

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Doctor of Theology Dissertation

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

5-1-1991

Mystical Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Soteriology

James Breckenridge

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_breckenridgej@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/thd>



Part of the [Christian Denominations and Sects Commons](#), and the [History of Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Breckenridge, James, "Mystical Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Soteriology" (1991). *Doctor of Theology Dissertation*. 108.

<https://scholar.csl.edu/thd/108>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Theology Dissertation by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

MYSTICAL ASPECTS OF PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC
SOTERIOLOGY

A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Historical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Theology

by

James Floyd Breckenridge

May 1991

Approved by: Quentin F. Wesselschmidt
Advisor

Lewis A. Brighton
Reader

Thomas Mantepfel
Reader

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Statement of the Problem	
	Limitations	
	Thesis	
	Methodology	
	Benefits	
II.	WHAT IS MYSTICISM?	21
III.	JOHN WESLEY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PENTECOSTALISM.	31
	Influence of Mysticism Upon Wesley	
	Influence of Wesley Upon Pentecostalism	
IV.	PENTECOSTAL ORIGINS.	82
	Historical Antecedents of Pentecostalism	
	Historical Origins of Pentecostalism	
	Independent Charismatic Origins	
V.	MYSTICISM REFLECTED IN PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC UNDERSTANDING OF REVELATION.	122
	Revelation as Personal Encounter	
	Revelation as Scripture	
VI.	MYSTICISM REFLECTED IN PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC UNDERSTANDING OF SIN	167
	The Nature of Humanity	
	The Nature of Sin	
VII.	MYSTICISM REFLECTED IN PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC UNDERSTANDING OF SALVATION	197
	The <u>Ordo Salutis</u>	
	The Beginning of Salvation: Justification	
	The Continuance of Salvation: Law and Gospel	
	The End of Salvation: Redemption and Restoration	

Chapter

VIII. CONCLUSION 258

 The Nature of Revelation

 The Nature of Humanity

 The Nature of Religious Experience

 Evaluation

GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY. 284

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Pentecostal historian Vinson Synan estimates that Pentecostals now comprise the largest family of Protestants in the world. Drawing from the World Christian Encyclopedia¹ he concludes that Pentecostalism now claims a total of 51,167,000 adherents, not including an additional 11,000,000 independent charismatics.² This places the Pentecostal/Independent Charismatic movement significantly ahead of classical groups such as the Anglicans (49,804,000 adherents), Baptists (47,550,000) and Lutherans (43,460,000).³ This figure grows even larger when the "Third-Wave" phenomenon is included. This term, used by Pentecostals and Charismatics to identify members of traditional evangelical churches who have begun to practice charismatic gifts and

¹David B. Barrett, ed. World Christian Encyclopedia (Nairobi, Kenya: Oxford University Press, 1982).

²C. P. Wagner, "Church Growth," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, eds. Stanley M. Burgess, Gary B. McGee and Patrick H. Alexander (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 181.

³Ibid.

worship, indicates a total of 20.7 million adherents.⁴ If one chooses to count by "waves," the total population of those espousing charismatic beliefs as of 1985 constitutes 267.9 million believers or nineteen percent of the world's church-member Christians.⁵ By the end of this century it is projected that twenty-nine percent of all Christians, or 562.5 million persons will be Pentecostal or Charismatic in belief and practice.⁶ David Barrett, in World Christian Encyclopedia, reports that by 1988 Charismatics had grown to over 359 million followers worldwide, with a growth rate of 21 per-cent, making it the fastest growing religious movement in America and the world.⁷

While the devotion and sincerity of thousands of adherents in the above movements is beyond question, the issues of content and sound theology must be faced. While Classical Pentecostalism originally held to both conservative theological tenets and an evangelical view of Scripture, it is currently undergoing rapid transition. Evangelical foundations are rapidly eroding as Pentecostalism

⁴Ibid., 184.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., 185.

⁷Paul G. Chappell, "Healing Movements," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 373.

becomes increasingly syncretistic as well as ecumenical.⁸ The New Hermeneutic and its derivatives are being actively courted as alternatives to the formidable grammatical-historical challenges of non-pentecostal evangelical Protestants. The logical question raised by these events is whether liberal scholars are undermining an original, basically conservative theology, or are actually calling Pentecostalism to a greater adherence to its authentic roots. Is the movement authentically conservative and evangelical? Or is the theological substructure actually an alien experience which has merely been disguised for many years as an offshoot of conservative Protestantism?

Independent Charismatics, conversely, do not seem as affected by liberalism, but rather display a wide spectrum of tenets ranging from extreme pluralism to obscurantism colored by doctrines of prosperity theology. Their weakness seems to lie in a lack of form which allows for numerous heretical extremes. Religious authority becomes a question of central importance due to the influence of charismatic

⁸For example, the most current meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies ("Old and New Issues in Pentecostalism," California Theological Seminary, Fresno, CA, November 16-18, 1989) featured a paper titled "The Oneness View of Jesus" by an author from the United Pentecostal Church which teaches a Sabellian view of the Godhead. This was accompanied by continuing emphases on Protestant-Catholic dialogue, positive applications and attitudes toward the New Hermeneutic and its derivatives and a general disparaging of classical Protestantism.

leaders who answer to no one but themselves. They likewise must face the question of their true nature.

The critical problem is whether the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement is essentially heterodox. Are the millions worshipping within this framework truly within the boundaries of historical Christianity? Congruent with this question is whether the believers themselves understand either the true content of their beliefs or the spiritual destination toward which they are headed.

Another issue is the facilitation of dialogue between Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal traditions. Contemporary attempts at communication seem to degenerate into arguments concerning the cessation of spiritual gifts or the phenomenon of glossolalia. Such debates are often a waste of time in that they do not confront the basic presuppositions of the opposing systems. The goal of this study is to examine presuppositions in order to provide criteria for analysis with a minimum of argumentation.

Limitations

General Approach

The most common approach to analyzing the phenomenon of Pentecostalism seems to be the assumption that the

contemporary movement is a resurgence of first generation Christian charismatic spirituality.⁹ John Nichol notes,

[The] events which occurred on the Day of Pentecost constitute the very core of modern Pentecostal belief and practice. Whatever else may separate them, all Pentecostals agree that like the 120 who had gathered in the upper room, they too must "tarry" and be "endued with power from on high."¹⁰

Those who build on this assumption proceed to analyze Pentecostalism with a variety of historical approaches. Pentecostalism may be approached through early Methodist connections, by concentrating on the history of the Azusa Street Revival, or by positing Roman Catholic origins, Black origins,¹¹ Holiness origins, Keswick origins; even the Puritans are cast as accommodating the concept of a second spiritual experience following conversion.¹²

While sociological, economic, and political influences are important, the approach of this work will be to analyze the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement through historical and theological analysis. The goal is not to provide a mere historical survey (there are many already), but rather to find the common components which will allow

⁹ Mathew S. Clark and Henry I. Lederle, What is Distinctive About Pentecostal Theology? (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1989), 7.

¹⁰ John Thomas Nichol, The Pentecostals (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1966), 1.

¹¹ See James S. Tinney, "Black Origins of the Pentecostal Movement," Christianity Today, 16 (Oct. 8, 1971): 4-6.

¹² Henry I. Lederle, Treasures Old and New (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), 8-9.

both recognition and analysis of Pentecostal/Charismatic theology. By reducing the groups to be studied to a reasonable and logical minimum, the author hopes to be able to isolate the unique ingredients of Pentecostal/Charismatic religious experience.

Definition of Terms

Classical Pentecostal

The term "Classical Pentecostal" originated circa 1970 as an attempt to distinguish the older Pentecostals from the "neo" Pentecostals in established Protestant denominations as well as from the adherents of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.¹³ David W. Faupel divides Pentecostalism into theological categories, noting at least three segments: (1) those who teach a doctrine of sanctification in the Wesleyan holiness mold of a "three-step work," (2) those emphasizing "two works of grace" within the context of gradual sanctification, and (3) those who hold a "Oneness" or "Jesus Only" view of the Godhead.¹⁴ Donald Dayton demurs, insisting that the "Oneness" group is actually a subdivision of the second group made necessary by their particular restorationist approach to hermeneutics:

The oneness movement is a variation within Pentecostalism produced by a literalistic effort to harmonize

¹³H. V. Synan, "Classical Pentecostalism," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 220.

¹⁴Donald Dayton, Theological Roots of Pentecostalism (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 18.

the trinitarian baptismal formula in Matthew 28:19 with the pattern more common in Acts (especially Acts 2:38) of baptism in the name of the "Lord Jesus" or "Jesus Christ."¹⁵

The first two groups would then be considered the most "substantive" movements for "orthodox theological analysis."¹⁶

Independent Charismatic

The general term "charismatic movement" refers to various renewal groups within established denominations which were initially known as "neo-Pentecostals."¹⁷ These groups all accept the charismata as valid for today, but they disagree with the classical Pentecostal position that speaking in tongues (or glossolalia) is the initial evidence of receiving the "baptism in the Holy Ghost."¹⁸

The specific origin of the movement is usually identified as the announcement of the "tongues experience" by Episcopal Dennis Bennett to his congregation at St. Mark's in Van Nuys, California.¹⁹ Bennett's 1959 announcement was followed by charismatic emphases in his pastorates

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 19.

¹⁷ Vinson Synan, The Twentieth-Century Pentecostal Explosion (Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1987), 10.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ P. D. Hocken, "Charismatic Movement," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 130.

which resulted in the spread of the renewal movement throughout mainline American denominations.²⁰

By the early 1960's people in virtually every major Protestant tradition were receiving BHS [the baptism in the Holy Spirit] (Baptists, Lutherans, Mennonites, Methodists, and Presbyterians).²¹

Within a short time adherents of the new movement were referring to themselves as the "charismatic renewal movement" rather than "neo-Pentecostals," a term originally coined by Russell Hitt, Editor of Eternity magazine.²² Charismatic scholar Peter Hocken notes that the term "Neo-Pentecostal," however, continues to be used in scientific studies.²³

Modern attempts to categorize the charismatic renewal movement show a great deal of diversity. Pentecostal scholar Henry Lederle divides the charismatic renewal into three categories: (1) denominational charismatics in established church structures, (2) parachurch structures often maintaining membership within particular denominations, and (3) non-denominational charismatics who have formed independent structures.²⁴

²⁰L. Christenson, "Bennett, Dennis Joseph," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 53-54.

²¹P. D. Hocken, "Charismatic Movement," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 133.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Lederle, Treasures, xv.

A more synthetic approach is to speak in terms of differing "waves" or movements inclusive of both Pentecostals and Charismatics. Paul G. Chappell, Dean of Oral Roberts Seminary, understands at least four historical groups in the movement. First is the Charismatic renewal, made up of those who accept the charismata as valid operations for today and who come from traditional denominations. A second grouping would be the Faith Movement or the Word Movement. This group comprises parachurch fundamentalists who practice a mixture of highly conservative theology with Pentecostal religious experience. Third would be the "Third Wave" revival of mainstream conservative evangelicals who accept the Pentecostal experience, but do not prefer to be identified as such. Fourth is the Independent Charismatic segment, the "fastest-growing" part of the movement, which comprises thousands of independent churches. These would include the Vineyard Fellowship of John Wimber, the Church of the Rock associated with Larry Lea, and Victory Ministry Fellowship under Billy Joe Daugherty.²⁵

The term "Independent Charismatic" as used in this study will indicate those figures who operate either outside any controlling denomination or who have nominal membership within a group or denomination, but are not answerable to it. The key concept in defining "independent" will be whether one is answerable to authority. This clarification

²⁵Ibid., 373-74.

is made necessary by that fact that such figures as Oral Roberts may claim Methodist membership, but in actuality operate independently of that group. Definition of this category was assisted by personal discussion with Andrew Walker, director of the C. S. Lewis Research Center in London.²⁶

Focus of Study

The focus of this work will be upon selected groups which are either specifically Pentecostal, or have formed their theology outside of confessional authority and influence as in the definition of "independent" above. The

²⁶Q: "Do you think the term 'independent charismatic' would be a sufficient label to include a good number of these groups? For example Copeland and Oral Roberts?"

