

**RENEGADE OR REFORMER? OSWALD J. SMITH AND THE
CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE, 1921-1930**

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A thesis presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the
degree of Master of Arts

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Abstract of a thesis presented to Briercrest Seminary
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Before establishing the Peoples Church in Toronto, Oswald J. Smith experienced a meteoric rise to prominence within the Christian and Missionary Alliance during the 1920s. Under his leadership, the Alliance Tabernacle on Christie Street was regularly filled with over two thousand people who came to participate in the constant stream of revivalistic campaigns that Smith orchestrated. His ministry with the Alliance, however, was as tumultuous as it was successful; plagued by tensions with leaders within his tabernacle and on the Alliance's Board of Managers, Smith resigned his pastorate in 1926 and, two years later, severed all ties with the Alliance. Days later he began the independent ministry that would evolve into the Peoples Church.

Smith's departure from the Alliance has generally been explained by suggesting that he was not "Alliance enough." Historians within the movement have drawn particular attention to Smith's doctrine, his methodology, and his organizational philosophy, arguing that he did not fit within his Alliance context in these key areas.

Smith has, therefore, been construed as a renegade whose ministry departed from Alliance sensibilities and ventured into uncharted territory. This thesis offers a fundamentally different interpretation by suggesting that Smith's difficulties can be attributed to the fact that he was, in fact, more Alliance than the Alliance. That is, he was deeply influenced by the Alliance's founder, A. B. Simpson, and was consciously attempting to emulate Simpson's early independent New York ministry from which the Alliance was birthed. By Smith's day, though, the Alliance had changed significantly, exchanging the flexibility of a *movement* for the increasing rigidity of a *denomination*. As a result, Simpson's organization no longer had room within its ranks for a Simpsonian visionary. Smith was not a renegade, boldly going where none had gone before, but a reformer who was trying to return to the well-worn path walked by Simpson himself.

The first two chapters of this thesis examine Smith in light of his Alliance context, both theologically and methodologically. In terms of doctrine, Smith actively promoted Simpson's Fourfold Gospel, writing books about and giving space within his tabernacle ministry for the Alliance's distinctive teachings regarding sanctification and healing. Methodologically, Smith's development of his large urban tabernacle was authorized by Alliance personnel at all levels of leadership, including the president himself. These chapters provide an important corrective to the prevalent view that Smith's ministry was askew from its Alliance context.

The two remaining chapters demonstrate Smith's dependence upon Simpson by revealing that his ministry on Christie Street was intentionally consistent with Simpson's New York ministry forty years earlier. Even when Smith left the Alliance in 1928, he took Simpson with him: Smith established his post-Alliance ministry upon a Simpsonian

foundation, boldly claiming that the Alliance had abandoned its founder's vision but that he had taken up the cause.

Smith should no longer be understood as a renegade, but as a reformer whose problems arose because he was more Alliance than the Alliance.

To Mom and Dad

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INTRODUCTION

Oswald J. Smith's (1889-1986) name is synonymous with the Peoples Church—an independent congregation that grew out of a series of meetings Smith held in Massey Hall, Toronto, in 1928. In the years that followed, Smith and his congregation came to be known for an all-consuming commitment to the evangelization of the world by Spirit-filled believers in anticipation of the return of Christ. In the interest of this cause, Smith played a key role as a pastor, evangelist, author, hymn writer, and conference speaker, travelling widely throughout North America and around the world.¹

However, Smith's ministry career predated his appearance at Massey Hall in 1928. Seven years earlier he had taken over the pastorate of the Christian and Missionary Alliance's Parkdale Tabernacle in Toronto, a struggling congregation of thirty-five people rattling around in a building with a seating capacity of nine hundred.² Within a year and a half he had relocated his people to the new two-thousand seat Christie Street

¹ Smith has written numerous versions and revisions of his autobiography: see Oswald J. Smith, *Working with God* (Toronto: The Tabernacle Publishers, 1926); “*What Hath God Wrought!*”: *Dr. Smith's Life and Ministry* (Toronto: The Peoples Press, [1947]); Oswald J. Smith, *The Story of My Life* (Toronto: The Peoples Press, 1950); Oswald J. Smith, *The Story of My Life and The Peoples Church* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1962). Subsequent references to these last two works will be noted as Smith, *Story* (1950) and Smith, *Story* respectively. Smith's life and ministry have also been the subject of three biographies written for a popular audience: see J. Edwin Orr, *Always Abounding! A Pen Sketch of Oswald J. Smith of Toronto* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, [1940]); Douglas Hall, *Not Made for Defeat: The Authorized Biography of Oswald J. Smith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969); Lois Neely, *Fire in His Bones: The Official Biography of Oswald J. Smith* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1982). Though these works are overly laudatory, they feature interviews with Smith and excerpts from his diary which provide important insights into his story.

² Properly speaking, this is not the beginning of Smith's ministry career in Toronto. He had previously served as an associate minister at Dale Presbyterian Church under the flamboyant J. D. Morrow from June 1915 to October 1918; see Smith, *Story*, 59-68. Smith's work with the Alliance, however, marked the first time that he rose to prominence as the head of his own congregation.

Tabernacle that was frequently full to overflowing.³ Over the next five years Smith established himself as a key Alliance personality, speaking on extension tours designed to open up new territory for the movement, publishing numerous books and articles through their printing press, and raising increasingly large amounts of money for their ambitious missionary program.⁴ In 1923 he was even offered the pulpit of the New York Gospel Tabernacle, the Alliance's flagship church which had been founded by A. B. Simpson himself. Simpson's widow was reportedly eager for Smith to accept: as he recalled, "She felt, so she said, that I had both her husband's vision and message."⁵

Considering her high estimation of Smith and the place of prominence which he occupied within the Alliance, it would have come as a surprise to Mrs. Simpson when he severed all ties with the movement in 1928.⁶ More curious still is the fact that, days after his resignation, he stepped onto the stage at Massey Hall in front of nearly two thousand people—many of whom had come from Christie Street in support of their former pastor—and inaugurated a new tabernacle ministry that proved detrimental to Alliance efforts in the city. The Peoples Church was born.⁷

³ Lindsay Reynolds, *Footprints: The Beginnings of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada* (Beaverlodge, AB: Buena Book Services, 1982), 383-94; Lindsay Reynolds, *Rebirth: The Redevelopment of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada* (Beaverlodge, AB: Evangelistic Enterprises, 1992), 59-68. The tabernacle was expanded twice more by 1925, giving it an advertised seating capacity of nearly 2500; see *Himself*, January 1925, 3. Folder 13, Box 8, Collection 322, Oswald J. Smith Papers (hereafter cited as Smith Papers). Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

⁴ For Smith's work on extension tours see Reynolds, *Footprints*, 397-8; for his publishing activity with the Alliance see H. D. Ayer, *The Christian and Missionary Alliance: An Annotated Bibliography of Textual Sources* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2001), 296-9; for his missions funding see the listing of missionary offerings for the Alliance Tabernacle (which rose from \$3,693 in 1921 to \$34,000 in 1926) in Smith, *Story*, 82.

⁵ Smith, *Story*, 82.

⁶ Mrs. Simpson passed away in 1924.

⁷ Reynolds, *Footprints*, 409-11. Smith originally called his new work the Metropolitan Tabernacle but had to change the name to the Cosmopolitan Tabernacle two weeks later to avoid confusion with the

This is a strange development, an unexpected twist in an otherwise predictable storyline, and it provokes questions about Smith's compatibility with the Alliance. If he truly had Simpson's vision and message, why did he part ways with Simpson's organization and set up a rival ministry?

Unfortunately Smith did not shed much direct light on this issue, suggesting instead that "it would be better for the present, at least, if I were to draw a veil over the Gethsemane of those months of torture and despair" surrounding his resignation from Christie Street. This is a veil that he never lifted himself, though his autobiographies hint that the problems centred around his unrelenting evangelistic fervour that led to conflict with some within his congregation.⁸ Smith's biographers take up this position and point to a perceived evangelistic imbalance that concerned some members of his tabernacle's governing committee who tired of his program of perennial revivalistic campaigns and hungered for a more normal church experience.⁹

Besides Smith's own testimony and that of his sympathetic biographers, there have only been a handful of Alliance scholars and one Canadian religious historian who have sought an explanation for Smith's departure from Simpson's movement.¹⁰ David

Metropolitan Methodist Church of Toronto. In March 1930 Smith assumed leadership of the Toronto Gospel Tabernacle and in October 1933 he changed the name to the Peoples Church. See advertisement, *Toronto Star*, 1 September 1928, 25; advertisement, *Toronto Globe*, 8 September 1928, 27; advertisement, *Toronto Globe*, 22 September 1928, 21; Smith, "What Hath God Wrought!," 64; Smith, *Story*, 87-9.

⁸ Smith, *Story* (1950), 53; also Smith, *Story*, 84.

⁹ Orr, *Abounding*, 49; Hall, *Not Made for Defeat*, 143; Neely, *Fire*, 148-9.

¹⁰ Smith has been largely ignored by the scholarly community up to this point. He is not mentioned in John Webster Grant, *The Church in the Canadian Era, A History of the Christian Church in Canada*, ed. John Webster Grant, vol. 3 (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1972), Robert T. Handy, *A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada*, Oxford History of the Christian Church, ed. Henry and Owen Chadwick (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), Mark Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1992), or Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin, *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford

Elliott, in his study of eight significant Canadian fundamentalists, recognizes that Smith was a theological heir to Simpson, but he describes him as an autocratic egomaniac who could not work within ecclesiastical restraints. His breakdown with the Alliance, then, was just one of many along the path toward the establishment of his own personality cult where he enjoyed absolute power.¹¹ Elliott affirms that the “manic pace” of Smith’s ministry led to conflict within the tabernacle committee, but he lays the bulk of the blame upon Smith’s autocratic leadership style.¹²

University Press, 1996), some of the standard treatments of Canadian church history. Robert A. Wright mentions Smith in “The Canadian Protestant Tradition 1914-1945,” in *The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760-1990*, ed. George A. Rawlyk, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), 169-71, where he rightly notes that Smith’s theology was “doggedly pietistic and evangelistic,” but he wrongly asserts that Smith had accepted the militant anti-modernism of fundamentalism by the time he arrived at Parkdale. John Stackhouse’s *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to Its Character* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) largely passes over Smith since his study focuses on key movements and institutions that enjoyed the participation of evangelicals across the geographic and denominational spectrum (Stackhouse, 12). It should be noted, though, that Smith’s ministry validates Stackhouse’s claim that Canadian evangelicalism was marked by a commitment to doctrinal orthodoxy, personal spirituality, and evangelistic urgency during this timeframe (Stackhouse, 51). Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), makes just three passing references to him, all dealing with his ministry in the 1940s.

¹¹ David R. Elliott, “Studies of Eight Canadian Fundamentalists” (Ph.D. diss., University of British Columbia, 1989), 277, 287-94, 304.

¹² Unfortunately, Elliott’s study is marked by a number of inaccuracies, unfounded assertions, and an unrelenting bias against all things fundamentalist. For example, he claims that, as a seminary student in Chicago in 1912, Smith spent much of his time at the Moody Tabernacle where Paul Rader was the minister (281). Smith left Chicago in May 1915, though, giving him a slender three month overlap with Rader’s Chicago ministry which began in February of that year. As well, the Moody Tabernacle was not built until the following November, six months after Smith had returned to Toronto. See Larry K. Eskridge, “Only Believe: Paul Rader and the Chicago Gospel Tabernacle, 1922-1933” (M.A. thesis, University of Maryland, 1985), 32-3. As one of a number of unfounded assertions, Elliott claims that Smith turned down the pastorate of the New York Gospel Tabernacle because he preferred to “stay in Toronto where he had autocratic control” (288). None of the literature suggests that questions of polity entered into Smith’s decision; to the contrary Smith’s biographers report that it was his committee’s “strong protest”—not his personal organizational convictions—that kept him from accepting the offer (see Orr, *Abounding*, 49 and Neely, *Fire*, 149). Elliott’s pervasive prejudice against fundamentalism is evident when he suggests that Smith treated his Bible “like a ouija board” (282) and when he declares that A. B. Simpson had “schizophrenic tendencies” (90) based on his quest to hear the voice of God over the din of competing “voices” which distracted him from his goal. To attribute this mystical quest to a psychological disorder is an unnecessary jump which betrays Elliott’s bias against his subjects.



Figure 1. Portrait of Smith during the 1920s (Lindsay Reynolds Papers, Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK).

Historians from within Simpson's tradition have generally explained Smith's departure from their ranks by suggesting that he simply was "not Alliance enough." Lindsay Reynolds, who has done the most helpful and thorough work on Smith's Alliance ministry to date, offers a number of reasons for the problems that arose. He highlights Smith's autocratic organizational philosophy, his understanding of the key doctrines of sanctification and healing, his separatistic attitude toward the church, and his all-consuming focus on evangelism as key differences between him and the Alliance that led to an "inevitable separation [that] would cause much hurt to both."¹³ *All for Jesus*, the movement's centennial history, compares Smith's ministry to A. B. Simpson's New York Gospel Tabernacle and suggests that there were "drastic differences" between the two.¹⁴ It describes Smith's tabernacle as an autocratic evangelistic enterprise that avoided the functions of a typical church; in contrast, Simpson's tabernacle is described as a regular church with a congregational government that sought a balance of worship, nurture, evangelism, and missions. *All for Jesus* claims that Alliance leadership in the 1920s grew concerned with the new form of ministry that Smith modeled, viewing it as a deviation from the "precious inheritance" with which they had been entrusted.¹⁵ Darrel Reid asserts that Smith was not in accord with the Alliance's holiness distinctives and refers to his appointment at Parkdale as "a triumph of expediency over dogma."¹⁶

¹³ Reynolds, *Footprints*, 384, 389-90; Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 59-60, 69, 149-50.

¹⁴ Robert L. Niklaus, John S. Sawin, and Samuel J. Stoesz, *All for Jesus: God at Work in The Christian and Missionary Alliance Over One Hundred Years* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1986), 152-3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 153.

¹⁶ Darrel Reid, "Towards a Fourfold Gospel: A.B. Simpson, John Salmon, and the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada," in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, ed. G.A. Rawlyk, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 283.

William Bedford succinctly suggests that “Smith, in short, argued for evangelism rather than merely maintaining Alliance branches that focused on reaffirming the four-fold gospel to those already converted.”¹⁷

These specific issues will be addressed in the pages that follow, but it should be noted at the outset that Alliance historiography has uniformly suggested that organizationally, doctrinally, and methodologically, Smith was “not Alliance enough.” He has therefore been cast as a renegade who veered from the beaten path. Once the “drastic differences” reached a critical mass, the “inevitable separation” occurred and Smith walked away from his Alliance context. This study will challenge that interpretation by suggesting the opposite—that Smith’s breakdown with the Alliance occurred because he was, in some important ways, more Alliance than the Alliance. That is, he was committed to the ideal of non-sectarian evangelism articulated and practiced by A. B. Simpson, an ideal from which the Alliance had drifted.¹⁸ Rather than a renegade veering from the beaten path, Smith was a reformer consciously trying to follow the path that had been marked out by Simpson himself.

This argument will unfold over the course of the chapters that follow. Chapter One will examine Smith’s doctrinal teaching to demonstrate that he both subscribed to and promoted Simpson’s Fourfold Gospel. This will involve a survey of the numerous books Smith wrote as an Alliance pastor and a comparison of his understanding of salvation, sanctification, divine healing, and the second coming of Christ against that of

¹⁷ William B. Bedford, Jr. “‘A Larger Christian Life’: A. B. Simpson and the Early Years of the Christian and Missionary Alliance” (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1992), 177-8.

¹⁸ The shift from a fluid movement to a more rigid organization may be an unavoidable reality. What is at issue in this study is the fact that the Alliance was still claiming to be a fluid movement in Smith’s day and he took them at their word. The way the story progresses, though, provides further substantiation to the claim that Simpson’s non-sectarian movement had essentially evolved (or devolved?) into a denomination by the 1920s.

Simpson. The Alliance's identity has always centred upon the Fourfold Gospel, and if Smith was "a son of Simpson," his pedigree should be evident in his teaching.

Chapter Two argues against the contention that Smith's tabernacle methodology was misaligned with Alliance sensibilities in his day. To the contrary, Smith's ministry on Christie Street was authorized and influenced by Alliance leadership at the national, district, and local level. He entered a movement in 1921 that was pursuing an extension plan focused on evangelistic campaigns and inexpensive tabernacles—the very things that would become characteristic of his ministry. Smith was shaped and moulded by his Alliance context to such an extent that it is fair to claim that his "distinct" tabernacle was also "distinctly Alliance."

Chapter One thus demonstrates Smith's doctrinal continuity with the Alliance while Chapter Two reveals the significant ways that his tabernacle was authorized and influenced by Alliance personnel. Chapter Three will shift the focus from the Alliance to its founder, A. B. Simpson, by arguing that Smith's Christie Street ministry was, in fact, modelled after Simpson himself. Smith was attempting to follow a Simpsonian pattern in Toronto, and an examination of Simpson's early tabernacle ministry in New York will reveal that Smith was essentially faithful to his goal.

Finally, Chapter Four describes how, when Smith found himself (or made himself) unwelcome in Simpson's organization, he left—but he took his role model with him. Believing that the Alliance had forsaken Simpson's commitment to non-sectarian evangelism, he touted his new ministry under the auspices of Paul Rader's World-Wide Christian Couriers as Simpson's true bloodline. Smith argued that they were now the

true Alliance and that Simpson's organization had become the very thing he had wanted to avoid—a denomination of its own.

Smith's foray with the Alliance is a tumultuous story and it is fittingly set within a turbulent period of Canadian Protestant history. During the 1920s the fundamentalist/modernist controversy divided many churches into conservative and liberal camps, even while three of the major denominations moved toward unification. The formation in 1925 of the United Church of Canada from the merger of the Methodist, the Congregationalist, and part of the Presbyterian church ironically accentuated many of the tensions in the Canadian church, with the union enjoying its greatest support amongst those with modernistic sensibilities while being opposed by many of their fundamentalist comrades.¹⁹

Modernism has been succinctly defined as “a movement that sought to reconcile Christianity with the ‘rationalist’ ideas of the Enlightenment.”²⁰ As such, many supernatural aspects of the Christian faith that were inexplicable by modern scientific standards were called into question. Rather than focus on the other-worldly and the miraculous, modernists increasingly described Christianity in temporal terms and worked toward the transformation of society in the here-and-now; as Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau have stated, “Between 1900 and 1930 the Methodist and Presbyterian churches envisioned their mission as nothing less than the complete Christianization of Canadian life.”²¹ To accomplish this gargantuan task, “the modern clergyman's purview lay

¹⁹ David B. Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 192-4.

²⁰ Wright, “Canadian Protestant Tradition,” 157.

²¹ Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant*

beyond the walls of the institutional church, for he was expected to be a student of the social sciences and scientific agriculture, a coordinator and interpreter of community social surveys, a social activist, and a knowledgeable expert in the design of state social legislation, as well as a powerfully emotive revival preacher.”²² These modernistic proponents of the “Social Gospel,” like Rev. Dr. Salem Bland of the Broadway Methodist Tabernacle in Toronto, believed that Christianity should transform society in the present, not just save individuals in the future. In a Sunday evening sermon preached on February 12, 1922, Bland berated the other-worldly focus of premillennialism as “a deplorable, childish and antiquated viewpoint,” and countered with the modernist assertion that “the Kingdom is here and now. Wherever a kind word is spoken, wherever a deed of kindness is done, there is the Kingdom of Heaven.”²³

Fundamentalists were alarmed by this focus on the rational and the temporal, fearing that such positions amounted to denials of central aspects of the Christian story like the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the afterlife. They were committed to absolute biblical inerrancy and the supernatural aspects of the faith such as the virgin birth, Christ’s miracles, and his atoning death on behalf of his followers.²⁴ The militant defense of these issues consumed some fundamentalists whose hostile attitude earned them the caricature that has been assigned to their lot. T. T. Shields is an obvious and notable example: the pastor of the Jarvis Street Baptist church in Toronto from 1910 to 1955 was once quoted as saying, “I find myself referred to in the press as ‘the militant

Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1940 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996), xiii.

²² *Ibid.*, xiii-xiv.

²³ “Clergy Discuss Second Coming,” *Toronto Globe*, 13 February 1922, 13.

²⁴ Marshall, *Secularizing*, 192.

Pastor of Jarvis Street Church.’ I should like to enquire, what other sort of Pastor is of any use to anyone?”²⁵ Shields’ vitriolic attacks against his modernist enemies (whom he increasingly saw behind every bush) have survived as his primary legacy, earning him the dubious distinction of “Canada’s foremost fundamentalist.”²⁶

Oswald J. Smith shared Shields’ doctrinal commitments and his disdain for the modernism characterized by Salem Bland, but Smith was clearly a different breed of fundamentalist from the fiery Baptist. Although Robert A. Wright asserts that Smith had accepted “the militant anti-modernism of fundamentalism” by the time he arrived at the Alliance’s Parkdale Tabernacle, Smith’s ministry does not substantiate the charge.²⁷ He was far more interested in saving souls and calling believers to the “deeper life” than in battling for the truth.²⁸ Thus, of the eight campaigns he hosted in his tabernacle in the early months of 1926, only two addressed the dangers of modernism. Paul Kanamori’s message on the “Cure of Modernism” and Dr. E. Ralph Hooper’s focus on “Evolution vs. Redemption” were more than offset by the evangelistic and missionary impulse of Jonathon Goforth, Paget Wilkes, and the “Welsh Revivalists,” Fred Clark and George Bell.²⁹ Smith’s non-militant fundamentalism is explicit in his assertion that “we have no time to battle against the Modernists. Our spirituality suffers as a result. . . . Let us keep to our one great task of getting the Gospel out both at home and abroad and the Gospel

²⁵ Quoted in Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism*, 33.

²⁶ Wright, “Canadian Protestant Tradition,” 159. Shields’ venom was not reserved for modernists only; on several occasions he attacked Smith. See T. T. Shields, “Religious Sprees,” *Gospel Witness*, 26 June 1930, 1-3; quoted in Elliott, “Eight Canadian Fundamentalists,” 294-5.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 170.

²⁸ Elliott, “Eight Canadian Fundamentalists,” 299, suggests that the fundamentalist/modernist controversy did not occupy much of Smith’s time until the Second World War.

²⁹ “Many Prominent Speakers Occupy Tabernacle Pulpit Dr. Hooper Takes Charge,” *The Tabernacle News*, April 1926, 1. Folder 14, Box 11, Smith Papers.

will do more in the lives of men and women than argument and controversy ever can.”³⁰

This commitment to spiritual concerns makes Smith characteristic of the “softer side of fundamentalism” that Joel Carpenter notes was also present south of the border.³¹ Smith and Shields were both fundamentalists, but they represented different streams within the Canadian experience.

This lends credence to John Stackhouse’s claim that Shields does not stand at the centre of Canadian evangelicalism but that “he marks out instead the fundamentalist limit of the fellowship of evangelicals.”³² Using Stackhouse’s terminology, Smith was representative of an evangelicalism that, while sharing the “sectish” character of the Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, Alberta, was nevertheless not out spoiling for a fight with the modernists.³³ He was too busy trying to save the world.

Oswald J. Smith worked with the Alliance during a tumultuous period of Canadian Protestant history. The United Church was in its infancy, the fundamentalist/modernist controversy was at its height, and major proponents of both positions—like Salem Bland and T. T. Shields—were in their pulpits fanning the flames. During this time of division, Smith joined the *Alliance* whose mandate was to bring people together from the various churches to work towards the salvation of the world in preparation for the return of Christ. Alliance historians, though, have questioned Smith’s compatibility with their movement. The first two chapters of this thesis address this concern by

³⁰ Oswald J. Smith, “The Challenge of the Churches,” in *Can Organized Religion Survive?* (Toronto: Toronto Tabernacle Pub., 1932), 69; see also his “The Challenge of the Churches,” *World-Wide Christian Courier*, October 1928, 15. Folder 11, Box 1, Collection 38, Ephemera of Daniel Paul Rader (hereafter cited as Rader Collection). Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois.

³¹ Carpenter, *Revive*, 76.

³² Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism*, 21, 24.

³³ *Ibid.*, 85-6.

demonstrating that Smith aligned himself with Alliance doctrine and that his tabernacle ministry in Toronto enjoyed the authorization of the movement's leadership. The two chapters that follow demonstrate that Smith was not only truly Alliance, he was actually Simpsonian; the Alliance founder served as Smith's primary model for ministry, even after he severed his ties with the Alliance. A. B. Simpson's widow was right—Smith did have her husband's vision and message.

CHAPTER ONE

SMITH AND THE DOCTRINAL “FOUR”-MULATION OF THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE

When Oswald J. Smith joined the Alliance in January of 1921, it appears that the movement or its beliefs had not played any significant role in his life up to that point. As he states, the thought of joining the Alliance “had never even dawned upon my mind I had heard Dr. Simpson once in the Bible College, and clearly remembered him. My wife was a Nyack girl; hence I was not altogether ignorant of the Movement; but that was as far as it had gone.”¹ The Alliance was essentially new and uncharted terrain for Smith. It would seem appropriate, therefore, to examine Smith’s doctrine to see how it aligned with that of the movement he entered—was his appointment merely pragmatic, or did his teaching conform to that of Simpson and the Alliance?

Lindsay Reynolds, historian of the Alliance in Canada, finds it “surprising” that Smith was welcomed into the Alliance given his doctrinal convictions.² Reynolds notes that Smith had embraced the tenets of the Niagara Conference, which Reynolds suggests maintained a Reformed view of sanctification that stood in contrast with the Alliance’s

¹ Smith, *Working*, 112; Neely, *Fire*, 128; Hope Evangeline, *Daisy: The Fascinating Story of Daisy Smith, Wife of Dr. Oswald J. Smith, Missionary Statesman and Founder of the Peoples Church, Toronto* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 37-49. Smith’s early theological influences include James McConkey, *The Three-fold Secret of the Holy Spirit* (Pittsburgh: Silver Pub. Co., 1897); Arthur T Pierson, *The New Acts of the Apostles: or, The Marvels of Modern Missions* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1898); and Charles Trumbull, *Victory in Christ: Messages on the Victorious Life* (Philadelphia: Sunday School Times, 1959). See Smith, *Story*, 49, 61, 67.

² Reynolds, *Footprints*, 384.

distinctive teaching on the subject.³ He also points out that Smith did not declare his views on the important issue of divine healing for another three years, and at that point he aligned himself with A. J. Gordon, A. T. Pierson, and Andrew Murray—Simpson’s name being noticeably absent from the list.⁴ Reynolds’s concerns about Smith’s commitment to the doctrine of divine healing could potentially find further substantiation by the fact that healing seemed to disappear from the radar of his ministry once he left the Alliance; he continued to publish books on salvation, sanctification, and the second coming of Christ but he did not write another book on healing. As well, Smith continued to use a fourfold formula to define his ministry priorities, but healing was removed from the equation; Smith’s post-Alliance ministry emphasized “the four great essentials, viz., Salvation, the Deeper Life, *Foreign Missions*, and our Lord’s Return.”⁵ No more reference to healing—in its place Smith inserted foreign missions, which had previously served as the main implication of the Lord’s return but now enjoyed its own private billing. Does this apparent disregard for one of the Alliance’s central doctrines mean that Smith dropped the “party line” after he was dropped from the party? If so, this could

³ Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 59. The Niagara Conference reaffirmed the Reformed notion that the sinful nature remained within believers throughout their lives. Holiness was a matter of counteracting the tendency toward sin by abiding in Christ. For more information on the Niagara Conference, including its relationship to Keswick thought, see Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 132-41, 176-81; also George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 46-51, 93.

⁴ Reynolds, *Footprints*, 384; Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 59; Research Notes, “RE OSWALD J. SMITH,” Lindsay Reynolds Papers, Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK. An advertisement appearing in the *Toronto Star*, 22 December 1923, 10, states the following: “From the standpoint of a Presbyterian minister, who for three years has been prayerfully studying the subject. Rev. Oswald J. Smith will begin a series of messages in the Tabernacle . . . on Divine Healing. His conclusions will be found in agreement with such spiritual leaders as A. J. Gordon, Arthur T. Pierson and Andrew Murray. This will be the first time that Mr. Smith has preached on the subject from the Tabernacle pulpit.”

⁵ Oswald J. Smith, “Editorial Reports and Comments,” *World-Wide Christian Courier*, October 1928, 13, emphasis mine. Folder 11, Box 1, Rader Collection. Also Oswald J. Smith, “The New Evangelism,” in *Can Organized Religion Survive?*, 28.

substantiate Reynolds' conviction that Smith's teaching was doctrinally askew from the Alliance.

The books that Smith wrote and the tabernacle periodicals that he published do not allow us to hold to that interpretation. He may not have been strongly influenced by Simpson or the Alliance in his early life or ministry, but Smith's writing demonstrates both his substantial accord with Alliance doctrine and the influence that the Alliance founder came to exert over the young pastor. Smith was Alliance in doctrine; he wrote books that promoted each aspect of the Alliance's Fourfold Gospel and his tabernacle ministry honoured these convictions. Any concerns about Smith's doctrinal disparity need to be re-examined in light of his writings.

The Historical Context of the Development of the Alliance's Fourfold Gospel

When A. B. Simpson wrote *The Fourfold Gospel* in 1887, he was not presenting the world with novel ideas so much as he was providing a convenient package for theological convictions that were swirling throughout the evangelical world. Joel Carpenter has noted that the last quarter of the nineteenth century saw the rise of a large inter-denominational revivalist network that espoused a uniform set of doctrinal concerns: an intense focus on evangelism as the church's overwhelming priority; the need for a fresh and subsequent infilling of the Holy Spirit to live a holy and effective life; a belief in the imminent, premillennial second coming of Christ; and a commitment to the divine inspiration and absolute authority of the Bible.⁶ Therefore Simpson's Fourfold Gospel—which presented Christ as Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King—was not original truth but rather a convenient way to bring a number of these core convictions

⁶ Carpenter, *Revive*, 6.

together under one roof.⁷ Though Simpson's belief in healing was not shared by all of his comrades, it was far from a unique belief and therefore earned its place in the Fourfold scheme so that by the turn of the century many holiness and revivalistic groups had adopted (or adapted) Simpson's formulation for themselves.⁸

Simpson and his late-nineteenth century compatriots bequeathed these core convictions to their heirs in the early twentieth century with the result that the salvation of souls, the sanctification of believers, and the return of Christ were still core concerns of many evangelicals in the 1920s.⁹ Oswald J. Smith was one of these heirs. Although Smith had minimal exposure to Simpson's thought before joining the Alliance, once he entered the movement his teaching began to take on a distinctly Alliance—or Simpsonian—perspective. To demonstrate so, this chapter will examine Simpson's Fourfold Gospel, paying particular attention to those aspects of his teaching which distinguished him from others who held similar positions. Smith's books will then be opened to ascertain how his teaching lined up with that of Simpson, especially in terms of his distinct foci.

