this particular section on the way women were behaving in their day:

Instead of being the complement she demands to be the competitor, instead of mothering her infants she prefers to multiply her income; instead of guiding the home she elects to govern the nation. The cost of this abdication of entrustment can be seen in the ever increasing marital chaos, the multiplication of juvenile delinquency and the general threat this all means to the future of civilization.³¹

The extent to which Chapman's views here were agreed with by others on the committee is not known. However these words are not found in the final report. The

²⁷ Chapman, "Women and Their Ministry."

²⁸ This was the third section of the report entitled "The place of women in Elim".

²⁹ Doctrine of the Church Committee, "Annual Conference Report: Women and Their Ministry," 16.

³⁰ Doctrine of the Church Committee, "Regarding Women's Service," 1.

³¹ Chapman, "Women and Their Ministry," 1.

difference of opinion presented by Canty and Chapman may well have provided an environment in which a balanced compromise had to be found. (In a final report in 1976, the two lasting members of the Committee do say that there were ‘conflicting views’, but that ‘no minority report’ was brought to Conference, ‘because agreement was reached on all important issues’; except that is ‘over the place of women in the economy of God’.³²)

The committee continued to demonstrate, in this second meeting, that it was largely positive towards women in ministry. At one point the notes say:

The ideal however is towards the new kingdom in which discrimination on the grounds of sex is eliminated, but the present earthly estate can only move towards it, and is not likely to achieve it before the Kingdom of God comes.³³

Following on from the first meeting in which it was recognised that a climate of discrimination is unhelpful, so here they take the view that gender discrimination, in God’s Kingdom, is/will be non-existent. The difficulty for them, was how to proceed.

1974 – Report to Conference – Not far enough

A final committee meeting on 22nd March 1974, with only 4 in attendance,³⁴ finalised the report, bringing together a three page report ‘Women and their ministry’,³⁵ which was submitted to the 1974 Conference.

The 1974 Study Group Report presented to Conference, had some notable omissions from the earlier meeting notes. One notable change was the use of the term

³² Doctrine of the Church Committee, “Annual General Conference Agendas and Reports,” 27.

³³ Doctrine of the Church Committee, “Regarding Women’s Service,” 2.

³⁴ J.T. Bradley, G. Canty, D. Cartwright and R. Chapman.

³⁵ Elim, “Annual Conference: Agenda and Reports,” 16–20.

'ladies' which crept in from Chapman's paper. This was not exclusive, with the term 'women' also used, but does reflect a particular perspective. Some of Chapman's negative comments, like the example I gave above, was redacted. Some of Canty's more forthright comments regarding the restrictions that Elim has enabled, were also redacted. Canty had included a section regarding Elim missionaries, which was not included:

It is perhaps a little strange that Elim continues to thrust them [women] out into lonely and somewhat demanding posts on the mission field, but is hesitant about finding them places of equal trust in the homeland...It might appear anomalous to some that women carrying great responsibility abroad should not be allowed to be members of the Elim Conference which controls Elim activities. Their voice is unheard at home for the better development of the fields in which they serve with outstanding acumen.³⁶

This question over the place of missionaries within Elim has emerged in more modern debates, but is clearly relevant to the history of Elim going back to the first missionary Miss Dollie Phillips.³⁷ She was soon followed by Miss A. Henderson who later held the post of Missionary Secretary for many years, and was quoted by Canty, as mentioned above.

The report made a number of observations which can only be briefly mentioned here. They observed that there was no legislative restriction on women serving in Elim except at executive level. However, they failed to address key restrictive wording in the Constitution that meant women were not 'members of conference'; this issue was later addressed in the 1990s (see below). The report acknowledged the genuine call of God on both men and women, as evidenced in those attending the Bible College; and

³⁶ Canty, "The Place of Women in Elim," 1-2.

³⁷ Cartwright, *Defining Moments*, 136.

encouraged the practice of trialling women in roles of service in a church (whilst specifically putting the role of Pastor to one side in this discussion). The report also briefly addressed the social climate of the day, citing how the liberation of women had been gaining momentum since the middle of the 19th century:

Experience in the 1920/30s revealed the capacity of some women to pastor and preach, but in general it appeared that the public of this country were not ready to accept women as pastors.³⁸

This is an important observation which both affirms the role and capacity of women as pastors and preachers, whilst also acknowledging (or accusing) the society of the day as the cause for the lack of acceptance of women in ministry.

Having largely avoided the discussion of women pastors, the report concluded, 'there should be an opportunity to give of their womanly best to God and to Elim'.³⁹ This final sentence had been changed from Canty's original 'there should be a full opportunity in the Elim work as at the beginning'.⁴⁰ This alteration drops the mention of Elim's heritage, and adds a rather pejorative gendered-term 'womanly best.'