A: "I think its perfectly legitimate. I think you can show three stages very clearly. You've got Classical Pentecostalism. And from the early days of Pentecostalism, when you had the AOG up here and the Church of God started, even in those early days you had independent stars, in America Aimee Semple McPherson. And their tradition has maintained itself so that when Neo-Pentecostalism came along in the mid-sixties it gave a new shot in the arm to the notion of "stars." Think of Katharine Kuhlman, . . . and various independent ministries, people who might feed off of the renewal movement, for example, taking some of its energy to fill their own little empires. We've got lots of those in England. But of course we don't have television like you do here. Swaggart was only kidding everybody that he was a typical AOG man. Did Oral kick anybody who was a good Methodist? I really don't know. The whole point basically is I think they are independent because they are accountable to nobody but themselves. I think the issue of accountability is actually one of the ways that one could stop a lot of the nonsense. I mean Hagin would be another example. They don't fit into the Classical Pentecostal mold and they really don't fit into the Neo-Pentecostal mold." Andrew Walker, interview by the author, 20 April 1990, Oral Roberts University.

reason for drawing these parameters is fourfold: (1) Both the Classical Pentecostal and Independent Charismatic movements offer a publishing history which allows their practices and beliefs to be analyzed for both sound doctrine and internal consistency. (2) Both movements offer a theology which has developed relatively independently of confessional constraints. Whereas numerous "charismatic renewals" in mainline denominations force one to analyze or "sift" the experience through the confessional bias of each group, Pentecostals and Independent Charismatics provide a more clear picture of the actual elements of the experience. (3) Greater literary efforts seem to be warranted in attempting to analyze and understand the independent segment of the Charismatic movement. Scholars have tended to focus upon Classical Pentecostal or "Neo-Pentecostal" adherents while neglecting the relatively large amount of people affected by the Independent movements.²⁷ (4) Finally, and perhaps most compelling, is the writer's own experience in having been raised as a Classical Pentecostal. Education in the Reformed and Lutheran traditions has created a desire to examine closely the soteriology of Pentecostalism with respect to Lutheran orthodoxy.

²⁷An example is Vinson Synan's The Twentieth-Century Pentecostal Explosion (Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1987), a comprehensive study of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement which excludes any mention of Independent Charismatics.

Selection of Subjects

Classical Pentecostals

Within the Pentecostal groups three bodies stand out as worthy subjects. The first, the Church of God with headquarters in Cleveland, Tennessee, is the oldest Pentecostal denomination, having begun in 1886.²⁸ It remains one of the largest Pentecostal groups with 1,650,000 members worldwide.²⁹ This group operates a number of colleges and one seminary. The second, the Assemblies of God, is the world's largest Pentecostal church with 1,267,696 members in the United States³⁰ and 12,269,817 members and adherents in other countries.³¹ These two groups are especially illustrative of Pentecostal theology in that they include the two primary holiness traditions of Pentecostalism, namely, the Wesleyan-Holiness or second-work tradition associated with the Church of God and the Baptistic or finished work motif identified with the Assemblies of God in the United States.³² The final group, the International Pentecostal

²⁸ Charles W. Conn, "Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.)," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 197.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ "The General Secretary's Report," Advance, September 1989, p.9.

³¹ "Foreign Missions Overview," Advance, September 1989, 27.

³² Lederle, Treasures, 21. (These terms refer to a never-settled controversy within Pentecostalism, namely, whether sanctification should be seen as part of Christ's "finished-work" at Calvary, thus beginning at Regeneration

Holiness Church, is one of the oldest and largest Pentecostal denominations in the U.S. It has roots in the nineteenth-century holiness movement and was directly influenced by the Azusa Street Revival.³³ Current records indicate a total of 1,834,055 members and "affiliates" including a membership of 116,764 in the United States.³⁴

Black Pentecostalism also has historical roots extending back to the primary Azusa Street revival in the person of William J. Seymour,³⁵ but the movement does not display the same literary base and seems more difficult to objectify. One reason for this may be the fact that it is not basically a denomination but rather a "movement encompassing several denominations."³⁶ An additional factor is the influence of heretical Trinitarian views upon the Black culture. The category of "Oneness" or "Unitarian"

and continuing; or whether sanctification is actually a second definite work of grace achieved as a definite experience sometime following Regeneration. Although Wesley did not technically teach Sanctification as a second definite work, many of his followers developed his thought in this manner.)

³³H. V. Synan, "International Pentecostal Holiness Church," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 466.

³⁴"IPHC United States Statistical Summary for 1988," General Evangelism Department, International Pentecostal Holiness Church, 1988.

³⁵Vinson Synan, The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 168.

³⁶L. Lovett, "Black Holiness-Pentecostalism," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 77.

Pentecostals mentioned above accounts for about twenty percent of American Pentecostals and approximately half of these are black.³⁷ It should also be noted that neither of the primary Black Pentecostal denominations, the United Holy Church and the Church of God in Christ, played a direct role in the beginning of the Pentecostal revival.

Independent Charismatics

Independent Charismatics are more difficult to categorize since it is nearly impossible to count the number of nondenominational charismatic churches in the United States. When asked to explain the sudden growth of their movement, pastors and leaders often note the influence of Oral Roberts, the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship, and the television ministries of the Christian Broadcasting Network and Praise the Lord.³⁸ Some outstanding leaders would be Earl P. Paulk, Kenneth Hagin, John Osteen, Robert Tilton, T. L. Osborn, and Kenneth Copeland.

Within this group Oral Roberts especially has a significant publishing history and is considered by Vinson Synan to be "the most prominent Pentecostal in the world."³⁹

³⁷Lederle, Treasures, 19.

³⁸S. Strang, "Nondenominational Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches" in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 638.

³⁹"By 1980 a Gallup Poll revealed that Roberts' name was recognized by a phenomenal 84 percent of the American public, and historian Vinson Synan observed that Roberts was

Historian David Harrell identifies Roberts as "one of the most influential religious leaders in the world in the twentieth century."⁴⁰ Roberts was also influential in forming the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship in 1951, and in addition to many healing campaigns built both a hospital and a university, the latter of which continues to function as the "premier charismatic university in America."⁴¹

Kenneth Hagin occupies a position similar to Roberts with respect to the "Word" or "Faith" movement. He is "the acknowledged father" of the movement and has been acclaimed as "the granddaddy of the Faith teachers."⁴² Hagin has a syndicated radio program on 180 stations while his Word of Faith monthly magazine has a circulation of 200,000. In addition his Rhema Bible Training Center has over 2,000 students, making his ministry in this area one of the largest in the nation.⁴³ Hagin, born with a deformed heart, experienced a series of illnesses before being physically

considered the most prominent Pentecostal in the world." Cited by Paul G. Chappell in "Roberts, Granville Oral," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 759.

⁴⁰Chappell, "Healing Movements," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 372.

⁴¹Chappell, "Roberts, Granville Oral," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 760.

⁴²Chappell, "Healing Movements," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 373.

⁴³Ibid.

healed in 1934.⁴⁴ In 1974 Hagin founded the Rhema Bible Training Center and by 1988 more than 10,000 students had graduated.⁴⁵ He has authored eighty-five books which have sold over three million copies; one-half million tapes of his sermons are distributed annually.⁴⁶

Hagin's theology has been described as "a unique blend of evangelical orthodoxy, biblical fundamentalism, charismatic theology, and metaphysical thought."⁴⁷ The difference between his thought and that of Oral Roberts or other advocates of divine healing is in his concept of "positive confession" accompanied by "sensory denial" and implicit rejection of medical science.⁴⁸

Both Hagin and Roberts demonstrate publishing histories which allow for analysis. Both also are primary leaders of their respective movements. There are, however, a number of other figures who are extremely influential in charismatic thinking. Rather than concentrate on one or two men, an attempt will be made to provide a cross-section of charismatic opinion on relative topics. The objective will be to determine whether the similarities allow for objective

⁴⁴R. M. Riss, "Hagin, Kenneth E." in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 345.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Chappell, "Healing Movements," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 373-74.

⁴⁸Ibid.

definition of the independent charismatic religious experience.

Thesis

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine Pentecostal and Independent Charismatic theology for mystical themes which could indicate the presence of a theology inimical to the primary Reformation tenets of sola Scriptura, sola gratia, and sola fide.

Methodology

The first step in this study will be a preliminary examination of the basic tenets of mysticism. Following this the Wesleyan origins of Pentecostalism will be noted, along with possible mystical influences upon and proceeding from Wesley himself. This should set the stage for addressing the historical antecedents which directly prepared the way for Classical Pentecostalism. A short historical introduction to each denomination will be given, along with background information of pertinent Independent Charismatics.

Since the latter group represents a broad spectrum, historical background material will be kept to a minimum. Some figures, such as Oral Roberts and Kenneth Hagin naturally merit more attention, but others will be introduced as they occur in the text.

Following the historical survey a theological analysis will be attempted. The specific subjects chosen

reflect the basic tenets of Christian Mysticism as distilled in Chapter II. Emphasis upon experience relates to the Pentecostal/Charismatic understanding of revelation and Scripture discussed in Chapter Five. The image of God in humanity correlates to Pentecostal/Charismatic understandings of sin and human depravity. The mystical concept of salvation by stages, or as a process, corresponds to Pentecostal/Charismatic views of Christian initiation followed by the Christian life.

While the first two elements of the theological analysis are not specifically part of an ordo salutis, they seem to be necessary ingredients in discussing any system of soteriology. John Theodore Mueller notes that, ". . . while the fides historica is not a part of saving faith, it is a necessary prerequisite of saving faith, since the Holy Spirit engenders saving faith only in those hearts which know and understand the Gospel of Christ."⁴⁹ Likewise, a basic understanding of the nature of sin seems essential to truly understanding redemption.

The conclusion of this work will analyze the tenets of Pentecostal/Charismatic religious experience relative to the nature of revelation, humanity, and religious experience. A closing evaluation will focus upon theological

⁴⁹ John Theodore Mueller, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), 325.

themes which distinguish Pentecostals and Charismatics from the Reformation heritage of the three solas.

Benefits

This study is advantageous from both a practical and a theoretical perspective. Theoretically, the subject is important in that Classical Pentecostalism is an American religious phenomenon which continues to influence a considerable part of the world. Historical and theological analysis from a Lutheran Reformation perspective is merited.

Practically, since the Charismatic renewal is manifestly ecumenical, and since Classical Pentecostalism displays the same ethos, it becomes critically important to distinguish what is truly "orthodox" in Christianity. The position of this paper is that the litmus test for believing Christianity is to be found in the doctrine of Justification by grace through faith, specifically the views of depravity and the consequentially necessary character of grace which such a view of salvation necessitates. The contemporary Charismatic or Pentecostal movements may be theologically evaluated by their adherence to this standard. On a more informal note, individual Christians with limited theological training may be able to distinguish the Evangelical Gospel from what could be a religion of works. The latter issue is of special importance due to the great amount of confusion that exists among Pentecostal and Charismatic laity. The former feel that they are true "evangelicals,"

but are not aware of the actual philosophies and theological emphases being taught in their colleges and seminaries. The latter have considerable problems with finding dependable religious authority. Both groups illustrate the critical need for an authentic base of history and tradition in arriving at a fully-orbed Christian Faith.

CHAPTER II
WHAT IS MYSTICISM?