Reference will also be made to another important Alliance document to help flesh out the movement's theological self-understanding. In May 1906 the movement, sensing a need for more consistency in the way the Fourfold Gospel was being communicated at official gatherings, held a "Conference for Prayer and Counsel Respecting Uniformity in

⁷ See also David Fessenden, "Present Truths: The Historical and Contemporary Distinctives of The Christian and Missionary Alliance," in *Alliance Academic Review 1999*, ed. Elio Cuccaro (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1999), 2.

⁸ Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, Studies in Evangelicalism, ed. Donald W. Dayton and Kenneth E. Rowe, no. 5 (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1987), 22, 175-6; Melvin E. Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, 2d ed., Studies in Evangelicalism, ed. Donald W. Dayton and Kenneth E. Rowe, no.1 (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1996), 254.

⁹ Carpenter, *Revive*, 6.

the Testimony and Teaching of the Alliance.”¹⁰ In preparation for this meeting, Simpson and four of his associates prepared a document that outlined the Alliance’s doctrinal stance. Though intended to be used as a starting point that would set the stage for discussion and clarification of Alliance positions, this document ended up functioning in the years to come as a codification of those positions. For example, in 1922 the main body of this report was used as a creed to define Alliance distinctives at the movements’ Bible schools.¹¹ It seems fair, then, to look to the 1906 Conference report as an explication of Alliance doctrine that was authoritative in Smith’s day.¹²

Christ our Saviour

Both Simpson and Smith were unequivocally committed to the evangelical fundamentals regarding salvation.¹³ That being the case, not much space will be devoted to this doctrine, choosing rather to focus attention on the Alliance’s more distinct

¹⁰ “Conference for Prayer and Counsel Respecting Uniformity in the Testimony and Teaching of the Alliance, May 25-28, 1906,” compiled in *The Man, the Movement, and the Mission: A Documentary History of the Christian and Missionary Alliance*, comp. Charles Nienkirchen (Regina: privately printed, [1987]), 166-8; also compiled in *Readings in Alliance History and Thought*, comp. Ken Draper (Regina: privately printed, 2000), 222-3. This report appears in its entirety in Appendix A.

¹¹ Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Managers of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (hereafter cited as Board of Managers’ minutes), September 20-23, 1922. File 13, Box 3. Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

¹² Another source which could be used to ascertain the Alliance’s doctrinal texture in Smith’s era is W. M. Turnbull and C. H. Chrisman, *The Message of the Christian and Missionary Alliance* (New York: Christian Alliance Pub. Co., 1927); compiled in *Readings in Alliance History and Thought*, comp. Ken Draper (Regina: privately printed, 2000): 78-84. Turnbull was vice-president of the Alliance and Chrisman was the district superintendent for California (see Robert B. Ekvall and others, *After Fifty Years: A Record of God’s Working through The Christian and Missionary Alliance* [Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1939], 38-41). Both of these men were people of influence within the Alliance and therefore wrote with the authority of the Society behind them. More than anything, though, this book demonstrates that the Alliance had not deviated from Simpson’s teaching in any way following his death but firmly upheld the doctrinal convictions to which he gave expression in the Fourfold Gospel. Simpson’s thought *is* Alliance thought. We will therefore focus our attention on his writing and the 1906 Conference document (which he had a hand in preparing) as we determine Smith’s doctrinal continuity with the Alliance.

¹³ Compare the following: A. B. Simpson, *The Four-Fold Gospel* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Alliance Pub. Co., 1925), 16-20; and Oswald J. Smith, *Thou Art the Man* (Toronto: Evangelical Publishers, 1919), 88-9.

testimony regarding sanctification, healing, and the return of Christ. Nevertheless, one significant soteriological conviction that the movement shared in common with Smith should be noted: namely, a commitment to the absolute priority of salvation as the motivating factor behind all other ministry. In 1893 Simpson detailed his movement's evangelistic core:

From the beginning, we have felt that *the great business of the church* was to give the gospel equally, impartially, and in the present generation to all mankind; and that the Church of Christ has been strangely blind and faithless in fulfilling the trust committed to her so sacredly by the Master's last commands. We believe that the evangelization of the heathen is the highest commission of Christ, and that it rests as a personal obligation on every individual, either to go or send a substitute. *It is the chief business of our people*, and even those who remain at home do so that they may sustain those who go abroad.¹⁴

These words were subsequently reprinted in the *Alliance Weekly* in 1916 in preparation for the Alliance's annual council of that year—evidence that Simpson's convictions still held sway in the years immediately preceding Smith's involvement in the Alliance.¹⁵ If Simpson's movement was to be known for anything, it would be known for a commitment to the evangelization of the world.

Smith shared this commitment to the priority of salvation. He even appealed to Simpson directly and agreed with the Alliance's founder that the church's lack of interest in evangelizing the world was "Christianity's Crime."¹⁶ Since Jesus himself came into the world to save sinners, it logically followed for Smith that the church should follow its

¹⁴ A. B. Simpson, "The Work of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (1916)" *The Alliance Weekly* (May 13, 1916)," 109; compiled in *The Man, the Movement and the Mission: A Documentary History of the Christian and Missionary Alliance*, comp. by Charles Nienkirchen (Regina: privately printed, 1987), 141, emphasis mine.

¹⁵ Simpson's article was reprinted in preparation for the Annual Council to remember "the rock from which we were hewn and the pit whence we were dug." *Ibid.*, 107.

¹⁶ Oswald J. Smith, *Back to Pentecost* (New York: Christian Alliance Pub. Co., 1926), 95. He does not cite his source for Simpson's quote.

Master's lead and see the salvation of souls as the reason for its existence.¹⁷ "The Supreme Task of the Church," he wrote in 1926, "is the Evangelization of the World," echoing a sentiment that he first expressed in his diary eleven years earlier.¹⁸ This conviction fuelled the evangelistic fervour within his tabernacle ministry, with Smith teaching that "apart from the salvation of souls the church has no ground for her existence. We are saved to win others."¹⁹ A commitment to the salvation of the lost was not simply a priority in Smith's ministry—it was *the* priority. Smith's resonance with the Alliance's founder on this point is easy to see; even their wording is similar, as Smith's talk about the Church's "Supreme Task" seems to echo Simpson's statement about its "great business."

This consuming interest in salvation meant that all other concerns necessarily had to fade into the background. While many denominational bodies in his day were involved in educational enterprises, health initiatives, and other reforms, Smith was concerned entirely with the spiritual needs of the lost and looked with disdain on any other "lesser" activities. He writes:

Let us believe the Bible, and we will no longer be indifferent; in the face of such solemn truths we must be serious. People are serious enough when a house is on fire; they do not think of taking time to wash and dress the children before they carry them to safety. Their one cry is, "Save, save, or they will perish!" And when we truly believe . . . that souls are perishing all around, . . . we will care about little else but getting them saved, and that as quickly as possible.²⁰

Smith believed that the various means of washing and dressing the children—education, social services, and other means of "world betterment"—were the responsibility of the

¹⁷ Oswald J. Smith, *From Death to Life* (New York: Christian Alliance Pub. Co., 1925), 11.

¹⁸ Smith, *Back*, 111; Smith, *Story*, 61.

¹⁹ Smith, *Back*, 29-30.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 13; also included in Smith, *Thou Art*, 21-2.

state and a distraction to Christians who should be pouring their efforts into the one truly important task of preaching the gospel while there was still time.²¹ Humanity's great spiritual need trumped all physical needs.

His thinking in this regard was very similar to that of Simpson who, while recognizing that there was limited value in "philanthropic schemes and social reforms," still lamented the fact that Christians were allowing these secondary concerns to absorb valuable energy and resources that should be devoted to the evangelization of the world: "God wants you to give the gospel to the world, to rise to the highest calling, to do the best things."²² Simpson's early ministry was marked by a robust interest in social concerns, but as John V. Dahms has demonstrated, this "seems to decline not long after the turn of the [twentieth] century."²³ This corresponds to what George Marsden and others have termed the Great Reversal, the phenomenon in which "all progressive social concern, whether political or private, became suspect among revivalist evangelicals and was relegated to a very minor role" between 1900 and 1930.²⁴ Social concern was perceived to be associated with the liberal Social Gospel which Simpson and his colleagues staunchly opposed; in attacking this enemy, Marsden suggests, "it was perhaps inevitable that the vestiges of their own progressive social attitudes would also

²¹ Smith, *Back*, 112; Oswald J. Smith, *Is the Antichrist at Hand?* 4th ed. (Toronto: Tabernacle Pub., 1926), 89; Smith, "The Supreme Task of the Church," in *Can Organized Religion Survive?*, 279.

²² A. B. Simpson, *The Christian and Missionary Alliance Weekly*, 27 October 1897, 417; quoted in John V. Dahms, "The Social Interest and Concern of A.B. Simpson" in *The Birth of a Vision: Essays on the Ministry and Thought of Albert B. Simpson*, ed. David F. Hartzfeld and Charles Nienkirchen (Beaverlodge, AB: Buena Book Services, 1986), 49.

²³ *Ibid.*, n. 12, 67.

²⁴ Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 85-6.

become casualties.”²⁵ By the time Smith entered the scene, the Great Reversal was in full evidence and concern for others was expressed ever increasingly in terms of meeting their eternal needs, not their temporal ones.²⁶ In this respect Smith travelled a path that had been marked out for him by Simpson and others a generation earlier.

Sanctification

Sanctification has been a hallmark doctrine within the Alliance from its inception.²⁷ Simpson had a desire to lead Christians into a relationship with Christ that was deeper—or higher—than the status quo; after all, if the Alliance was to accomplish its “chief business” of evangelizing the world, it would require the cooperation of sanctified believers surrendered to the will of God and empowered by his Holy Spirit. Like many other revivalistic evangelicals in his day, Simpson was convinced that sanctification was an experience, distinct from conversion, which a Christian must

²⁵ Ibid., 91; citing a study by Norris Magnuson, David Elliott claims that Simpson was among the most reactionary of evangelical social workers and that he “exemplified the ‘great reversal’ in evangelical social attitudes.” See Elliott, “Eight Canadian Fundamentalists,” 103-4.

²⁶ Michael Gauvreau and Nancy Christie demonstrate that there were contemporary church leaders in Canada who shared Smith’s commitment to evangelism without forfeiting their concern for social work. A. E. Smith and Rev. John Maclean both pastored working-class congregations in Winnipeg in the years surrounding the General Strike of 1919. These men, however, “associated what they called ‘a more aggressive policy for work among the common people’—namely community work—*not with a theology of social redemption but with the old-time gospel of personal evangelism*” (emphasis mine). Like Oswald J. Smith, they eschewed the social Christianity which had thoroughly imbued the middle-class churches of their city, believing that the salvation of souls was their primary goal. Unlike Smith, they continued to work tirelessly for the social needs of their community. See Michael Gauvreau and Nancy Christie, “‘The World of the Common Man Is Filled with Religious Fervour’: The Labouring People of Winnipeg and the Persistence of Revivalism, 1914-1925,” in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, ed. G.A. Rawlyk, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), 339-43.

²⁷ Because sanctification was the Alliance’s foundational distinction—it was the basis from which the blessing of healing and the power to prepare for the return of Christ flow—more space will be devoted to it than to the other aspects of the Fourfold Gospel. Both Simpson and Smith wrote a great deal about their understandings of sanctification and this gives us substantial material to examine in this section.

choose to enter into by a definite act of faith.²⁸ While regeneration was like “building a house and having the work done well,” sanctification was the deeper work of “having the owner come and dwell in it and fill it with gladness, and life, and beauty.”²⁹ This experience was available through faith alone and not by any intense personal struggle or penance.³⁰ This was not a weak or insubstantial faith, however; to the contrary, Simpson taught that Christians must completely separate themselves from sin and dedicate their whole beings to God before he would come and fill them with his presence.³¹ In this way, sanctification involved an all-inclusive surrender subsequent to conversion.

Smith could not have agreed more. In fact, he even adopted Simpson’s analogy of the house being built through conversion and the owner coming to dwell through sanctification.³² These two experiences need not be far removed in time—Smith followed Simpson in asserting that a person could experience sanctification from the moment they were saved—but he was equally clear that sanctification was a distinct reality and not merely the outflow of conversion. It was, he wrote, “an instantaneous crisis experience. That means it has a beginning, and while you may view it as a process life-long in its result, you must also recognize its crisis nature.”³³ Further, Smith echoed Simpson’s contention that sanctification could only be experienced by faith: “God is more willing to give than you are to receive,” he wrote, “therefore, take. You are not to

²⁸ Carpenter, *Revive*, 76, 81; Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 78.

²⁹ Simpson, *Fourfold*, 28.

³⁰ A. B. Simpson, *A Larger Christian Life* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, [1940]), 5-6.

³¹ A. B. Simpson, *Wholly Sanctified* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1925), 12-24; see also Simpson, *Fourfold*, 33-35.

³² Oswald J. Smith, *The Spirit-Filled Life* (New York: Christian Alliance Pub. Co., 1926), 21.

³³ Oswald J. Smith, *The Man God Uses* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1932), 58.

struggle and groan and wait. You are to trust.”³⁴ This faith, though, could not be separated from a complete surrender, for if sin and self-will were not forsaken, “God will not even hear the prayer offered.”³⁵ Smith used the Simpsonian formula of separation, dedication, and filling to describe how sanctification was a free gift that would cost a believer everything.³⁶

One of the distinctive marks of the Alliance’s view of sanctification was its Christocentric focus. Simpson wrote that “the heart and soul of the whole matter is seeing that Jesus is himself our sanctification.”³⁷ He taught that Jesus did not simply infuse the sanctified heart with righteousness; rather, “He comes there personally Himself to live.”³⁸ In turning to Smith’s writings, it appears at first blush that this was not as important of an issue to him. His treatise on sanctification during his years with the Alliance was entitled *The Spirit-Filled Life* and, not surprisingly, this book focuses a great deal of attention on the role of the Holy Spirit. For example, while Smith follows Simpson in seeing the seventh chapter of Romans as a description of the struggle with sin in an unsanctified life, they look to two different members of the godhead for the victory. Simpson trains the spotlight upon God’s provision of Jesus Christ while Smith asserts that God brings victory “through *the Holy Spirit* who now undertakes and becomes,

³⁴ Smith, *Spirit-Filled*, 47.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

³⁶ Smith, *The Man* (1932), 60-1.

³⁷ Simpson, *Fourfold*, 37.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

Himself, Master of the Situation.”³⁹ Both men revel in the same deliverance, but they do not agree on the identity of the deliverer.

This would seem to put Smith at odds with the Alliance’s Christocentric focus of sanctification; however, an examination of Smith’s other writings does not substantiate the charge. In a number of places Smith asserts the centrality of Christ not only to sanctification but to the Fourfold Gospel in its entirety. This is most clearly seen in the opening paragraph of his book on healing, *The Great Physician* (1927), where he refers to his favourite Simpson motto—“Everything in Jesus and Jesus Everything”—as an expression of the ideal Christian life. “Hence,” he wrote, “we preach and magnify Christ. He Himself is the centre, the heart, the very core of our doctrine and experience.”⁴⁰ Rather than haggling over doctrinal differences, Smith urged people to focus on Christ: “We believe in sanctification, in healing, and many other priceless blessings, but we place the emphasis on the Sanctifier, the Healer, our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁴¹ This passage demonstrates the strong Christocentric nature of Smith’s doctrinal convictions; it also demonstrates the influence which Simpson had come to exert on Smith. Further, his Christocentrism made its way from his books and into his pulpit—an advertisement in the March 11, 1922 *Toronto Globe* informed readers that Smith would be preaching the next morning on “‘Jesus Himself,’ or ‘Sanctification, the Alliance Testimony.’”⁴² Smith was

³⁹ Ibid., 42; Smith, *Spirit-Filled*, 31, emphasis mine. See also Smith, *The Man* (1932), 43-4.

⁴⁰ Oswald J. Smith, *The Great Physician* (New York: Christian Alliance Pub. Co., 1927), 7. Smith’s official biography states that “Everything for Jesus and Jesus Everything” was the motto of Smith’s Alliance Tabernacle. See Neely, *Fire*, 134.

⁴¹ Smith, *Physician*, 7-8.

⁴² “Alliance,” *Toronto Globe*, 11 March 1922, 19.

actively promoting an Alliance perspective of sanctification that focused squarely on Christ.

Certainly, Smith paid more attention to the Spirit's role in sanctification than Simpson did, but it seems that distinguishing their roles was simply not an important issue to him. Both Christ and the Spirit were involved in the process of making someone holy, and Smith was far more concerned with the practical experience of sanctification than with its doctrinal formulation.⁴³ In reality, the Alliance found it difficult to make a clear distinction here as well. Simpson himself began to give greater emphasis to the Holy Spirit by the mid-1890s, preaching on the topic for two years and subsequently publishing his messages in two widely distributed volumes.⁴⁴ As well, when the 1906 conference outlined the five essential points of sanctification, it referred to the role of the Holy Spirit twice (points "b" and "e") and the role of Christ only once (point "c"). It would seem that Smith was reflective of the doctrinal fluidity that was already evident within the movement.

Christ indwelt the sanctified Christian and enabled a life of victory over sin; but how was this newfound power to be understood? Both Smith and the Alliance wanted to avoid the concepts of eradicationism and suppressionism. For Smith, the victorious life was "not a question of Sinless Perfection, or Eradication. These phrases are neither in the Bible, nor have they been demonstrated in Christian experience. . . . Nor do we believe in Suppression."⁴⁵ The Alliance had likewise red-flagged these positions as "extreme

⁴³ Smith, *The Man* (1932), 59.

⁴⁴ A. B. Simpson, *The Holy Spirit: or, Power from on High*, 2 vols. (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, n.d); Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 106-7.

⁴⁵ Smith *The Man* (1932), 41.

views” in the 1906 Conference document, warning personnel to shy away from them.⁴⁶ *Eradicationism* was a term used to describe the perfectionistic teachings of Wesleyan holiness advocates, some of whom taught that the sinful nature was eradicated at the moment of sanctification.⁴⁷ These, in turn, countered that their friends in the Reformed camp—including those associated with the teaching which flowed out of the Keswick Conferences in England—only allowed for the *suppression* (and therefore acceptance) of sin in a believer’s life. These terms were sometimes used as epithets to be hurled across the theological divide.⁴⁸ Simpson waded into this acrimonious fray and offered an alternative explanation: expulsive habitation. He taught that Christ’s indwelling fullness “expels all evil, and continually renews and refreshes our entire being, keeping us ever clean and pure.”⁴⁹ Rather than sin being destroyed or suppressed, it was expelled when God in his fullness inhabited a believer. Smith likewise affirmed this Simpsonian distinction and used an anecdote about the Alliance founder to explain his position.

He writes about Simpson listening to a heated argument in which eradication and suppression were being debated. There was “something of a red hue . . . rising in the faces of both parties,” and it was evident that those involved were acting in a manner that betrayed the holiness they claimed to experience. According to Smith, Simpson arose and spoke: “‘Brethren,’ he said, ‘it is not Eradication; and brethren, it is not Suppression,

⁴⁶ 1906 Conference.

⁴⁷ David Bundy, “Keswick and the Experience of Evangelical Piety,” in *Modern Christian Revivals*, ed. Edith L. Blumhofer and Randall Balmer (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 132-3; David Bundy, *Keswick: A Bibliographic Introduction to the Higher Life Movements* (Wilmore, KY: Asbury Theological Seminary, 1975), 42-7.

⁴⁸ Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 105; Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 77-78.

⁴⁹ Simpson, *Wholly*, 101.

but it is Habitation.”⁵⁰ Smith exulted in this Simpsonian concept and promised his readers that, once sanctified, “You will be so filled with Him that you will not want the world. It will be the expulsive power of a new affection. The new will expel the old. You will find your greatest delight in God’s service and you will discover that you are miserable and unhappy in the world.”⁵¹ Smith thereby eschewed the unhelpful and argumentative terms of eradication and suppression in favour of Simpson’s alternative; in a life full of Christ there would be no room or desire for sin.

Simpson may have offered his position as a third alternative in the debate over how a believer could be holy, but in essence his position—and therefore that of Smith as well—was closely related to Keswick thought. Like Keswick, Simpson posited a means to experience practical and ongoing holiness while avoiding the Wesleyans’ perfectionistic language. Both taught that a Christian could live in victory over sin, but only so long as Christ indwelt the heart in his fullness.⁵² Simpson has therefore been associated with Keswick teaching both by his contemporaries and by modern scholarship with justification.⁵³

⁵⁰ Smith, *The Man* (1932), 41-2.

⁵¹ Smith, *Spirit-Filled*, 25-6; see also Smith, *The Man* (1932), 42-3.

⁵² Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 78; Simpson, *Fourfold*, 32-3.

⁵³ J. B. Culpepper, a Wesleyan holiness advocate, wrote an interesting article in 1899 which suggested that the Keswick teaching which D. L. Moody had introduced at his Northfield Conference was not a new discovery but was, rather, “similar to what Mr. A. B. Simpson teaches.” He goes on to note that “Keswickites” focused on the Blessing rather than the blessing, talking of “the great Person who has come into their body and soul and life.” Simpson was clearly in line with this emphasis. Quoted in Bundy, “Keswick Piety,” 132. For modern scholarship identifying Simpson with Keswick teaching, see Sandeen, *Roots*, 181, n. 25; Elliott, “Eight Canadian Fundamentalists,” 97; Dayton, *Theological Roots*, 104-6, 188; Bundy, *Keswick*, 67. Alliance theologians have understandably differentiated Simpson’s teaching from that of Keswick teachers, thereby arguing for his distinct contribution to the church; see Samuel Stoesz, *Sanctification: An Alliance Distinctive* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1992), 41-3, and Richard Gilbertson, *The Baptism of the Holy Spirit: The Views of A. B. Simpson and His Contemporaries* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1993), 179-219. Gilbertson’s contention that “Simpson’s views were distinct though not unique” (4) is a helpful summation of Simpson’s relationship to Keswick thought.

That being the case, Smith's adoption of the doctrinal statement of the Niagara Conference—which affirmed a similar view of sanctification as the Keswick Movement with which it had joined hands through the influence of Moody's Northfield Conferences in the 1890s—should not be viewed as a departure from his Simpsonian context, as Reynolds suggests.⁵⁴ All were teaching essentially the same thing. Further, Smith did not choose Niagara over and against an Alliance formulation; rather, he had to look outside of the movement for a document that represented the doctrinal position of his ministry because the Alliance had no formal Statement of Faith to offer him.⁵⁵ He was not alone in this quandary. In September 1922 the Alliance's Board of Managers sensed a need to provide students in their Bible schools with “clear teaching as to the distinctive testimony of the Alliance.” Where did they look to formulate their creed? They turned to Niagara and to the 1906 Conference for Prayer and Uniformity. While the 1906 document makes up the bulk of the creed adopted by the Board of Managers, it is introduced with the following statement: “Our schools shall stand for the historic

While his teaching was not identical to that of men like F. B. Meyer and Andrew Murray, they shared enough common ground that Simpson was pleased to have them speak at Alliance conferences; see A. E. Thompson, *The Life of A. B. Simpson* (New York: Christian Alliance Publishing Co., 1920), 110. Simpson aligned himself with Keswick teachers and would not have wanted his particular emphases to be set in sharp contrast to theirs; to the contrary, his foundational commitment was to work together under a broad umbrella of common convictions.

⁵⁴ Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 59. For Smith's adherence to the “Fundamentals of the Faith as Expressed in the Articles of Belief of the Niagara Bible Conference,” see “Facts About the Work,” *Tabernacle Monthly*, August 1922, 4. Folder 7, Box 10, Smith Papers. The Niagara Creed itself is included as an appendix in Sandeen, *Roots*, 273-7; for the melding of the worlds of Niagara and Keswick, see Sandeen, *Roots*, 176-81.

⁵⁵ George Pardington, Alliance theologian and close friend of Simpson, proudly declared that “aside from the Word of God it [the Alliance] has no formal creed.” See Pardington, *Twenty-Five Wonderful Years, 1889-1914: A Popular Sketch of the Christian and Missionary Alliance* (New York: Christian Alliance Publishing Co., 1914; reprint, Sources for the Study of the Holiness, Pentecostal, and Keswick Movements, ed. Donald W. Dayton, no. 34. New York: Garland Publishing, 1984), 47. It would be another four decades before the Alliance adopted an official Statement of Faith. See Scott Borderud, “The Doctrine of Sanctification of The Christian and Missionary Alliance as Represented in its Statement of Faith of 1965-66” (Th.D. diss., University of South Africa, 1992), 80-106, for an overview of the journey towards the Alliance's official statement of faith.

fundamentals of the faith as embodied in ‘The Apostles’ Creed’ and ‘*The Niagara Creed*.’”⁵⁶ The movement’s Board of Managers viewed the Niagara Conference as representative of their basic theological sensibilities. Likewise, Smith’s reliance on this document reflects his continuity with the Alliance, not his distinction from it.

The preceding examination of the relationship of Smith’s teaching regarding sanctification to that of the Alliance has demonstrated his substantial harmony with the movement. Reference has been made to *The Spirit-Filled Life*, which Smith wrote while pastor of the Alliance Tabernacle in Toronto, along with the version of *The Man God Uses* which he published in 1932, four years after leaving the Alliance. Both of these books align with Simpson’s teaching. Perhaps more significantly, the revised edition of *The Man God Uses*—which first appeared in 1962—makes Smith’s harmony with Simpson even more explicit, particularly as it relates to the Christocentric focus of sanctification. For example, in the chapter entitled “The Victorious Life,” Smith adds yet another reference to Simpson’s couplet, “Everything in Jesus and Jesus Everything” to rejoice in the fact that victory was in a Person, namely Jesus.⁵⁷ This “corrects” the 1932 edition (in which Smith gave more attention to the role of the Holy Spirit) by specifically rooting sanctification in Christ.⁵⁸ Further, he concludes his chapter from 1962 with the following statement which clearly demonstrates his continued continuity with key aspects of the Alliance’s view of sanctification:

⁵⁶ Board of Managers’ minutes, 20-23 September 1922, emphasis mine. File 13, Box 3. Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

⁵⁷ Oswald J. Smith, *The Man God Uses*, rev. ed. (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1962), 95-6.

⁵⁸ In 1932, Smith asserted that victory comes by “being so filled with *the Holy Spirit* . . . that we have no room for sin” (emphasis mine, *The Man* [1932]), 43. The Holy Spirit was central to the equation in 1932, but in 1962 it is Jesus who takes preeminence.

If you want to be a victorious Christian you will have to receive Him [Christ] as your Victor, let Him indwell you, keep in constant contact with Him by prayer and Bible study, and then, as you walk with Him, He will manifest Himself through you. That will be the Victorious Life.⁵⁹

This quotation speaks of sanctification's distinction from conversion, its requirement of faith ("you will have to receive Him"), its Christological focus ("let Him indwell you"), its continuance through abiding ("keep in constant contact with Him"), and the resulting power over sin ("the Victorious Life"). The fact that Smith published these words decades after he left the Alliance demonstrates the enduring—and strengthening—nature of his commitment to this Alliance distinctive.

Christ Our Healer

A. B. Simpson's name was synonymous with the healing movement in his day. Having experienced divine healing himself and later seeing his daughter healed of diphtheria, he eventually inaugurated a weekly meeting through his New York tabernacle where interested individuals could come and be instructed regarding the provision and requirements of divine healing. These meetings grew to attract hundreds of people from many different denominational backgrounds and garnered much attention—most of it negative—from the press.⁶⁰ Still, the publicity also provided a platform from which he could broadcast his views on the subject.

Simpson believed that the miracles of healing contained in the Scriptures were never meant to be constrained to that one era. As he stated, God "never contemplated or proposed any post-apostolic gulf of impotence and failure. Man's unbelief and sin have

⁵⁹ Smith, *The Man* (1962), 103.

⁶⁰ A. B. Simpson, *The Gospel of Healing*, rev. ed. (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1915), 177-9.

made it. The Church's own corruption has caused it. But He never desired it."⁶¹ To the contrary, God provided the ordinances of anointing with oil and the prayer of faith mentioned in the book of James (5:14-15) at the end of the Apostolic age because they were meant to be enduring ordinances.⁶² Not only was healing to be always available, it was to be available to all who asked for it. Appealing to Matthew 8:16-17, which declares that Jesus healed *all* that were sick, Simpson asserted that healing was universally available since Jesus was the same yesterday, today, and forever.⁶³ The basis for healing was Jesus' atoning death on the cross which provided not only for humanity's spiritual renovation but also for man's physical restoration.⁶⁴ Thus, Simpson referred to healing as "a great redemption right which we simply claim as our purchased inheritance through the blood of His cross."⁶⁵ This redemption right could be claimed through faith in Christ, but Simpson was clear that "it is not the faith that heals. God heals, but faith receives it."⁶⁶ The person who desired healing must not rely on their faith and must not trust in any mere person as a "healer;" rather, they must look to "the merits, promises, and intercessions of Christ alone."⁶⁷

Lindsay Reynolds questions whether Smith shared the Alliance's commitment to this third "fold" of the Fourfold Gospel. He notes that Smith did not address the topic of healing from his pulpit until December 1923—three years after joining the Alliance—and

⁶¹ Ibid., 52-3.

⁶² Ibid., 23.

⁶³ Ibid., 18, 28.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 35.

⁶⁶ Simpson, *Fourfold*, 62.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 54; see also Simpson, *Gospel*, 180.

on that occasion he aligned himself with non-Alliance teachers to the exclusion of A. B. Simpson himself.⁶⁸ While it is undeniably strange that Smith would declare his views on healing in this manner, the significance of this episode needs to be counterbalanced by a recognition that Smith was both a participant in and a proponent of healing ministry from his earliest association with the Alliance. Smith put aside his eyeglasses when his vision was healed during the Bosworth Brothers' campaign which came to town just months following his arrival at the Parkdale Tabernacle in 1921.⁶⁹ He heartily promoted the Bosworth meetings and invited the brothers back twice in the next two years.⁷⁰ Although it was three years before he addressed the topic from his pulpit, in the meantime Smith had personally experienced healing himself and had hosted numerous campaigns in his tabernacle that featured healing.

Further, Reynolds' concerns about Smith's non-Alliance influences should be allayed by the fact that, when Smith wrote his own book on healing in 1927, he appealed to Simpson as a major influence both in doctrine and in practice. In the early pages of *The Great Physician*, Smith suggested that "perhaps no book has meant more to suffering humanity than 'The Gospel of Healing,' by Dr. A. B. Simpson."⁷¹ Having thus affirmed Simpson's book in the early going, Smith correspondingly affirmed his method of dealing with healing near the end of the book: "Dr. A. B. Simpson's practice can hardly

⁶⁸ See note 4 above.

⁶⁹ For Smith's personal testimony of healing, see his *The Great Physician*, 122-8. "Healing Miracles Bringing Gladness to Long-Suffering," *Toronto Globe*, 25 April 1921, 13.