All of this is written in the same year that a report from the Secretary-General is circulated following the conference. In this he talks about the 'great need' to open new churches and calls upon Pastors to look for 'men' who are called and gifted by God, to 'use him, recognise him, and thrust him out'.⁴¹ Despite the great need, the call remains

³⁸ Doctrine of the Church Committee, "Annual Conference Report: Women and Their Ministry," 19.

³⁹ Ibid., 20.

⁴⁰ Canty, "The Place of Women in Elim," 3.

⁴¹ Elim, "Annual General Conference Minutes," May 1974, 3.

very male. Around half of Elim members remained shackled in their function and role simply because of their gender.

The committee having submitted their report in 1974 had the matter referred back to them for 'further consideration' by the Conference.⁴² They were asked 'to investigate the possibility of more involvement by ladies in the service and work of our churches, full or part time, after Bible College training';⁴³ the following year a further report was produced.

1975 – Supplementary Report – Status Quo

The 1975 supplementary report indicates that the group met again (with the proposers Hawkes and Woodfield) and felt that because Elim accepted 'ladies' as 'ministers' that 'no further constitutional provision is necessary'.⁴⁴ What this however failed to address was the issue of ordination, and senior Pastoral duties in a church. Years of meetings and reports seemed to be reduced to accepting the status quo. However what they also proposed was the introduction of a new term, 'Lady workers', for women who wanted to have paid, non-ministerial work.

The conference reviewed this short report and accepted it whilst changing the term 'Lady workers' to 'Lay workers'.⁴⁵ Although this had an effect of introducing a whole new gender-open category of workers, in removing the female focus, it potentially removed further chances for women to be involved. It was quite conceivable that local Churches would understand 'Lay worker' to be male.

⁴² Ibid., 12.

⁴³ Elim, "Supplementary Reports and Agenda for Conference 1975."

⁴⁴ Ibid., 1.

⁴⁵ Elim, "Annual General Conference Minutes of the Representative Session," 6.

As mentioned earlier, the Doctrine of the Church Committee ended with a final report in 1976. Due to a lack of continuity with the original members no further reports were completed. The discussions on women in ministry had ended with little changes actually manifest.

1980s-1990s – The final frontier

Key committee proposal

More than a decade after the final report from the Doctrine of the Church Committee, a proposal was made to the Annual Conference in 1989 by Smith and Blair :

THAT the Executive Council appoints a Committee, including at least one lady, to investigate the scriptural, constitutional and legal position with regard to the ministry and ordination of women, this Committee to report in writing to the next Conference, the report to include such recommendations as the Committee consider to be necessary.⁴⁶

They set in motion a chain of events that saw women being ordained ten years later. In 1990 a one-page report included the committee findings to date in which it said that there should be no restriction on women preaching or teaching ‘when this is carried out under the authority of a male church leadership, such as a board of elders’.⁴⁷ The committee noted that such provision was already there in Elim for women to be ministers. It then turned to discuss ordination. It states that this ‘raises the question of authority and the right or otherwise of a woman to exercise judgement so far as men are concerned.’⁴⁸ The report also indicated that more detailed findings would be circulated

⁴⁶ Elim, “Annual Conference Representative Session - Supplementary Agenda.”

⁴⁷ Smyth, “Annual Conference Report: Women’s Ministry.”

⁴⁸ Ibid.

prior to the Conference of 1992.

1991 – The role of women in ministry

A 62-page document was prepared by the three authors, under the auspices of the Constitution Committee, looking at the role of women in ministry. The report was split into four sections. The first ‘Survey of contemporary Church praxis and a study of Feminism’ by Heather Hunter, the second ‘Examination of the Old Testament texts’ by John Burgan, and the third ‘Examination of the New Testament texts’ by Keith Warrington.⁴⁹ The fourth section was a one-page section with eleven points of recommendation, compiled by the authors as a group.

I do not have space here to examine all the arguments used by the authors, rather I will turn to the recommendations. The language is complementarian in nature, approving of spiritual equality, but not of role equality. For instance a woman should be part of a team ‘in partnership with a male leader’,⁵⁰ for, in their view, eldership is male. Interestingly there is also a mention of ‘communion, stewarding, water baptism, et al’, here the report recommended that these areas be reconsidered as ‘available for women’, having previously been largely the realm of men. Finally the question of women missionaries was raised, saying that they had an ‘anomalous position’. This point had previously been made by the ‘Ordination of sisters’ committee back in the 1930s⁵¹ and by Canty, as mentioned earlier.⁵² Having produced this report, the committee hoped to

⁴⁹ Hunter, Burgan, and Warrington, “The Role of Women in Ministry,” 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 62.

⁵¹ Carter, “An Historical Overview of Women in Ministry within the Elim Pentecostal Church in the First Half of the Twentieth Century,” 9.

⁵² Canty, “The Place of Women in Elim,” 1.

see discussion documents from the Elim Bible College and be able to say more to the Conference of 1992.