Definitions of Mysticism

The topic of Mysticism seems to defy simple explanation. Georgia Harkness apprises the state of mystical studies by observing that "Among careful students of the subject there is no single universally agreed upon definition."¹ At least part of the problem lies in the fact that some scholars tend to evaluate the problem from the perspective of communion with God in a distinctively pietistic framework. Conversely, Eastern Orthodox traditions are more concerned about union with the Absolute through the via negativa.

Regardless of the itinerary, one must deal with multiple definitions. If pressed, Harkness will agree with the definition offered by W. R. Inge:

Mysticism means communion with God, that is to say with a Being conceived as the supreme and ultimate reality. If what the mystics say of their experience is true, if they have really been in communion with the Holy Spirit of God, that is a fact of overwhelming importance, which must be taken

¹Georgia Harkness, Mysticism: Its Meaning and Message (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973), 19.

into account when we attempt to understand God, the world, and ourselves.²

Yet Inge also advances another more abstract definition:

Religious Mysticism may be defined as the attempt to realize the presence of the living God in the soul and in nature, or, more generally, as "the attempt to realize, in thought and feeling, the immanence of the temporal in the eternal, and the eternal in the temporal."³

Michael Cox understands this as "the attempt to see the absolute by pure spiritual apprehension."⁴ Evelyn Underhill maintains that "Mysticism, in its pure form, is the science of ultimates, the science of union with the Absolute, and nothing else."⁵

The above examples show an unresolved intricacy over the question of "union" versus "communion." Underhill points out that most historic definitions prefer the latter term.⁶ Harkness observes:

The language used seems often to slide back and forth between the union which connotes a breaking down of all barriers in the immediacy of Divine presence--and this might more accurately be termed communion--and an assumed ontological merging of the

²William R. Inge, Mysticism In Religion (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1948), 8.

³William R. Inge, Christian Mysticism, 7th ed. (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1964), 7.

⁴Michael Cox, Handbook of Christian Spirituality (New York: Harper and Row, 1983), 21.

⁵Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, 12th ed. (London: Methuen and Co., 1962), 72.

⁶Underhill, Mysticism, 72.

finite with the Infinite for a transient but ecstatic period.⁷

Karl Rahner, while asserting that it is not possible to start with a definition of mysticism, nevertheless states that "mysticism may be regarded as a consciousness of the experience of uncreated grace as revelation and self-communication of the triune God."⁸ Still, he lacks a definition of Mysticism. D. D. Martin follows the same route by attempting to describe the characteristics of Mysticism without supplying any definition.⁹ The same method is followed by E. J. Tinsley who begins by noting that "great care is required in defining the meaning of the term," and proceeds to describe the characteristics of Mysticism, still without providing an exact definition. Perhaps the closest he comes is the observation that in the early Church "Mysticism. . . amounted to an unmediated experience of external verities, a heightened state of awareness and direct experience of God, an ecstatic sense of fusion with ultimate reality."¹⁰

⁷Harkness, Mysticism, 22.

⁸Karl Rahner, "Mysticism," in Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi, ed. Karl Rahner (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 1004.

⁹D. D. Martin, "Mysticism," in Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 744-46.

¹⁰E. J. Tinsley, "Mysticism," in The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology, eds. Alan Richardson and John Bowden (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 387-88.

Ninian Smart feels that such difficulty in definition exists for two main reasons:

[1] Mystics often describe their experiences partly in terms of doctrines presupposed to be true, and there is no one set of doctrines invariably associated with mysticism," and [2] "There is quite a difference between mystical experience and prophetic and, more generally, numinous experience, but it is not easy to bring out this phenomenological fact in a short definition.¹¹

The latter emphasis, for example, brings to mind the discussion of the numinous found in Rudolph Otto's Idea of the Holy. In distilling his three main elements of mystical experience ("Awefulness, Overpoweringness, and Energy")¹² he also provides the following definition: "Mysticism is the stressing to a very high degree, indeed the overstressing, of the non-rational or supra-rational elements in religion."¹³ While cogently criticizing Schleiermacher for failing to explain his "feeling of dependence," as well as being overly solipistic,¹⁴ he also criticizes orthodoxy for its seeming emphasis upon rationalism or the cognitive element in religious experience:

. . . we see that the common dictum, that orthodoxy itself has been the mother of rationalism, is in some measure well founded. It is not simply that orthodoxy

¹¹Ninian Smart, "History of Mysticism," in Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: MacMillian Pub. Co., 1967), 5:420.

¹²Rudolph Otto, The Idea of the Holy, trans. John W. Harvey, (London: Oxford University Press, 1923; New York: Oxford University Press paperback, 1958), 11-21.

¹³Ibid., 22.

¹⁴Ibid., 9-10.

was preoccupied with doctrine and the framing of dogma, for these have been no less a concern of the wildest mystics. It is rather that orthodoxy found in the construction of dogma and doctrine no way to do justice to the non-rational aspect of its subject. So far from keeping the non-rational element in religion alive in the heart of the religious experience, orthodox Christianity manifestly failed to recognize its value, and by this failure gave to the idea of God a one-sidedly intellectualistic and rationalistic interpretation.¹⁵

This continuing tension between "union" and "communion," or between the affective and cognitive elements in religion thus seems to defy simple explanation. Merely recounting personal experiences or philosophizing about the Transcendent leaves neither content or verifiability. One may, however, objectify mysticism by noting those components which seem constant in mystical experience and which lend themselves to objective analysis. These seem to be three in number: (1) a view of revelation which stresses the priority of experience over Scripture, (2) a concept of salvation as a continuing process which develops in definite "stages," and (3) a concept of the Imago Dei which sees the image in terms of a divine "spark" naturally resident in humanity.

The first component insists that God can only be known "by stripping away every aspect and attribute of the self."¹⁶ Since God is viewed as being completely transcendent, nothing of his true nature can be communicated to us.

¹⁵Ibid., 3.

¹⁶Cox, Handbook, 34.

He can only be known in "superessential Darkness."¹⁷ The practical effect of this view is to deny any possibility of supernatural revelation which is stated in propositions. In other words, the concept of an infallible or inerrant Scripture is nonsense.

While both Pentecostals and Charismatics espouse varying views, it is clear that the concept of Scriptural revelation is undergoing a drastic change compared to earlier, more fundamental concepts. Part of the reason for this change is doubtless due to the Pentecostal/Charismatic fascination for modernity. The question should be asked, however, whether the change is not also due to a basic difference in the hermeneutical approach of Pentecostal and Charismatic theology. Does the emphasis on experience and "charismatic" authority result in a way of interpreting Scripture which deemphasizes its revelatory content?

The second component is clearly demonstrated in the medieval mystics who emphasized an experience of dying from the world and entering into the self in three stages: (1) Purification--repentance and dying away; (2) Illumination--the imitation of Christ in suffering and obedience; and (3) Union--becoming entirely free of created things culminating in unification with the Divine.¹⁸ While it is inaccurate to

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Bengt Hagglund, History of Theology, trans. Gene J. Lund (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 205-206.

accuse Pentecostals of Gnostic spirituality, this concept of "stage" spirituality seems endemic throughout both Pentecostal and Charismatic camps. Henry Lederle insists that the formal link which unites varying Pentecostal understandings of the Christian life is "the basic element of dividing the Christian life up into distinct stages."¹⁹ In the words of Pentecostal theologian French Arrington:

Primary among these Pentecostal distinctives are the two interrelated doctrines: (1) that the Spirit baptism is a work of grace distinct from and subsequent to the initial experience of salvation, and (2) that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of baptism in the Spirit. These distinctive doctrines of subsequence and initial evidence were affixed to the holiness doctrines as the primary Pentecostal theological presuppositions.²⁰

This stands in clear opposition to Luther's emphasis upon spiritual growth as a unified pattern of development in which one is justified and sinful at the same time.

The third assumption of mysticism, that humanity somehow possesses a "divine spark," provides the clearest line of demarcation from orthodoxy. Eastern theology presupposes an inherent capacity for divine things through the Image of God which remains in us:

See, how He [God] fits Himself to each soul, measuring Himself to its capacity and how each soul is worthy to meet Him because within it is the image and likeness of the Creator Himself! He by Himself without more and none but He is sufficient to fill and more than fill the

¹⁹Henry I. Lederle, Treasures Old and New (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), 15.

²⁰French Arrington, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 379.

will and desire of each soul; and each soul because of His re-forming grace, is sufficient to its fullness to comprehend Him by¹love, who is incomprehensible to the reasoning powers.²¹

Salvation in this context thus becomes a matter of restoring the image that has been marred.²² The Eastern term theosis, or "deification" expresses the concept as the elevation of humanity to the divine realm, to "the atmosphere of God."²³ Jesus Christ, as Irenaeus put it, became "what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself."²⁴ While the term "deification" should not be oversimplified, the logical application of the concept seems to prompt a more mystically-oriented spirituality.

Similar themes seem present in the fourteenth-century German mystics such as Eckhart and Tauler, who spoke of terms such as the Grund or "ground" of the soul, or of

²¹The Cloud of Unknowing (New York: Harper and Row, 1948), 27.

²²"The Orthodox Church believes that the corruption of the God-like image of man was not complete, that man's will became blurred, but did not disappear. Man's desire for salvation implies that man feels his inner emptiness and turns to God for forgiveness and redemption." George Mastrantonis, The Fundamental Teachings of the Eastern Orthodox Church (St. Louis: OLOGOS, n.d.), 8.

²³Linda Hopkins, "The Flight From the World: A Study of the Origins of Third- and Fourth-Century Desert Asceticism" (M.A. Thesis, Oral Roberts University, 1988), 4.

²⁴Qui propter immensam suam dilectionem factus est quod sumus nos, uti nos perficeret esse quod est ipse. Irenaeus, "Contra Haereses," in Patrologiae Cursus Completus, ed. Jacques Paul Migne, vol. 7(2), 1119.

See also Athanasius, Oratio de Incarnatione Verbi in Migne, t.25, 192b: Ipse siquidem homo factus est, ut nos dii efficeremur.

the "spark of divinity" within each individual.²⁵ Bengt Hagglund notes that "Eckhart did not place the Cross and the Resurrection at the center, but rather the Incarnation, in which this union was manifested."²⁶

While both Eastern and Western mysticism may have emphasized certain Reformation themes (such as personal and experiential faith as opposed to Scholasticism), a critical difference remained in anthropology. The primary issue is whether humanity is dead in sin, or merely ill. This single question leads to completely different systems of soteriology. John Stott refers all divergences in theology to the single issue of our view of fallen humanity:

Behind our differences in relation to both authority and salvation there lies a divergent understanding of our human being and condition. Both the Catholic and the liberal traditions have tended to exalt human intelligence and goodness and, therefore, to expect human beings to contribute something toward their enlightenment and their salvation. Evangelicals, on the other hand, while strongly affirming the divine image which our humanity bears, have tended to emphasize our human finitude and fallenness and, therefore, to insist that without revelation we cannot know God and without redemption we cannot reach him.²⁷

This difference profiles the tension between orthodoxy and mystical theology. For the mystic justifica-

²⁵D. D. Martin, "Mysticism," in Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 746.

²⁶Hagglund, History of Doctrine, 205.

²⁷John Rodgers, "Human Finitude and Evangelicals," a review of Evangelical Essentials: A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue, by David L. Edwards, In In Trust, 1 (New Year, 1990): 30.

tion is a process, grace is ontological, revelation is inscrutable and salvation is synergistic. Conversely those who follow the Reformation tenets of sola Scriptura, sola gratia, and sola fide see justification as a forensic act, grace as the imputed favor of God, Scripture as propositional revelation, and salvation as coming from God alone. These two systems exist in a constant tension with one frequently pretending to be the other. The critical issue for the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement is which of the two describes its own faith and life? Can the Charismatic movement, for example, truly formulate a sound doctrine given its penchant for "continuing revelation"? Can the Pentecostals establish a sound Biblical foundation given their own preoccupation with contemporary theology combined with their view of the Christian life as a series of spiritual "stages"? Once again the question of human merit must be faced.