⁷⁰ "Bosworth Campaign Stirs Toronto," *The News of the News*, May 1921, 2. Folder 6, Box 10, Smith Papers; "Insists Faith Brings Cures," *Toronto Globe*, 3 May 1922, 14; "Alliance Tabernacle," *Toronto Star*, 24 March 1923, 10; "Voice Lost 3 Years Restored by Prayer," *Toronto Star*, 23 April 1923, 2; "Bosworth Meetings Continue," *The Prophet*, April 1923, 4th ed, 1. Folder 13, Box 11, Smith Papers.

⁷¹ Smith, *Physician*, 20.

be improved on; namely, a quiet afternoon service specially set apart for instruction and anointing with nothing of a spectacular aspect.”⁷² Smith’s personal treatise on divine healing was, in a sense, bookended by commendations of Simpson that should dispel any concerns about the theological company he was keeping.

Smith agreed with Simpson that healing was not meant to be limited to the Apostolic age, but was only limited by the contemporary church’s lack of faith: “If it were not for the unbelief of the Church,” he wrote, “miracles of healing would still be as prevalent as in the early days. Unbelief is the great hindrance.”⁷³ He also affirmed that the ordinances of prayer and anointing in James 5 were permanent gifts given to the church, and he asserted that to explain away this provision would place a person in company with higher critics who cut the Bible apart to suit their positions—it would be hard to imagine a stronger affront to Smith’s fundamentalist audience than this.⁷⁴

In regard to the question of healing in the atonement, Smith certainly agreed with Simpson and the Alliance that healing had been provided through Christ’s death on the cross, but he also wanted to clarify a distinction between sin and sickness. “Christ did not atone for our sickness because sickness needs no atonement,” he argued. While this initially seems to place him outside the Alliance camp, Smith’s explanation of this statement demonstrates that he is seeking to clarify, not repudiate, the Alliance’s teaching. He explains that, while sickness needs no atonement, when Christ “atoned for our sin He redeemed us from all the results of the Fall including sin, disease and death; so that what

⁷² Ibid., 110.

⁷³ Ibid., 22.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 42.

we lost in Adam we regain in Christ.”⁷⁵ So then, Christ atoned for sin and in so doing, redeemed humanity from sickness. This is simply another way of expressing Simpson’s conviction that healing is our “redemption right” through the blood of Christ. Healing is still in the atonement.

For a person to experience divine healing, Smith urges them to exercise faith that is centred on the person of Jesus:

Sick one, I invite you to Jesus. Go to Him for healing even as you went to Him for salvation. Claim all that He has promised. It is yours. Earthly physicians there are and we thank God for their work; but He is the only truly “Great Physician,” since all diseases are alike to Him. . . . Notice, I do not hold up before you any special type of so-called “faith healing.” I direct you to the Healer Himself. He has never failed.⁷⁶

Divine healing was available to all who would come to Jesus in faith. It was there for the asking, just as their salvation had been. Importantly, though, Smith does not invite his audience to healing—he invites them to the Healer, Jesus. The Christocentric focus that was so important to Simpson was also cherished by Smith.⁷⁷

In summary, Smith was an active promoter of the Alliance’s distinct testimony regarding divine healing. He experienced healing himself in an Alliance context and his book on the subject endorsed A. B. Simpson’s teaching and ministry. He even assumed the role of spokesperson for the Alliance when he concluded the introductory chapter of *The Great Physician* with a sentence which encapsulated the movement’s position:

We believe in the supernatural intervention of God, who, in answer to the prayer of faith offered in the name of Jesus Christ, through the redemptive work of Calvary,

⁷⁵ Ibid., 99.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 103-4.

⁷⁷ As was noted earlier, *The Great Physician* begins by citing Simpson’s famous couplet, “Everything in Jesus and Jesus Everything,” and asserting that the emphasis in either sanctification or healing must be placed upon the Sanctifier and the Healer (8).

saves, sanctifies, . . . heals, . . . and meets every other need of man—spirit, soul and body.⁷⁸

Smith presumed to speak for the Alliance, and his presumption was justified. He reasserted the key elements of Simpson’s theology of healing—God’s willingness to heal, the efficacy of faith, the Christocentric focus, and the connection with the cross. This was the Alliance’s position and it was Smith’s as well.

That being said, why did Smith remove healing from the Fourfold description of his ministry emphases once he left the Alliance, and why did he not publish any other books on the subject after this time? Although Smith continued to believe in divine healing in his post-Alliance context, it seems evident that he reduced the significance afforded to this doctrine in his subsequent ministry. Still, he did write a chapter on healing entitled “The Use of Means,” which was included in his *Can Organized Religion Survive?* in 1932. Here Smith demonstrates that he continued to affirm a belief in healing, but it was tempered by the conviction that God heals through natural as well as supernatural means:

. . . it is therefore our privilege to have His life made manifest in our bodies or our mortal flesh . . . and to know Him as our Healer (Romans 8:11). Hence, being thus kept in health, we will have little or no need of human remedies. (2 Chron. 4:10, 11). Yet, should human means seem advisable, we will not allow ourselves to be brought into bondage. We are free.⁷⁹

Healing was still a reality; however, it was a somewhat muted reality with Smith marking out a moderate position that still affirmed healing while not making it a central focus in his tabernacle.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 10.

⁷⁹ Smith, “The Use of Means,” in *Can Organized Religion Survive?*, 204.

Christ our Coming King

Simpson believed that the return of Christ—which constituted the fourth “fold” of his gospel—represented “the glorious culmination of all other parts of the Gospel.”⁸⁰ When Christ returned his children would experience full *salvation*, genuine *holiness* (for they would be like Him), and they would share in the resurrection life of which divine *healing* was just a foretaste. The second advent was, therefore, referred to as a “blessed and purifying hope” which motivated holy living and active Christian service; those who were watching for the return of their Lord would be set apart from the world and set on fire to serve God and warn sinners while there was still time.⁸¹ Christ told his followers that he would return once salvation had been proclaimed to the whole world, and Simpson saw this as an incentive to hasten that return through aggressive and worldwide evangelization.⁸² This was not the same thing, though, as the conversion of the world. Simpson’s premillennial convictions held no hope that the world in general would respond to God’s offer of salvation; rather, God was calling out his church from among the nations by giving every person at least one chance to respond to the gospel.⁸³ Those who accepted the invitation were the true church of Christ, a people prepared for his name.

⁸⁰ Simpson, *Fourfold*, 68.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 82. For Simpson’s fuller teaching regarding the practical impact of the imminent return of the Lord, see A. B. Simpson, *The Coming One* (New York: Christian Alliance Publishing Co., 1912), 201-11.

⁸² Simpson, *Fourfold*, 81; elsewhere, Simpson wrote that “We believe that the evangelization of the world will fulfil the only remaining condition that prevents our Lord’s return” Simpson, “The Work,” 109.

⁸³ Simpson, *The Coming One*, 220-1.

Smith's ministry was likewise enlivened by a desire to prepare for the premillennial return of Christ by preaching the gospel throughout the world.⁸⁴ This theme, in fact, rose to prominence during his last years with the Alliance. Though he preached on the Second Coming early in his ministry,⁸⁵ a series of his messages on the Antichrist in 1926 made a huge stir and led to their publication in book form as *Is the Antichrist at Hand?* This book sold an impressive thirty-eight thousand copies in the following year which encouraged Smith to publish another series of prophetic addresses under the title *When Antichrist Reigns* just one year later.⁸⁶ Smith's later ministry was therefore marked by increased attention to end-time themes.

However, the titles of his books reveal much about his focus in these matters; while the Fourfold Gospel looked to "Christ our Coming King," Smith at times seemed more concerned with the coming of the Antichrist. He devoted many pages in both of his books to speculations regarding Mussolini and whether he might be the Antichrist, the rise of atheism and modernism, the corresponding decline of morality, and the threat of another world war. Given the profound political and social changes that were either evident or on the horizon when he was writing, Smith's prophetic fervour seemed well placed and enjoyed a popular response.⁸⁷ Smith used these gripping and contemporary topics to urge his audience to accept Christ before it was too late, but often this came in

⁸⁴ Oswald J. Smith, *When Antichrist Reigns* (New York: Christian Alliance Pub. Co., 1927), 76.

⁸⁵ See "Second Coming Not Fixed Date," *Toronto Globe*, 27 February 1922, 11.

⁸⁶ Smith, *Is the Antichrist at Hand?*; Smith, *When Antichrist Reigns*; see the introduction of *When Antichrist Reigns*, 7, by T. C. Horton for the publication success of *Is the Antichrist at Hand?*

⁸⁷ Joel Carpenter notes that "the prophetic commentator's role was well established by the 1920s . . . and the events of the ensuing dozen or so years conspired to encourage their efforts." Carpenter, *Revive*, 92. Many Toronto ministers joined with Smith in speculating about the end-times; a *Toronto Globe* article from February 1922 noted that the topic had been discussed at a recent meeting of the Toronto Ministerial Association and that it was the focus of the sermons in at least six different churches the previous Sunday. See "Clergy Discuss Second Coming," *Toronto Globe*, 13 February 1922, 11, 13.

the form of a closing challenge that seemed tagged on to the sensational warnings and predictions that made up the bulk of the text. For example, the second chapter of *Is the Antichrist at Hand?* suggests that the Roman Emperor (perhaps Mussolini?) will rise in power, be assassinated, and then—before his body goes cold—the spirit of the Antichrist will enter his flesh and he will be reincarnated.⁸⁸ The resurrected beast/emperor will then form an alliance with the Catholic church as the civil and the ecclesiastical Babylons. Their reign will be brutal, but it will not last forever—they will be thrown into the pit when Christ returns to establish his Millennial Kingdom. Smith ends the chapter with the following charge: “My friend, are you ready to meet God? Are you prepared to face the Antichrist? Christ is the only way of escape, whether you go through Tribulation or not. ‘Come then, accept Jesus Christ as your Saviour and all will be well.’”⁸⁹ Smith believed and taught that Christ was going to return and set everything right, but he focused more attention on the coming Antichrist and used this to call people to repentance and renewal while there was still time.⁹⁰

Not only did sinners need to be called to repentance, but Christians needed to be called to service. Convinced of the coming destruction that was close at hand, Smith urged his audience to evangelistic action:

Oh that God might make us true witnesses in this our day, that we may warn the people of the coming catastrophe, the world crash that we know is so near at hand! . . . The clouds are already gathering. Soon, oh so soon, the storm will burst. Tens of thousands have no knowledge of what is coming. May God help us in the little space

⁸⁸ In *When Antichrist Reigns*, Smith suggests that the spirit of the Antichrist could be that of Nero, Antiochus, or Judas Iscariot, summoned from the depths after two thousand years. Smith, *When Antichrist Reigns*, 139-41.

⁸⁹ Smith, *Is the Antichrist at Hand?*, 39.

⁹⁰ All six chapters of *When Antichrist Reigns* end with Smith calling people to Christ before it is too late. See pages 29-30, 49, 69, 87-8, 129, 148.

that remains to herald out the Tidings and thus seek the salvation of a vast company before it is forever too late.⁹¹

Again, the focus is not so much on the return of Christ as it is on the preceding catastrophe, but Smith's concern for the evangelization of the world was the same as Simpson's a generation earlier. Christians had a responsibility to save as many people as possible before the end came.

Smith was clear that this involved the world's *evangelization*, not its *Christianization*. As was noted earlier, Smith shared Simpson's dismay over the church's postmillennial efforts to establish the kingdom of God on earth through education, social work, and other reforms. This is not to say that Smith was unconcerned with the wretched state of the world. Rather, he suggested that Christians should work toward the premillennial return of Christ, seeing this as the only thing that would effect a lasting social change:

Often-times our hearts are saddened within us as we gaze upon the sin and misery of our great cities. But the one thing that buoys us up and imparts fresh courage is the thought that Jesus Christ in His own good time will return to restore all things. Then, and only then will sorrow and oppression cease, and nothing save the personal return of our blessed Saviour will ever do it. No wonder the Second-Coming is one of the most comforting doctrines of Scriptures, and one of the greatest incentives to soul-winning! May He come soon, ere another generation comes into being with its heavy burdens—all too heavy to bear!⁹²

To Smith's mind, Christ's return was the only answer to the pain and suffering in the world. Therefore the most humane action was to divert energy from temporary world betterment and hasten the return of Christ by preaching the gospel to all nations. "If every man who is doing and preaching Social Service would endeavour to lead one soul

⁹¹ Smith, *Is the Antichrist at Hand?*, 56.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 111.

to Jesus Christ each day, more real social service would be accomplished in the long run than we realize.”⁹³

Smith’s teaching regarding the return of Christ was not a carbon-copy of Simpson’s. He tended to devote an inordinate amount of attention to his sensational speculations regarding the Antichrist and the details of the end times, something which Simpson warned against.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, Smith saw the return of Christ as an enervating and imminent reality; sinners had to be warned, Christians had to be ready, and the world had to be evangelized. In these core respects Smith was aligned with both Simpson and the Alliance.

Doctrinal Confusion and Diffusion within the Alliance

Smith’s teaching was not always identical to that of Simpson, but he fit easily within the doctrinal parameters which the Alliance specified for its members. That being the case, Lindsay Reynolds’s concerns surrounding Smith’s apparent doctrinal disparity—particularly in relation to his endorsement of the Niagara Conference’s view of sanctification and his hesitation to declare his views on healing—should be tempered. One other matter relating to Reynolds’s critique of Smith deserves some clarification.

Reynolds argues that the tabernacle ministry which Smith developed in Toronto “could never be a typical Alliance church fellowship, committed to the propagation of the four-fold Gospel message.”⁹⁵ Reynolds himself, though, makes a very good case for the fact that the Alliance movement in general was experiencing something of a theological

⁹³ Ibid., 112.

⁹⁴ Simpson, *Fourfold*, 81-2; David Bundy, *Keswick*, 69, wryly suggests that Smith’s prophetic work in this period was published “with more enthusiasm than discretion.”

⁹⁵ Reynolds, *Footprints*, 388.

identity crisis in the years surrounding Simpson's death in 1919. The Alliance itself was not very committed to the propagation of the Fourfold Gospel at this time, being unclear about what that really entailed. For example, Reynolds notes that the Alliance's president described the movement in 1921 as "a soul-saving organization and not a healing cult" in response to the Bosworth meetings which had served as a catalyst for Smith's ministry; this is hardly a rousing endorsement of the validity of divine healing.⁹⁶ Reynolds also points out that the Board of Managers, though debating the nature of sanctification and healing at a number of their meetings, were unable (or unwilling) to reach a consensus on these issues and clarify their positions in the early 1920s.⁹⁷ At the district level, a delegation from the Canadian District Committee, sent to scout out the Bosworth brothers before their Toronto campaign, questioned whether the baptism of the Holy Spirit was a second work of grace and whether healing was actually in the atonement.⁹⁸ In each of these matters, Reynolds demonstrates persuasively that Alliance leadership was questioning or challenging central Alliance doctrines. This leads him to the conclusion that "the Alliance in the 1920s was not prepared to risk internal controversy in order to define its distinctive faith and priorities."⁹⁹

That being the case, Smith should not be judged by a theological standard to which the Alliance itself was not measuring up. The movement was in a state of doctrinal confusion and diffusion—key doctrines were being questioned or simply passed over as the central work of evangelizing the world came to prominence. Father was dead,

⁹⁶ Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 69.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 56-7.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 60

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

his steadying presence was gone, and the household had not yet adjusted to the new reality. As Reynolds writes, “Just what the Alliance was all about in 1919 was not clear to many, both within and without the fellowship.”¹⁰⁰ “Doctrinal Continuity,” then, is an inappropriate standard by which to measure how “Alliance” Smith was.

The Fourfold Gospel and Smith’s Tabernacle Ministry

The preceding examination of Oswald J. Smith’s books written during his tenure with the Alliance has demonstrated his continuity with the movement’s core doctrinal convictions as expressed in Simpson’s Fourfold Gospel. A brief survey of the magazines and newspapers produced during those years testifies to the important role those teachings also played in his ongoing tabernacle ministry.

From the beginning of Smith’s association with the Alliance in January of 1921, he produced magazines and newspapers to promote the Alliance in general and his tabernacle in particular. Even in the early months, Smith appealed to Simpson to help describe the Alliance to the uninitiated. The February 1921 issue of *The News of the News* reprinted Simpson’s description of the Alliance as being, among other things, evangelistic, spiritual (only sending out missionaries who have been baptized with the Holy Ghost) and premillennial.¹⁰¹ Thus, within a month of his arrival, Smith was quoting Simpson and asserting the first, second, and fourth “folds” of the Alliance’s Gospel. The third “fold,” that of healing, came to the forefront just months later when Smith’s tabernacle played host to the Bosworth brothers’s evangelistic campaign which was noticeably marked by a large number of physical healings. The May edition of *The News*

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 53.

¹⁰¹ A. B. Simpson, “The Christian and Missionary Alliance—What It Is,” *News of the News*, February 1921, 1. Folder 6, Box 10, Smith Papers.

of the News began running testimonies of those who had been healed of infirmities such as cancer, deafness, stammering, and infantile paralysis.¹⁰² The newspaper was quick to note, though, that healing was not the only thing going on at the campaign. There were three distinct groups who were responding to the Bosworths' invitations: "Those who come for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and this is generally the largest; those who want to be saved; and the sick who appeal for healing. Almost 350 sought the Baptism of the Spirit at one service alone."¹⁰³ After the Bosworths left, Smith embarked on a series of continual revivalistic campaigns and reported at the end of the year that "the three-fold invitation is still being given," with people being saved, healed, and filled with the Spirit on any given night.¹⁰⁴ So then, every aspect of the Alliance's distinct testimony was in evidence in Smith's first year with the movement.

A later tabernacle publication, *The Prophet*, was sent out in 1923 with an introductory letter which explained that the magazine would lay "special emphasis on salvation, the fulness of the Spirit, our Lord's provision for the body, the Second Coming of Christ, and Missions, the great truths for which the Christian and Missionary Alliance stands."¹⁰⁵ The letter also explained that, besides Smith himself, *The Prophet* would contain messages by people such as Paul Rader, president of the Alliance, F. F. Bosworth, and others. It thereby promoted Alliance doctrine taught by the movement's own luminaries.

¹⁰² "Bosworth Campaign Stirs Toronto," *News of the News*, May 1921, 2-3. Folder 6, Box 10, Smith Papers.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁰⁴ "The Big Tent Campaign," *The News of the News*, August – December 1921, 1. Folder 12, Box 11, Smith Papers.

¹⁰⁵ Promotional Letter for *The Prophet*, July 1923. Folder 12, Box 8, Smith Papers.

Perhaps one of the clearest indications that Smith was committed to the Fourfold Gospel can be seen in an advertisement for his tabernacle's weekly services which appeared in the inaugural edition of *The Prophet's* successor, *Himself* (which, significantly, was so named as a tribute to Simpson's motto, "Everything for Jesus and Jesus Everything").¹⁰⁶ Smith was preaching "A Fourfold Message Each Week in the Tabernacle," devoting Sunday evenings to "Christ our Saviour," Wednesday evenings to "Christ our Sanctifier," Friday evenings to "Christ our Healer," and Sunday mornings to "Christ our Coming King" (figure 2). The advertisement makes special notice that the meetings concerning sanctification and healing would be followed by opportunities for individuals to receive those blessings.¹⁰⁷ Smith was preaching on each point of the Fourfold Gospel on a weekly basis and inviting people to experience the blessings related to these positions.

Conclusion

During his service with the Alliance Smith wrote books on the topics of salvation, sanctification, healing, and the return of Christ, and the teaching in these books was in substantial agreement with Simpson and the movement he founded. The testimony of these books is further substantiated by the story told through Smith's tabernacle newspapers and magazines. This being the case, the estimation of William Bedford and others that "Smith, in short, argued for evangelism rather than merely maintaining Alliance branches that focused on reaffirming the four-fold gospel to those already

¹⁰⁶ Smith explained: "Dr. A. B. Simpson's great statement 'Everything in Jesus and Jesus Everything' best characterizes our position. Hence we have named our magazine **Himself**" (emphasis his). This is yet another sign that Simpson was deeply influential in Smith's ministry. "Aim," *Himself*, November 1924, 3. Folder 13, Box 8, Smith Papers.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

A Fourfold Message

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NEARLY 2000 FREE SEATS

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IS salvation by works of morality and religion, or by faith? Can the church save? Which is the way to Heaven? Are you afraid to die? Dare you meet God? Are you ready for the Judgment? Does the burden of sin rest heavily upon you? Come, then, and hear the Old, Old Story next Sunday night. There is hope for you.

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"CHRIST OUR SANCTIFIER"

HAVE you received the baptism with the Holy Spirit? Do you believe in such an experience? What is the evidence, the proof? Can it be known? Are there any conditions? Come next Wednesday night and hear what the Word of God has to say on this important subject.

There will be an after meeting at the close to give an opportunity for hungry souls to receive the fulness of the Spirit.

Friday, 7.45 p.m.

"CHRIST OUR HEALER"

DOES Jesus heal to-day? Is He willing as well as able? Does James 5: 14-15 mean what it says, and will God answer prayer for physical healing? Are you sick, and would you like to be well? Come next Friday night, listen to the testimonies of those who have been healed, hear what the Bible says, and prove the promises of God.

There will be an anointing service at the close for those who have need of healing.

Sunday, 11 a.m.

"CHRIST OUR COMING KING"

IS Jesus coming again? Do Acts 1: 11 and I Thess. 4: 13-18 mean what they say? Will there be a select rapture, or are all Christians to be raised? Are believers to be both rewarded and punished at the Judgment Seat of Christ? What is the teaching of Scripture? Come next Sunday morning with your Bible and hear for yourself.

Figure 2. Advertisement appearing in *Himself*, November 1924, 2. (Oswald J. Smith Papers, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, IL).

converted” needs to be re-examined.¹⁰⁸ Smith’s heart did burn with a passion for evangelism, but he also longed to see the saved sanctified, the sanctified healed, and everyone prepared for the return of Christ. In these respects Smith’s doctrinal convictions were thoroughly Alliance. It was perhaps for these reasons that Smith was selected at the Annual Council in 1926, along with three other Alliance personalities, to write a series of four articles which would restate the Fourfold Gospel and stand as “an Alliance epitome of our testimony.”¹⁰⁹ Smith was not a doctrinal renegade—to the contrary, he was looked to as a defender and explicator of Alliance thought.

The breakdown in Smith’s relationship with Simpson’s movement must be explained by other means. Some have seen his particular approach to tabernacle ministry as the point of contention that led to his departure, and it is to this issue that the next chapter is dedicated. The evidence demonstrates that, while Smith’s tabernacle ministry was in some ways unique, it was also authorized in significant ways by the Alliance and shows evidence of Alliance influence on a number of important levels.

¹⁰⁸ Bedford, “Larger,” 178.

¹⁰⁹ “Report of the Commission on Home Work,” in *The Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Christian and Missionary Alliance for the Year 1925*, 182-3. Two of the other three writers involved in this project were Walter Turnbull and C. H. Chrisman. Considering the fact that their book, *The Message of the Christian and Missionary Alliance*, was published one year later, it seems likely that this was the end-product that evolved from the earlier initiative to restate and re-emphasize the Alliance’s distinctive testimony—an initiative to which Smith was central. It should come as no surprise, then, that Smith was in line with the Alliance’s testimony as outlined in Turnbull and Chrisman’s book.

CHAPTER TWO

SMITH'S TABERNACLE MINISTRY: DISTINCT AND DISTINCTLY ALLIANCE

Oswald J. Smith's commitment to the Alliance's Fourfold Gospel had to find a home, and the home that Smith created was his tabernacle on Christie Street. In the same way that Smith has been understood in Alliance historiography as being at odds with the Alliance's doctrinal standards, his ministry has also been cast as somewhat of an awkward anomaly that did not fit within the direction of the larger movement. Lindsay Reynolds, commenting on Smith's appointment to the pastorate of the Parkdale Tabernacle, opines that "for the next six years Smith and the Alliance would do much for each other, but their inevitable separation would cause much hurt to both."¹ Part of the cause for what Reynolds sees as the inevitable separation was Smith's distinct tabernacle ministry which, he asserts, "could never be a typical Alliance church fellowship, committed to the propagation of the four-fold Gospel message."² We have already seen that the typical Alliance fellowship in Smith's day was not necessarily committed to the Fourfold Gospel, but Reynolds' understanding of Smith needs to be reconsidered on another level as well. It is true that Smith's tabernacle ministry was distinct in many ways, but it was also distinctly Alliance—it was authorized by Alliance leadership at the national, district, and local level and its particular texture was shaped by the influence of key Alliance personalities. In other words, Smith could not have developed his

¹ Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 60.

² Reynolds, *Footprints*, 388; Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 66.

tabernacle ideology apart from the Alliance. If the separation to come was truly inevitable, it is because the movement charted a different course after Smith had joined and not because he was out of line with Alliance ministry practice in his day. To demonstrate this reality, the development of the tabernacle ideal within the Alliance prior to Smith's association with the movement must be examined.

Authorization at the National Level

E. J. Richards's Extension Plan

In 1918 E. J. Richards, the Home Secretary of the Alliance, told the General Council that the coming year would be a crisis period for the movement's work in North America. The previous year saw the addition of only eight new branches in the entire home field—an embarrassingly small statistic—and Richards feared that Alliance people had become self-content and uncommitted to the expansion of the movement into new regions. He lamented the tendency “to multiply services in our present meeting places instead of launching out into new territory. We wish to warn the workers against the apparent waste of time, money, and effort in duplicating meetings and meeting places that reach the same constituency.”³ Further, some well-established branches were requiring the time of an Alliance worker and still not contributing even one hundred dollars a year to the missionary enterprise.⁴ The Alliance was at a crisis point in its development and something had to change if it was to survive.

Richards's proposed solution for the Alliance's homeland dilemma lay in the holding of special campaigns in unreached territory towards the end of stirring up

³ E. J. Richards, “Report of the Home Secretary,” *The Twenty-First Annual Report of the Christian and Missionary Alliance: 1917-1918*, 53.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

sufficient interest to establish a permanent Alliance presence in those centres. Workers from organized areas were encouraged to co-operate in developing such “out-stations” in the unreached cities in their vicinity: he suggested that “where one Pastor cannot spare time enough from his own work to develop an out-station alone, the above plan could be worked to good advantage.”⁵ The committee on the Home Work at the Annual Council agreed with Richards that the Alliance needed to expand into new territory and in their report they recommended to the assembled delegates “that the Home Department and District Superintendents initiate, at the earliest moment practicable, a crusade for the enlargement of the Home Base.”⁶ Council was urged to give their hearty endorsement and active cooperation to this initiative and the Board of Managers was urged to free up as much money as possible for this “advance movement.”⁷ To this end, the Board of Managers called a meeting during the council “to consider a special forward movement in the Home Field, and looking toward a closer affiliation to the work of our beloved brother Rev [*sic*] Paul Rader.” Rader had been elected an honorary vice-president of the Alliance in 1916 and had worked closely with A. B. Simpson ever since, everyone recognizing Rader’s exceptional abilities as a motivational preacher and a proponent of the Fourfold Gospel.⁸ In the end, the Board commissioned Rader to conduct a special

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ “Report of Committee on the Home Work,” *The Twenty-First Annual Report of the Christian and Missionary Alliance: 1917-1918*, 87.

⁷ Ibid. Interestingly, H. M. Shuman—who would assume the presidency of the Alliance in 1926 and steer the movement in a more conservative direction—was the chairman of this committee that suggested this campaign strategy for the health of the Alliance.

⁸ Eskridge, “Only Believe,” 39; Niklaus, Sawin, and Stoesz, *All for Jesus*, 153.

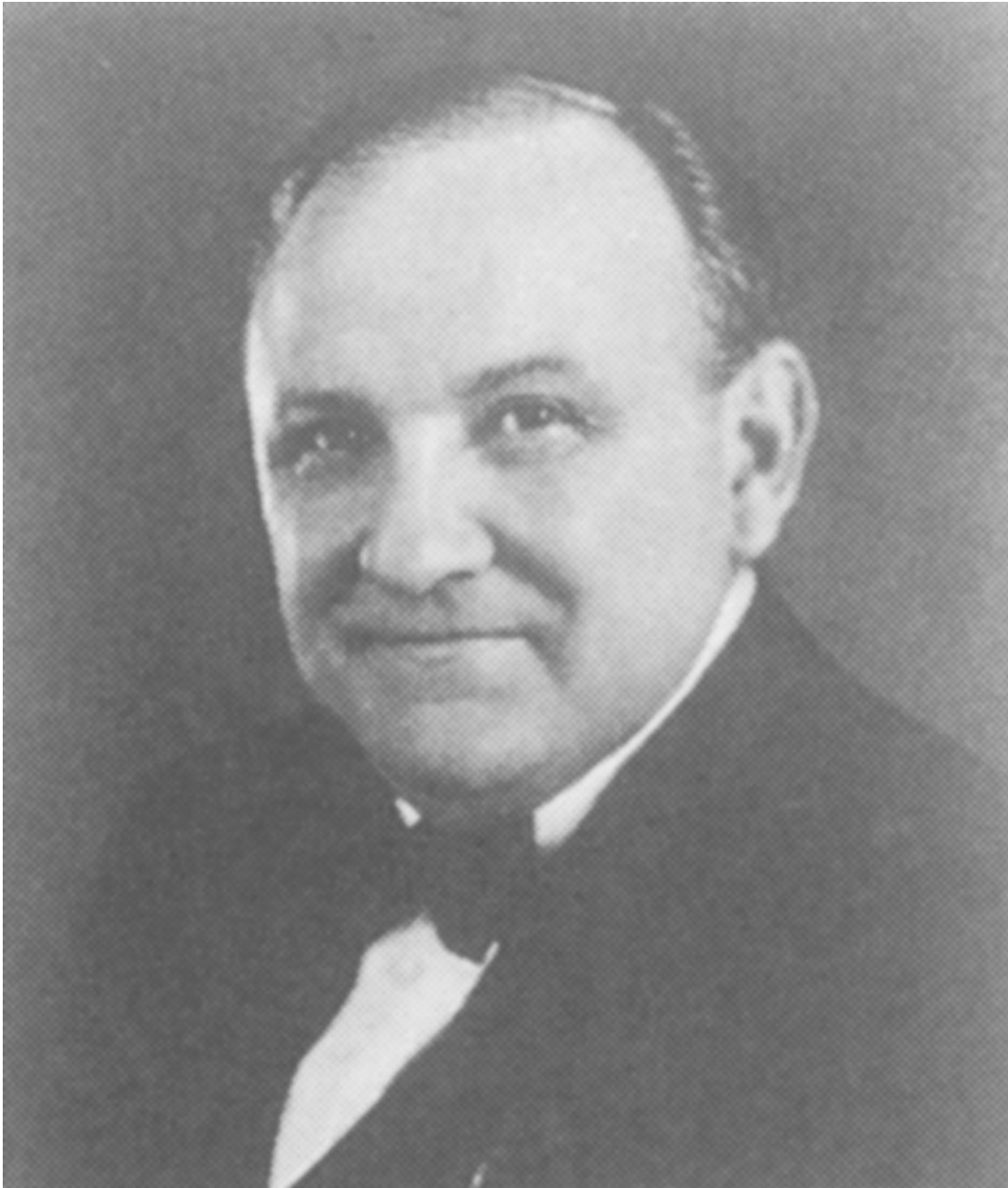


Figure 3. Paul Rader, president of the Alliance from Simpson's death in 1919 until January 1924, was one of Smith's closest friends and greatest role models. (Photo taken from Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 52).

eight-week campaign to commence January 1 of the following year.⁹ Richards's report had facilitated a new plan for the Alliance in a crisis time: the home field would be expanded as Rader proclaimed the Fourfold Gospel in unreached cities and prepared the soil for new Alliance branches to be planted through the co-operation of nearby Alliance workers.