Theological Conferences⁵³

The reference to discussion documents from the Elim Bible College most likely refer to the Theological Conference of October 1991 held in Swanwick, Derbyshire, which addressed as one of its topics 'The Ministry of Women'.⁵⁴ Whilst covering such themes as the current social climate including feminism, the vast majority of emphasis is placed in biblical arguments. Unlike the discussions earlier in the century there is little or no pragmatic emphasis.⁵⁵ Each of the authors argued against women in ministry.

In 1992 the report on women's ministry was adopted by the Annual Conference and the minutes state that 'a number of questions were answered'.⁵⁶ However, it is clear that the answers were not satisfactory for those who were promoting women in ministry. For, in 1995, a second Theological Conference was held in which 310 people were registered. This was a joint conference with the Assemblies of God, and again was held in Hayes.

Out of the four papers printed,⁵⁷ two were for, two were against women in ministry. Similar arguments were made from Scripture, largely focusing on headship,

⁵³ I cover the details of these conferences in: "Women in Ministry within the Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance."

⁵⁴ Dick et al., "The Ministry of Women."

⁵⁵ Carter, "An Historical Overview of Women in Ministry within the Elim Pentecostal Church in the First Half of the Twentieth Century," 13.

⁵⁶ Elim, "Annual General Conference Minutes," 1992.

⁵⁷ Cartwright, "The Role of Women in the Government of the Church"; Evans, "The Role of Women in the Government of the Church"; McComb, "The Role of Women in the

authority, silence, the creation order and eldership governance. However positive arguments were also made from Scripture that focussed on biblical role models and the gifts of the Spirit, whilst also countering the standard arguments against women in ministry.

The Key Conferences – The vote for women

On the back of the 1991 report and the 1991 and 1995 Theological Conferences a proposal was brought by S. Potter and C. Cartwright (who had written a paper in favour for the 1995 Theological Conference) to the Annual Conference in 1997. This proposal would remove the words ‘as to men only being members’ from the Constitution. After some discussion a vote in favour was made.

In 1998, because it was a deed poll change,⁵⁸ the proposal was brought again and passed. At this point the Constitution Committee Report explained that after the first vote of 1997, at the checking of a solicitor, women ministers were legally members of the conference. So the second vote was simply a tidying up exercise with some of the wording.

At the end of the twentieth century, for the first time in Elim, women were officially ordained. On the 26th April 1999, eight women, who were already ministers, were ordained: Sue Boyle, Ruth Ann Cannings, Hazel Cartledge, Lily Florida, June Freudenberg, Marilyn Harry, Annette Richmond, and Ann Stevenson.

Government of the Church””; Rivers, ““The Role of Women in the Government of the Church.””

⁵⁸ Deed poll changes require a vote of acceptance two years running.

Conclusion

The journey for the ordination of women within Elim had been a long one. There had been moments, especially in early days, when there appeared to be no difference between men and women ministers, who both were simply serving God as they were called. However, following similar trends, seen also elsewhere,⁵⁹ institutionalization enhanced any restrictions that were underlying.⁶⁰ The quiet decades of the 1950s and 1960s maintained that status quo within Elim, but the 1970s and the Doctrine of the Church Committee examined the role of women in far greater detail. However, even that seemed to stall in bringing any change to women in ordained ministry. But a sea-change had occurred and the 1990s brought a diversity of views which culminated in a vote in agreement to ordain women. It is far from clear that all questions and concerns regarding the role of women were answered,⁶¹ but this was a major step forward.

The opening of the twentieth century brought a wave of Pentecostal fervour throughout the UK instigated by a small Elim Evangelistic Band that was open to men and women called by God. The close of the twentieth century saw men and women again working together on equal footing almost. Looking beyond the twentieth century, it was only in 2013 that women were allowed to be appointed to the National Leadership Team (the new term for the Executive). Perhaps in the twenty-first century the struggle of women in ministry will be only of historical interest, however current

⁵⁹ E.g. in the USA: Stephenson, "Prophesying Women and Ruling Men."

⁶⁰ This largely concurs with the argument of Barfoot and Sheppard, "Prophetic vs. Priestly Religion."; although Stephenson argues that their distinction, in Pentecostalism in the USA, always existed: "Prophesying Women and Ruling Men," 423.

⁶¹ See research on more recent times: Carter, "Women in Ministry within the Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance."

research⁶² indicates more work is needed. Similar assessments are often made in the global works I referenced in the introduction. Back in 1985 Cartwright, in assessing the lack of encouragement towards women, concluded his paper by saying ‘Thus Pentecostalism lost one of its special features: It has yet to be restored’.⁶³ We can now say that restoration is under way, ‘special features’ are being re-established.

⁶² Nunn, “What Are the Critical Determinants That Will Release, Enable and Empower Women to Maximise and Fully Express Their Ministry Gifting within the Elim Pentecostal Movement?”

⁶³ Cartwright, “Your Daughters Shall Prophesy. The Contribution of Women in Early Pentecostalism,” 8.

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