CHAPTER III

JOHN WESLEY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PENTECOSTALISM

Part One: The Influence of Mysticism Upon Wesley

Early Life

Although Wesley's exposure to mysticism is perhaps most popularly associated with William Law, it cannot be denied that exposure to the tenets of mysticism came at a very early period in his life. Neither can it be denied that the influence of Law can easily be over emphasized:

When one thinks of Wesley and the mystics, one usually thinks first of William Law, the celebrated mystic and nonjuror. Law's importance for the subject at hand, however, has traditionally been greatly exaggerated. True, Law was a sort of spiritual mentor of the Wesleys for several years and the climax of John's significant 'break' with mysticism occurs simultaneously with his May, 1738 correspondence with Law; yet, much of the influence usually accredited to Law should have been attributed to other mystics as well.¹

Conversely, Vinson Synan notes that upon reading Serious Call in 1726 Wesley adopted much of Law's thinking for his own and spent his life in pursuit of the holiness of heart mentioned by Taylor, a'Kempis, and Law.²

¹Robert Gregory Tuttle Jr., "The Influence of the Roman Catholic Mystics on John Wesley" (Ph.D. diss., Bristol University, 1969), 12-13.

²Vinson Synan, The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 14-15.

One should not, however, consider only "other mystics." Wesley's own parents should also be considered as direct mystical influences upon him. Robert Monk notes that,

The Puritan family lineage of John Wesley begins at least as early as two of his great-grandfathers and perhaps earlier. Bartholomew Westley, grandfather of Samuel Wesley, and John White, grandfather of Susanna Wesley, were recognized Puritans active during the period of the Commonwealth.³

Brazier Green notes the "powerful influence of the Puritan outlook in the mind of his grandfather."⁴ The latter, John "Westley" (the name was evidently changed to "Wesley" with Samuel, John Wesley's father)⁵ was an Oxford graduate who experienced strong persecution for dissenting from the Act of Uniformity in 1662.⁶ After journeying from place to place, the elder Westley became the pastor of a small independent congregation at Poole, where he finished his life.⁷ Monk notes his association with renowned Puritans such as Thomas Goodwin, Stephen Charnock, John Howe, Philis Henry, and Joseph Alleine; also the fact that he received "special attention" from John Owen and became known as a

³Robert C. Monk, John Wesley His Puritan Heritage (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), 17.

⁴Brazier Green, John Wesley and William Law (London: The Epworth Press, 1945), 15.

⁵E. B. Chappell, Studies in the Life of John Wesley (Nashville: Smith and Lamar, 1915), 10.

⁶E. B. Chappell, Studies, 10.

⁷Ibid.

diligent student of Oriental languages.⁸ Although not a mystic in the proper sense of the term, his extreme Puritan emphasis upon perfection and holiness would have to be considered a forceful influence which would be brought to fruition in John Wesley himself.

John Westley's son, Samuel, inherited the Nonconformist stance of his father, but left that view in his teens to enter Oxford.⁹ Upon graduation in 1688 he was ordained in the Church of England and married Susanna Annesley that same year.¹⁰ Green observes how Samuel "returned to the faith of his forefathers, growing up an almost rabid royalist and a pernickety [sic] high churchman."¹¹ He strongly embraced an emphasis upon the early church and "became a staunch supporter of a 'high church' interpretation of the sacraments."¹² He also studied the mystics a' Kempis, de Renty, and Pascal.¹³ The end result of such staunch loyalty to the Church of England was his pastorate at Epworth with a congregation described by his daughter, Hetty:

⁸Monk, Wesley, 18.

⁹Ibid., 20.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹V. H. H. Green, John Wesley (London: Thomas Nelson, 1964), 9.

¹²Monk, Wesley, 21.

¹³Tuttle, "Influence", 51.

As asses dull on dunghill born,
 Impervious as the stones their heads are found,¹⁴
 Their rage and hatred steadfast to the ground.¹⁴

Still, the primary influence upon him seems to have been his Puritan heritage. On his deathbed he could make the statement: "The inward witness, son, the inward witness; that is the proof, the strongest proof of Christianity."¹⁵

The strongest early mystical influence by far on Wesley came from the woman who would be his mother, Susanna Annesley. Susanna's father, Samuel Annesley, was "one of the most eminent of the later Puritan Nonconformists,"¹⁶ and, according to Calamy "was so early under serious impressions, that he declared he knew not the time when he was not converted."¹⁷ The elder Annesley was ordained a Presbyterian but was forced into retirement for his refusal to conform in 1662.¹⁸ He continued to support Nonconformists and held the first Presbyterian ordination to be held publicly after 1662.¹⁹ He is said to have been familiar with the writings of St. Teresa and Gregory of

¹⁴Cited by Stanley Ayling, John Wesley (New York: William Collins Publishers, 1979), 17.

¹⁵Monk, Wesley, 22.

¹⁶Ibid., 20.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., 21.

¹⁹Ibid.

Nyssa and to have referred to the latter when writing on "what it is to love God with the whole heart."²⁰

Susanna, the twenty-fifth child of Rev. Annesley, was said to be "a marvel of precocity."²¹ Methodist historian W. H. Fitchett remarks that she knew Greek, Latin, and French, and that while in her teens she was "saturated with theology, reasoned herself into Socinianism--and out of it--and, generally, had a taste for abstruse knowledge."²² It is this latter characteristic, a "taste for abstruse knowledge" which may have affected Wesley in a manner only recently sensed by Wesley scholars. Tuttle points out that Susanna was intimately acquainted with the "quasi-mystic" Pascal, and that she "knew his Pensees practically by heart."²³ Further, that the Italian mystic Lorenzo Scupoli "held a primary place in Susanna's devotion."²⁴ Scupoli was an Italian Theatine monk who preached complete self-renunciation followed by "whole-hearted love to God."²⁵ Susanna also studied a'Kempis, the Cambridge Platonists,

²⁰Tuttle, "Influence," 48.

²¹E. B. Chappell, Studies, 12.

²²W. H. Fitchett, Wesley and His Century: A Study in Spiritual Forces (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1912), 15-16.

²³Tuttle, "Influence," 48-49.

²⁴Ibid., 49-50.

²⁵Ibid.

More and Norris, and the Scottish mystic Henry Scougal.²⁶ One of her most loved books was the Pugna Spiritualis by Lorenzo Scupoli.²⁷ This work was a call to Christian perfection which was derived solely from the idea of God.²⁸ Scupoli argued that such standing was acquired when a human could apprehend the "inexpressible goodness of God and at the same time his own nothingness."²⁹ In the words of Martin Schmidt:

Man must therefore hate himself, renounce his own Ego, and turn with wholehearted love to God. It is not feeling but the understanding and the will which are addressed in the first place; hence this is primarily an intellectualist and voluntary mysticism, even if the emotional element follows. . . . The characteristic of such an attitude is necessarily renunciation--or as the ancient formula of Greek monachism expressed it--the mortification of the passions, although it is not taken nearly as far.³⁰

"The fundamental law of the spiritual life and the instrument of true progress is therefore spiritual trial."³¹

Schmidt notes that

John Wesley's mother was well acquainted with this theocentric mysticism and its emphasis upon the will. She heard in it the message of that love of God which alone is efficacious and all-powerful; and of that grace

²⁶ Ibid., 51.

²⁷ Martin Schmidt, John Wesley: A Theological Biography, vol. I, trans. Norman P. Goldhawk (Nashville: Abingdon Press, n.d.), 48.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 48-49.

³¹ Ibid., 50.

which takes up into itself human inability and worthlessness. But at the same time she heard the serious summons not to relax the struggle for perfection and to withdraw from the things of the world.³²

Still another religious source which was common currency in eighteenth-century England was Henry Scougal's The Life of God in the Soul of Man.³³ Scougal defined true religion as:

. . . a union of the soul with God, a real participation of the divine nature, the very image of God drawn upon the soul, or, in the Apostle's phrase, it is Christ formed within us.³⁴

Schmidt notes that at this point, "the connexion with Romanic, quietest mysticism is immediately evident."³⁵

He who loves God participates gradually in the nobility of the divine world. As people in love grow continually more like each other even in movement and voice, so the image³⁶ of God appears increasingly in His faithful ones.

The mystic view of the atonement is readily apparent:

[Love] embraces all men because God created them and sent into the world for their salvation no less a one than His own Son. God has imprinted His own image on them all, and even if they have lost it, Jesus Christ came in order to restore it. . . . His Son entered into the weakness of men, fully conscious of the humiliation, in order to become the true minister of their souls. In this way He awakened their dead hearts to the divine

³²Ibid., 52-53.

³³Ibid., 53.

³⁴Ibid., 54.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid., 55.

love, and led them back to their original state, to their true destiny.³⁷

Schmidt notes further,

Scougal vigorously attacks those theologians who would confine the Holy Spirit to Pentecost. It is rather a question of coming to know God here and now, since both for the person whose love is for earthly things and for the one who loves God the remoteness of the loved object is the greatest misery.³⁸

Schmidt's analysis of Scupoli points out an important mystical trait:

When we consider the main positions of this impressive book, we can recognize both its strength and its weaknesses. The strongest point is the coherent way in which the idea of God is expressed. The greatness of God is the leading theme, and it consists in His love. This love is conveyed to man through the likeness which binds him to God, and it continues in that love for mankind which extends to love for the enemy. The image of God in man is the foundation which supports the whole structure. Therefore those who forbear to know anything about this in themselves are to be pitied, not hated or treated with contempt. In comparison with this the understanding of sin is weakly developed, and therefore also the conception of Jesus Christ. Indeed Scougal emphatically attacks the idea which limits Christianity to the mere forgiveness of sins. It is the possession of eternity, life in the divine world--very like Schleiermacher's definition later of immortality as becoming one with infinity in the midst of finiteness.³⁹

Even though Scupoli and Scougal vary in how they approach the subject, Schmidt notes that "both books are concerned with perfection, which consists in participation in God's own nature."⁴⁰ He concludes that:

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 55-56.

³⁹ Ibid., 56-57.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 57.

Susanna Wesley was deeply affected by these influences, and through her they passed to her large family, especially John. It must not be overlooked that certain essential characteristics of John Wesley's own system are contained in them, and questions are apparent with which he was constantly concerned in his maturity.⁴¹

That Wesley was more affected by his mother than his father seems a truism. Chappell observes, "In any attempt to estimate the forces that entered into the making of John Wesley's life the first place must be given to his mother's influence."⁴² This would surely mean that Wesley was at least indirectly exposed to mysticism at a very early age. Schmidt notes that,

Susanna Wesley's view of the subjection of the will as the essential presupposition for education in the things of God is an echo of Romanic mysticism. . . For her, self-will was the root of all sin and misery, and so she was well able to understand that the essence of Christianity lay precisely in the fact that man should do the will of God and not his own.⁴³

Some hint of Wesley's early background is contained in a reflection upon his early life written when he was eighty years old:

From a child I was taught to love and reverence the Scripture, the oracles of God; and, next to these to esteem the primitive Fathers, the writers of the first three centuries. Next after the primitive church, I esteemed our own, the Church of England, as the most scriptural national Church in the world. I therefore not only assented to all the doctrines, but observed all

⁴¹ Ibid., 58.

⁴² E. B. Chappell, Studies, 17.