This proved to be a successful venture, as Richards's exultant report to the Annual Council one year later demonstrates: "It has been a year of crowning blessing, with the largest attendance at both local and district conventions, with the greatest increase in missionary offerings, and with a most marked presence of the Holy Spirit in saving, sanctifying, and healing power."¹⁰ Rader's "Full Gospel Crusade" had been a success, though partially stunted by an influenza epidemic. He had still been able to hold week-long campaigns in five major centres, including Toronto.¹¹ As a result, scores had been saved, hundreds were led into the Spirit-filled life, and the truths of divine healing and Christ's second coming were embraced by many others. Richards was encouraged that, as a result of Rader's efforts, "our testimony and organization were given a new place in the cities touched."¹²

The primary way in which the Alliance sought to hold on to their gains in these new centres was through the establishment of tabernacles. Praising the way that Alliance

⁹ Board of Managers' minutes, 15 May 1918. File 10, Box 2. Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

¹⁰ E. J. Richards, "Report of Secretary of Home Department," *The Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Christian and Missionary Alliance: 1918-1919*, 34.

¹¹ Smith was in attendance at this crusade as an unemployed minister, having just resigned from Dale Presbyterian at the end of October 1918. He reports being greatly humbled when he was consigned to selling hymnals in the aisles while his former ministry comrades were seated on the platform. Still, Smith was encouraged when, during this crusade, one of his most popular hymns, "Saved," was introduced to the public for the first time by Rader's songleader. See Smith, *Story*, 67, 112-3.

¹² Richards, "Report," *Twenty-Second Annual Report: 1918-1919*, 38.

workers had responded to his call of a year previous to co-operate in the effort to enter new territory, he noted that some of these groups had erected simple tabernacle buildings within which to continue their work. In one instance, a tabernacle seating three hundred people was built at a cost of merely \$1,000; in the first month's meetings many people were saved and the first missionary offering exceeded \$1,300. What more could a movement committed to evangelism and worldwide missions want? Richards excitedly proposed that tabernacles could serve an important function in the Alliance's future expansion: "We believe this result could be duplicated in many places, and that this simple form of building would solve the problem of a meeting place in many cities."¹³

The Alliance in 1919 was developing a two-pronged approach to ministry: crusades and tabernacles. If a crusade could drum up enough interest in the Alliance work, a tabernacle could be built which could then serve as a base from which to hold further campaigns and broadcast the truths of the Fourfold Gospel. Richards believed that, in this way, a reborn Alliance was destined to play a prominent role in the revitalization of the religious world. He claimed that "many eyes have been turned in our direction, and many people, who are not officially connected with us at present, have felt that our Society was qualified of God to occupy a very prominent place in rallying the forces of truth and holiness."¹⁴ A sobering responsibility was thus thrust upon the Alliance, and they would fulfill the trust placed in them by holding to the course so recently marked out for them. The Committee on the Home Work, representing the assembled delegates, stated their belief that "the methods used in his [Rader's] campaigns

¹³ Ibid., 37. Richards was still promoting the use of inexpensive tabernacle-style buildings in 1927; see his "Report of the Home Department," *The Thirtieth Annual Report of the Christian and Missionary Alliance for the Year 1926*, 104.

¹⁴ Ibid., 39.

should be employed more widely in opening new territory as well as advancing our work in general.”¹⁵ Campaigns and tabernacles were the order of the day.

This approach to ministry was by no means unique to the Alliance; rather, it was part of a “wider Fundamentalist phenomenon” of that era in which a number of independent tabernacles sprang up in store fronts, abandoned churches, or hastily constructed buildings in cities throughout North America.¹⁶ There were at least five such congregations operating in Toronto by 1921.¹⁷ Though largely ignored by religious historians or disparaged as the last stand of revivalism, Joel Carpenter suggests that these enterprises were perhaps “the most influential institutional product of fundamentalists’ evangelistic impulse.”¹⁸ Significantly, Carpenter cites Paul Rader as the master of this form of ministry, and Larry Eskridge’s M. A. thesis on Rader’s Chicago Gospel Tabernacle demonstrates that these tabernacles could be vibrant and essential centres of inspiration and activity.¹⁹ Leaders of these tabernacles institutionalized the revivalistic zeal of their nineteenth-century forbears and rallied large numbers of people in a united cause—the evangelization of their community and the world. In this way the path for the Alliance’s “forward movement” was also being travelled by some like-minded friends in the larger evangelical community.

¹⁵ “Report of the Committee on the Home Work,” *The Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Christian and Missionary Alliance: 1918-1919*, 73.

¹⁶ Eskridge, “Only Believe,” 58.

¹⁷ For example, the *Toronto Star*, 15 January 1921, 4, advertised services for the Alliance’s Parkdale Tabernacle along with Beulah Tabernacle, City Temple, and the Tabernacle Church. The Missionary Tabernacle on Bathurst Street was also active at this time though it did not appear on this page. Dr. Salem Bland’s Broadway Methodist Tabernacle was also listed, but this was a denominational work.

¹⁸ Carpenter, *Revive*, 78; for a largely negative assessment of this form of ministry see William McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1959), 467-72.

¹⁹ See the description of Rader’s tabernacle in Eskridge, “Only Believe,” 75-95.

It is important to note that the Alliance charted this course a year before Rader was elected as president and four years before he proposed his tabernacle commission to the Board of Managers in 1923. Though William Bedford gives the impression that Rader single-handedly championed the tabernacle ideal within the Alliance, it rather seems that there was widespread interest in this approach to ministry in the years preceding both Rader's presidency and Smith's association with the movement in Toronto.²⁰ Smith's Alliance ministry would be marked by both the tabernacle ideal and the use of crusades, but these were ideas which were around the Alliance before he was. Home Secretary Richards certainly saw campaigns and tabernacles as a potent combination and this was a sentiment that was shared by others, from ordinary delegates to those in positions of influence.

This assertion is further substantiated by the fact that the Board of Managers themselves reaffirmed the above Home Field extension plan at General Council in 1919 and made plans to continue it into the next year.²¹ The rank and file delegates assembled at Council officially sanctioned this direction and authorized the Board to develop a budget to finance this continuing endeavour. In response to this, George R. Gregg, an Alliance supporter from Toronto, pledged twenty-five thousand dollars to a "Budget and

²⁰ Bedford, "Larger," 176-81. Niklaus, Sawin, and Stoesz, *All for Jesus*, 150-1, notes Richards's interest in tabernacle ministry.

²¹ Board of Managers' minutes, 26 April 1919. File 10, Box 2. Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

Crusade” fund and Rader had the first ten thousand dollars in hand by June of 1919.²²

The Alliance now had a significant amount of money on tap to prosecute their home field expansion through Rader’s campaigns. By October of that year the Board of Managers took action that further testified to their support of this approach to ministry. They removed the Budget and Crusade Committee from the realm of the Home Department and placed it under their direct control because “said Budget and Crusade do not properly belong to any one department but appertain to the general work affecting all the departments”²³ In the opinion of the Board of Managers, the expansion plan charted by Richards and animated by Rader was central to the Alliance movement in its entirety. It is clear that this was not merely one man’s hobby-horse—the Board recognized the significance of the venture and assigned it a place of prominence within the movement.

Support of Smith’s Move from Parkdale to Christie Street

It could be argued that the Board of Managers were primarily endorsing the use of campaigns without specifically endorsing the establishment of tabernacles. While it is true that the Board of Managers do not speak directly about tabernacle ministry in the above incidences, their support of tabernacle ministry in general—and Smith’s ministry in particular—is clearly evident from their actions on two separate occasions.

Smith’s establishment of the Christie Street Tabernacle involved more than simply relocating the Parkdale congregation to a new building. Smith dissolved the

²² Board of Managers’ minutes, 10 June 1924; 24 June 1919, File 10, Box 2. Canadian Bible College/ Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK. Gregg had previously assisted the Alliance in the liquidation of Simpson’s estate which was in a state of disarray at the end of his life. See Board of Managers’ minutes, 8 February 1919. File 10, Box 2. Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.; also Bedford, “Larger,” 170-1.

²³ Board of Managers’ minutes, 8 October 1919. File 10, Box 2. Canadian Bible College/ Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

Parkdale work and began again with a new constitution, a new organizational philosophy, and a new approach to ministry. Lindsay Reynolds marvels that Smith was able to persuade his congregation to go along with this action because, under Parkdale's constitution, all proceeds from the sale of their property would divest to the Alliance for distribution on the mission field.²⁴ The Board of Managers had the right to seize Parkdale's assets and redistribute them as they saw fit; this was a clause introduced into the Alliance's constitution in 1912 to afford the Society some control over congregations who might want to break ranks with them (as had happened so painfully during the Pentecostal crisis of the early 1900s).²⁵ If the Board of Managers felt that Smith's new work was breaking faith with the Alliance, they could at least recoup their financial losses. As it turns out, the Board of Managers saw no need to exercise this right and instead gave their consent and authorization for the move.²⁶ Reynolds' scenario of a congregation forced to start over from nothing never materialized because the Board of Managers supported Smith's innovative new tabernacle ministry.

This support would be demonstrated a second time just months later. Once the new location on Christie Street was secured and the lot was excavated, Smith and his congregation ran out of money.²⁷ George Gregg again rode to the rescue. Having pledged twenty-five thousand dollars to the Alliance's Budget and Crusade fund in 1919 (and having only been able to provide the initial ten thousand up to this point), Gregg wrote to the Board of Managers in February 1922 and asked for permission to give the

²⁴ Reynolds, *Footprints*, 390; Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 67.

²⁵ Niklaus, Sawin, and Stoesz, *All for Jesus*, 116-7.

²⁶ Board of Managers' minutes, 29 August 1921. File 12, Box 3. Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

²⁷ Smith, *Working*, 124.

remaining fifteen thousand dollars of his pledge to the Christie Street building committee to enable them to proceed with the construction of the tabernacle. Once the Parkdale Tabernacle building was sold, the money from that would go toward repaying the Board of Managers for their loan. Here again, Alliance leadership had a chance to step in if they had any concerns about Smith's emerging ministry in Toronto; by refusing Gregg's suggestion they could have shut down Smith's new venture. Just five months earlier they had requested information from A. W. Roffe, the Canadian District Superintendent, about "the affairs in connection with the Parkdale Tabernacle in Toronto."²⁸ That information would have been fresh in their minds and contributed to their response to Gregg's suggestion. The Board showed no evidence of any reservation, however; rather:

The Board was *most hearty in its appreciation* of Mr. Gregg's letter and *unanimously passed the following resolution*: "RESOLVED that we accept *with thanksgiving* the proposition of Mr. George R. Gregg that he loan the \$15,000 promised to the Christian and Missionary Alliance, to the Parkdale Tabernacle."²⁹

The Board was more than happy to oblige because they were happy with Smith's emerging tabernacle ministry. Smith's autobiography makes no reference to the Board of Managers' central role in this situation and simply states that Gregg "placed \$15,000.00 at our disposal."³⁰ This gives the mistaken impression that Gregg was solely responsible for the generous assistance; in reality, he had already promised the money to the Board

²⁸ Board of Managers' minutes, 20 September 1921. File 12, Box 3. Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

²⁹ Board of Managers' minutes, 15-16 February 1922, emphasis mine. File 13, Box 3. Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.; see also "Handsome Bequest Comes to Homeless Congregation Following Days of Prayer," *Toronto Globe*, 30 January 1922, 9.

³⁰ Smith, *Story*, 80; see also Smith, "What Hath God Wrought," *Tabernacle Monthly*, August 1922, 3. Folder 7, Box 10, Smith Papers. Similarly, Reynolds does not mention that the fifteen thousand dollars was essentially a loan from the Board of Managers to Smith's tabernacle, perhaps because this evidence of support seems to contradict his argument that Smith's tabernacle should have raised concerns within the Alliance; see Reynolds, *Footprints*, 390-1.

and it was only through their permission that it could be made available to Smith's tabernacle. It was their money to do with as they pleased, and they unanimously chose to use it in support of Smith's ministry. Gregg's money had been designated to finance the Alliance's forward movement on the Home Field, and—while this primarily had in view the financing of gospel crusades—in the eyes of the Board of Managers, Smith's tabernacle was also evidence of the Alliance's forward movement. It was not a difficult stretch for them to authorize the use of Gregg's money to assist Smith's tabernacle.

Authorization at the District Level

Smith also received support for his ventures from the Alliance's Canadian superintendent, A. W. Roffe, who had been appointed to his position in September 1919, less than sixteen months before Smith joined the Alliance.³¹ The Alliance work in Canada had deteriorated in the first two decades of the twentieth century, leaving Roffe with a significant challenge as he assumed his office. This was due to a number of decisions made by Alliance leadership in New York which, though reasonable for their American context, proved to be detrimental north of the border. Since the turn of the century the Alliance had shifted attention away from the development of local fraternal branches that focused on the experience of the Fourfold Gospel and concentrated instead on congregations which had essentially become Alliance churches which could support the movement's increasing missionary effort. The shift of attention from the fraternal branch to the exclusive church and from an emphasis on doctrine to an emphasis on

³¹ Interestingly, Roffe was the pastor of the Bathurst Street Tabernacle in Toronto in 1911 when a young student from the Toronto Bible College named Oswald J. Smith called him up and asked permission to hold a two-week evangelistic campaign at the church—a request which Roffe granted. Smith cites this as his first campaign. See Smith, *Story*, 42-3.

missions hurt the work in Canada where the fraternal branch had always been the backbone of the movement and most Alliance adherents were still committed to their home denominations and their missionary programs.³² As a result of these and other factors the Alliance work in Canada was at a precariously low ebb by 1919, prompting Lindsay Reynolds to suggest that “rejuvenation was virtually impossible. Rebirth was a necessity.”³³

The first indications of that rebirth came in January of 1919 when Rader visited Toronto as part of the Full Gospel Crusade that had been commissioned at the behest of Home Secretary E. J. Richards at General Council in 1918.³⁴ This nine day crusade was a phenomenal success, with Massey Hall filled to overflowing and newspapers covering the events of each day.³⁵ In response Richards organized another convention for Toronto in June, again featuring Rader (who one month earlier had been elected vice-president of the Alliance). This convention set a target of twenty-two thousand dollars to be raised for Alliance missions and received over twice that amount—forty-seven thousand dollars.³⁶ These two conventions in Toronto, half a year apart, were the first opportunities for celebration that the Alliance in Canada had enjoyed in many years.

³² Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 33-41.

³³ *Ibid.*, 41.

³⁴ See page 52 above. As has been previously noted, Smith was in attendance at this campaign.

³⁵ See the following *Toronto Globe* reports: “Eight Seek Forgiveness,” 30 January 1919, 6; “Massey Hall Packed Again,” 1 February 1919, 8; “Many Hundreds are Converted,” 4 February 1919; “Rader Ends Big Meetings,” 6 February 1919, 6.

³⁶ “Big Response for Missions,” *Toronto Globe*, 14 June 1919, 8; Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 47-8. It may be that George R. Gregg’s twenty-five thousand dollar donation for the “Budget and Crusade Fund” was included in this total, since it was at this time that Rader reported to the Board of Managers that he had received the first ten thousand of that amount (see page 55 above). In any case, even allowing for Gregg’s contribution the convention still would have raised over twenty-two thousand dollars, their target amount.

It is evident, then, that when Roffe assumed the role of superintendent of Canada three months after this second crusade, the Alliance was starting to show signs of life in Canada, particularly in Toronto. Rader's crusades were the lifeblood that was being



Figure 4. Massey Hall, Toronto, played a recurring and important role in Smith's life story. He was saved at an R. A. Torrey/Charles Alexander revival campaign held here in 1906 and he attended a Paul Rader campaign here in 1919, two years before joining the Alliance. When the Bosworth Revival of 1921 outgrew the Parkdale Tabernacle, services were moved to Massey Hall. In 1928 Smith launched his post-Alliance ministry in this building. (Lindsay Reynolds Papers, Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK).

pumped into the sickly body and Roffe had no plans to change anything. He organized two more Toronto conventions for April and May 1920 featuring the Alliance president, the latter of which raised fifty-one thousand dollars for missions over just three days.³⁷ Roffe felt that conventions were really the only strategy available to him in his Canadian context—the denominations still held sway in Canadian cities and Alliance policy discouraged reviving the network of fraternal branches.³⁸ “We have few, very few, distinctively Alliance Churches,” he reported to the Annual Council in 1922. As a result, “our policy of necessity is to present the Alliance message by means of conventions, held in various denominational churches, where we can secure an entrance.”³⁹

The situation was somewhat different at the Parkdale Tabernacle (and later at Christie Street). As one of the few distinctly Alliance congregations in the nation, this tabernacle offered a permanent platform from which to broadcast the Alliance message. And since Roffe had embarked on a policy for Canada which had campaigns at its core, he was supportive of Smith’s ministry which was similarly campaign-driven.⁴⁰ Christie

³⁷ See the following *Toronto Globe* reports: “Audience Gives Great Ovation to Paul Rader,” 21 April 1920, 9; “Rader Speaks to Huge Crowd,” 26 April 1920, 9; “Huge Audience to Hear Rader,” 29 April 1920, 9; “Christian and Missionary Alliance Great 3-Day Convention,” 22 May 1920, 12. See also Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 55.

³⁸ Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 54.

³⁹ Quoted in Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 54-5. Roffe recognized that many people, dissatisfied with the modernism evident in their denominations, were looking to the Alliance. “While we do not look to the opening of Alliance branches through the country, we must answer the calls that are coming to us” by holding Alliance conventions. A. W. Roffe, “A Day of Need and Opportunity,” *The Canadian Alliance*, August 1924, 14. Folder 8, Box 10, Smith Papers.

Street fit the context of Roffe's newly reborn Alliance in Canada with its powerful preaching, its revivalistic excitement, and its commitment to the evangelization of the world.

Reynolds writes of his surprise that "there is no evidence that any restraints emerged from the district office" as Smith charted his bold new course.⁴¹ Seen in the light above, however, no restraint should be expected from a district office that was pursuing a similar policy of growth. Roffe's implicit support and authorization of Smith's ministry was made explicit in August 1923 when he reported to the Home Department that the Christie Street Tabernacle "was doing splendid work."⁴² Smith's tabernacle ministry was unique in the Canadian Alliance but this did not mean that Smith had fallen out of favour with denominational leadership; instead, his tabernacle was an encouragement to the district office and the embodiment of the Alliance's revival on Canadian soil.⁴³

Authorization at the Local Level

As to authorization for Smith's ministry at the local level, one note should be made in regard to the terms under which Smith assumed the leadership of the Parkdale Tabernacle. Prior to his arrival, the Parkdale nucleus had shrunk to approximately thirty-

⁴⁰ Late in life Smith recounted that Roffe had given him complete control of the tabernacle and never interfered. See Oswald J. Smith, interview by Lindsay Reynolds, 11 August 1977, Lindsay Reynolds Papers, Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina SK.

⁴¹ Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 67.

⁴² Minutes of the Home Department, 28 August 28 1923. File 14, Box 3. Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

⁴³ See also the letter from A. W. Roffe, Toronto, to E. B. Fitch, New York, 2 November 1923, Ottawa Gospel Tabernacle file, Eastern and Central Canadian District documents, Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK, in which he writes that: "We need real Alliance men in Canada . . . and there is no limit to the number we can use if, like Mr. Smith . . . they have boldness and courage." Roffe considered Smith to be a model which others should follow.

five people meeting in a building with a seating capacity of nine hundred.⁴⁴ The situation was so bleak at Parkdale that in February 1920—ten months before Smith assumed the pastorate—they had resolved to disband their congregation and return to functioning as a Gospel Mission as they had in their past. Though this decision was rescinded seven months later, the congregation had little reason for celebration when Christmas came around that year.⁴⁵

Parkdale's fortunes were about to change. That same fall Smith had been running the "Gospel Auditorium" at the nearby Y.M.C.A. building, a short-lived venture which he later referred to as a "peculiar form of testing."⁴⁶ Just before Christmas, Smith mysteriously received a copy of *The Alliance Weekly* in his mail and, gazing at the magazine, sensed God saying to him, "This is your work."⁴⁷ Smith contacted Roffe who, upon hearing about Smith's interest in the Alliance, had his assistant Lionel Watson meet with Smith to discuss the affairs of the Parkdale Tabernacle. Smith suggested that he shut down his work with the Gospel Auditorium and bring his people with him to Parkdale. Watson then met with the Tabernacle's governing committee the next day to get their opinion on the matter.⁴⁸ Though they could not have known the full import of their response, their openness to Smith's leadership was crystal clear; as Watson wrote in a letter informing Roffe of the meeting:

⁴⁴ Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 59; Smith put attendance at 25-30 persons in *Working with God* (1926), 114, and then changed that figure to "less than two dozen" in *Story of My Life* (1962), 79. Whatever the actual figure, the Parkdale Tabernacle was in rough shape when Smith arrived.

⁴⁵ Reynolds, *Footprints*, 373.

⁴⁶ Smith, *Story*, 78. Smith's account of the Gospel Auditorium appears in his *Story*, 73-8 as well as his *Working*, 77-108.

⁴⁷ Smith, *Working*, 111-2; Smith, *Story*, 79.

⁴⁸ Reynolds, *Footprints*, 383; Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 59.

The committee were extremely anxious to go right ahead at once and told me that I could tell Mr. Smith they were anxious to have him take the pastorate and carry on the work as he wished and to do it at once.⁴⁹

Smith was essentially handed a blank cheque (or a blank church) and told to fill it in as he saw fit. This blanket authorization by Parkdale's governing committee preceded the development of Smith's tabernacle ideal and essentially gave the space for its development. There were those within the congregation who were familiar with Smith's tumultuous previous service at Dale Presbyterian Church, so Parkdale had at least an inkling of the kind of evangelistic fervour that motivated his ministry.⁵⁰ They may not have known the outcome, but they helped to precipitate it by offering Smith free reign as he stepped into their pulpit.

Alliance Influence on Smith's Tabernacle Ministry

It did not take long for Smith to develop the campaign-driven tabernacle ideology for which he became famous (or infamous). Stepping into an Alliance which was advocating a forward movement based on this type of ministry, with a president who was its foremost proponent, with a district office committed to a similar program of growth, and with a local church willing to follow their new pastor wherever he would lead, Smith's distinctive ministry began to take shape within months of his arrival at Parkdale. It is important to recognize, however, that he did not bring a preconceived tabernacle ideal into his new Alliance context; instead his convictions in this area were shaped by the Alliance context in which he found himself.

⁴⁹ Lionel Watson to A.W. Roffe, 24 December 1920. Lindsay Reynolds Papers, Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

⁵⁰ "Our New Pastor," *The News of the News*, January 1921, 1. Folder 6, Box 10, Smith Papers.

Before looking at some of those Alliance influences, it should be noted that revivalism had played an important role in Smith's life long before he had heard of Simpson's movement. At the age of sixteen, Smith travelled one hundred miles, with his brother, from their isolated community in rural Ontario to Toronto in order to attend an evangelistic campaign being conducted at Massey Hall by R. A. Torrey, one of D. L. Moody's former lieutenants. Smith was saved at this campaign and, upon returning home, prayed nightly for God to make him an evangelist.⁵¹ From the beginning of his spiritual life, then, Smith was enthralled with and interested in revivalistic evangelism. Three years later, working as a colporteur with the Upper Canada Bible Society in British Columbia, Smith heard that Gipsy Smith was going to be holding a crusade in Toronto. Smith wrote to his mother and asked her to "send me every paper without fail that has anything of his meeting." Gipsy was, in Oswald's estimation, the "world's greatest evangelist . . . I would give a lot to hear him."⁵² Oswald tried his hand at holding a campaign of his own in 1911 when, as a student at the Toronto Bible College, he contacted A. W. Roffe and received permission to hold a two-week crusade in his tabernacle.⁵³ Smith was assisted in this upstart of a venture by J. D. Morrow, a flamboyant minister who Smith first met in 1908 and who he would later serve under as associate pastor at Dale Presbyterian Church from 1915 to 1918.⁵⁴ Smith was greatly influenced by Morrow, describing him as "a gifted evangelist and a most effective gospel

⁵¹ Smith, *Story*, 18-21.

⁵² Oswald Smith, Ladysmith, BC, to Alice Smith, Mount Albert, ON, 5 May 1909. Folder 2, Box 1, Smith Papers. Years later Oswald was able to not only hear Gipsy Smith but become good friends with him. Gipsy wrote the introduction to Smith's book, *The Revival We Need*.

⁵³ Smith, *Story*, 42-3. See note 31 above.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

preacher. He knew how to put on a bright evangelistic service, and thus attract the crowds.”⁵⁵ Revivalistic evangelism thereby gave shape to the first decade of Smith’s spiritual life; evangelism was never far from the surface during this formative period of his life. Nevertheless, Smith’s distinctive tabernacle ideology would not be formed until he entered the Alliance and learned from its people. While Smith would converge the world of R. A. Torrey and Gipsy Smith’s sporadic campaigns with Morrow’s local and ongoing work, the Alliance was the catalyst for this momentous innovation.

Extended Campaigns: Influence of the Bosworth Brothers

Just four and a half months after Smith accepted the pastorate of the Parkdale Tabernacle, the Alliance sponsored a six-week crusade in Toronto to be conducted by F. F. Bosworth, an accredited Alliance evangelist who, until January of 1921, had served as an assistant district superintendent. F. F.’s brother, B. B. Bosworth, assisted in this crusade as the music leader.⁵⁶ The whole city was stirred by this campaign, including the newly appointed thirty-three year-old pastor.⁵⁷ Besides throwing away his glasses during the campaign and claiming healing from a difficult eye condition, Smith was also intrigued by the dynamics of the crusade itself.⁵⁸ He later recounted that “I was more interested in the mechanics of the crusade than in the actual preaching. I watched and listened carefully. I can honestly thank them for teaching me how to hold extended

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁵⁶ Reynolds, *Footprints*, 385; Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 60; Neely, *Fire*, 117.

⁵⁷ See the following *Toronto Globe* reports: “Healing ‘Miracles’ Bringing Gladness to Long-Suffering,” 25 April 1921, 13; “Bodily Healing Not Chief Aim,” 26 April 1921, 11; “Large Audience Witnesses Cure,” 28 April 1921, 11; “Many Testify at Massey Hall,” 16 May 1921, 11.

⁵⁸ Smith, *The Great Physician*, 124-6.

evangelistic campaigns. I've used some of their techniques down through the years."⁵⁹

This team of accredited Alliance evangelists who were brought to Toronto under the auspices of the district office became a model for Smith's emerging ministry.

Once the Bosworths left in June, Smith did not waste any time in putting the lessons learned from them to the test. He continued the "Bosworth Revival" by bringing in a steady stream of other evangelists to hold ongoing meetings. He explained this initiative in his tabernacle newsletter, *The News of the News*:

We have never believed that God intended His house to be kept open on Sunday and Wednesday and closed the rest of the week, except for concerts, socials, and bazaars. We believe in a perennial revival. That is to say, that the normal state of the Church should be one of revival; not a spasmodic campaign held two or three weeks during the year, but one continuous work. It ought to be possible for a sinner to find Christ at every service. Therefore, as much as in us lies, we are ready (D.V.) to carry on the work and preach the Gospel every day in the week, taking Saturday only for rest and recuperation.⁶⁰

The convergence of the worlds of revivalism and ongoing ministry was about to begin. With this announcement Smith charted an ambitious course of continuous evangelistic campaigns. He was true to his word, and eighteen months later one of his publications listed the names of twenty-one people who, "among others," had held campaigns at his tabernacle since the Bosworths.⁶¹ These campaigns typically ranged from one week to almost a month in duration,⁶² which therefore did not leave Smith many opportunities to address his congregation himself. Far from guarding his pulpit time, Smith essentially filled in the gaps between campaigns, preaching twice on Sundays and on Wednesday

⁵⁹ Quoted in Hall, *Not Made for Defeat*, 131.

⁶⁰ "A Continuous Revival," *The News of the News*, June 1921, 2-3. Folder 6, Box 10, Smith Papers.

⁶¹ "Noted Preachers at Tabernacle in Continuous Evangelistic Campaign," *The Prophet*, November 1922, 1. Folder 13, Box 11, Smith Papers.

⁶² "Future Campaigns," *The Word of Life*, July 1923, 1. Folder 10, Box 8, Smith Papers.

nights when a guest evangelist was not in town.⁶³ In this way, Smith functioned more as a crusade administrator than a preaching pastor, a role which he accepted gladly for the sake of the greater good which he believed was being accomplished.

The Tabernacle Building: Influence of Paul Rader's Moody Tabernacle

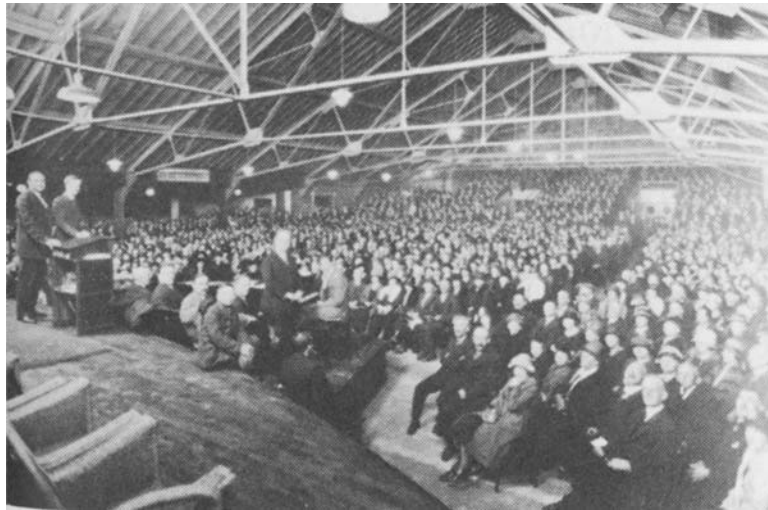
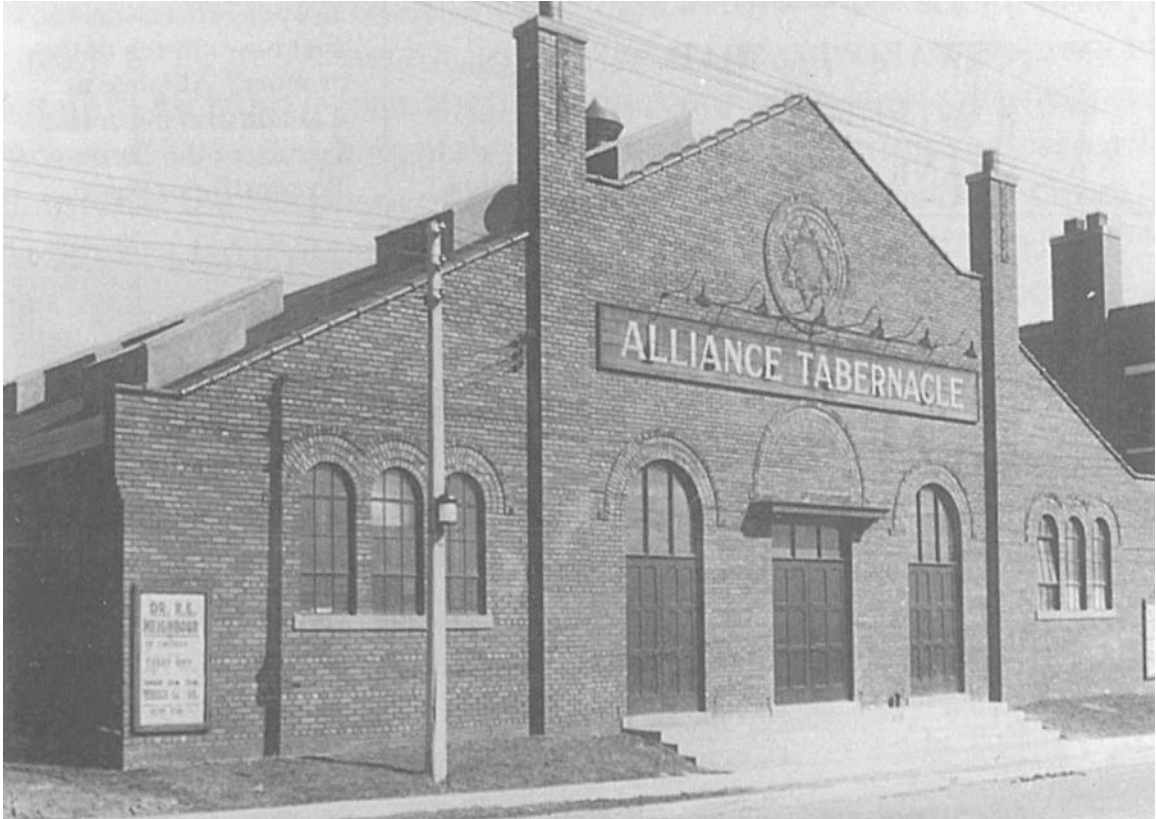
The “perennial revival” which Smith began following the Bosworth meetings attracted so much interest that—having moved from the Parkdale building to Massey Hall and then into a large ninety-foot square tent for the summer months⁶⁴—he was faced with the task of building a larger, more central tabernacle to accommodate the crowds. On August 21, 1921 Smith announced his plan to sell the Parkdale Tabernacle and construct a new building “large enough to meet all the demands of the congregation for some time to come.”⁶⁵ Since Smith's ministry did not resemble that of a typical church, it was fitting that his new tabernacle would not be a typical church building either. For inspiration, Smith looked to Paul Rader, having been “greatly impressed” with the Moody Tabernacle in Chicago which Rader had built in 1915 and which was regularly packed with five thousand people.⁶⁶ Smith's Christie Street Tabernacle was built with the same sensibilities that motivated Rader who was becoming one of the greatest

⁶³ Advertisement, *The Tabernacle News*, March 1925, 1. Folder 14, Box 11, Smith Papers.

⁶⁴ “Driven by Heat to Cooler Tent,” *Toronto Globe*, 28 June 1921, 11; “The Christian and Missionary Alliance Tabernacle Tent,” *Toronto Star*, 2 July 1921, 18.

⁶⁵ “Build New Tabernacle On West Bloor Street,” *Toronto Globe*, 22 August 1921, 9; “A New Tabernacle,” *The News of the News*, August-December 1921, 3. Folder 12, Box 11, Smith Papers; Smith, *Story*, 79-80; Smith, *Working*, 121-3.

⁶⁶ Neely, *Fire*, 133.



Figures 5 and 6. Exterior and interior of the Alliance Tabernacle (85 Christie Street, Toronto). In figure 6 Smith shares the platform with Paul Rader. The sloping amphitheatre which was added early in 1923 is visible in the rear of the building. (Photos taken from Reynolds, *Footprints*, 401).

influences in his life.⁶⁷ From the beginning it was designed to be “as plain and inexpensive a building as possible . . . along modern tabernacle lines.”⁶⁸ Smith had no time for aesthetic concerns—the tabernacle was built with functionality and frugality in mind (see figures 5 and 6). It was a “barn-like structure” with a two inch asbestos floor, a corrugated steel roof, and an inadequate heating system. Steel trusses spanned the building and the hollow-tile walls were bricked at the front.⁶⁹ Smith defended the rudimentary nature of the new building with the assertion that “our Lord did not tell us to build beautiful churches, but to evangelize the world; hence, our Tabernacle, while comfortable, and adequate for our needs, is a plain and inexpensive structure.”⁷⁰ Some people may have taken issue with the word “comfortable” being used in this statement, but no one could question Smith’s logic in keeping everything “on the cheap.” He wanted his congregation’s money to be used to build the kingdom of God, not an ornate church. True to his conviction, the two thousand seat tabernacle cost only forty thousand dollars to construct and was paid off within a year and a half, freeing up money for Smith’s great passion—reaching the lost of Toronto and the world.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ “A New Tabernacle,” *The News of the News*, August-December 1921, 3. Folder 12, Box 11, Smith Papers; Carpenter, 78.

⁶⁹ Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 68; caption, *Tabernacle Monthly*, August 1922, 1. Folder 7, Box 10, Smith Papers.

⁷⁰ “Facts About the Work,” *Tabernacle Monthly*, August 1922, 4. Folder 7, Box 10, Smith Papers; Smith, *Working*, 128.

⁷¹ “Tabernacle Debts Met,” *Toronto Globe*, 15 October 1923, 13; Smith, *Story*, 81; Smith, *Working*, 139; The Tabernacle would be expanded twice by January of 1925, giving it an eventual seating capacity of nearly 2500. See “Tabernacle is Enlarged to Accommodate Crowd” *Toronto Star*, 31 March 1923, 25; Reynolds, *Footprints*, 394.

Smith's Home Policy: Accord with E. J. Richards
and Influence of Paul Rader

By the early months of 1923, Smith had crystallized some of his thoughts about tabernacle ministry and began presenting these (somewhat prematurely) as the Home Policy of the Alliance. Key to Smith's convictions was a repudiation of the multiplication of small, ineffective churches which he described as overfed and underworked, self-satisfied and lacking a sense of obligation to evangelize the masses. Such a church was a "dried-up, stagnant pool with no outlet."⁷² Instead, he called for an emulation of the ministry which he was conducting in Toronto. He envisioned:

The establishment of a number of large tabernacle centers in the big cities, to broadcast the truth at home and to form the basis of our foreign work from the standpoint of prayer, money, and missionaries. Such centers will commend the Alliance as a worth-while movement. And with strong executive heads in charge of each place mighty things will be accomplished in the short time that remains before our Lord returns.⁷³

The world would be evangelized as the Alliance conducted ongoing crusades based out of permanent urban tabernacles whose leaders acted as executive heads, organizing campaigns and "holding things steady" by preaching in the interims.⁷⁴

This sounds like a distinctive approach to ministry and it was—but it was also distinctly Alliance at that time in history. Smith's critique of the church in "Our Home Policy" shared much in common with Home Secretary Richards's concerns about

⁷² "Our Home Policy," *The Prophet*, February 1923, 2. Folder 13, Box 11, Smith Papers.

⁷³ Ibid. The embryonic form of these thoughts appear on page two of the November 1922 edition of *The Prophet* (Folder 13, Box 11, Smith Papers), while Smith's expansion of these thoughts is found in "Our Home Policy," *The Prophet*, May-June 1924, 21. Folder 12, Box 8, Smith Papers. One should also refer to "The New Evangelism," in *Can Organized Religion Survive?*, 21-34, for the fullest development of Smith's tabernacle ideal, though this was published after Smith had left the Alliance. See Appendix C for the full text of Smith's Home Policy as recorded in the May-June 1924 edition of *The Prophet*.

⁷⁴ Smith, "Without a Vision," in *Can Organized Religion Survive?*, 78; see also "The New Evangelism," in *Can Organized Religion Survive?*, 27.

ineffective Alliance branches which he reported in 1918.⁷⁵ Though Smith's Home Policy has been quoted at times to argue that his attitude toward the local church was an extreme position that was out of line with the Alliance's more irenic stance,⁷⁶ it would seem that both Smith and Richards were lamenting the same problem: a self-serving inward focus in many congregations that stunted the growth of the Alliance movement and the evangelization of the world. Both men saw a crisis in the homeland that required definite action, and Richards' proposed solution in 1918 prepared the soil for Smith's tabernacle ministry a few years later.

By far the greatest influence in the development of Smith's proposed tabernacle ideal came from the Alliance president, Paul Rader, whom Smith described as a close friend and "a great inspiration."⁷⁷ Smith was impressed with Rader's Moody Tabernacle in Chicago and saw it as a model when he built the Christie Street Tabernacle; but Rader's influence on Smith's life and ministry was not restricted to construction blueprints. Rather, Rader was the inspiration for Smith's entire approach to tabernacle ministry as described in his Home Policy. What Smith saw in Rader, he put into practice himself and then wrote down on paper in 1923. The parallels between their two ministries are striking. Both men were relatively unknown when called to their new pastorates. Both, however, quickly found themselves at the head of thriving works—Rader through his dynamic preaching and Smith through the Bosworth Brothers' campaign. Both men responded to this new public interest in the same way—they capitalized on it by essentially closing their churches and pouring all their energy into

⁷⁵ See page 49 above.

⁷⁶ Niklaus, Sawin, and Stoesz, *All for Jesus*, 152; Bedford, "Larger" 177.

⁷⁷ Hall, *Not Made for Defeat*, 133; Smith, *Story*, 81; Neely, *Fire*, 133.

summer tent meetings. When these proved successful, they both came to the conviction that their churches were meant to sustain a state of high energy evangelism and they resolved to carry their revivalistic momentum into the establishment of permanent evangelistic centres. To accomplish this, they constructed inexpensive, rudimentary tabernacles to serve as a base from which to run continuous crusades. The crowds continued to grow as both men utilized fresh new music and modern advertising techniques to reach more people with the gospel and raise more money for missions.⁷⁸

Smith was understandably inspired by Rader's development of a thriving urban tabernacle and viewed it as a pattern for his own ministry. This being the case, there was no one more fitting than Rader to make the trip to Toronto to dedicate the tent used for Smith's summer meetings in July 1921 or to reappear less than a year later to dedicate the new Christie Street Tabernacle in May 1922.⁷⁹ In Rader, Smith had both a comrade and a role model.

Rader's influence on Smith only increased when, just one month after dedicating the Christie Street Tabernacle, the Alliance president began a six-week summer revival in Chicago that evolved into yet another permanent tabernacle ministry—the Chicago Gospel Tabernacle. Rader constructed a “big steel tent” with a seating capacity of five thousand and filled it nightly throughout the summer months. The campaign was scheduled to end on Labor Day, but—rehearsing the same script he had followed at Moody and Smith had followed in Toronto—Rader felt that the revival they were

⁷⁸ For this overview of Rader's ministry, see Eskridge, “Only Believe,” 32-8.

⁷⁹ “The Christian and Missionary Alliance Tabernacle Tent,” *Toronto Star*, 2 July 1921, 18; “Tabernacle Dedicated,” *Toronto Star*, 15 May 1922, 16; “Prayer Wrought Impulses That Raised Church Fund, Tabernacle Pastor Avers,” *Toronto Globe*, 15 May 1922, 13; Smith, *Working*, 122, 125; Smith, *Story*, 80-1.

experiencing had to be continued and institutionalized.⁸⁰ Following a powerful prayer meeting near the end of summer, Rader and his associates were resolved: “All doubt as to the wisdom of continuing the work was dispelled; all difficulties were removed, and all minds were convinced that there was no alternative but to go forward into a winter campaign.”⁸¹ For the next eleven years the Chicago Gospel Tabernacle functioned as a permanent evangelistic outreach centre much akin to Smith’s work in Toronto.

Smith’s distinctive ministry, therefore, bore the marks of the Alliance president’s influence. He was inspired by Rader’s earlier work at Moody and used this as a model for his own emerging ministry; he was also emboldened by Rader’s contemporaneous development of the Chicago Gospel Tabernacle and saw within their two tabernacles the future of the Alliance. His Home Policy was simply the codification of the ministry ideals he had learned from Rader and which both of them were currently practicing.

Evangelistic Ministries: Accord with Alliance Priorities

Under Smith’s leadership the Christie Street Tabernacle became “Toronto’s Great Centre of Evangelism.”⁸² Beyond the revivalistic campaigns that filled the sanctuary week after week, a number of ministries were developed that gave people an opportunity to participate in the work.⁸³ The evangelistic thrust of these ministries lined up well with the sensibilities of the Alliance within which they found their home.

⁸⁰ Eskridge, “Only Believe,” 63-5.

⁸¹ Pamphlet, “How to Make the Christmas Bells Ring at the Chicago Gospel Tabernacle,” [1922]. Folder 2, Box 1, Rader Collection.

⁸² Smith, *Working*, 143; Smith, *Story*, 83.

⁸³ The following ministries are summarized succinctly in Smith, *Working*, 133-7, Smith, *Story*, 81-2, and Neely, *Fire*, 122-3.

One of the first ministries to take shape was the Wayside Mission, an initiative started in December of 1921 in response to District Superintendent A. W. Roffe's description of the need for the gospel in the unreached regions of Canada.⁸⁴ Smith wrote that "Canada is fast becoming one vast missionary field needing to be evangelized," and to meet that need workers would be sent from the Tabernacle two by two into northern Ontario and western Canada to proclaim the message of salvation by distributing tracts, assisting evangelical ministers, and holding gospel meetings.⁸⁵ The most ambitious endeavour along these lines occurred in the early months of 1924 when two men sponsored by the Alliance Tabernacle headed north from Edmonton to the end of the rail line and then travelled by dogsled far into the northland distributing portions of the Bible in native languages and preaching the Gospel. Smith published accounts of this adventure and the challenges faced by these northern missionaries over the next two months before the project had to be terminated due to an emergency in one of the men's family.⁸⁶

While not many could leave Toronto with the Wayside Mission to evangelize the far reaches of Canada's frontiers, the King's Messengers began in December of 1922 as a means to "provide definite Christian work for all who are desirous of serving their

⁸⁴ Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 107.

⁸⁵ "The Wayside Mission," *The News of the News*, August-December 1921, 3. Folder 12, Box 11, Smith Papers.

⁸⁶ "A Glorious Project," *The Alliance World*, December 1923, 3-4. Folder 11, Box 8; "Off to the Far North," *The Prophet*, February 1924, 5. Folder 12, Box 8; L. J. Butcher, "62 Below," *The Prophet*, March 1924, 6. Folder 12, Box 8, Smith Papers. The Wayside Mission seems to have downsized its vision in the next few years since there is no report on its work in the April 1926 edition of the *Tabernacle News* in which all ministries associated with the Alliance Tabernacle reported on their previous year. It is still listed in the Financial Statement but only received \$121.14 over the year. Perhaps the "Glorious Project" proved to be too glorious to sustain. See "Financial Statement for 1925," *The Tabernacle News*, April 1926, 4. Folder 14, Box 11, Smith Papers.

Lord.”⁸⁷ Local evangelism was the focus of this group, with each member being responsible to evangelize the people living on a given street at least once a month through either tract distribution or personal contact. In this way anyone associated with the Tabernacle could “preach the Gospel through the printed page.”⁸⁸ This group also held open air street meetings and distributed an astonishing number of tracts—91,400 tracts were distributed over the course of twenty-eight meetings in 1925, an average of over 3,200 tracts per meeting.⁸⁹

Beyond evangelizing the general population walking the streets of Toronto, the Tabernacle also developed a specific ministry directed towards the Jewish community of the city. In 1923, Smith was approached by Henry Bregman, an ex-rabbi who had converted to Christianity. Having studied at Toronto Bible College upon his arrival in Canada from Britain, Bregman had a history of involvement in Jewish missions work in Toronto, Paterson (NJ), New York City, and Montreal. Now back in Toronto, Bregman contacted Smith and told him of his desire to start a Jewish ministry in the city.⁹⁰ A house was purchased in a Jewish community and the Tabernacle joined forces with Knox Presbyterian church in founding the House of Seekers After Truth. Bregman lived at the House with his family and used it as a centre from which to run Bible classes for Jewish men, sewing classes for Jewish women, and a monthly prayer meeting for all interested. Bregman also held open air meetings in Jewish communities, distributed tracts written in

⁸⁷ “The King’s Messengers,” *The Prophet*, January 1924, 3. Folder 12, Box 8, Smith Papers.

⁸⁸ “The King’s Messengers,” *The Canadian Alliance*, July 1924, 12. Folder 8, Box 10, Smith Papers.

⁸⁹ “Nearly 100,000 Tracts Distributed by King’s Messengers During 1925,” *The Tabernacle News*, April 1926, 3. Folder 14, Box 11, Smith Papers.

⁹⁰ Henry Bregman, *The Conversion of a Rabbi, or My Life Story* (Toronto: Beth Dor’she ‘Emeth [House of Seekers After Truth], 1926), 13, 48-52.

Hebrew and Yiddish, and published a Yiddish Gospel hymnal. Results were never large—only two people were baptized in 1925—and Bregman faced a great deal of open hostility from his Jewish brethren, but both he and Smith were eager to turn the hearts of the Jewish people toward their Messiah before he returned.⁹¹

Smith's tabernacle also played a key role in the history of the Canadian Bible Institute, which first held classes in the Fall of 1924 with the intention of training young people for missionary and evangelistic service without the slightest taint of religious liberalism.⁹² Though formally a district venture, the Bible Institute was built adjacent to the Alliance Tabernacle and came to rely quite heavily upon its neighbour. In fact, the Tabernacle purchased the land for the school, Smith was one of the instructors, and within a year Ralph E. Hooper, associate pastor of the Tabernacle and close friend of Smith, was appointed principal.⁹³ "Between the school and the Tabernacle the closest possible fellowship exists," *The Tabernacle News* reported in April 1926. "There is not a ripple anywhere. Dr. Hooper and Mr. Smith are as one in the work. No wonder God is

⁹¹ "Rabbi Henry Bregman Doing Magnificent Work Among Toronto Jews," *The Tabernacle News*, April 1926, 3. Folder 14, Box 11, Smith Papers; "House of Seekers After Truth," *The Prophet*, January 1924, 19. Folder 12, Box 8, Smith Papers; "Jewish Opposition," *The Prophet*, March 1924, 5. Folder 12, Box 8, Smith Papers; Oswald J. Smith, Introduction to Bregman, *Conversion of a Rabbi*, no page numbers. See Carpenter, *Revive*, 97-105, for a helpful examination of fundamentalists' attitudes toward the Jewish people. Citing historian Timothy Weber, Carpenter wryly states that it was hard to tell whether fundamentalists were the Jews best friends or their worst enemies (97). Though there are signs in Smith's ministry of the "deep ambivalence" which Carpenter suggests existed in the fundamentalist mindset (105), Bregman would—and did—defend Smith as "a lover of Israel." See "Rabbi," *The Tabernacle News*, April 1926, 3. Folder 14, Box 11, Smith Papers.

⁹² Advertisement, *The Tabernacle News*, March 1925, 4. Folder 14, Box 11, Smith Papers; W. M. Turnbull, "Educational Department Report," Board of Managers' minutes, 23 September 1924. File 15, Box 3. Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

⁹³ "Canadian Bible Institute," *The Canadian Alliance*, July 1924, 3. Folder 8, Box 10, Smith Papers. "First Annual Prayer Conference," *The Canadian Alliance*, July 1924, 5. Folder 8, Box 10, Smith Papers; Reynolds, *Footprints*, 399-402; Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Eastern and Central Canadian District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, 28-30 May 1924, 5. Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

blessing and meeting the needs.”⁹⁴ The Tabernacle seems to have assumed a great deal of responsibility for the ministry of the Institute: in 1925 the school sent out ten thousand letters across Canada in an attempt to raise five thousand dollars. When a paltry twenty replies came in from outside of Toronto “it was felt by the committee of the Tabernacle that Toronto had better lead the way.”⁹⁵ An offering was taken one Sunday at the Tabernacle at which \$6,062 was received for the school—over one thousand dollars more than was asked for.⁹⁶ The Canadian Bible Institute may have been a district venture, but its close ties with and dependence upon the Alliance Tabernacle made it essentially one of the ministries of Smith’s congregation.

Another ministry that grew out of Smith’s time on Christie Street was the Tabernacle Publishers. Besides distributing Smith’s growing number of books and tracts, the Tabernacle Publishers also sold titles written by Canadian Alliance personalities like A. Sims and A. W. Roffe. Other authors whose works were available included A. J. Gordon and Arthur T. Pierson, both of whom shared many convictions in common with the Alliance.⁹⁷ These books were available for purchase at the Tabernacle’s “splendidly equipped Book-Room”⁹⁸ or they could be sent by mail to those farther away. The Tabernacle Publishers’ manager, H. R. Pannabecker, rejoiced in 1926 that they had been able to preach the gospel through the printed page to thousands of homes across Canada and around the world. “In this day when the Church is menaced with the onrushing tide

⁹⁴ “Alliance Tabernacle Contributes \$6,062 to the Canadian Bible Institute. Asked for \$5,000,” *The Tabernacle News*, April 1926, 2. Folder 14, Box 11, Smith Papers.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Advertisement, *The Canadian Alliance*, July 1924, 16. Folder 8, Box 10, Smith Papers.

⁹⁸ “The Book Room,” *The Word of Life*, July 1923, 2. Folder 10, Box 8, Smith Papers.

of modernism and false doctrine,” he urged, “every Christian should do his utmost to scatter good, sound literature [*sic*] throughout the length and breadth of the country.”⁹⁹

The Tabernacle Publishers saw themselves as offering just such a service.

Smith’s tabernacle also ran a Sunday School, but the numbers involved were surprisingly small with only 250 students in 1926.¹⁰⁰ True to its theological context, Smith’s Sunday School was pre-eminently concerned with evangelism and missions.¹⁰¹ Twenty-five students were saved through the Sunday School in 1925 and \$3,800 was raised for mission work, including the building of two churches on the mission field (one in Africa and one in India). The reasons for the smaller numbers in the Sunday School are at least twofold. One, the Tabernacle’s adherents were scattered across the Toronto area and distance prohibited many from travelling in very often. To combat this, in 1923 the Sunday School began a “Home Department” which provided students with lessons which they could do while sitting at their own kitchen tables; in 1925 the Sunday School claimed eighty-five such students.¹⁰² The other factor that led to smaller attendance at the Sunday School was Smith’s relative indifference to children’s ministry. As one of his associates later commented regarding his ministry at the Peoples Church, “You have to remember that Dr. Smith did not see this as a family church. . . . The main thrust was the

⁹⁹ “World-wide Service Rendered by Tabernacle Publishers During 1925,” *The Tabernacle News*, April 1926, 4. Folder 14, Box 11, Smith Papers.

¹⁰⁰ Smith, *Back to Pentecost*, 106.

¹⁰¹ It was reported at the Eastern and Central Canadian District Conference in 1925 that missions was “without a doubt the centre of this work [Alliance Tabernacle’s Sunday School]” as evidenced by its “fine offering of prayer, money, and lives for missions.” See the Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Eastern and Central Canadian District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, 20 May 1925, 1. Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

¹⁰² “Our Sunday School,” *The Alliance World*, December 1923, 4. Folder 11, Box 8, Smith Papers; “Sunday School Raises \$3,800 for Foreign Missions. Primary Contributes \$165.00,” *The Tabernacle News*, April 1926, 3. Folder 14, Box 11, Smith Papers.

pulpit ministry. . . . The Sunday School was far down Dr. Smith's list as an effective tool of the Peoples Church."¹⁰³ Put more gruffly, Smith's vision was to "fish for men, not minnows."¹⁰⁴ As a result the Sunday School was generally healthy but was never one of the ministries for which the Alliance Tabernacle was noted.

The one thing that these diverse ministries share in common is an overarching commitment to evangelism—in Smith's tabernacle all Christian ministry revolved around the saving of souls. This is a conviction that Joel Carpenter sees being shared and championed by the larger fundamentalist community in the twentieth century in a manner unparalleled by other evangelical movements. Though this could be seen to set Smith apart from an Alliance focus on the Fourfold Gospel, Carpenter argues that it was the Alliance's founder, A. B. Simpson, who—among other "soul-saving specialists"—inadvertently contributed to this narrowing of the church's mission long before the modernist-fundamentalist controversies of Smith's day.¹⁰⁵ Smith was travelling a road marked out for him by Simpson. As well, we have already argued that the Alliance had likewise narrowed its focus by the 1920s—while still holding to the Fourfold Gospel in theory, evangelism and missions had become the focus of the movement. This focus on the eternal was partly a reaction to the temporal concerns being championed by their modernistic foes through the Social Gospel and it was also a by-product of their culturally-pessimistic premillennial convictions.¹⁰⁶ For all intents and purposes the Alliance was motivated by the same goal that motivated Smith's tabernacle ministry—the

¹⁰³ Quoted in Bernard Palmer, *Peoples: Church on the Go* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1976), 16.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Neely, *Fire*, 134.

¹⁰⁵ Carpenter, *Revive*, 78.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*; Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 85, 91.

salvation of souls. This is borne out by E. J. Richards' report on the Home Department, delivered to the Alliance's Annual Council in 1921, in which he bemoaned the apostasy of the organized church and their commitment to "social uplift." The solution Richards called for is unequivocal:

Against this condition of affairs God has called us to take a most uncompromising stand, believing that the call of the Church is to do one thing only and that is to "preach the Gospel to every creature." Pastors, evangelists, and missionaries, let us be true to God's vision and Evangelize, Evangelize, Evangelize!¹⁰⁷

Smith could not have agreed more. This report was given in May 1921, just five months after Smith had joined the Alliance and at the height of the Bosworth Revival which proved to be so formative for his future ministry. Richards made it clear that evangelism was the clarion call of the Alliance in that day, and the fact that the ministries of Smith's tabernacle revolved around this same centre point demonstrates his accord with the movement.

Conclusion

Smith's tabernacle ministry was undeniably distinct—few congregations had the resources or the tenacity necessary to internalize the revivalistic intensity and energy that was characteristic of life on Christie Street. Nevertheless, Smith's ministry was also distinctly Alliance—he joined a movement in 1921 which had adopted an expansion plan focused on campaigns and tabernacles two years previous and which demonstrated its support of his developing ideology at the national, district, and local levels. Beyond this

¹⁰⁷ E. J. Richards, "Report of Secretary of Home Department," *The Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Christian and Missionary Alliance: 1920-1921*, 73. Note also the priority assigned to evangelism in the Fraternal Letter of this Annual Report: "While we thank God for the increased interest in the ministry of healing witnessed in an extraordinary way during the past year, at the same time we consider the great message of salvation for a perishing world of pre-eminent importance." "Fraternal Letter," *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report: 1920-1921*, 6.

authorization, the specific contours of Smith's ministry were shaped by the influence of key Alliance personalities, including the president himself. As such, Smith's ministry was not an awkward anomaly but rather serves as a paradigmatic example of Alliance initiatives in the tumultuous and definitive years surrounding the death of its founder, A. B. Simpson.

That name has been largely absent from the discussion in this chapter, and this could give the mistaken impression that Simpson played no significant role in the development of Smith's tabernacle ideology. Nothing could be further from the truth, for Smith considered the Alliance founder to be the guiding inspiration for his work on Christie Street. The next chapter, then, will be dedicated to an examination of the way in which the ministry practiced by Smith and championed by Rader was patterned after Simpson. Were Smith and Rader steering the Alliance into troubled waters, or were they returning it to the vision of its founder?

CHAPTER THREE

FOLLOWING THE (SIMPSONIAN) PATTERN SET BEFORE HIM

Oswald J. Smith's tabernacle ministry enjoyed the authorization and influence of the Alliance, at least in its earlier years. When the Board of Managers accepted Paul Rader's resignation of the presidency in January 1924, they also embarked on a more conservative course that inherently rejected Rader and Smith's suggested "Home Policy" of large urban tabernacles focused on evangelism and missionary support.¹ The board wanted an expansion plan that was more in harmony with "the simplicity and spirituality of the Alliance movement," and the tabernacle ministry exemplified by Rader and Smith was seen to be a deviation from the Alliance's heritage.²

Smith saw things quite differently. To his way of thinking his tabernacle was not a departure from A. B. Simpson's original vision but rather the fulfillment of it. The Alliance founder was arguably his primary inspiration as he developed his ministry on Christie Street. Smith was a Simpsonian visionary, and although there was some discontinuity between his tabernacle and Simpson's ministry a generation earlier, their substantial continuity testifies to the integrity of Smith's claim.

¹ Board of Managers' minutes, 16 January 1924, File 15, Box 3. Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

² Board of Managers' minutes, 27 November 1923. File 14, Box 3. Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK; "Report of the Committee to the Board on Official Letter Relative to the Resignation of Mr. Rader," 2. Folder 1, Box 1, Rader Collection.

Echoes of Simpson in the Ministry of Smith

Chapter One presented evidence of the influence which Simpson's teachings had on Smith's doctrinal convictions. Smith adopted the Alliance founder's Christocentric understanding of the Fourfold Gospel and aligned himself with Simpson on many matters related to the distinctive doctrines of sanctification and healing. Beyond this doctrinal influence, Smith also referred to Simpson at key junctures to explain the specific contours of his tabernacle ministry. For example, one month after arriving at the Parkdale Tabernacle, Smith's newsletter contained an article written by Simpson which defined the Alliance as an evangelistic and inter-denominational movement, preaching the gospel "to every creature" while refusing to build up sectarian divisions.³ In this way, Smith was able to align his forthcoming ministry with that of Simpson and remind people where the idea of non-sectarian evangelism had come from.

Construction on the new Christie Street Tabernacle began in February 1922, and Smith celebrated the laying of the cornerstone by holding a special service.⁴ At this ceremony he gave his audience the clearest indication that he saw his ministry fulfilling a pattern marked out by Simpson. His chosen message for this important and symbolic event was entitled "The Vision and Work of the Alliance," and it amounted to a description of Simpson's early tabernacle ministry in New York. The way that Smith told the story, Simpson had been "the pastor of a very large Presbyterian church of very high social standing" when he "decided to launch his followers out on evangelistic work, that they might save some of the lower classes of New York." Once he recognized that

³ A. B. Simpson, "The Christian and Missionary Alliance—What It Is," *News of the News*, February 1921, 1. Folder 6, Box 10, Smith Papers.