⁴³ Schmidt, Wesley, 60.

the rubrics in the Liturgy; and that with all possible exactness, even at the peril of my life.⁴⁴

Wesley as a Student

Public School at Charterhouse

Historians do not make a great deal of Wesley's public school education. Fitchett notes his enrollment at Charterhouse "when not yet eleven years old," in 1714; also that "he was an ideal student--quick, tireless, methodic, frugal of time and sober of spirit."⁴⁵ George Eayrs notes that while at Charterhouse "he had all the signs of pulmonary decline."⁴⁶ While this may be more a reference to his slight build, it would not have helped that he "practically lived on bread" since the older boys quite often robbed the younger students of their meat.⁴⁷

Perhaps the primary value of this public-school period lies in its role as a forerunner of Wesley's conversion experience. Scholars differ somewhat on his spiritual state during these public school years. Luke Tyerman feels that "John Wesley entered the Charterhouse a saint, and left

⁴⁴Leo George Cox, John Wesley's Concept of Perfection (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1964), 15.

⁴⁵Fitchett, Study, 43.

⁴⁶George Eayrs, John Wesley: Christian Philosopher and Church Founder (London: The Epworth Press, 1926), 46-47.

⁴⁷Fitchett, Study, 43.

it a sinner."⁴⁸ Wesley himself, in his famous letter describing the events leading to his experience of May 24, 1738, deserves quoting at length:

I believe, till I was about ten years old I had not sinned away that "washing of the Holy Ghost" which was given me in baptism; having been strictly educated and carefully taught, that I could only be saved "by universal obedience, by keeping all the commandments of God;" in the meaning of which I was diligently instructed. And those instructions, so far as they respected outward duties and sins, I gladly received, and often thought of. But all that was said to me of inward obedience, or holiness, I neither understood nor remembered. So that I was indeed as ignorant of the true meaning of the Law, as I was of the Gospel of Christ.

The next six or seven years were spent at school; where, outward restraints being removed, I was much more negligent than before, even of outward duties, and almost continually guilty of outward sins, which I knew to be such, though they were not scandalous in the eye of the world.⁴⁹

Chappell disagrees with Wesley's severe judgment upon himself, contending that Wesley's recollection reflects "the first glow of that flaming enthusiasm which followed his emancipation from his long intellectual and spiritual bondage."⁵⁰

⁴⁸L. Tyerman, Life and Times of John Wesley (Hodder & Stoughton, n.d.), 1:22, quoted in Braizer Green, Wesley and Law, p.21.

⁴⁹John Wesley, Letter #6, May, 1738, "Wesley's Description of Events Leading to His Experience on May 24, 1738," in John Wesley: An Autobiographical Sketch of the Man and His Thought, Chiefly from His Letters, ed. Ole E. Borgen (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966), 27.

⁵⁰E. B. Chappell, Studies, 30.

As a Student at Oxford

Wesley's student days cover the period from his matriculation at Christ Church College, Oxford on June 24, 1720 to his ordination to deacon on September 19, 1725.⁵¹ Again, little is known of his undergraduate days. There seems to be no evidence of riotous living; he was probably "less careful of religious observances," and seems to have been constantly in need of funds.⁵² Tyerman persists in painting a dark picture of his state maintaining that "from the age of eleven to the age of twenty-two, Wesley made no pretensions to be religious and, except on rare occasions habitually lived in the practice of known sin."⁵³ Green, however, feels it much more likely that Wesley's "known sin" was the absence of inner holiness, his highest goal in the letter of 1738.⁵⁴

Wesley's Conversion

Wesley's terminus ad quem for his university education was his bachelor of arts graduation in 1724.⁵⁵ Ordination followed on September 19, 1725.⁵⁶ In March of

⁵¹Tuttle, "Influence," 55.

⁵²E. B. Chappell, Studies, 31.

⁵³Tyerman, Life and Times, 31, quoted in Braizer Green, Wesley, 23.

⁵⁴Brazier Green, Wesley, 28.

⁵⁵V. H. H. Green, Wesley, 14.

⁵⁶Tuttle, "Influence," 58.

1725 he had received word from his father to begin preparation for the ministry; shortly following this events took place which would have far-reaching effects upon him: (1) he met his first "religious friend," (2) he was introduced to Jeremy Taylor's Rules for Holy Living, (3) he was also introduced to a 'Kempis' Imitation of Christ, and (4) he experienced a religious conversion.⁵⁷ The latter event, according to Tuttle, "was to launch his unpredictable mystical career."⁵⁸ An additional influence which Wesley would encounter in 1726 was William Law's A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, produced in 1726.⁵⁹ While the scholarly debate on the exact time and nature of Wesley's conversion make this factor relative, the remaining events seem to constitute objective mystical influences upon him.

Sally Kirkham

The first of these events, Wesley's "religious friend," has been identified as Sally Kirkham (also called "Varanese" by Wesley), an acquaintance made during his pastoral activities in the area of Cotswold.⁶⁰ Kirkland is credited by Tuttle as being the stimulus for Wesley's interest in mystical devotional writings during the year

⁵⁷ Ibid., 60.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 55.

⁵⁹ Robert G. Tuttle, Jr., Mysticism in the Wesleyan Tradition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 68.

⁶⁰ V. H. H. Green, Wesley, 16-17.

1725.⁶¹ Wesley's correspondence for this period indicate a considerable interest in Thomas a'Kempis and Jeremy Taylor's Holy Living and Dying, both seemingly due to the influence of Kirkland.⁶² Wesley notes that,

In the year 1725, being in the twenty-third year of my age, I met with Bishop Taylor's Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying. In reading several parts of this book, I was exceedingly affected: that part in particular which relates to purity of intention. Instantly I resolved to dedicate all my life to God; all my thoughts, and words, and actions; being thoroughly convinced there was no medium, but that every part of my life (not some only) must either be a sacrifice to God, or myself; that is, in effect, to the devil.⁶³

Concerning a'Kempis, Wesley was initially less impressed, writing in a May 1725 letter to his mother that,

I was lately advised to read Thomas a'Kempis over, which I had frequently seen, but never much looked into before. I think he must have been a person of great piety and devotion, but it is my misfortune to differ from him in some of his main points. I can't think that when God sent us into the world He had irreversibly decreed that we should be perpetually miserable in it.⁶⁴

Jeremy Taylor

Taylor (1613-67), was a well-known Anglican bishop and writer whose fame came primarily from his devotional

⁶¹Tuttle, Mysticism in the Wesleyan Tradition, 55.

⁶²Braizer Green, Wesley, 26.

⁶³John Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection (London: Epworth Press, 1983), 5.

⁶⁴John Wesley, "Letter to His Mother, May 28, 1725," in John Wesley: an Autobiographical Sketch of the Man and His Thought, Chiefly from His Letters, ed. Ole E. Borgen (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966), 10.

classics, Holy Living, and Holy Dying.⁶⁵ He was also involved in controversy as a theologian, being accused of Pelagianism and minimizing the doctrine of Original Sin.⁶⁶ Tuttle points out that while Taylor "was no mystic in the sense that John Wesley was to understand the term," he nevertheless contained mystical characteristics.⁶⁷

According to Tuttle, D. Dunn Wilson makes a convincing case for Taylor's mysticism in that Taylor was "concerned with establishing a union between the believer and God in a Christian mystical relationship."⁶⁸

Taylor states that "God dwells in our heart by faith . . . so that we are also cabinets of the mysterious Trinity." Wilson also suggests that Taylor, in true mystical fashion, has his own scala perfectionis by which the Christian climbs up to God. Taylor seems to teach that through humility, self-renunciation, self-examination, scrupulous employment of time, purity of intention, and other similar rules of mortification, the Christian can strip away the worldly passions and that love can then grow step by step.⁶⁹

William R. Cannon notes,

The aim of Taylor's book is to convince man that, as God has given him an excellent nature and an immortal spirit, he has also appointed for him a work and a service great enough to employ those abilities, and has ordained him to a state of life beyond the grave to

⁶⁵The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 2nd ed., s.v. "Taylor, Jeremy."

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Tuttle, Mysticism, 56.

⁶⁸Ibid., 56-57.

⁶⁹Ibid., 57.

which he can arrive only by that service and that obedience.⁷⁰

Tuttle feels the effect of Taylor was to provide "the preamble for Wesley's attraction to the mystical ladder of perfection."⁷¹ The idea seems to be that of a "practical mysticism" in the vein of a Kempis and Law in which Christianity is represented as a progressive development towards perfection:

As in practical mysticism this perfection was conceived as an inherent ethical change in man and the Christian life represented as a progressive development towards it. Such perfecting was the purpose of religion. With Wesley as with the mystics everything was directed towards a change which would qualify man for glorification. In this general position just as in the teleological alignment of his theology, Wesley, after, as well as before 1738, agrees with practical mysticism.⁷²

Wesley himself lauds Taylor with high praise:

In 1725 I met with Bishop Taylor's "Rules of Holy Living and Dying". I was struck particularly with the chapter upon intention, and felt a fixed intention "to give myself up to God". In this I was much confirmed soon after by the "Christian Pattern," and longed to give God all my heart. This is just what I mean by Perfection now: I sought after it from that hour.⁷³

⁷⁰William Ragsdale Cannon, The Theology of John Wesley: With Special Reference to the Doctrine of Justification. (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1946), 55.

⁷¹Tuttle, Mysticism, 57.

⁷²Harald Lindstrom, Wesley and Sanctification: A Study in the Doctrine of Salvation (New York: Abingdon Press, n.d.), 128-29.

⁷³John Wesley, The Journal of John Wesley: A Selection, ed. Elisabeth Jay (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 158.

In this section, Taylor's work advances a high spiritual goal for all Christians:

Blessed be that goodness and grace of God, which, out of infinite desire to glorify and save mankind, would make the very works of nature capable of becoming acts of⁷⁴ virtue, that all our lifetime we may do Him service.

Taylor notes that "Hezekiah repeated his good deeds upon his sick-bed, and obtained favor of God. . ."⁷⁵ It is here that a primary theme of Methodism presents itself--that of intention. According to Taylor, "holy intention" is the primary verification of true Christianity.

Without these [holy intentions] the body is a dead trunk, the matter is sluggish, the tree is a block, the world is darkness, the river is quickly dry, the pillar rushes into flatness and a ruin; and the action is sinful, or unprofitable and vain.⁷⁶

The chapter is further divided up into "Rules for our intentions," followed by "Signs of purity of intention." Relative to the former, Taylor reminds that ". . .the more good ends are designed in an action the more degrees of excellency the man obtains."⁷⁷ Further, that Christians must strive to reach a pious attitude of "habitual intention," in which one offers the whole self for God's glory.⁷⁸

⁷⁴Jeremy Taylor, The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living, ed. Thomas S. Depler (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1956), 20.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid., 21.

⁷⁷Ibid., 24.

⁷⁸Ibid., 25.

The latter section dealing with "signs" of piety again reflects the Methodist concern with spiritual assurance:

But because many cases may happen in which a man's heart may deceive him, and he may not well know what is in his own spirit; therefore, by these following signs we shall best make a judgment⁷⁹ whether our intentions be pure and our purposes holy.

Then follow eight "signs" of piety urging such Christian characteristics as humility and faith.⁸⁰ The idea seems to be that by following such "rules" "the Christian can strip away the worldly passions and that love can then grow step by step."⁸¹

One cannot help being struck by the similarity of such language to Wesley's own system as expressed in A Plain Account of Christian Perfection. First, there is a clear understanding of the Christian life as a series of "stages," which lead eventually to perfection:

Neither dare we affirm, as some have done, that all this salvation is given at once. There is indeed an instantaneous, as well as a gradual, work of God in His children; and there wants not, we know, a cloud of witnesses who have received, in one moment, either a clear sense of the forgiveness of their sins, or the abiding witness of the Holy Spirit. But we do not know a single instance, in any place, of a person's receiving in one and the same moment, remission of sins, the abiding witness of the Spirit, and a new, a clean heart.⁸²

⁷⁹Ibid., 26.

⁸⁰Ibid., 26-31.

⁸¹Tuttle, Mysticism, 57.

⁸²Wesley, Account, 24.