⁴ "Handsome Bequest Comes to Homeless Congregation Following Days of Prayer," *Toronto Globe*, 30 January 1922, 9; "Build New Tabernacle," *Toronto Star*, 30 January 1922, 13.

his congregation was “stylish and didn’t want the poorer ones in their church,” he resigned and “stepped out alone to start a new work without either help or money.” Though only seven people had joined with him in his new work, there were now thousands “who banded themselves together for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.” Smith then offered a threefold description of Simpson which a reporter picked up on, demonstrating that he understood the import of Smith’s message. Beginning with a quote from Smith, the reporter wrote:

“Mr. Simpson was a Canadian, a Presbyterian and stood four square to the old principles.” Mr. Smith likewise is a Canadian, and a former Presbyterian. But like Rev. Doctor Simpson, he had a greater vision and left his pastorate to take up the evangelistic work of the Missionary Alliance [*sic*]. Like Mr. Simpson, he never fell out with the Presbyterians. In fact he still enjoyed worshipping with them.⁵

Smith told Simpson’s story in order to tell his own. Like Simpson, Smith’s evangelistic fervency got him into trouble in a stylish Presbyterian church—Smith had been an associate minister at Dale Presbyterian in Toronto where he encountered stern opposition to his soul-saving efforts.⁶ Like Simpson, Smith resigned and left denominational ministry behind while still asserting his ongoing fellowship with his former ecclesiastical home. Like Simpson, Smith had started his new work with a small number of people which then grew into thousands all caught up in the grand task of evangelization. To Smith’s mind, his ministry fulfilled a Simpsonian pattern. By preaching this sermon in connection with the laying of the cornerstone of his new tabernacle, Smith made it clear that he saw his ministry as a replica of Simpson’s and he wanted others to notice the parallels as well.

⁵Newspaper clipping, “New Tabernacle Corner Stone Laid,” [ca. February 1922]. Folder 3, Box 11, Smith Papers.

⁶ Smith, *Story*, 66.

Smith may have seen things this way, but was his perception justified? Some might charge Smith with being guilty of selective history, reading Simpson's story through an incomplete grid that highlights similarities but ignores differences. For example, the Alliance's centennial history, *All for Jesus*, compares the ministries of Simpson and Smith and states that the significant differences between them were the reason why "Alliance leaders were becoming concerned with the new direction envisioned by [President] Rader for the Alliance."⁷ Was Smith following a Simpsonian pattern as he thought he was, or was he launching out into uncharted territory as *All for Jesus* suggests? To answer that question, this chapter will take a closer look at Simpson's early tabernacle ministry to ascertain how Smith's work in Toronto either honoured or deviated from the pattern set before him.

Continuity Between Simpson and Smith's Tabernacles

Simpson provides a retrospective analysis of his New York Gospel Tabernacle on the occasion of the congregation's quarter centennial in 1907. After relaying a history of the tabernacle's development and building-hopping up to that point, he summarizes its twenty-five year history with a list of nine "leading lessons which God has been emphasizing in the story of the Gospel Tabernacle."⁸ According to Simpson, his ministry could be described as evangelistic, free, spiritual, balanced, missions-minded, sacrificial, beneficial to the church, Jesus-centred, and premillennial.⁹ While these nine descriptors provide a full-orbed picture of Simpson's tabernacle priorities, certain elements show up

⁷ Niklaus, Sawin, and Stoesz, *All for Jesus*, 153.

⁸ A. B. Simpson, "A Story of Providence," *Living Truths*, March 1907, 162.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 162-4.

more frequently than others in his reflections on the matter; more attention will be focused on those characteristics since they form the heart of Simpson's convictions. Analysis of this exercise will demonstrate that Smith's ministry was faithful to the Simpsonian model he sought to honour.

An Evangelistic Work Apart from the Church

When Simpson resigned from the Thirteenth Street Presbyterian Church in November 1881 he did not plan to start another church; rather, he simply wanted to commit himself to the task of evangelizing the masses in New York “who go to no church, and are not reached by the Gospel through the ordinary channels.”¹⁰ Simpson believed that churches were necessary and good, but he was certain that there was evangelistic work to be done which the churches were not willing—or perhaps able—to do. Writing during the very early stages of his new work in January 1882, he states:

We must not ignore or undervalue the office of the pastor to feed and teach the flock of God. But the ministry of special evangelists for the purpose of preaching to the world and stirring up the Church to this work; . . . this should by all means be done far more widely than it is, and the Gospel carried to men who would not dream of seeking it within a church.¹¹

Simpson saw himself as one of those “special evangelists” and as such, he had left the organized church with no intention of starting a new one. His interview with a reporter at the time of his resignation confirms this:

I have been impressed with the fact that a vast number of people, even those who have once been church members, cannot be induced to attend an organized church. Having reached hundreds of such persons by preaching for two years in a public hall in Louisville, Ky., I felt that the same work could be done here. I find that work is not

¹⁰ A. B. Simpson, “The Gospel Tabernacle,” *The Word, The Work, and The World*, March 1883, 45.

¹¹ A. B. Simpson, “The Religious Wants of New York,” *The Word, The Work, and The World*, January 1882, 28.

met by the church. My main reason for my action in retiring from the pastorate of my church is to labor among these non-churchgoers.¹²

The organized church was not bad, but, according to Simpson, it simply was not sufficient to meet the needs of the day. He therefore left it behind and committed himself to the task of special evangelistic work that would reach those beyond its grasp.

It was not long before Simpson had to modify his original vision. A local minister advised Simpson that he should take care of his own spiritual children rather than expect the local churches to do this. To that end, in February 1882 Simpson formed a simple independent congregation, comprised of the handful of people who had joined him in his evangelistic endeavour along with those who were being saved through his ministry.¹³ Thus the Gospel Tabernacle was born. While Simpson was now at the head of a church, it was still pre-eminently an evangelistic enterprise. Written right into the simple constitution of the tabernacle was the statement that “it will ever be recognized as *the specific mission* of this Church to promote the work of Evangelization among the neglected classes both at home and abroad.”¹⁴ The young congregation was birthed out of Simpson’s passion for evangelism and it remained true to its roots.

The rhythm of life at the Gospel Tabernacle bears testimony to this. By May 1882, the congregation had secured permanent facilities in the Grand Opera Hall which allowed them to hold “a regular Sunday morning and evening service, with meetings

¹² “Retiring from His Pulpit,” compiled in *Simpson Scrapbook*, comp. C. Donald McKaig, (Regina: Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, 1971), 190.

¹³ Simpson, “A Story,” 152-3; Simpson, “Gospel Tabernacle,” 45.

¹⁴ *Gospel Tabernacle 1893 Yearbook* (1893), 38, emphasis in the original. Compiled in *The Man, the Movement and the Mission: A Documentary History of the Christian and Missionary Alliance*, vol. 1, comp. Charles Nienkirchen (Regina: privately printed, 1987), 153.

every night in the week, except Saturday.”¹⁵ By July, the nightly meetings were moved to a large tent where “for nearly four months, the work went on without intermission, and scarcely one service was held without the conversion of souls.”¹⁶ In November the congregation returned to the Grand Opera Hall to continue its intensive schedule of regular, nightly meetings. Eleven years later, in 1893, Simpson testified that services were still being held every night of the week, giving him good reason to declare that “our gospel never takes a vacation.”¹⁷

Simpson was clearly committed to the task of ongoing evangelistic work—a task that he believed should be prosecuted in other centres as well:

There is need in every town and city in the land for a simple, popular and undenominational evangelistic movement, not for a few passing weeks, leaving them to relapse into their old habits when the meetings close, but continuing throughout the year; gathering its fruits around its own centre and providing a home for the non-church going classes. May God speed the day when there shall not be a hamlet in the land without such a light in the darkness.¹⁸

Simpson thereby held up his tabernacle ministry as a model for others to follow. The churches were not willing or able to devote their energy to large-scale evangelism, and short-term evangelistic campaigns left the converted susceptible to spiritual relapses. Simpson proposed to stand in the gap by overseeing an ongoing evangelistic movement which would save the souls of non-churchgoers and then provide them with a spiritual home. This was not a picture of a typical church—it was a vision of a creative, evangelistic enterprise.

¹⁵ Simpson, “A Story,” 153.

¹⁶ Simpson, “Gospel Tabernacle,” 45.

¹⁷ Simpson, “The Work,” 107.

¹⁸ A. B. Simpson, “Evangelistic Work in America,” *The Word, The Work, and The World*, November 1882, 263; also quoted in Niklaus, Sawin, and Stoesz, 53.

It is also the vision that Oswald Smith tapped into almost forty years later.

Simpson's statement above sounds remarkably similar to one that Smith gave in the afterglow of the Bosworth Revival of 1921 that set the tone for his future ministry:

The normal state of the Church should be one of revival; not a spasmodic campaign held two or three weeks during the year, but one continuous work. It ought to be possible for a sinner to find Christ at every service. Therefore, as much as in us lies, we are ready (D.V.) to carry on the work and preach the Gospel every day in the week, taking Saturday only for rest and recuperation.¹⁹

This announcement seemed to signal the inauguration of a unique approach to ministry, but in reality Smith was following a Simpsonian pattern. Every aspect of Simpson's ministry that has been detailed in this section also finds expression in Smith. Both men perceived a desperate need for aggressive evangelism that could not be met by ordinary churches using ordinary methods. Both men committed themselves to meet those needs apart from the organized church and, when they formed congregations of their own, kept evangelism as the central focus of their tabernacles. The same techniques of regular nightly meetings and summer tent campaigns figured prominently in both ministries. On the basis of these parallels, Smith could justifiably portray his ministry as Simpsonian.

Free to All and Freely Supported by All

While Simpson's evangelistic fervour drove him *toward* independent ministry, it was his disdain for what he perceived to be the exclusionary practices of the organized church that drove him *away* from denominationalism. He had tried to fulfill his vision of evangelism at the Thirteenth Street Presbyterian Church, but "the system of pew rents, the strong sectarian aspects which the work unavoidably carried . . . and the extreme respectability of the people made it difficult and almost impossible to gather the poor and

¹⁹ "A Continuous Revival," *The News of the News*, June 1921, 2-3. Folder 6, Box 10, Smith Papers.

NEWS THE NEWS

OF

Published by Parkdale Tabernacle, Toronto, Can.

Queen Street, First Stop West of Subway
Pastor, Rev. Oswald J. Smith, 6 Muir Avenue. Ken. 5104w

VOL. 1

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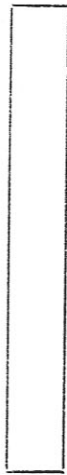
Alliance Tabernacle Tent

COLLEGE STREET, ONE BLOCK WEST OF SPADINA AVENUE



REV. JOSEPH HOGUE
OF MINN.

under whose leadership the Re-
vival was carried on from
June 6th to 30th



REV. ROBERT G. MOORE
who will continue the great Bosworth
Revival.

Our Big Tent, 90 feet square, is at last ready and all the money in hand. The whole amount, more than \$2,000.00, has been provided during the past three weeks, mostly in small gifts, the largest being \$100.00. The tent was completely seated the first day by means of a Chair Shower, the people sending in hundreds of chairs until there was no room for more.

The Bosworth Brothers, Hardy Mitchell and Joseph Hogue have come and gone. Paul Rader is with us for three days only. Robert G. Moore of Chicago, the Irish Evangelist, comes next, commencing on July 4th. With him we enter upon the twelfth week of our Revival Services. Well may we exclaim: "What hath God Wrought!"

MEETING EVERY NIGHT (EXCEPT Saturday) 7.30

Figure 7. Tabernacle publication detailing the early stages of Smith's continuous evangelistic services. (Oswald J. Smith Papers, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, IL).

the lost within our walls.”²⁰ Pew rents excluded the middle and lower classes, sectarianism divided Christians into opposing camps, and social respectability demeaned those who could not keep up with the latest fashion. In contrast to this, Simpson wanted to break down financial and social barriers so that people of all classes and backgrounds could find the salvation they all needed and then work together for the evangelization of the world.²¹

To accomplish this Simpson adopted “the principle of a free church without pew rents, where all classes and denominations would be equally welcome.”²² This was a large act of faith, for without pew rents Simpson had to rely on the voluntary giving of his congregation both to cover the tabernacle’s expenses and to put food on his family’s table. Many of his colleagues thought he was crazy and told him that “a free church never could be sustained in New York City.”²³ He was convinced, though, that if the work was worth supporting then he could “expect the Lord to send the means” as they were required.²⁴ “No money is ever charged for admission to the church, under any circumstances, no religious fairs or entertainments are ever held,” he vowed. “It is God’s holy house and He is pleased to fill it continually with his power and glory.”²⁵ God was faithful and Simpson’s congregation gave generously of their own free will, leading their

²⁰ Simpson, “The Work,” 107.

²¹ See Simpson, “The Rich and the Poor Meet Together,” *The Word, The Work, and The World*, January 1882, 25.

²² Simpson, “A Story,” 150.

²³ *Ibid.*, 162.

²⁴ Simpson, “The Work,” 107.

²⁵ *Gospel Tabernacle 1893 Yearbook* (1893), 38, compiled in *The Man, the Movement and the Mission*, 153.

pastor to assert that “the spirit of sacrifice, especially in giving to God, has been from the beginning a striking feature of our work.”²⁶ Simpson removed financial barriers so that people would feel free to come, and when they came they supported the work freely.

Smith adopted a similar attitude and opened the doors of his tabernacle wide. He advertised the Christie Street Tabernacle as having “2000 Free Seats”²⁷ and he abjured all questionable means of money-raising which churches sometimes used in his day:

We endeavour to do God’s work in God’s way. The world’s methods are not introduced. Money is not raised through suppers, bazaars, concerts, entertainments, showers, social functions, ticket selling, etc., nor are any private solicitations authorized. Our needs are continually supplied according to Phil. 4:19, in answer to believing prayer.²⁸

Smith’s people were likewise noted for their sacrificial giving towards the ministry—when the congregation needed to make a three thousand dollar payment on their new tabernacle in October 1922, the amount was raised through one offering with the largest contribution being one hundred dollars.²⁹ Like Simpson, Smith welcomed everyone into his tabernacle and then found that they were willing to support the ministry freely.

Focused on “Jesus Only” and Avoiding Sectarian Divisions

People were not only free from financial pressures in Simpson and Smith’s tabernacles—they were also free from sectarian divisions. It would be difficult to overestimate the importance Simpson placed upon the non-sectarian nature of his work; it was inextricably connected to his desire to reach non-churchgoers, many of whom had

²⁶ Simpson, “A Story,” 163.

²⁷ Advertisement, *Toronto Globe*, 13 May 1922, 22.

²⁸ “Standards and Principles,” *The Prophet*, May-June 1924, 7. Folder 12, Box 8, Smith Papers.

²⁹ Smith, *Working*, 130-1; Smith, *Story*, 81.

grown cynical of the divisiveness they saw within the church. Against this state of affairs, Simpson was determined to draw people together by focusing on their common need for Jesus which transcended any denominational differences. It is no surprise, then, that Simpson described his new work as “undenominational” at every turn.³⁰ To reach those who had been hurt or ignored by the organized churches, Simpson had to distinguish himself from them.

Simpson took this commitment to non-sectarian ministry with him from his personal tabernacle and into the establishment of the Christian Alliance in 1887. “Its aim is not in any sense sectarian,” he explained to a meeting of New York City ministers in 1893. “If we had the power to establish a new sect, with hundreds of thousands of churches, we would not for one moment encourage it. We advise our people to work in hearty accord with the various branches of the evangelical church, and there is no sort of antagonism between the Alliance and any of the churches of Christ.”³¹ In the same way that Simpson wanted his tabernacle to be a place where people from all walks of life could gather together to find Christ and work towards his coming, his vision for the Alliance was of a fraternal association of believers from different ecclesiastical backgrounds all united for the sake of the gospel. As such, denominational distinctions that could divide people and hurt the work were checked at the door. In their place, Simpson sought to raise a banner which people of different backgrounds could all rally under, and written on that banner was his signature motto, “Jesus Only.”³² This phrase

³⁰ See, for example, the following newspaper articles: “Retiring from His Pulpit,” “Evangelizing the Masses,” and “Preaching to the Masses,” compiled in *Simpson Scrapbook*, 191-194.

³¹ Simpson, “The Work,” 107.

³² Simpson’s oft-repeated declaration to the Annual Meeting of the Alliance in 1914 makes this clear: “[The Alliance] is an interdenominational movement, not building up sectarianism, but *bearing only*

appears to function as somewhat of a double entendre for Simpson, speaking of the fact that “Jesus Only” could meet every need in a believer’s life while also asserting that believers should seek to magnify “Jesus Only” and not any particular sect or faction of the church.³³

Smith was in hearty agreement with the Alliance founder on this matter. “God knows, there are enough sects now,” he wrote despairingly.³⁴ He aligned himself with Simpson’s vision very early, quoting Simpson in his tabernacle periodical just one month after joining the movement to affirm that the Alliance was “an interdenominational movement, not building up sectarianism, but bearing only on its banner the name Jesus, and welcoming the cooperation of Christians and missionaries of every evangelical denomination.”³⁵ Smith gave expression to Simpson’s non-sectarian convictions regularly throughout his ministry. Again, at the laying of the cornerstone for the Christie Street Tabernacle where Smith implicitly described his ministry in Simpsonian terms, it was reported that “in closing Mr. Smith said that they were not trying to be another denomination. Instead they were simply trying to advance the Kingdom of God through evangelism [*sic*].”³⁶ This is the statement of a “latter-day Simpson,” someone who believed he was fulfilling a ministry mandate begun forty years previous in New York.

on its banner the name of Jesus and welcoming the cooperation of Christians and missionaries of every evangelical denomination without requiring the sacrifice of their convictions and denominational relationships” (emphasis mine). See A. B. Simpson, “Report of the President,” *The Seventeenth Annual Report of the Christian and Missionary Alliance: 1913-1914*, 36.

³³ See Thompson, *Life of A. B. Simpson*, 133-5, for more on Simpson’s anti-sectarian convictions.

³⁴ “Why No Membership,” *The Prophet*, February 1923, 2. Folder 13, Box 11, Smith Papers.

³⁵ A. B. Simpson, “The Christian and Missionary Alliance—What It Is,” *News of the News*, February 1921, 1. Folder 6, Box 10, Smith Papers.

³⁶ Newspaper clipping, “New Tabernacle Corner Stone Laid,” n.d. Folder 3, Box 11, Smith Papers.

Following in his role model's steps, Smith proudly and regularly proclaimed his work as inter-denominational and non-sectarian throughout his pastorate.³⁷

The preceding survey has demonstrated that Smith faithfully emulated the most significant aspects of the nine "leading lessons" which Simpson believed were characteristic of his independent tabernacle ministry in New York—Smith followed Simpson in establishing an evangelistic ministry apart from the organized church that was free to all, marked by the sacrificial support of the common people, and focused on glorifying the name of Jesus in a non-sectarian fashion. It should also be noted that three of the other descriptors find clear expression in Smith's ministry as well. Simpson's tabernacle stood for a deep spirituality that aimed to lead people "into all the fullness of Christ," and Chapter One demonstrated that Smith was likewise a faithful exponent of the Fourfold Gospel. Second, Simpson believed that the supreme glory of his tabernacle was its commitment to foreign missions and the same could easily be said of Christie Street: Smith was a missionary statesman who raised increasingly large sums of money and sent out workers for the Alliance's missionary enterprise through his tabernacle.³⁸ Finally, Simpson's tabernacle declared that Christ was coming back again and sought to be prepared for his premillennial return; Chapter One gave evidence that Smith likewise urged people to prepare for the end times through his preaching and writing. So then, of the nine characteristics that Simpson offers as descriptors of his tabernacle, Smith's work on Christie Street aligns easily with seven of them.

³⁷ For example, see "Facts About the Work," *Tabernacle Monthly*, August 1922, 4. Folder 7, Box 10, Smith Papers; "Why No Membership," *The Prophet*, February 1923, 2. Folder 13, Box 11, Smith Papers; "The Alliance Tabernacle," *The Word of Life*, July 1923, 2. Folder 10, Box 8, Smith Papers; "Our Home Policy," *The Prophet*, May-June 1924, 21. Folder 12, Box 8, Smith Papers.

³⁸ "Multitudes Attend Opening and Dedication of New Alliance Tabernacle. \$36,000 for Missions," *The Bloor-Dovercourt Booster*, 16 June 1922. Folder 3, Box 11, Smith Papers; Smith, *Story*, 82.

Apparent Discontinuity between Simpson and Smith's Tabernacles

This leaves two characteristics of Simpson's tabernacle that apparently are not honoured by Smith: a balance of ministries and a commitment to benefit the church. Upon closer examination, however, it will be seen that even these two issues are not as clear-cut as they first appear.

A Balance of Ministries

Simpson argued that his tabernacle combined “all the gifts and ministries of the Apostolic Church” into a cohesive, balanced blend: “Not only have we the work of the evangelist, but the deeper teaching of God's Word, the training of Christian workers, the ministry of healing, the work of the pastor, and the great work of foreign missions.”³⁹ He explained that, while the first stage of his independent work was wholly evangelistic, before long his tabernacle had developed other meetings for believers focused on consecration and healing.⁴⁰ In the following years he also established a Missionary Training School, an orphanage, a publishing house, and a variety of rescue missions;⁴¹ these disparate ministries would appear to justify Simpson's claim that he was “not simply an evangelist.”⁴²

This seems to conflict with Smith's vision of tabernacle ministry. “If we settle down to ordinary church work,” he warned the Alliance in 1924, “we will have no ground for our existence. Only as our Tabernacles become spiritual centers for

³⁹ Simpson, “A Story,” 163.

⁴⁰ Simpson, “The Work,” 107-8.

⁴¹ Ibid.; Simpson, “Gospel Tabernacle,” 46; Simpson, “A Story,” 156-7.

⁴² Cited in Bedford, “Larger,” 91.

aggressive evangelism, both at home and abroad, are we true to the vision of Jesus Christ as expressed in the great commission.”⁴³ For Smith, tabernacles dare not deviate from the evangelistic focus which he believed was their genius: while churches had to care for many things, tabernacles could focus on the one thing that was most important.⁴⁴ In contrast to Simpson, then, Smith would seem to be quite content to be known as “simply an evangelist.”

However, two things should be noted before placing a wedge between Simpson and Smith’s tabernacles. First, within Simpson’s “balanced blend of ministries,” evangelism still held pride of place. He proclaimed at his congregation’s quarter-centennial that “the work has always been pre-eminently evangelistic, the salvation of souls has ever been, *and we trust will ever be*, its supreme business. It was born in this atmosphere and without it, it will languish and decay.”⁴⁵ Evangelism was king. Other ministries developed over time, but Simpson would not allow these to replace the central concern of saving souls. As well, a number of these secondary ministries were motivated by an evangelistic concern that lurked just beneath their surface: the Missionary Training School sought to prepare workers “to go forth as laborers into the neglected fields,”⁴⁶ his publishing house produced periodicals focused on the cause of world missions,⁴⁷ and rescue missions were established with a view to saving the souls of those who walked

⁴³ “Our Home Policy,” *The Prophet*, May-June 1924, 21.

⁴⁴ Oswald J. Smith, “The Cosmopolitan Tabernacle,” *World Wide Christian Courier*, November 1928, 12. Folder 11, Box 1, Rader Collection; Smith, “The New Evangelism,” in *Can Organized Religion Survive?*, 27, 29.

⁴⁵ Simpson, “A Story,” 162, emphasis mine.

⁴⁶ Simpson, “Gospel Tabernacle,” 46.

⁴⁷ Simpson, “A Story,” 157.

through their doors.⁴⁸ Scratch Simpson's tabernacle and it would bleed evangelism. The same was true of the Alliance which later grew out of his ministry; Simpson explained that:

While the strength of our organization is chiefly directed to foreign evangelization and the more neglected fields of the heathen world, our home work is being chiefly directed to the promotion of a deeper spiritual life among Christians, *with the view of inspiring aggressive work for the salvation of the lost* at home, and bolder efforts for the evangelization of the world abroad.⁴⁹

The Alliance was focusing attention on the teachings of the deeper life but with an agenda in mind—this would lead to more effective evangelistic and missionary efforts. It would seem that Simpson was justified in asserting that he was not *simply* an evangelist; he was a *complex* evangelist whose concern for souls expressed itself at all levels and in a variety of creative ways.

The second consideration that should temper any large distinction one may be tempted to make with regard to the balance of ministries in Simpson and Smith's tabernacles is the fact that Smith was not as narrowly evangelistic as he sometimes portrayed himself. He regularly listed "the edification of believers" as one of his tabernacle's key objectives⁵⁰ and dedicated mid-week meetings to Bible study and teaching when campaigns were not being conducted.⁵¹ As well, though Smith spoke with apparent disdain for "ordinary church work," his tabernacle carried out many of the functions of an ordinary church such as administering the ordinances of baptism and

⁴⁸ Simpson, "Gospel Tabernacle," 46; Simpson, "The Work," 108.

⁴⁹ Simpson, "The Work," 108, emphasis mine.

⁵⁰ "Facts About the Work," *Tabernacle Monthly*, August 1922, 4. Folder 7, Box 10, Smith Papers.

⁵¹ Smith, *Story*, 84; Neely, *Fire*, 148; Advertisement, *The Tabernacle News*, March 1925, 1. Folder 14, Box 11, Smith Papers.

communion while providing both nurture and practical service for believers.⁵² These are clearly concerns that fall outside of the realm of simple evangelism.

As with Simpson, an evangelistic mandate was never far beneath the surface of Smith's concern for believers. The evangelization of the world would require the cooperation of believers who had experienced the power of the Full Gospel in their own lives and who could then take that message to the lost. In order for more sinners to be saved, then, the saved had to be sanctified, the sanctified had to be healed, and then everyone could work toward the return of Christ by proclaiming this good news to those who had yet to hear. In this way Smith's ministry to believers was motivated by the same evangelistic agenda that undergirded Simpson's tabernacle.

Simpson and Smith's tabernacles should not be set in sharp contrast on the basis of their balance of ministries. Simpson did foster a greater diversity of programs—most notably a number focused on healing—but his tabernacle was still an evangelistic enterprise at its core. On the other side of the spectrum, Smith's tabernacle was not as exclusively evangelistic as he sometimes claimed it was; he provided for Christian nurture and development in a number of ways within his congregation. In the end, both men operated evangelistic tabernacles that saw the continued growth of believers as an important aspect of their goal to spread the gospel throughout the world.⁵³

⁵² "The Alliance Tabernacle," *The Word of Life*, July 1923, 2. Folder 10, Box 8, Smith Papers; "The King's Messengers," *The Prophet*, January 1924, 3. Folder 12, Box 8, Smith Papers.

⁵³ This counters the Alliance's centennial history, *All for Jesus* (152-3), which implies that (1) Smith's tabernacle avoided the functions of a regular church such as the observance of the ordinances and that (2) Simpson's tabernacle enjoyed a balance of worship, nurture, evangelism, and missions.

Beneficial to the Church

There is one last “leading lesson” of Simpson’s Gospel Tabernacle against which Smith’s ministry on Christie Street should be compared—its beneficial contribution to the church. Smith was actually in substantial harmony with Simpson on this matter but there was also an important difference between the two that needs to be noted.

Simpson believed that his tabernacle had exercised a pervasive and powerful influence throughout the church:

Perhaps the most significant feature of the Tabernacle work is the one that would be the most difficult to describe, namely, its silent, indirect influence in stimulating faith in God and earnest, aggressive work for our fellowmen *among other Christian organizations* as well as individuals. Like the salt and like the light, its pervading power has been stealing silently through human hearts and only the final day will measure the value and fruition of that “sweet savor of Christ” which has gone forth through its humble and consecrated people to the uttermost parts of the earth.⁵⁴

Simpson was no stingy miser when it came to his congregation’s time and energy—he gloried in the fact that his people had poured their energies into a variety of different organizations and missions apart from their home tabernacle. This willingness to support ministries other than those he was directly involved in flowed out of his strong non-sectarian convictions; Simpson was not concerned with the advance of any particular church but he had a consuming interest in the advance of the universal church.

This was a concept that grew in popularity with the rise of dispensational thought in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. George Marsden explains that dispensationalism led to a non-institutional ecclesiology which relegated the organized church to a place of obscurity. The true church was redefined as the “faithful remnant of the spiritual who are ‘separate and holy’ from the world,” and within this new economy

⁵⁴ Simpson, “A Story,” 164, emphasis mine.

the institutional church held no particular status and played no necessary role.⁵⁵ Taking its place, there arose “a network of *ad hoc* spiritual organizations” into which sanctified believers directed their energies and their finances.⁵⁶ Simpson could therefore rejoice that his people were involved in a number of Christian ministries because these other “spiritual organizations” were all members of the true church along with his tabernacle. As such, it did not matter which group a person chose to work with so long as the work was getting done and the gospel was being proclaimed.⁵⁷

Smith held a similar commitment to furthering the mission of the universal church in a non-sectarian fashion. In fact, he raised the ire of some within his tabernacle by financing non-Alliance missionaries, something that was against Alliance policy at that time.⁵⁸ Smith saw no problem with such an arrangement, however, and he found backing within the Alliance’s own literature. Quoting verbatim from the Alliance’s 1912 Constitution, he declared that one of the primary objectives of his tabernacle was to work “without reference to ecclesiastical uniformity, but in cordial sympathy with all evangelical Christians and organizations” toward the salvation and sanctification of many.⁵⁹ Such a commitment to the universal gave no space for bickering over any particular—after all, everyone was on the same team.

⁵⁵ Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 54.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁵⁷ See Joel L. From, “Antebellum Evangelicalism and the Diffusion of Providential Functionalism,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 32 (Winter 2003): 194-9, for a critical analysis of the Evangelical understanding of the universal church and the rise of disparate agencies in antebellum America all intent on the same objective.

⁵⁸ Neely, *Fire*, 147-8.

⁵⁹ “Standards and Principles,” *The Prophet*, May-June 1924, 7. Folder 12, Box 8, Smith Papers; “General Constitution and Principles, Adopted by the General Council, May 26-30, 1912, Amended by the

While Simpson and Smith shared a commitment to the universal church and believed that their tabernacles were contributing to its cause, where they differed was in their attitudes toward the local church—an entity which Simpson sought to support and which Smith sought to replace. Though Simpson chose to work apart from the Thirteenth Street Presbyterian church he did not want his new ministry to be viewed as in any way competitive or divisive; to that end he urged his congregation “with great earnestness” to remain with the church rather than follow him, and he pledged his willingness to support his former congregation in any way they should desire.⁶⁰ When he established the Christian Alliance in 1887 he upheld his commitment to the local church, specifying in its constitution that “it is not intended in any way to be an engine of division or antagonism in the churches, but, on the contrary, to embrace Evangelical Christians of every name.”⁶¹ Rather than pulling away from the work of their congregations, Simpson suggested that members of the Alliance “will be found to be the most earnest, faithful and spiritually minded people in the various evangelical churches, the most valued helpers of every faithful pastor and of every good work.”⁶² The Alliance would strengthen the local church by holding branch meetings and conventions which would inspire and instruct Christians who would then return to their churches to minister more effectively. Simpson wanted to support, not undermine, the work of the local church.

General Council, March 25-28, 1913,” compiled in *Readings in Alliance History and Thought*, comp. Ken Draper (Regina: privately printed, 2000), 71.

⁶⁰ “Giving Up His Pastorate,” *Simpson Scrapbook*, 188; Simpson, “A Story,” 151.

⁶¹ Constitution of the Christian Alliance (1887), *The Christian Alliance Yearbook* (1888), 48; compiled in Draper, 43.

⁶² A. B. Simpson, “Editorial,” *The Word, The Work, and The World*, September 1887, 110; quoted in Niklaus, Sawin, and Stoesz, *All for Jesus*, 75.

Smith offered a more radical alternative: he wanted to advance the cause of Christ by *replacing* the church with the tabernacle. This is seen in his Home Policy that has been referred to earlier.⁶³ Smith lamented that denominational churches were no longer doing God's work of evangelism and attributed the loss of evangelistic preaching to the influence of Satan. What was to be done about this? "To plant small churches all over the country is not our policy," he asserted. Rather, the answer was to be found in the establishment of a number of aggressive tabernacles.⁶⁴ While Smith still affirmed that there were some faithful men serving within the denominations, he believed that a new wave was washing over the evangelical shore which was wiping out ineffective churches and depositing tabernacles in their place.⁶⁵

This apparent disregard for the local church was decidedly different from Simpson's attitude. Then again, the ecclesiological landscape that Smith inhabited was also different from Simpson's. While Simpson was generally supportive of the church, he was still concerned with the rationalism and higher criticism which he believed was creeping into many denominational pulpits.⁶⁶ These concerns were shared by many in the late nineteenth century who saw them as signs of the "ruin of the church," the belief that deviation from the true faith within the major branches of Christianity would precede and prepare the way for the rise of the Antichrist in the last days. For Simpson and most of his contemporaries, however, this was more of a theoretical belief than an operative one; while they perceived a problem, very few were willing to place their home

⁶³ See pages 71-5 above; see also the text of Smith's Home Policy in Appendix C.

⁶⁴ "Our Home Policy," *The Prophet*, May-June, 1924, 21. Folder 12, Box 8, Smith Papers.

⁶⁵ Smith, "The Challenge of the Churches," in *Can Organized Religion Survive?*, 68.

⁶⁶ See especially A. B. Simpson, *The Old Faith and the New Gospels: Special Addresses on Christianity and Modern Thought* (New York: Alliance Press Co., 1911).

denominations in this category.⁶⁷ By Smith's day, though, concern for the ruin of the church took on a new urgency as the fundamentalist/modernist controversy heated up. What had been a sobering theory in Simpson's day was looking more like an alarming reality to Smith. As Joel Carpenter explains, "Militant conservatives began to suspect that their liberal denominational colleagues had actually gone over to the enemy. The days for polite discussion and giving benefit of the doubt were gone, and the gloves came off."⁶⁸ On the basis of this analysis, Smith's pessimistic attitude toward the church can be understood as the realization of Simpson's prior theoretical concern. Although their positions were different, they shared the same trajectory.

Organizational Discontinuity between Simpson and Smith's Tabernacles

Having looked at the nine descriptors Simpson used to characterize his tabernacle, only two areas have been noted in which Smith deviated measurably from his model. This process, though, did not uncover the most obvious difference between the two men: their organizational philosophies.

Simpson's Gospel Tabernacle was marked by democratic governmental ideals. Membership was open to anyone who had professed their faith in Christ, had a sincere desire to live according to his will, and demonstrated their consistent Christian character.⁶⁹ These members elected a board of elders to care for the affairs of the church and who were, by virtue of their elected status, accountable to the people. In contrast to

⁶⁷ Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 70; Carpenter, *Revive*, 38.

⁶⁸ Carpenter, *Revive*, 40.

⁶⁹ Constitution of the Gospel Tabernacle, from *Gospel Tabernacle 1893 Yearbook* (1893), 38. Compiled in *The Man, the Movement and the Mission*, 153.

this, Smith led his Christie Street Tabernacle autocratically—he hand-selected a group of “consecrated men” and formed a committee to aid him in giving direction to the ministry.⁷⁰ The chain of command was unmistakable. Smith asserted that “God’s plan is that His flock should be led by a Shepherd, not run by a board. Committees are to advise, never to dictate. The Holy Spirit does not come upon Boards, He anoints men.”⁷¹

Membership in the tabernacle was limited to this committee with everyone else left as adherents with no representative voice. Smith defended this philosophy as being in the best interests of the work:

1. It does away with the annual election of officers by the congregation. No longer are church fights and congregational battles possible. . . .
2. It takes away what is often a basis of salvation. Since there is nothing to join no one can possibly rely upon church membership. . . .
3. It nullifies the frequent charge of “sheep-stealing.” Individuals may come and go at will. They will never be asked to “join” since there is nothing to join. The objective will be the salvation of souls and the development of spirituality rather than church membership.⁷²

Smith was fundamentally opposed to board governance and church membership, believing that they caused unnecessary distractions and impediments. These were, however, the very means by which Simpson’s tabernacle was organized. This is the clearest difference between the two men and, as such, it has been duly noted by Alliance historians.⁷³

⁷⁰ “By-laws—Alliance Tabernacle Willowvale Park,” Folder 3, Box 10, Smith Papers; “Committee in Charge,” *The Prophet*, February 1923, 2. Folder 13, Box 11, Smith Papers.

⁷¹ Oswald J. Smith, “Leadership,” *World Wide Christian Courier*, September 1928, 15. Folder 11, Box 1, Rader Collection; also Smith, “Leadership,” in *Can Organized Religion Survive?*, 35.

⁷² “Why No Membership,” *The Prophet*, February 1923, 2. Folder 13, Box 11, Smith Papers.

⁷³ Reynolds, *Footprints*, 390; Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 67, 69, 149; Niklaus, Sawin, and Stoesz, *All for Jesus*, 152-3.

That being said, it should be recognized that this is a difference with which Simpson would not have been very concerned. In fact, his Gospel Tabernacle began in February 1882 with a repudiation of church membership that anticipates Smith's convictions. "Mr. Simpson says he has no intention at present of organizing a regular church society," a reporter noted during the new congregation's first campaign. "'We have holy communion,' he said, 'and that is all. We keep no church record nor anything of that sort. Our names are registered in heaven, and that's enough for us.'" ⁷⁴ Simpson's tabernacle was birthed in a culture of organizational indifference, and while he did adopt the form of membership mentioned above shortly after this interview, his comments testify to the low priority that he placed on these matters. He did not see his particular form of government as prescriptive in any way. ⁷⁵

Conclusion

Smith's assertion that he was following a Simpsonian pattern of ministry proves to be justified upon examination. His Christie Street Tabernacle was an evangelistic work apart from the organized church which was free to all and committed to advancing the gospel in a non-sectarian manner—Simpson's legacy is easily discernible in this description. Certainly, there were some differences between Simpson and Smith's ministries, but the significance of these should not be overstated. Simpson's greater balance of ministries still largely gravitated around an evangelistic centre, and Smith's more pessimistic attitude toward the organized church can be seen as the realization of

⁷⁴ "Mr. Simpson's Park Theatre Revival Service," *Simpson Scrapbook*, 195.

⁷⁵ This organizational indifference carried over into the Christian and Missionary Alliance. The 1906 "Conference for Prayer and Counsel Respecting Uniformity in the Testimony and Teaching of the Alliance" specifically listed "Church Government" as an open question which the Alliance took no official position upon.

his forebear's prior theoretical concern. The clearest distinction between the two tabernacles was the way they were organized and governed, but this is an issue that Simpson would have considered negligible. Therefore, while Smith's ministry in Toronto may not have been a carbon copy of Simpson's work in New York, the family resemblance was unmistakable.

Sadly, though, Smith left his tabernacle in 1926 and then left the Alliance family altogether in 1928. Why did someone marked by Simpsonian convictions end up parting with Simpson's organization? Either he was a prodigal who forsook his family in order to live his own life or he was a prophet who was banished from his people but remained unwilling to compromise the convictions with which he was entrusted. Alliance historiography has largely subscribed to the first scenario—Smith was restless within the confines of the Alliance household and, leaving house and father, set off on his own. Our next chapter will demonstrate that Smith viewed his departure through the lens of our second option—he may have left the Alliance, but he took Simpson with him.

CHAPTER FOUR

LEAVING THE ALLIANCE AND CLEAVING TO SIMPSON

Oswald J. Smith was committed to the Fourfold Gospel (Chapter One), his tabernacle ideology had been authorized and influenced by key Alliance personalities (Chapter Two), and he patterned his ministry after A. B. Simpson himself (Chapter Three). Nevertheless, the young pastor severed all ties with the Alliance in August 1928 and, just nine days later, stepped onto the stage at Massey Hall to inaugurate what would become the Peoples Church. This new work featured the same message, the same techniques, and even many of the same personnel which had proven so successful on Christie Street. It also owed something else to Smith's foray with the Alliance—the vision of A. B. Simpson. Smith may have left the Alliance, but he never left its founder; to the contrary, Smith carried his Simpsonian convictions into his post-Alliance ministry, boldly asserting that his new ministry was Simpson's true bloodline since the Alliance had forsaken its founder's ideal of non-sectarian evangelism.

Leaving the Alliance

Like any pastor, Smith had his share of detractors and it appears that there were at least three factions that expressed significant concerns with his leadership. Lindsay Reynolds suggests that “fundamental differences” surfaced between Smith and some members of the original Parkdale nucleus as early as August 1921 when it became clear that their democratic ideals would be jettisoned and replaced with an autocratic

government in the new Christie Street Tabernacle.¹ Lois Neely claims that Smith got into trouble with some Alliance loyalists by contravening Alliance policy and financially supporting missions organizations not associated with the movement.² Ironically, though, Smith's greatest problems revolved around his hand-picked committee, several members of which grew tired of the constant campaigns that characterized life at the tabernacle, longing for a return to a more "normal" church experience.³ Smith later attributed this unrest to "Methodists who [*sic*] I had unwisely taken into the committee,"⁴ explaining elsewhere that they "did not have the vision for missionary work that the Alliance people had."⁵ By 1925 the dissatisfaction of these men had spread beyond the committee to include a growing segment of the congregation.⁶

The committee was also concerned that Smith's rising success and popularity had gone to his head. "There are two Oswald Smiths," wrote Assistant Superintendent Lionel Watson, offering his explanation of the conflict.⁷ The Smith of the early years was humble, contrite, and dependant upon God, but "gradually, almost imperceptibly, another

¹ Reynolds, *Footprints*, 389-90; Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 67, 149. Smith would have undoubtedly been frustrated that this core of approximately twenty-five people who had resolved to disband only months before he became pastor would criticize his initiatives in favour of their former state of affairs (see page 63 above). District Superintendent A. W. Roffe would have been sympathetic to Smith's frustration; he once wrote to a colleague that "Mr. Smith took hold of Parkdale Tabernacle when it was worse than dead. It was a liability rather than a help to him." See A. W. Roffe, Toronto, to E. B. Fitch, New York, 2 November 1923, Ottawa Gospel Tabernacle file, Eastern and Central Canadian District documents, Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

² Neely, *Fire*, 147-8.

³ *Ibid.*, 148; Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 149.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Neely, *Fire*, 149.

⁶ Hall, *Not Made for Defeat*, 143.

⁷ Lionel Watson, [Toronto], to Oswald J. Smith, [Toronto], 30 January 1927, 1. Lindsay Reynolds Papers, Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

Oswald Smith emerged.” He was boastful, self-promoting, and intrigued by the autocratic leadership ideals of Mussolini.⁸ This new Smith no longer felt it necessary to tolerate what Watson termed the “rigid demands and fearless criticisms” of his opponents on the committee, and everyone was forced to choose sides.

While these conflicts swirled around Christie Street, Smith was asked by Alliance leadership in New York to consider becoming the district superintendent for Eastern Canada. Frustrated by the situation in the tabernacle, Smith submitted his resignation and indicated his intent to accept the post with the district.⁹ In reality he hoped his resignation would be refused and that his supporters on the committee would urge him to stay while dismissing his opponents. The gamble backfired. Smith’s resignation was accepted and he found himself cut off from his beloved tabernacle, “the child of his prayers and tears,” by his own doing.¹⁰ He was elected district superintendent on May 13, 1926, and he preached his farewell sermon at the tabernacle one month later, on June 20.¹¹

The next year was full of active ministry for Smith as he travelled and held campaigns throughout North America, but through it all he restlessly longed to be

⁸ Ibid., 2. Smith’s positive assessment of Mussolini is evident in *When Antichrist Reigns*, 38-9: “I am not one of those who frown on Mussolini’s form of government. That he has accomplished wonders for Italy there can be no doubt. It takes a one man government to really do things. Mussolini has saved Italy. Real leadership is priceless. I know that when my Lord comes, He is going to set up just that kind of a government. An absolute monarchy is God’s ideal. It will, of course, be just and righteous and strong where human governments are weak and faulty.” 38-9

⁹ Letter of resignation, Oswald J. Smith, Toronto, to the Committee of the Alliance Tabernacle, Toronto, n. d. Lindsay Reynolds Papers, Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

¹⁰ Neely, *Fire*, 149-50; Orr, *Abounding*, 49-50; Elliott, “Eight Canadian Fundamentalists,” 290.

¹¹ Minutes of the Meeting of the Eastern and Central Canadian District Conference, 13 May 1926. Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK; “Tabernacle Pastor Concludes Ministry to Take New Office,” *Toronto Globe*, 21 June 1926, 11; Smith, *Story*, 84.

reunited with his “child.” In November 1926 Smith received a call to return to Christie Street but it “lacked a whole-hearted enthusiasm” on the part of the committee. Smith agreed to accept, but on the condition that the “troublemakers” on the committee be removed.¹² This shut down negotiations and within a month Smith had tendered his resignation from the district office (effective 1 February 1927) and announced his plan to accept the pastorate of a gospel tabernacle in Los Angeles, which he did on April 10, 1927.¹³

As soon as Smith arrived at his new post, he realized that his “heart was still in Toronto” and he immediately made plans to return.¹⁴ He was encouraged in this respect by some loyal supporters from Christie Street who wrote to him and urged him to come and save his “ailing child.” Attendance at the Tabernacle had dropped by fifty percent since his departure and many people were anxious to see their former pastor back.¹⁵ By the end of 1927 it looked like a way was opening up for Smith to return. Two former members of the Alliance Tabernacle’s committee wrote to the Alliance’s Board of Managers in New York in December 1927, requesting that Smith’s successor, Dr. Ira David, be asked to resign and Smith reinstated. Surprisingly, the board called Dr. David to New York to discuss the matter, and this gave Smith and his supporters reason to hope

¹² Watson to Smith, 30 January 1927; Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 150.

¹³ Minutes of the Meeting of the Eastern and Central Canadian District Committee, 27 December 1926. Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK; Neely, *Fire*, 151; Smith, *Story*, 85; Program from Installation Service for Oswald J. Smith at the Gospel Tabernacle Church, 10 April 1927. Folder 21, Box 1, Smith Papers.

¹⁴ Smith, *Story*, 85. Smith resolved to stay in Los Angeles for a year, reasoning with his wife that he could “do no less when these kind folks have brought us all this way” (Neely, *Fire*, 151-2). For insight into Smith’s ministry in Los Angeles, see his tabernacle magazine, *Herald of the Times*, June 1927 to August 1928. Folder 14, Box 8, Smith Papers.

¹⁵ Reynolds, *Footprints*, 408, notes that average attendance plateaued at twelve hundred under the ministry of Smith’s successor, Dr. Ira David.

for an eventual reunion of pastor and people.¹⁶ Smith preached his last sermon at the Gospel Tabernacle in Los Angeles on April 1, 1927 and explained to his congregation that he was returning to Toronto to work as a field evangelist with the Alliance. At heart, though, he was hoping that he would soon be back in his old pulpit.¹⁷

In one sense, he was. Leaving California on May 16, Smith arrived back in Toronto twelve days later. Curiously, Dr. David gave Smith the Sunday evening service on June 3 and he preached to an overflowing Tabernacle, enjoying “all the enthusiasm and fervor of bygone days.”¹⁸ Everything seemed to be working out. “What a joy it was to stand on the platform again,” he wrote, “to look once more away up into the elevation at a sea of faces, and to see kneeling at the altar precious souls for whom He died! How we thanked God that He ever led us . . . to build the Tabernacle that has been the spiritual birthplace of so many!”¹⁹

However, that proved to be the last time that Smith occupied the platform of the Alliance Tabernacle. His return to Toronto had shaken up life on Christie Street and the Board of Managers in New York decided they needed to step in and restore stability.²⁰ President Harry Shuman and Vice President Walter Turnbull travelled to Toronto on July 12, 1928 to meet with the tabernacle committee and, after pushing for Dr. David’s

¹⁶ Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 150-1.

¹⁷ “Farewell,” *Herald of the Times*, May 1928, 2-3. Folder 14, Box 8, Smith Papers; “Los Angeles to Toronto,” *Herald of the Times*, July-August 1928, 2-4. Folder 14, Box 8, Smith Papers; Neely, *Fire*, 155.

¹⁸ Advertisements for this service appeared in the June 2 edition of both the *Toronto Globe* (page 23) and the *Toronto Star* (page 26). See also “Sunday Night in the Tabernacle,” *Herald of the Times*, July-August 1928, 4; Smith, *Story*, 86; Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 151.

¹⁹ “Sunday Night in the Tabernacle,” *Herald of the Times*, July-August 1928, 4.

²⁰ Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet of the Board of Managers, 25 June 1928. Lindsay Reynolds Papers, Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

resignation and reassignment as a travelling evangelist, turned their attention to the future of the tabernacle. Lindsay Reynolds explains:

As the tabernacle was in fact an independent work, it was clearly possible that at any time a leader might appear “who could secure a majority vote of the Committee to completely alienate the work and property from the Society.” In order to prevent the possible loss of the building for Alliance use, the board wished “to place the Corporation of the Alliance Tabernacle . . . into the hands of the men at Headquarters.”²¹

The Board of Managers clearly did not want Smith back at Christie Street and viewed him as a threat to Alliance interests in Toronto.²² Shuman and Turnbull persuaded the committee to resign and an interim committee—composed of nine members of the New York Board—was appointed in its place. Further, plans were immediately undertaken to make the tabernacle a “regular Alliance branch” which subscribed to the Society’s constitution, including membership and representative government.²³ Smith’s “child” was thereby given a facelift which obliterated any resemblance to him as father. By the end of the summer the tabernacle’s interim committee had called Noel Palmer, associate pastor of the New York Gospel Tabernacle, to candidate in Toronto. One week after Dr. David preached his last sermon as pastor of Christie Street, Palmer preached his first.²⁴

²¹ Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 151.

²² Strangely, Smith was a member of the Board of Managers at this time, having been elected to a three year term in 1926. It seems obvious that he was not a part of the deliberations that led to this action in Toronto. See “Officers of the Christian and Missionary Alliance,” *The Thirty-First Annual Report of the Christian and Missionary Alliance for the Year 1927*, 208.

²³ Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 151; Minutes of the Meeting of the Home Department of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, 16 July 1928. Lindsay Reynolds Papers, Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

²⁴ Reynolds, *Rebirth*, 152; “Big Congregation Welcomes Pastor,” *Toronto Globe*, 17 September 1928, 13. This article notes that a crowd of fifteen hundred people welcomed Palmer to the Christie Street Tabernacle. Besides Smith’s return earlier in the summer, this would have been the first occasion in a long time that the tabernacle was reasonably full. Unfortunately for Palmer, attendance dropped to around eight hundred—one-third of the tabernacle’s capacity—soon after his arrival. See Reynolds, *Footprints*, 411.

Smith's response to these developments was hardly surprising. Even before Palmer was called to Toronto, Smith wrote to his colleagues on the Board of Managers:

As a result of recent developments in connection with the Christie Street work, I have become convinced that it is impossible to carry out my God-given vision for Toronto through the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and I therefore feel that I have no alternative but to sever my relationship and obey the voice of the Lord.²⁵

Smith declared his love for the Alliance but he was convinced that his work in Toronto was not yet done. "I trust that my new effort will not be looked upon as in any way competitive," he wrote, "for I wish the Alliance every possible blessing."²⁶ He asked that his service as a member of the Board of Managers and a field evangelist be ended effective August 31, 1928, a wish to which the board consented.²⁷

Thus ended Smith's eventful service with the Alliance. He had returned to Toronto at the end of May expecting, so he said, "to work with the Alliance the rest of my life," but the events of the ensuing two months had made it "irrevocably clear" that the Christie Street Tabernacle "was lost to him forever."²⁸ He had attempted to fulfill a Simpsonian pattern of evangelizing the world in a non-sectarian manner, but these were the very things that proved to be points of contention between him and the Alliance. His evangelistic fervour created a rift within his committee which precipitated his resignation

²⁵ Oswald J. Smith, [Toronto], to the Board of Managers of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, New York, 27 July 1928. Lindsay Reynolds Papers, Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ The Board's reply to Smith shared the same cordial nature evident in his resignation. "We were pleased with the spirit of your letter and your expressed desire to continue in fellowship and to cooperate whenever possible in the future. We join with you in this desire and trust, whatever may be your field of service in the future, that you may realize constantly that you are in the will of God and that God's blessing is resting upon you." These warm wishes would be put to the test in the coming months. D. J. Fant, New York to Oswald J. Smith, Toronto, 2 August 1928. Lindsay Reynolds Papers, Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.

²⁸ Smith, *Story*, 86; Neely, *Fire*, 155.

in 1926. When it looked as though he might return to the tabernacle in 1928 the Board of Managers intervened and reorganized the work; by doing so, they made it clear that matters of organization and constitution were central interests of the movement. Smith saw this as a betrayal of the Alliance's supposed non-denominational nature and he severed his ties. He was still committed to the task of non-sectarian evangelism, though, and he wasted no time in starting a new work.

Cleaving to Simpson

Smith travelled to Chicago to preach in Paul Rader's Gospel Tabernacle from August 12 to 26, 1928.²⁹ While there he agreed to join Rader's World-Wide Christian Couriers, an independent missionary society which he had established during his final year as president of the Alliance.³⁰ Rader appointed Smith as the Director for Canada, based out of Toronto, and the two planned a large campaign in Massey Hall from September 4 to 14 which featured Rader speaking during the week and Smith on Sundays (see figure 8).³¹ Rader's magazine announced that "this effort will be followed by another important enterprise which will result in the fulfillment of a great vision for the evangelization of the Christless masses both at home and abroad."³² Smith originally

²⁹ Sermon manuscript, "Bro. Oswald Smith," 26 August 1928. Folder 43, Box 1, Rader Collection.

³⁰ In April 1922—eight months before resigning from the Alliance—Rader began the Gospel Missionary Association which was perceived by the Board of Managers to be a competing missionary society. In June 1926 it was renamed the World-Wide Christian Couriers. See Eskridge, "Only," 165, 195 n. 16.

³¹ Paul Rader, "The World-Wide Christian Couriers Come to Canada Under the Splendid Leadership of Oswald J. Smith, the Director for Canada," *World-Wide Christian Courier*, September 1928, 20. Folder 11, Box 1, Rader Collection; "Noted Evangelist Opens His Campaign in Effective Style," *Toronto Globe*, 5 September 1928, 13; advertisement, *Toronto Star*, 1 September 1928, 25; advertisement, *Toronto Globe*, 8 September 1928, 27.

³² "Notice to Subscribers," *World-Wide Christian Courier*, September 1928, 2. Folder 11, Box 1, Rader Collection.

PAUL RADER

Closing Week in Massey Hall

Paul Rader will preach every night in Massey Hall at 7.30, Monday, 10th, to Friday the 14th, inclusive, and each afternoon at 2.30, Tuesday the 11th, to Friday, the 14th, inclusive.

Don't fail to hear this mighty evangelist, who is preaching to vast multitudes constantly. His messages are broadcast to multiplied thousands. His sermons illustrated by stories of his early life in the Wild West, his pugilistic encounters and his modernistic preaching grip his audiences and hold the attention of his hearers to the end. Come early. Doors closed as soon as great auditorium is filled.

OSWALD J. SMITH

will deliver one of his soul-stirring addresses on Prophecy, closing with a salvation appeal, in Massey Hall to-morrow night (Sunday) at 7 o'clock, when he will answer the following questions:

"What will happen when Jesus comes, according to Zech. 14?—who will gather together the nations?—How will the battle of Armageddon be won?—Will Jerusalem ever fall again?—How and where will Christ first appear?—What physical and moral changes will take place when He returns?—Is He to reign as King?"

S. E. Ramseyer, soloist and trombolist, will lead his great mass choir and direct the singing at every service, including to-morrow night, and Mrs. Ramseyer, pianist, will play on "David's" Golden Harp. All who can sing are urged to be on the platform before seven.

To-morrow night will constitute the first service of The Metropolitan Tabernacle congregation, of which Rev. Oswald J. Smith is pastor, W. C. Willis treasurer, and Paul Rader president; a permanent evangelistic centre, standing pre-eminently for the conversion of souls, the edification of believers and world-wide evangelism, emphasizing especially the four great essentials, viz.: Salvation, the Deeper Life, Foreign Missions, and our Lord's Return; endeavoring by every means to get the Message out to the Christian masses both at home and abroad.

In the years to come you will want to say that you were at the very first service of The Metropolitan Tabernacle. Then come to Massey Hall to-morrow night and hear all about it, but come early and get a good seat. Watch for the big word "Metropolitan" in next Saturday's ad.

Figure 8. Advertisement appearing in the *Toronto Star*, 8 September 1928, 21, announcing the Rader/Smith campaign in Massey Hall that marked the beginning of Smith's post-Alliance ministry.

called this “important enterprise” the Metropolitan Tabernacle but changed the name to the Cosmopolitan Tabernacle two weeks later to avoid confusion with the Metropolitan Methodist Church.³³ In any case, only four days after his resignation from the Alliance became effective, Smith was already launching a large campaign to inaugurate a new ministry in Toronto.

Rader and Smith were well-suited to working together, sharing the same ministry philosophy. As discussed in Chapter Two, both men developed large tabernacles void of membership, committed to ongoing revival and the support of pioneer missionary work around the globe. Rader was the president of the Alliance when Smith joined in 1921 and he proved to be a friend, model, and mentor. However, his tumultuous relationship with the Alliance was also a harbinger of things to come for Smith.

Rader’s Chicago Gospel Tabernacle had formed out of a series of evangelistic meetings he held in the summer of 1922, and as this work grew to attract five thousand people nightly, Rader’s energy was increasingly siphoned away from the Alliance. The Board of Managers grew frustrated with their absentee president, a situation which was exacerbated by Rader’s impulsive and non-consultative nature. In 1923 he proposed an aggressive focus on tabernacles as the future of the Alliance’s Home Policy, but the Board rejected the idea as being discordant with “the simplicity and spirituality of the Alliance movement.”³⁴ They were not willing to commit to Rader’s proposed program and Rader was not willing, as he put it, to “bear the onus of leading it [the Alliance] into

³³ “Evangelistic Centre Launched in Toronto,” *Toronto Globe*, 10 September 1928, 13. See also the advertisements found in the following newspapers: *Toronto Star*, 1 September 1928, 25; *Toronto Globe*, 8 September 1928, 27; *Toronto Globe*, 22 September 1928, 21.

³⁴ Board of Managers’ minutes, 27 November 1923. File 14, Box 3. Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK.; “Report of the Committee to the Board on Official Letter Relative to the Resignation of Mr. Rader,” 2. Folder 1, Box 1, Rader Collection.

ecclesiasticism when my vision is absolutely otherwise.”³⁵ His resignation was accepted on January 16, 1924, after which he devoted his entire energy toward his Chicago Gospel Tabernacle and the World-Wide Christian Couriers.³⁶ “Constant Revival at Home and Abroad until Jesus Christ Comes Again” was the guiding slogan of the Couriers.³⁷

This was the organization Smith joined in the fall of 1928 as the Director for Canada. Besides the tabernacle ministry which Smith developed under the umbrella of the Couriers, he also contributed a regular section to the society’s magazine.³⁸ Called “Canadian Outlook,” these pages afforded Smith an opportunity to present his teachings as well as to provide readers with updates about his ministry in Toronto. Smith’s frustration with the Alliance is palpable in these columns. For example, the September 1928 edition featured a lengthy article on leadership that attacked governing boards and committees, the source of his struggle on Christie Street. “God’s plan is that His flock should be led by a Shepherd, not run by a Board,” he wrote. “Committees are to advise, never to dictate. The Holy Spirit does not come upon Boards, He anoints men.”³⁹ Any doubt that Smith had his difficulties at Christie Street in mind when writing these words are dispelled by the thinly veiled autobiography that follows later in the article:

³⁵ Paul Rader to the Board of Managers of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, New York, [1923], 7. Scrapbook 2, Rader Collection.

³⁶ Board of Managers’ minutes, 16 January 1924. File 15, Box 3. Canadian Bible College/ Canadian Theological Seminary Archives, Regina, SK. For more information on Rader’s departure from the Alliance, see Eskridge, “Only Believe,” 71-5, and Niklaus, Sawin and Stoesz, *All for Jesus*, 145-56.

³⁷ *World-Wide Christian Courier*, July 1926, back cover. Folder 10, Box 1, Rader Collection.

³⁸ Smith’s writing appeared occasionally in the *Courier* before this time. See Oswald J. Smith, “The Abominations of the Church,” *World-Wide Christian Courier*, January 1927, 19-20, 38-40. Folder 10, Box 1, Rader Collection. Also Oswald J. Smith, “A Challenge to Preachers Without a Vision,” *World-Wide Christian Couriers*, January 1928, 13-14, 36.

³⁹ Oswald J. Smith, “Leadership,” *World-Wide Christian Courier*, September 1928, 15. Folder 11, Box 1, Rader Collection

A pastor prays, toils and travails until at last he gives birth to a God-imparted vision. Of his own free will he invites a number of men to associate themselves with him in the care of this child, dearer to him than life itself. But they disagree with his policy even though the child for which he has sacrificed everything is in a flourishing condition; and finally through their lack of appreciation and vision, they force him to abandon his offspring, thinking they in their blindness know better how to care for it. He goes, his soul wrung with anguish, his heart torn and bleeding. He appeals to those higher up, but in vain. They compromise with the usurpers, ignore what he has done, and let him suffer on. The men whom he was kind enough to invite, in whom he trusted, now take charge. The child grows weaker and weaker. Common sense would tell them to send in desperation for the father, to save it, but no, they prefer to watch its death struggles as it gasps for life, knowing not that they have wrought its ruin.⁴⁰

Smith wrote his *Courier* articles with (dangerous) abandon and for this reason they serve as a helpful and transparent source of his thought in the years following his departure from the Alliance. They reveal the central role that A. B. Simpson continued to play in his post-Alliance ministry and the new role which he believed the Couriers were to play in God's economy because of the Alliance's perceived departure from its founder's vision.