Second, "Christian Perfection" is defined as "loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength," so that "all the thoughts, words, and actions are governed by pure love."⁸³ Third, Wesley allows for the existence of "mistakes" which are not technically "sins" in that they are the result of the corruptible state of our body and "are in no way contrary to love; nor therefore, in the Scripture sense, sin."⁸⁴ This seems to be an implied appeal to Taylor's theme of "intentions."

Ultimately, as D. Dunn Wilson suggests, Taylor was not mystical enough for Wesley's changing taste.

Taylor's emphasis upon inward holiness (especially where it pertained to the extension of God's laws over one's thought as well as one's words and actions) was soon to gain additional impetus through the even stronger influence of Thomas a'Kempis, Wesley's springboard into the esoteric world of mysticism.⁸⁵

Thomas a'Kempis

Michael Cox states that the Christian mystical tradition recognizes two broad forms of contemplation: [1] Christocentric, in which union with the Triune God is accomplished through the Person of the Son, and [2] "Theocentric" mysticism in which one draws near to God through the contemplation of His creatures, as in the Platonic model

⁸³Ibid., 42.

⁸⁴Account, 44.

⁸⁵Tuttle, Mysticism, 57-58.

of the Timaeus.⁸⁶ In a 'Kempis (1380-1471) one finds a mysticism of the "Christocentric" variety which emphasizes a spiritual dualism of complete contrast between the world and the Spirit of God.⁸⁷ Cannon notes that a 'Kempis reaffirmed what Wesley had already been taught--that true Christians must seek to imitate their Lord.⁸⁸ After reading a 'Kempis, Wesley "set out in earnest upon a new course of life," following a rigorous schedule of religious meditation and devotions.⁸⁹ He would later publish and give away many thousands of copies of The Imitation of Christ under a new title: The Christian's Pattern.⁹⁰

Due to the influence of Taylor, a 'Kempis and Law Wesley scholars can claim that:

Holiness is therefore the key to the meaning of God in Christian experience. It is the gateway to communion with God. Wesley did not invent this idea. He took it from others.⁹¹

Wesley's own perception of a 'Kempis was at first dubious. "He could not. . . accept the mysticism, the asceticism, and the fatalism of a 'Kempis."⁹² Part of the

⁸⁶Cox, Handbook, 37.

⁸⁷Ibid., 125.

⁸⁸Cannon, The Theology of John Wesley, 56.

⁸⁹Ibid., 57.

⁹⁰Eayrs, Wesley, 263.

⁹¹George Croft Cell, The Rediscovery of John Wesley (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1935), 354.

⁹²E. B. Chappell, Studies, 36.

reason for such a reaction may have been the emphasis of a'Kempis on the renunciation of one's own will, a daily struggle involving continual and unconditional obedience. Whereas Scupoli, Scougal, and Taylor emphasized Christian perfection as a goal in this world, a'Kempis advocated a spiritual reality which was beyond this world, "in the mystical subjectivity of the individual."⁹³ The world and society were viewed in a completely negative manner, the social aspect of existence being completely absent.⁹⁴

Both of the above works, then influenced Wesley. Negatively, he reacted against the mysticism and asceticism of a'Kempis; likewise against Taylor's assertion that no one could have definite assurance of salvation.⁹⁵ Still, Wesley was strengthened in his "natural tendency toward asceticism" and developed a "bent toward mysticism which later became a serious menace to his religious life."⁹⁶

In spite of some initial skepticism toward a'Kempis, Wesley continued to draw closer to a'Kempis' monastic asceticism between 1725 and 1735.⁹⁷ "Before Wesley's evangelical conversion a'Kempis would first direct him by

⁹³Schmidt, Biography, vol.1, 83.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵E. B. Chappell, Studies, 36.

⁹⁶Ibid., 37.

⁹⁷Tuttle, Mysticism, 61-62.

another route involving a thirteen-year 'mystical' adventure."⁹⁸

By the time of [Wesley's] ordination, he had taken the advice of his mother and had made religion the 'business of his life.' And, as he would observe among so many of his own society members, those who took religion most seriously⁹⁹ were those most susceptible to mysticism.

William Law

William Law (1686-1761) is best known for his 1728 treatise, A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life.¹⁰⁰ Also of importance was an earlier work, On Christian Perfection.¹⁰¹ He was influenced by the mystics Tauler, Ruysbroeck, a Kempis, and was an early influence on both John Wesley and George Whitefield.¹⁰² Cox notes that Law's Serious Call (1729) "sowed the seed of Methodism in John Wesley."¹⁰³

In the mid-1730s Law began to study Jacob Boehme and was thereby influenced by Dionysius the Areopagite.¹⁰⁴ Law followed Boehme in asserting the primacy of the will as well as a spirituality which stressed self-mortification, trials,

⁹⁸Ibid., 62.

⁹⁹Ibid., 63.

¹⁰⁰Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 805.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Cox, Handbook, 196.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 197.

and eventual purification.¹⁰⁵ In praising mystical figures such as Dionysius, Ruysbroeck, Suso, and Boehme, Law notes:

These writers began their office of teaching, as John the Baptist did, after they had passed through every kind of mortification and self-denial, every kind of trial and purification, both inward and outward.¹⁰⁶

Law was anything but consistent, as revealed in his 1731 attempt to combat the Deism of Tyndal's Christianity as Old as Creation by publishing The Case of Reason. Martin Thornton notes that the latter "is in places so vigorously transcendental that one wonders if he was not something of a Deist himself."¹⁰⁷ As a non-juror¹⁰⁸ Law was outside the Church of England, so that the Serious Call assumes the character of an attack on religious formalism.¹⁰⁹

At the very least, Law's influence upon Wesley was in the nature of a logical step in the progress of his mystical development. Following his exposure to a 'Kempis Wesley continued to pursue the question of the devout Christian life:

After his ordination he concentrated to an increasing extent on the study of theology and on works of prac-

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ William Law, "Two Answers to Dr. Trapp," in Hobhouse, Selected Mystical Writings of William Law, 34, quoted in Cox, Handbook, 197.

¹⁰⁷ Martin Thornton, English Spirituality: An Outline of Ascetical Theology According to the English Pastoral Tradition (New York: Cowley Publications, 1986), 283.

¹⁰⁸ Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 805.

¹⁰⁹ Thornton, Spirituality, 283.

tical Christian value. In particular he read widely among the seventeenth-century high churchmen, became vitally interested in mystical theology and looked more and more to the example of the apostolic church.¹¹⁰

Some mystical sources which especially attracted Wesley's attention were Lorenzo Scupoli's Pugna Spiritualis, which he knew in the Spanish version of de Castiniza in 1732, "and in all probability at an earlier date."¹¹¹ This work emphasized the necessity for overcoming one's selfish will and that Christian perfection as well as the attainment of the "inexpressible goodness of God" was available only through mortification and the readiness to suffer."¹¹² Another influence during this period was Henry Scougal's The Life of God in the Soul of Man, which dealt with finding "true religion" through overcoming temptation:

"true religion," Scougal wrote, "is a union of the soul with God, a real participation of the divine nature, the very image of God drawn upon the soul, or, in the Apostle's phrase, it is Christ formed within us."¹¹³

The same theme was clearly present in a 'Kempis as introduced to Wesley by Sarah Kirkham in 1726.¹¹⁴

Wesley's concern with practical Christian living continued in his 1729 perusal of Count Gaston Jean Baptiste

¹¹⁰V. H. H. Green, Wesley, 19-20.

¹¹¹Ibid., 20.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

de Renty.¹¹⁵ De Renty was a seventeenth-century Catholic Frenchman who espoused a life of "mystical prayer," was adept in the practice of meditation, affection and contemplation," and 'had even written out a covenant with Christ in his own blood."¹¹⁶ De Renty's primary concern was a revival of the "spirit of apostolic witness" within the Catholic Church.¹¹⁷ Others who would later attract Wesley's attention were the Spanish Mexican recluse, Lopez, the Puritan, Thomas Haliburton, and Ambrose Bonwick, an ascetic young scholar who died partially due to religious privations at Cambridge in 1714.¹¹⁸ In this context he was also influenced by Jeremy Taylor's Holy Living and accordingly drew up rules of conduct intended to make him a better Christian:

He would rise early, at five in the morning, pray regularly, work at least six hours a day, fast every Wednesday in the month and eliminate impurity of thought by concentrating on the omnipresence of God.¹¹⁹

In 1729 Wesley was called back to Lincoln College to serve his turn as tutor.¹²⁰ This was an especially important period in his life since the Holy Club was formed at the same time, and, in the words of V. Green, was the

¹¹⁵Ibid., 21.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 22.

¹²⁰Ibid.

"virtual birth of Methodism."¹²¹ Although Wesley's life from 1729 to 1735 was a portrait of academic and spiritual respectability and consistency, he still evidently had not fulfilled his spiritual quest:

For the inner disquiet, testified by entries in his diary on the even of his return to Oxford, had not disappeared. How could he achieve holiness? How could he find room for the sacrificial ardor which he believed the Gospel required within the comfortable and congenial existence of an Oxford don? How could he embrace the Cross?¹²²

While a tutor at Oxford Wesley was also affected by German pietism via Hermann Francke's Nicodemus, which he read many times and would later publish as an abridged version.¹²³ Francke emphasized the requirement of renunciation of all material and spiritual entanglements.¹²⁴ The true Christian will experience a sincere faith which, according to Green's analysis, will

. . . bring true experience of God and the gift of His Holy Spirit. The Christian's faith will bring him into union with God and so enable him to participate in his fullness.¹²⁵

Wesley also read Cave's Primitive Christianity and felt that

¹²¹Ibid., 24.

¹²²Ibid., 25.

¹²³Ibid., 26.

¹²⁴Ibid., 26-27.

¹²⁵Ibid., 27.

in the patristic writings he had found the pattern of early church worship and spirituality.¹²⁶

During this time he read William Law's two books, A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection (1726) and A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life (1728).¹²⁷ Fitchett notes that the effect of Law upon Wesley at this time was to encourage a spirituality in which the central core was "not so much of divine grace, as of human obligation."¹²⁸ The first of Law's books, the Practical Treatise, profited Christian perfection as a goal to be obtained by all of God's people rather than merely a few spiritual heroes.¹²⁹ Using the Epistle to the Ephesians as his text, Law emphasized that there was only one Christian faith, therefore one baptism, one perfection.¹³⁰ As to whether it was possible to fulfill the requirements of Christian perfection, the answer was a definite "yes."¹³¹ In Schmidt's analysis of Law:

Perfection as the condition of happiness means perfection of purpose. The primary thing is not the end attained by the earnest effort towards it, not the actual performance but the disposition to do it, not the result which is produced but the genuine resolution to

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 25.

¹²⁸ Fitchett, Study, 71.

¹²⁹ Schmidt, Biography, vol.1, 106.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 106-107.

¹³¹ Ibid., 107.

effect it. The difference is between falling short of our perfection after our best endeavors, or stopping short of it, by not endeavouring to arrive at it.¹³²

This assumption then formed the primary foundation for the Serious Call, "that in the Christian life everything depends upon purity of intention."¹³³ This "purity of intention," however, is taken even further:

Yet for Law Christianity is much more than a demand; it is at the same time, in the words of the Second Epistle of Peter (1.4), participation in the Divine nature. . . This requires a complete transformation of nature, as is aptly expressed by the word about the new life.¹³⁴

Although these concepts had also been advanced by Scougal and Taylor, in Law the will was much more strongly stressed.¹³⁵

As a result of this John Wesley was in some respects directed once again to the Romanic mysticism which he had known in his childhood. It is not surprising that this conception of Christianity, expounded in so practical a way, exerted an irresistible attraction upon the group of Oxford students. It is already understandable why John Wesley found it so difficult later to break, both personally and theologically, with such a man.¹³⁶

The circumstances behind Wesley's break with Law seem to be the period of 1735-37, when Wesley served as a missionary to the American colonists of Georgia. During this time he became familiar with a number of Moravians,

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 109.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 112.

both going to and coming from his failed attempts on the mission field.¹³⁷ One Moravian leader in Georgia, Toltshig, reminded an inquiring Wesley that without a "convinced belief in justification by faith and grace" neither he nor his brother could be accepted as full members of the Moravian fellowship.¹³⁸ Wesley maintained close contacts with the Moravians, even writing Count Zinzendorf and receiving the reply:

Now may Westley own,
Through Thy blood alone,
A dauntless mind.¹³⁹

Three days after he had arrived in Georgia one of the German Moravians, August Spangenberg, had bluntly asked Wesley:

Do you know yourself? . . . Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?¹⁴⁰

His initial impressions of the Moravian's sincerity were strengthened shortly following his return to England when he met Peter Bohler on February 7, 1738.¹⁴¹

Bohler, with Martin Luther, whose teaching was received by Wesley a little later, must be regarded as the chief human means which conveyed divine quickening and knowledge to Wesley at this stage.¹⁴²

¹³⁷Eayrs, Wesley, 88.

¹³⁸V. H. H. Green, Wesley, 43.

¹³⁹Ibid., 44.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 52.

¹⁴¹Eayrs, p.88.

¹⁴²Eayrs, Wesley, 88.

Bohler had made acquaintance with Wesley soon after the latter's arrival in England and had accompanied him on his return to Oxford.¹⁴³ He had experienced "instantaneous conversion" at Jena and attempted to convince Wesley that he must follow the same pattern.¹⁴⁴ Before long, Wesley was searching for the same assurance of faith as Bohler seemed to possess.¹⁴⁵ In the words of Bohler, "Preach faith till you have it, and then, because you have it, you will preach faith."¹⁴⁶

Bohler soon left England for Carolina on May 4, 1738; Wesley continued to search for assurance.¹⁴⁷ Charles Wesley experienced his spiritual breakthrough on Whit Sunday, 1738, when, after illness, he prayed until he could say:

I now found myself at peace with God, and rejoiced in hope of loving Christ. My temper, for the rest of the day, was mistrust of my own great, but before unknown, weakness. I saw that by faith I stood; and the continual support of faith, which kept me from falling, though of myself I am ever sinking into sin. I went to bed still sensible of my own weakness . . . yet confident of Christ's protection.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³V. H. H. Green, Wesley, 53.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 55.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., 56.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 57.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 58.

Meanwhile John was still despondent, describing the following three days as "continual sorrow and heaviness in my heart."¹⁴⁹ Confirmation began to be found in Scriptural texts Wesley searched out at random. His Journal records one of the most important of these findings:

I continued thus to seek it [saving faith] (though with strange indifference, dullness, and coldness, and unusually frequent relapses into sin), till Wednesday, May 24. I think it was about five this morning, that I opened my Testament on those words, Ta megista heimin kai timia epaggelmata dedoretai, ina geneisthe theias koinonoi phuseos. "There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature." (2 Pet.i.4.)¹⁵⁰

This verse prompted Wesley to a renewed zeal in pursuit of righteousness. He notes that on that afternoon, "Just as I went out, I opened it [the Bible] again on those words, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.'¹⁵¹ That very evening Wesley notes that,

I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: And an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. . .¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Elisabeth Jay, ed., The Journal of John Wesley: A Selection, May, 1738 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 34.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid., 34-35.

The exact nature of this experience is debated among Wesley scholars. V. Green notes that while climactic, ". . . the experience lacked the dramatic qualities associated, say, with the conversion of a St. Paul or a St. Augustine."¹⁵³ Further,

In the Moravian sense of an instantaneous change and renewal Wesley was not indeed converted. He did not emerge from the Aldersgate Street meeting a radically changed or altered man.¹⁵⁴

Instead, Green contends, Wesley had achieved a "new equilibrium," "He now felt, as Ronald Knox shrewdly worded it, 'the conquest of sin to be an assured fact, instead of being a daily and almost hopeless struggle.'"¹⁵⁵ Schmidt seems more positive, comparing Wesley to Luther and portraying Aldersgate as a definite conversion.¹⁵⁶

Step by step Wesley had come to the climax. In the first instance he had believed that the message of justification by grace alone through faith in the forgiving power of Christ's blood was foreign to the truth. Then he had followed Bohler's counsel and preached faith without possessing it himself. He had done this from a sense of being responsible to something outside himself, in the last resort out of responsibility to God. Then the idea of the sudden beginning of faith had aroused his opposition, but in the end he had been compelled to accept it. By the time he had returned from Georgia he had already seen his spiritual situation in terms of the contrast between law and grace. But it was the letter which he wrote to a friend on the day of his conversion which first made it clear that this doctrine had been fully brought into line with

¹⁵³V. H. H. Green, Wesley, 61.

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

¹⁵⁶Schmidt, Biography, 260-63.

the conception of God which governed his whole outlook. In this the last link was added to the chain: the attainment of actual assurance arose from insight into the truth, and this occurred in the overwhelming and solitary meeting between God and himself, between the Thou and I.¹⁵⁷

Chappell agrees with the "conversion" motif, observing that "in the deepest sense," Wesley was not a Christian before Aldersgate,¹⁵⁸ and that,

Two great secrets which [Wesley] learned from the Moravians were that faith is fundamentally not a matter of belief but a personal relation--the absolute trust of the individual soul in a personal Saviour and the whole-hearted committal of the life to him--and that God is not a Being afar off, but a living presence in the heart of the believer, cleansing him from sin, imparting new life, and giving peace and victory over temptation.¹⁵⁹

Stanley Ayling demurs from the significance of the Aldersgate event:

But that there is any clear boundary between Wesley's life before a quarter to nine on the evening of 24 May 1738, and his life after that point, is a proposition which accords neither with the apparent facts nor even with a good deal of Wesley's own subsequent testimony, however lovingly he might sometimes luxuriate in this legend himself, and paint the rescued sinner's conventionally cautionary picture of his unregenerate past.¹⁶⁰

Ayling also quotes M. Piette's contention that if Aldersgate "had not been entered in the first extract of the Journal,

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 263-64.

¹⁵⁸ E. B. Chappell, Studies, 62.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 62-63.

¹⁶⁰ Ayling, Wesley, 93.

it is quite possible that Wesley would have entirely forgotten all about it."¹⁶¹

While the exact nature of the Aldersgate experience is not a necessary topic for this work, the position taken here would agree more with the latter view. One reason for this assumption is the position taken by Wesley in A Plain Account of Christian Perfection. This work, written in 1767, is Wesley's Apologia Pro Vita Sua for his concept of Christian perfection. He begins the work with a detailed account of "the steps by which I was led, during a course of many years, to embrace the doctrine of Christian Perfection."¹⁶² Not once in this account does Wesley mention Aldersgate, nor for that matter, any "conversion" at all. The closest Wesley comes to such an event is his description of reacting to Taylor's Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying in 1725. The effect this work had on Wesley is recounted as follows:

In reading several parts of this book, I was exceedingly affected: that part in particular which relates to purity of intention. Instantly I resolved to dedicate all my life to God; also my thoughts, and words, and actions; being thoroughly convinced there was no medium, but that every part of my life (not some only) must either be a sacrifice to God, or myself; that is, in effect, to the devil.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹M. Piette, John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1937), 308, quoted in Ayling, Wesley, p.93.

¹⁶²John Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection (London: Epworth Press, 1952), 5.

¹⁶³Ibid., 5.

What seems more likely is that Wesley, coming from a sacramentarian background, felt he had reached a new understanding in the development of his faith. The exact nature of this understanding is naturally debated, but an especially illuminating suggestion comes from Robert G. Tuttle in a recently published doctoral dissertation.¹⁶⁴ Tuttle's hypothesis is that prior to Aldersgate Wesley was extremely affected by mysticism and had not yet arrived at any final conclusions. The contribution of Aldersgate was to bring Wesley to a comprehension of justification by faith in lieu of which he revised his loyalties to mysticism and began to "separate the gold from the dross" in mystical theology.¹⁶⁵ Tuttle deserves quoting at length on this point:

In essence the hypothesis is this: Of the five mystical stages (1. awakening, 2. purgation, 3. illumination, 4. the dark night of the soul, and 5. union with God) Wesley continued to practice and encourage the 'tools' known to the first three stages. He also admired and commended the many other practical outworkings of these stages manifested in the lives of the mystics whose utter devotion to God was a continual inspiration to him. Similarly he continued to uphold the mystical concept of perfection (the mystical fifth stage) as the end of religion. Yet, Wesley detested the vain irrational philosophy which sought to link the noble beginnings of religion (stages one to three) to the ultimate end of religion (stage five) by the dark night of the soul (the mystical fourth stage involving a lifeless theory of 'in orco'), and it was precisely at

¹⁶⁴Robert G. Tuttle, Mysticism in the Wesleyan Tradition (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press of Zondervan Publishing Company, 1989).

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 126.

this point that he substituted the Aldersgate experience of justification by faith in Christ.¹⁶⁶

The importance of this conclusion for this study is that it points to the later fruit of Wesley's theology in the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. Pentecostals without exception claim to believe in "justification by faith." Neither has this writer witnessed any denial of the concept in Charismatic circles. While the actual content of the phrase may be, and most likely is, misunderstood, the general concept itself remains implanted in Pentecostal and Charismatic thought. The role of "faith" may be distorted into a work, but in the mind of the adherents they are loyal to the Reformation.

The role of mysticism in this framework is to provide a continuing standard of "perfection" couched in Christian terminology. Although the question of the exact "time" of sanctification in Wesley is debated, the point is that regardless of terminology or time lines Wesley held to the possibility of arriving at a holy, sinless "state." It is this "state" or "stage" concept in Christian living which makes Wesley's theology mystical. An interesting example of this is a comment made by Wesley in his primary work, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, written in 1767, almost thirty years after the Aldersgate event. In discussing the question of when one may expect entire sanctifica-

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 229.

tion (the eradication of all sin in one's life, known or unknown), Wesley contends that believers have a right to expect such accomplishment earlier than "till a little before death":

Q. When does inward sanctification begin?

A. In the moment a man is justified. (Yet sin remains in him; yea, the seed of all sin, till he is sanctified throughout.) From that time a believer gradually dies to sin and grows in grace.

Q. Is this ordinarily given till a little before death?

A. It is not, to those who expect it no sooner.

Q. But may we expect it sooner?

A. Why not? For although we grant--(1) That the generality of believers, whom we have hitherto known, were not so sanctified till near death; (2) that few of those to whom St. Paul wrote his Epistles were so at that time; nor (3) he himself at the time of writing his former Epistles; yet all this does not prove that we may not be so today.¹⁶⁷

While Wesley does not explain his phrase, "the former epistles," it is nevertheless surprising that the subject of Luther's remarks read at Aldersgate would have been viewed as "unsanctified" during the production of his earlier epistles! Wesley also clearly indicates a disenchantment with the sola fide theme of the Reformation:

. . . beware of Solifidianism; crying nothing but, "Believe, believe!" and condemning those as ignorant or legal who speak in a more scriptural way. . . . for as "by works faith is made perfect," so the completing or destroying the work of faith, and enjoying the favour or suffering the displeasure of God, greatly depends on every single act of obedience or disobedience.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Wesley, Plain Account, 33-34.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 92.

While Wesley may have discarded much of the "dross" of mysticism, its effect upon him seems to have remained in that his discovery of justification was tempered by a subsequent call to "perfection" which became to him the "and" of the Judaizers in Galatians. It could well be argued that the theme of perfection existed in tension with justification throughout Wesley's life, and indeed finally conquered as his later years gave way to every increasing exhortations to Methodists to strive for this experience.¹⁶⁹ This would provide an antecedent for later Holiness and Pentecostal claims for "justification by faith" while at the same time emphasizing perfectionism.