Smith's Cosmopolitan Tabernacle: Fulfilling Simpson's Original Vision

By November 1928 Smith felt the need to give his readers a detailed description of his new venture, the Cosmopolitan Tabernacle. Reminiscent of the ceremony at which the Christie Street Tabernacle's cornerstone had been laid—where Smith described his ministry in Simpsonian terms—Smith again appealed to Simpson at the outset of his post-Alliance work.⁴¹ First, though, he outlined a prestigious lineage for the Cosmopolitan Tabernacle. Smith claimed that they were using the same method as “that of the apostle Paul,” who would stay in a city and minister for a long period. Further,

⁴⁰ Ibid., 35-6.

⁴¹ See pages 85-6 for the service commemorating the laying of the Christie Street Tabernacle cornerstone.

“our inspiration has been Spurgeon’s great work in London,” in which he departed from conventional methods and established “a permanent evangelistic center” in music halls and theatres. Smith opined that “D. L. Moody had the same vision,” founding the Moody Church as a headquarters which kept the fires of revival burning and which served as a base from which to send workers and funds around the world.⁴² The Apostle Paul, Charles Spurgeon, D. L. Moody—these were the people Smith sought to emulate. They were not his chief influence, though. That honour was still reserved for A. B. Simpson:

What we are trying to do is to carry out the exact vision of that great Presbyterian leader, Dr. A. B. Simpson. He left the conventional church, rented theatres and halls, started great centers of evangelism in an effort to reach the Christless masses, cooperated with the churches, let them have the members, but continued to get the message out, using all the musical talent available and every method that would draw crowds to hear the Gospel which he so earnestly proclaimed. . . . *No thought had he of starting a new denomination. Times have changed, but we believe that Dr. Simpson’s vision is still the vision for today and his methods the best even now.* God help us to be true and never to depart from the original vision lest disaster overtake us and the glory depart.⁴³

A. B. Simpson was still Smith’s primary inspiration and model, and he wanted to fulfill the “original vision” which had motivated Simpson’s independent New York ministry four and a half decades earlier. Central to this quest was Simpson’s departure from conventional means, his overarching concern for evangelism, and his abhorrence of sectarian divisiveness in the body of Christ. As was demonstrated in the previous chapter, Smith rightly understood these to be core Simpsonian convictions and he faithfully (albeit imperfectly) honoured them during his ministry on Christie Street; the above quote makes it clear that they would continue to animate his ministry with the Couriers.

⁴² Oswald J. Smith, “The Cosmopolitan Tabernacle,” *World-Wide Christian Courier*, November 1928, 11-12. Folder 11, Box 1, Rader Collection. See also Oswald J. Smith, “The New Evangelism,” *World-Wide Christian Courier*, December 1930, 8-9, 13, 16, 18. Microfilm 3, Rader Collection.

⁴³ Smith, “Cosmopolitan,” *World-Wide Christian Courier*, November 1928, 12, 25, emphasis mine.

Smith's indebtedness to Simpson was made explicit in the above statement, and it is implicit throughout his various descriptions of his new venture. Smith chose the name *Cosmopolitan* because "the rich and the poor, the old and the young, the good and the bad, the white and the black—all are made welcome;" this honoured Simpson's commitment to forming a "free church . . . where all classes and denominations would be equally welcome."⁴⁴ Smith described his tabernacle as a permanent evangelistic centre, and his contention that "every great city needs such a work" corresponded to Simpson's belief that "there is need in every town and city in the land for a simple, popular and undenominational evangelistic movement, not for a few passing weeks . . . but continuing throughout the year."⁴⁵ Smith's conviction that the evangelization of the world was the "supreme task" and "chief business" of his tabernacle echoes Simpson's contention that the "chief business" of the Alliance was "to give the gospel equally, impartially, and in the present generation to all mankind."⁴⁶ Theologically, Smith's tabernacle would proclaim "the deeper life," but in a Christological manner informed by Simpson: "The emphasis," he wrote, "we place on Himself, a Person, rather than on gifts, experiences and manifestations. 'Everything in Jesus and Jesus Everything.'"⁴⁷ In each of these ways, Smith demonstrated his implicit commitment to Simpsonian patterns of ministry. The *Cosmopolitan Tabernacle* was not associated with the Alliance but it was undeniably influenced by its founder.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 11; Simpson, "A Story," 150.

⁴⁵ Smith, "Cosmopolitan," 11; Simpson, "Evangelistic Work in America," 263.

⁴⁶ Simpson, "The Work," 109.

⁴⁷ Smith, "Cosmopolitan," 34.

The Alliance: Departed from Simpson's Original Vision

In light of this, Smith's assessment of the Alliance was not surprising: he believed that the movement had departed from Simpson's original vision of non-sectarian evangelism. While he refrained from explicitly referring to the Alliance in his *Courier* articles, his description of his new ministry functioned as an implicit critique of his former Alliance context. It was everything that he believed the Alliance had proven not to be. Writing in September 1928, he declared that his tabernacle was "not to be a church," that "there will be no membership," and that "there is to be nothing of a sectarian nature about The Metropolitan Tabernacle."⁴⁸ In contrast to this, the recent history of the Christie Street Tabernacle had demonstrated to Smith that the Alliance was interested in developing churches complete with memberships and a focus on constitutional matters which—in his opinion—led to sectarianism. Noel Palmer's early sermons as the Christie Street pastor bear this out, with sermon titles such as "The Body of Christ, or Why Church Membership?" and "A Vision for the Tabernacle, or The Church that is to Be."⁴⁹

Smith's description of Paul Rader's leadership likewise shed unflattering light on the Alliance. Like Smith, Rader had been made to "bear the cross" (ostensibly imposed upon him by the Alliance), "yet God has sustained him through it all."⁵⁰ Smith suggested that Rader's successful ministry in Chicago was evidence that "while others are talking, Paul Rader is doing things for God. He is producing results. There is something to

⁴⁸ Oswald J. Smith, "Editorial Reports and Comments," *World-Wide Christian Courier*, September 1928, 13. Folder 11, Box 1, Rader Collection.

⁴⁹ *Toronto Globe*, 29 September 1928, 23; 13 October 1928, 23. The Alliance's advertisements also dropped the term "tabernacle" in October 1928.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

show.”⁵¹ Smith seemed to suggest that the Alliance was ineffectively talking about reaching the lost while Rader was doing it. Not only was Rader effective, he was also supportive; Smith wrote that it was a joy to work with a leader “who never hinders nor obstructs,” a not-too-subtle reference to the Alliance’s Board of Managers’ intervention at the Christie Street Tabernacle just weeks earlier.⁵²

At every turn, Smith described his new work with the Couriers in terms that provided an implicit critique of the Alliance. It had become a sectarian organization more interested in memberships and constitutions than in its original purpose of reaching the lost as quickly and effectively as possible. Its leadership still claimed to be committed to that task but it had become unfocused and ineffective, even hindering those within its ranks who wanted to prosecute the original vision. Smith was determined that history should not repeat itself. Again implicitly referring to his experience at Christie Street, he promised that “as a result of our past experience we will be able to so safeguard this new work that it will always remain true to the original vision.”⁵³ His new work would succeed where he believed the Alliance had failed—in holding to a Simpsonian pattern of effective non-sectarian evangelism.

The Couriers: A New Alliance Following a New Simpson

Smith’s Cosmopolitan Tabernacle met at Massey Hall every Sunday night from September 1928 until January 1929, at which time Rader appointed him Special Commissioner to Foreign Lands and sent him on a five-month missionary tour of Europe

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 14.

⁵³ Ibid.

and Russia.⁵⁴ Upon his return, Smith held a four-day Courier Missionary Convention in Massey Hall at the end of June 1929, after which he itinerated throughout the United States and Canada for six months raising money for the foreign fields he had visited.⁵⁵ In the midst of this hectic pace, he found some time in September 1929 to reflect on his first year of service with Rader and the Couriers. To his way of thinking, a great changing of the guard had taken place in the religious world, with the Couriers displacing the Alliance as God's chosen instrument for the evangelization of the world.

In an article that appeared in the September edition of the *Courier* he wrote:

God must have a representative organization through which to work in every generation. Movements come and movements go. From all appearances the World-Wide Christian Couriers is the movement which God has seen fit to choose for the need of the present hour. . . . There is no thought of another denomination. Mr. Rader is not accepting members and hence is not forming a new sect. He is keeping his movement true to the original vision, namely, *a great spiritual alliance* of Christian workers, unsectarian, undenominational, for the purpose of evangelizing the Christless masses, both at home and abroad.⁵⁶

“Movements come and movements go,” Smith opined, hinting that the Alliance's day as God's “representative organization” had past. In its place the Couriers had arisen to carry on his work and reach the masses with the gospel. Again, Smith described Rader's organization in terms that critiqued the Alliance: the Couriers were avoiding denominationalism and staying true to their original vision. Most provocatively, his description of the Couriers as “a great spiritual alliance of Christian workers” that was focused on evangelizing the world usurped the Alliance's self-identity; Simpson had similarly described his fledgling movement in 1897 as “an alliance of Christians for

⁵⁴ Oswald J. Smith, “First Recommendation,” *World-Wide Christian Courier*, August 1929, 8. Folder 11, Box 1, Rader Collection.

⁵⁵ Smith, *Story*, 88; Hall, *Not Made for Defeat*, 152.

⁵⁶ Oswald J. Smith, “One Year Ago,” *World-Wide Christian Courier*, September 1929, 11. Folder 11, Box 1, Rader Collection, emphasis mine.

world wide missionary work.”⁵⁷ Who was the “true Alliance” after all? Smith suggested to his readers that the Couriers deserved that designation, having displaced Simpson’s prodigal organization by faithfully committing themselves to a Simpsonian pattern of non-sectarian world evangelism.

If the Couriers were the true Alliance, then it followed that they should be led by a Simpson-figure. That was exactly how Smith presented Rader—as a successor who was following the trajectory marked out for him by his predecessor. In the same article, Smith outlined and celebrated the health that the Courier organization was enjoying. After mentioning a few notable tabernacle ministries, Smith made this bold comparison: “Men of unusual caliber are being drawn around Mr. Rader even as they used to rally to Dr. A. B. Simpson.”⁵⁸ The reference to Simpson—as opposed to D. L. Moody, Charles Spurgeon, or some other departed evangelical leader—was deliberate. Smith wanted to present Rader specifically as a new Simpson, someone who was continuing through the Couriers the very work that Simpson had begun through the Alliance.

This is made clear in another article which Smith wrote for the September 1929 edition of the *Courier*. He had spent two weeks in August speaking at the River Lake Gospel Tabernacle in Minneapolis which Luke Rader, Paul’s brother, was leading, and he wrote an article about his visit. In his glowing report of the tabernacle’s ministry he likened it to the Chicago Gospel Tabernacle, and this provided him with an opportunity to comment on Paul Rader’s ministry vision. As Smith presented it, Rader was bequeathed his convictions by A. B. Simpson himself:

⁵⁷ Quoted in Tozer, *Wingspread*, 101.

⁵⁸ Smith, “One Year Ago,” 11.

Paul Rader has never shirked from the responsibility laid upon him by Dr. A. B. Simpson, who, recognizing in him his successor and the one upon whom his mantel would fall; solemnly laid his hands upon him and by prayer dedicated him to the ministry which had been his own.⁵⁹

Rader was not only trying to fulfill a Simpsonian pattern of ministry—Smith suggested that this was a responsibility entrusted to him by Simpson himself. He was Elisha to Simpson's Elijah, a Joshua to succeed Moses and bring the people into the Promised Land.

This suggestion can not be dismissed as the wishful thinking of a bitter Alliance exile, for it is substantiated by the testimony of some key Alliance personnel. For example, at the Society's annual meeting in May 1923, Paul Rader's presidential report was preceded by an introduction by Frederic H. Senft, his vice-president (and soon to be successor). Senft introduced Rader by reflecting on an occasion near the end of Simpson's life in 1919 when a small group of men, including Rader and Senft, went to visit their ailing leader at his bedside. Senft recalled that during that meeting,

[Simpson] put his arms around our Brother Rader and poured out his heart in such a prayer as he alone knew how to do. That room was filled with the fragrance of heaven, and somehow the sign of God, without any arrangement or formality seemed to be put upon, and it seemed as though the Lord laid upon the heart of our Brother Simpson to pray the prayer that he did as though he were transferring the blessing of God, the commission of God upon the servant of God.⁶⁰

Senft had witnessed Simpson informally but powerfully commission Rader to carry on the work which he had begun. The blessing had been transferred by one leader to his successor, and this was widely (though not universally) accepted when Rader assumed the presidency of the Alliance in November 1919. Reflecting half a century later on

⁵⁹ Oswald J. Smith, "Twin Cities Give \$16,000.00," *World-Wide Christian Courier*, September 1929, 22. Folder 11, Box 1, Rader Collection.

⁶⁰ Frederic Senft, Introduction to Paul Rader's Presidential Report, 31 May 1923. Folder 40, Box 1, Rader Collection.

Rader's service with the Alliance, David J. Fant—who served as publication secretary for the Alliance when Smith severed his ties and joined the Couriers—wrote that “many in our Alliance family compared the succession [of Simpson by Rader] to that of Moses by Joshua.”⁶¹ Rader had not crassly co-opted Simpson's name to validate his new ministry—he had been set apart by Simpson himself and recognized as his rightful successor.

Thus, Smith's suggestion that Rader was fulfilling a Simpsonian mandate was not unique. What distinguishes his assessment of Rader from that of Senft and Fant is the historical context of his remarks. Whereas many people looked to Rader to continue Simpson's work by giving leadership to the Alliance, Smith's comments reveal that Rader was still seeking to fulfill his Simpsonian mandate five years after parting ways with Simpson's organization. Simpson's vision was still alive and it was still being nurtured by the man to whom he had bequeathed it, but it was no longer centred in the Alliance.⁶² Guardianship had been transferred to the World-Wide Christian Couriers, a new alliance being led by a new Simpson.

Conclusion

Oswald J. Smith anticipated spending the rest of his life working with the Alliance, but that changed drastically in the fall of 1928. Finding himself unwelcome in

⁶¹ David J. Fant, “Successor to the Founder: As Joshua was to Moses,” *Alliance Witness*, 3 December 1975, 8.

⁶² Other people associated with the Couriers made much the same point, demonstrating that the movement in general attributed its genesis to the bestowal of Simpson's vision upon Rader. See Luke Rader, “First Anniversary of River-Lake Gospel Tabernacle,” *World-Wide Christian Courier*, December 1929, 14-16, and Gerald B. Winrod, “Paul Rader and the Alliance,” *World-Wide Christian Courier*, December 1929, 12, 18, 33. Folder 11, Box 1, Rader Collection. Winrod's article is particularly noteworthy for his multiple references to “the original Simpson-Rader vision” which, he suggested, animated all Courier activities.

the Alliance, he left and inaugurated what came to be known as the Peoples Church. He maintained, though, that it was the Alliance who had, in fact, done the leaving. Simpson's organization had, in his estimation, departed from their founder's core commitment to non-sectarian world-wide evangelism and had evolved into a denomination of local churches that was increasingly concerned with matters of constitution and control.

Though Smith left the Alliance, he took Simpson with him—he continued to pattern his post-Alliance tabernacle after Simpson's early independent ministry in New York. Beyond this, he made the bold assertion that Paul Rader's World-Wide Christian Couriers had displaced the Alliance as God's chosen organization through which to reach the Christless masses around the world. By referring to the Couriers as an "alliance" and by comparing Paul Rader's leadership to that of Simpson, Smith usurped the Alliance's birthright and presented the Couriers as Simpson's true bloodline, the guardians of his vision. The Couriers were fulfilling the Simpsonian commission which Rader could not accomplish through the Alliance.

CONCLUSION

Oswald J. Smith has been inappropriately understood by Alliance historiography as an awkward anomaly, a gifted but precocious young pastor whose problems with the movement surfaced because his teaching and ministry were simply “not Alliance enough.” The preceding study of Smith and his Alliance ministry suggests that this understanding of Smith is no longer tenable.

Smith believed in and promoted each aspect of A. B. Simpson’s Fourfold Gospel, writing books during his service with the Alliance which focused on salvation, sanctification, healing, and the return of Christ. These books not only demonstrate his accord with the Alliance’s theological character, they also contain clear evidence of his distinctly Simpsonian understanding of these matters. Smith fit comfortably—though sometimes snugly—within the parameters marked out by the movement. This assertion is based on what is surprisingly the first detailed examination and explication of Smith’s Alliance books; as such, it provides an important and authoritative corrective to the general misunderstanding of Smith’s stance on the movement’s doctrinal positions, particularly those related to sanctification and healing. It is also apparent that attempts to differentiate Smith on the basis of perceived doctrinal disparity do not adequately take into account the theological imprecision that marked the Alliance in his day. As a result, Smith has at times been judged by a doctrinal standard to which the Alliance itself was not measuring up.

Smith established his Christie Street Tabernacle in Toronto as a permanent soul-saving centre that featured ongoing revivalistic campaigns and regular missionary appeals. This was a distinct approach to ministry, but it was also distinctly Alliance. Smith joined a movement in 1921 that was actively pursuing an extension plan that had campaign-evangelism and inexpensive tabernacles at its core. As such, Smith's fledgling ministry enjoyed the support and authorization of all levels of Alliance leadership. Smith's ideology was also shaped by his exposure to key Alliance personalities, most notably evangelist F. F. Bosworth and president Paul Rader. When Smith's ministry is examined in the context of the tumultuous years surrounding A. B. Simpson's death, it becomes apparent that he was not a maverick irreverently bucking the system; rather, the Alliance system which he entered provided a conducive environment for the development of his tabernacle ideal. The Alliance eventually charted a more conservative course following Rader's resignation in January 1924, but by this time Smith had already laid his foundation—an Alliance foundation. Future research into this fascinating juncture of the movement's history must recognize that Smith and his like-minded colleagues were products as well as shapers of their particular Alliance context.

Smith was a proponent of the Fourfold Gospel and the pastor of a tabernacle that was endorsed and shaped by its Alliance context. More significantly, he was a Simpsonian visionary—his Christie Street Tabernacle was a conscious attempt to replicate A. B. Simpson's early independent ministry in New York. He rightly keyed in upon his forerunner's vision of developing an ongoing evangelistic work apart from the church where everyone was welcome and sectarian divisions were declared anathema. Smith regularly invoked Simpson's name and legacy to validate his activities, reminding

people of the authoritative lineage his ideas enjoyed. Although Simpson developed a greater diversity of ministries at his tabernacle and he had a more positive attitude toward the church than Smith, these differences are not as significant as they initially appear and are partially reflective of the different contexts within which the two men lived. The largest discontinuity between their two tabernacles was organizational: Simpson practiced representative government while Smith adopted an autocratic leadership style. Significantly, though, Simpson considered church governance to be a matter of indifference and beyond the purview of Alliance interests. At the heart of Simpson's Alliance was the speedy evangelization of the world in a non-sectarian fashion so that Christ's return could be hastened; Smith was committed to following this Simpsonian pattern throughout his service at Christie Street.

This is an original assertion that has important implications for a proper understanding of Smith's Alliance ministry. Neither Smith's numerous biographies nor the various Alliance histories portray Smith as a Simpsonian visionary during his service with the Alliance, but that is the clear picture that emerges when his tabernacle is compared against Simpson's. Smith was not trying to blaze a new trail and lead his congregation into uncharted territory; to the contrary, he wanted to steadfastly return to the well-worn path which had been marked out by Simpson forty years earlier. The Christie Street Tabernacle, then, was not a renunciation but an attempted reformation of Alliance sensibilities.

The veracity of Smith's dedication to Simpson's vision is evident in the fact that it outlived his commitment to Simpson's movement. When Alliance leadership made it clear that they no longer had room for Smith in their ranks, he interpreted this to mean

that there was no longer room for his Simpsonian convictions, either. Severing his ties in 1928, he embarked on a new phase of ministry that still maintained a Simpsonian foundation. This assertion is substantiated by an examination of an important and previously untapped source: the articles Smith wrote in the wake of his departure from the Alliance when he joined forces with Paul Rader's World-Wide Christian Couriers. Here Smith provocatively suggested that the Alliance had been displaced in God's salvific economy and that the Simpsonian vision had been transferred to the Couriers. To his mind, the Alliance had lost sight of the precious inheritance entrusted to them and had devolved into the very thing that Simpson had wanted to avoid—a sectarian organization that was increasingly concerned with matters of constitution and control. All was not lost, though; providentially, Rader and the Couriers had arisen to fill the void left by this abdication. Smith presented Rader as a new Simpson leading a new alliance into a new era of ministry. Simpson's vision was still alive but the mantle had been passed from the Alliance to the Couriers.

Future studies of Smith's life and his post-Alliance ministry will need to recognize that Simpson continued to play a significant role in Smith's life during this formative stage of his ministry career. The current research suggests that the early history of the Peoples Church can not be properly understood without reference to Smith's persistent Simpsonian ideals, and further study should attempt to ascertain to what extent Smith carried these ideals into his later life—did he remain a Simpsonian visionary or did his ideals change as his ministry adapted over the years?

Smith's commitment to Simpson during the Peoples Church's nascent history raises interesting questions about that congregation's relationship to the Alliance.

Birthered as a result of Smith's Simpsonian passion, it may be fair to characterize the Peoples Church as an estranged cousin within the Alliance household—an essentially Alliance ministry for which the Alliance did not have room. Both trace their roots to Simpson, but Smith had to nurture his new child “outside the gate.” Interestingly, the Peoples Church and the Alliance share a family resemblance, both having distinguished themselves by their commitment to world missions. Further research should aim to highlight more similarities as well as important differences in the development of these two relatives, providing insights that could help both understand themselves better.

Whether Smith is understood as a renegade or a reformer will depend upon the criteria used to answer that question. If issues of organization and governance are deemed most important, then Smith can be characterized as an Alliance renegade since he adopted a leadership style that was decidedly different than that utilized by Simpson and most others within the Alliance family. One needs to question, however, whether this is an appropriate standard to be utilized by a society that steadfastly identified itself as a non-sectarian movement that was pre-eminently concerned with the speedy evangelization of the world. If issues of doctrine and practice are used as standards, then a very different understanding of Smith's relationship to the Alliance emerges. Smith was committed to the Alliance's message and he adopted its founder's methods to get that message out. In terms of these central aspects of ministry, then, Smith was a reformer who wanted to honour the Simpsonian vision of ministry that was the birthright of the Alliance but which he believed they had sold for a mess of sectarian pottage. Smith's problems with Simpson's movement arose not because he was not “Alliance enough” but because he was more Alliance than the Alliance.

APPENDIX A

CONFERENCE FOR PRAYER AND COUNSEL Respecting Uniformity in the Testimony and Teaching of the Alliance MAY 25-28, 1906.¹

The Committee appointed by the Board to prepare a plan for a conference on the matters above stated, recommend that such a conference be held immediately before the annual Council at Nyack in the beginning of June and that as many as possible of our Alliance workers throughout the country be invited and urged to attend.

The importance of Unity upon a common basis of testimony and teaching is becoming more and more urgent and the need of prayer for the great objects which we hold in common is emphasized at this time as never before. In connection with this conference the following plan is suggested:

1. That it shall be held for at least three days and that at least one hour of each session shall be given to prayer and the rest of the time to conference respecting our Alliance testimony and teaching.
2. That the various subjects covered by this report be introduced by a short paper not exceeding fifteen minutes and followed by five or ten minute addresses by the members of the conference.
3. That a Committee be appointed by the conference for the purpose of carefully following the various discussions and drawing up a brief paper to be submitted to a subsequent meeting and adopted as the sense of the conference upon the matter in question.
4. That specific subjects be taken up at the various meetings of the Council for prayer and made the subject of earnest, united, believing intercession.
5. The following outline of subjects to be discussed is respectfully submitted as a basis for the deliberations of the proposed conference:

¹ Compiled in *The Man, the Movement, and the Mission: A Documentary History of the Christian and Missionary Alliance*, comp. Charles Nienkirchen (Regina: privately printed, [1987]), 166-8; also compiled in *Readings in Alliance History and Thought*, comp. Ken Draper (Regina: privately printed, 2000), 222-3.

I. OPEN QUESTIONS

That the conference recognize certain matters of teaching and testimony as not within the direct province of the Alliance, but open question about which our brethren agree to differ and hold in mutual charity their individual convictions according to their various denominational connections and previous teachings.

These open questions include:

1. Church government.
2. The subjects and mode of baptism.
3. The doctrines known as Calvinism and Arminianism
4. Various ceremonies and practices such as feet washing, etc.

II. OUR DISTINCTIVE TESTIMONY

1. Christ, our Saviour, always assuming that we stand unequivocally upon the Deity of Christ, His vicarious sacrifice and the necessity of regeneration through the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. Christ, our Sanctifier, assuming the following essential points:
 - a. A definite second blessing, distinct in nature, though not necessarily far removed in time, from the experience of conversion;
 - b. the baptism of the Holy Ghost as a distinct experience, not merely for power for service, but for personal holiness and victory over the world and sin;
 - c. the indwelling of Christ in the heart of the consecrated believer as a distinct experience;
 - d. sanctification by faith as a distinct gift of God's grace to every open and surrendered soul;
 - e. growth in grace and the deeper filling of the Holy Spirit as distinct from and the result of the definite experience of sanctification.

It is understood that all our Alliance officers and teachers are at liberty to present the truth of sanctification in such phases and phrases as his own convictions warrant, in general accordance with the above specifications, but with the understanding that such extreme views as are sometimes taught under the name of "eradication" or "suppression" shall not be presented in an aggressive or controversial spirit toward those who differ.

III. DIVINE HEALING

It is understood the Alliance holds and teaches:

1. The will of God to heal the bodies of those who trust and obey Him by His own direct power without means.
2. The atonement of Christ for the body.
3. The life of the risen Christ for our mortal frame received by faith.
4. The ordinance of anointing and laying on of hands with proper recognition of the necessity of faith on the part of the individual anointed.
5. Power over evil spirits through the name of Jesus
6. The disclaiming of all merit or individual power on the part of the worker and the constant recognition of the name of Jesus as the source of all supernatural power.

IV. THE LORD'S COMING

1. The Alliance holds and teaches the personal and premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus
2. [blotted out—unreadable]
3. Liberty is accorded to our teachers in connection with the various opinions held about Anti-Christ, The Tribulation, the Last Week of Daniel, Rapture, etc., but with the understanding that any spirit of antagonism and strife toward those who may hold different opinions is discountenanced.

HENRY WILSON

J. D. WILLIAMS

A. E. FUNK

F. H. SENFT

A. B. SIMPSON

Committee

APPENDIX B

WHAT I BELIEVE¹

I proclaim the great Evangel,
I proclaim it full and free
God has promised to supply man's every need.
I proclaim complete provision,
I proclaim it from His Word
God has offered life that now is life indeed.

I believe the supernatural,
I believe God intervenes
In the lives of those who trust Him here below.
I believe the Name of Jesus,
I believe the prayer of faith
Will accomplish signs and wonders as I go.

I believe that he is able—
I believe that Jesus saves.
Oh, the joy of knowing One who lives today.
I believe that He is willing,
I believe without a doubt
That He's still the same as when He went away.

I have seen Him save the sinner,
I have seen Him heal the sick,
Fill believers with His Spirit from above.
I have seen Him cast out demons,
I have seen Him calm the storm,
For He still delights to manifest His love.

I accept Him as my Saviour,
I accept Him as my Lord,
He is still the great Physician as of yore.
I accept the Holy Spirit,
I accept the Word of God,
And I'll preach a full salvation evermore.

¹ Oswald J. Smith, "What I Believe," *The Prophet*, (May-June, 1924), 12. Folder 12, Box 8, Smith Papers.

I am watching for His Coming,
I am watching day by day;
Oh, the joy of that glad meeting in the sky!
I am watching for the Bridegroom,
I am watching for my Lord,
For His Coming now I know is drawing nigh.

APPENDIX C
OUR HOME POLICY¹

First of all let us evangelize the great centers. That was Paul's method and we cannot improve on it.

This can be accomplished by building a Tabernacle in each of our large cities as rapidly as God in answer to prayer raises up Spirit-filled leaders, to broadcast the truth and to form the basis of our foreign work from the standpoint of prayer, money and missionaries.

We are not concerned about church membership nor denomination. Our work is to be non-sectarian, international and evangelistic. Satan hates evangelism. Hence it is becoming increasingly difficult to work through denominational channels in spite of the fact that almost every distinctive Christian is able to point back to a great crisis experience, when in the midst of some stirring revival meeting the course of his life was utterly changed. Such men as Wesley, Whitfield [*sic*], Finney, Spurgeon and Moody have been the Devil's worst enemies and no work has made such inroads on his kingdom. No wonder then that Satan hates evangelism.

Hence, his present-day effort to bar evangelism from the churches by substituting in its place the theory of salvation by character and educational processes. Children are to "grow" into the Christian life instead of being "born" into it by a second birth, and to

¹ "Our Home Policy," *The Prophet*, May-June 1924, 21. Folder 12, Box 8, Smith Papers.

allow an evangelist to occupy the pulpit would be to undermine this new up-to-date theory, hence he is barred.

To plant small churches all over the country is not our policy. There are already far too many. Some might well be abandoned. How often do we find a mere handful of people overfed and underworked, self-satisfied and even anti-evangelistic, with no vision of enlargement and no sense of obligation to get the Message to the masses—a dried-up, stagnant pool with no outlet. And yet each such little company demands a pastor, who might be used somewhere among the unevangelized on the far-flung battle line.

As an Alliance of Believers, allied for the purpose of World Evangelism, emphasis should be placed on the fact that our mission is to train workers for the foreign field, the unoccupied areas of the world. And if we settle down to ordinary church work we will have no ground for our existence. Only as our Tabernacles become spiritual centers for aggressive evangelism, both at home and abroad, are we true to the vision of Jesus Christ as expressed in the great commission.

Then, in the second place, in order to reach the rural population and smaller centers, let us send men forth two by two along faith lines to itinerate from house to house, and from village to village, distributing tracts, and preaching Jesus Christ, both privately and publicly; that every creature may hear and know God's only way of salvation.

The truth must be scattered everywhere, nor is there any time to lose. It takes but a night for the enemy to sow his tares, and Modernism is already bearing a fearful harvest. Let us therefore get the Message out as quickly as possible and by every means at our

disposal. Thus mighty things will be accomplished in the short time that remains before our Lord's return.

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