Part Two: The Influence of Wesley upon Pentecostalism

The Historical Influence of Wesley

Pentecostal historian Vinson Synan begins his well-known work, The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States, with the following observation:

John Wesley, the indomitable founder of Methodism, was also the spiritual and intellectual father of the modern holiness and pentecostal movements which have issued from Methodism within the last century.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ White notes that, "Near the end of his life Wesley became convinced that God had raised up the Methodists chiefly to preach entire sanctification, and his later letters often urged his itinerants to do so." Charles Edward White, The Beauty of Holiness: Phoebe Palmer as Theologian, Revivalist, Feminist, and Humanitarian (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press of Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 122.

¹⁷⁰ Synan, Movement, 13.

The reason for this influence lies in Wesley's concept of religious experience:

Wesley is the prototype of all subsequent holiness and even Pentecostal movements. The mentality of the way he approaches spirituality and religious experience--I think we all are more influenced than we will ever know.¹⁷¹

Synan notes that in arriving at his fully-developed theology Wesley borrowed from the Anglo-Catholic tradition rather than from the Reformed Protestant tradition.¹⁷²

Methodism, with its strong Arminian base, was in essence a reaction against the extreme Calvinism which had dominated English social, religious, and political life during much of the seventeenth century. If the Calvinist taught that only the elect could be saved, the Methodist taught that anyone could find salvation. If the Calvinist could never be certain that he was in the elect circle, the Methodist could know from a crisis experience of conversion that he was saved. From the beginning, Methodist theology placed great emphasis on this conscious religious experience. The empirical evidence of salvation is what Wesley and his followers have since offered to the world, and it has been the divergent interpretations of this basic premise that have caused periodic fragmentation within the Methodist fold.¹⁷³

Not all Pentecostal scholars, however, see Wesley as such a primary force. R. M. Anderson contends that the primary ingredient in the development of Pentecostalism was

¹⁷¹Vinson Synan, interview by author, 3 April 1990, Oral Roberts University.

¹⁷²Synan, Movement, 14.

¹⁷³Ibid.

the Keswick movement and that thus it is necessary "to reject the central thesis of Synan."¹⁷⁴

To the contrary, that wing of the Pentecostal movement which had earlier connections with Wesleyanism became Pentecostal by accepting Keswick (i.e., Calvinist) teachings on dispensationalism, premillennialism and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.¹⁷⁵

While disputing Anderson's description of Keswick as "Calvinist," Henry I. Lederle agrees with his caution concerning Wesley:

It is more correct to acknowledge the role of two midwives at the birth of Pentecostalism, The Wesleyan-Holiness movement and the more Reformed evangelical revivalism that was so pervasive in America during the latter half of the nineteenth century.¹⁷⁶

Conversely, Walter Hollenweger makes Wesley a logical link in Pentecostal development in that Wesley "had already made a distinction between the sanctified, or those who had been baptized in the Spirit, and ordinary Christians."¹⁷⁷ Hollenweger feels this theme was subsequently

¹⁷⁴Robert Mapes Anderson, Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 43.

¹⁷⁵Ibid.

¹⁷⁶Henry I. Lederle, Treasures Old and New (Peabody, MA: Hendricksen Publishers, 1988), 15.

¹⁷⁷Walter J. Hollenweger, The Pentecostals (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972), 21. Hollenweger's use of the term "baptism of the Holy Spirit" relative to Wesley seems somewhat strange. His source material consists only of general references to mystics who influenced Wesley, specifically, Scupoli, Castaniza [who was only a translator of another work which Wesley read], Lopez, de Renty, Scougal, Taylor, and Law.

adopted by the American Holiness movement and served as a historical antecedent for the rise of Pentecostalism.¹⁷⁸

D. D. Bundy, noting the influence of Pietism in general upon Pentecostalism, also feels that Wesley is an important historical influence:

The most significant influence by which Pietist concerns flowed into the Pentecostal theological synthesis is that of Methodism in its various forms and derivative movements.¹⁷⁹

Bundy goes on to note that it was Wesley's chosen theologian, John Fletcher (1729-85), who was the first to use the term "baptism of the Holy Spirit" as a description of the "process of sanctification" and the assurance which it produced.¹⁸⁰ Donald Dayton offers a synthetic overview of Pentecostal origins which notes at least four various approaches to locating Pentecostal origins: (1) the attempt to establish an Anglo-Catholic and Roman heritage via the spiritual significance of Confirmation, (2) the influence of Puritanism in its teaching on the Spirit, (3) the attempt to establish Pietism as a Pentecostal source, and (4) the influence of Wesley and Methodism.¹⁸¹ Dayton's conclusion is that the non-Methodist origins of Pentecostalism "are to

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ D. D. Bundy, "European Pietist Roots of Pentecostalism," Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 280.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Dayton, Roots, 35-38.

large extent parallels rather than direct or actual sources, though some instances of indirect influence cannot be denied."¹⁸² Methodism remains the strongest influence because "we can pick up the story in such a way as to demonstrate actual historical links and developments that will climax in Pentecostalism"¹⁸³

The position of this work is that Wesley is indeed the spiritual forefather of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. The concern, however, is not so much to establish an organic historical connection as it is to find similarities of thought and theology which are foundational to the Pentecostal world view.

The Theological Influence of Wesley

The phenomenon of religious mysticism exists in many forms--the question is whether the basic concepts underlying those forms are the same. Wesley may be seen as the primary figure of this type of spirituality in Protestantism in that he established a concept of Christianity in which spiritual development proceeds through "stages" and in which certain key Christian concepts assume slightly different definitions. Whether intended or not, Wesley gave currency to the concept of a second work of perfection. Wesley's assistant, John Fletcher, then utilized the term "baptism of the Holy

¹⁸²Ibid., 38.

¹⁸³Ibid.

Ghost." Figures such as Phoebe Palmer and Asa Mahon promoted the "Holiness Revival" of nineteenth-century America while the English Keswick movement promoted purity of life. Thus by the turn of the century the stage was set for the phenomenon of Pentecostalism.

There are at least three ways in which Wesley influenced Pentecostalism. First, there is what Dayton calls the "primitivistic" motif, specifically Wesley's concern for restoring Christianity to its "apostolic faith": "Wesley clearly understood himself to be advocating the 'old religion' or 'true, primitive Christianity.'"¹⁸⁴ Second is what may be called Wesley's "theology of the Spirit."¹⁸⁵ The question here is whether Wesley's "soteriological shift" of 1738 constituted a significantly different approach from the Christocentric patterns of classical Protestantism.¹⁸⁶ The answer seems to be that apart from a "heightened soteriological orientation resulting from the emphasis on the experiential," Wesley remains "strikingly Christocentric in his patterns of thought."¹⁸⁷ Finally, there is the question of Wesley's position concerning the gifts of the Spirit. Dayton notes:

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 40-41.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 42.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 43.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

In one sense Wesley was unsystematic and incomplete in his treatment of the doctrine of the gifts, He was inconsistent, sometimes returning to classically Protestant conclusions, and at other times "developing beliefs in response to his own theological assumptions." On the other hand, Wesley argued ferociously against Conyers Middleton, who was skeptical of patristic reports of the miraculous and extraordinary gifts. Wesley insisted to the contrary that such gifts and miracles were continued through the first three centuries.¹⁸⁸

The logical conclusion seems to be Dayton's observation that Wesley's primary concern was not the gifts of the Spirit, but rather the fruit of the Spirit.¹⁸⁹ His concern was for personal sanctification and salvation rather than the miraculous.¹⁹⁰

More than any of the above motifs, it is Wesley's concept of salvation which has to be the most formative influence upon the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. Dayton notes that this was the central theme of his thought in which "the emphasis is on the restoration of the image of God through stages of the operation of grace."¹⁹¹ Dayton cites the following extended passage from Wesley:

Salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) "preventing Grace"; including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first slight transient conviction of having sinned against him. All these imply some tendency toward life; some degree of salvation; the beginning of a deliverance from a blind, unfeeling

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 44.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 45.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

heart, quite insensitive of God and the things of God. Salvation is carried on by "convincing grace," usually in Scripture termed repentance; which brings a larger measure of knowledge, and a fuller deliverance from the heart of stone. Afterwards we experience the proper Christian salvation, whereby, "through grace," we "are saved by faith," consisting of those two grand branches, justification and sanctification. By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favor of God; by sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God. All experience, as well as Scripture, show ¹⁹² this salvation to be both instantaneous and gradual.

Methodist scholar Albert Outler suggests that in this definition,

Wesley has developed a 'therapeutic' motif implicit in Anglicanism, in which grace is viewed not primarily as a forensically based forgiveness but as a 'healing' or 'restorative' force, so that, as Wesley put it above, 'by sanctification we are. . . restored to the image of God.'¹⁹³

Anderson sees Wesley's role as a forerunner of the American Holiness movement through his teaching regarding sanctification:

John Wesley reinvigorated the ancient Judeo-Christian tradition of holiness with his doctrine of sanctification. While that doctrine was sufficiently flexible, or perhaps ambiguous, to allow for various emphases, Wesley's central concern was with the limitation or removal of sin in the believer. Methodism entered the American religious environment during the Great Awakening of the eighteenth century, and from then until the close of the following century,¹⁹⁴ revivalism and holiness were to march side by side.

¹⁹² Ibid., 45-46.

¹⁹³ Albert Outler, Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit (Nashville: Tidings, 1975), 52; quoted in Dayton, Roots, 46.

¹⁹⁴ Anderson, Vision, 28.

As to what Wesley really believed concerning a "second definite work," his reasoning can support various interpretations. Charles Edward White, in a recent biography of Phoebe Palmer, notes that:

Wesley also taught that Christians experience several distinct acts of God's grace as they grow into the image of Christ. Two of these acts of grace are justification and entire sanctification. Justification occurs when a sinner is forgiven, regenerated, and made right with God. Entire sanctification happens when the carnal nature within a Christian is finally destroyed, and the believer is then enabled to love God with the whole heart, soul, mind, and strength.¹⁹⁵

White's terminology is interesting in that at first glance Wesley would be understood as teaching sanctification in the best holiness tradition--a second definite work of grace following justification. No attempt is made to relate properly the phrase "entire sanctification" to "sanctification" in itself. One is left with the impression (whether intended or not) that Wesley did believe in two separate works of grace.

Another example is Methodist scholar Laurence W. Wood, who portrays Wesley's view of righteousness as a supplement to the Reformation discovery of justification:

Wesley, in a sense, rediscovered this evangelical doctrine of inherent righteousness by faith alone, even as Martin Luther had rediscovered the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Wesley's concept of

¹⁹⁵White, Phoebe Palmer, 121.

inherent righteousness was a further development of the evangelical doctrine of justification by faith alone.¹⁹⁶

Wood's argument is that Wesley "did not interpret justification by faith solely in terms of 'forgiveness of sins.'"¹⁹⁷

Although he was in basic agreement with both Luther and Calvin, he went further with regard to justification itself by insisting upon "the full appropriation of Christ's righteousness."¹⁹⁸

As to the time when this complete righteousness could be appropriated, Wood emphasizes that, "Wesley believed that the full appropriation of personal righteousness could be had here and now, subsequent in time to the experience of justification."¹⁹⁹ Again, the terminology is very confusing with the phrase "subsequent in time" conveying the concept of a second definite work, although in reality it is completely ambiguous.

Although the historical reasons why holiness theology developed from Methodism are fairly clear, it is difficult to see why scholars persist in presenting confusing pictures of Wesley. A cursory examination of his writings seem to reveal a threefold answer to the question

¹⁹⁶ Laurence W. Wood, Pentecostal Grace (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press of the Zondervan Publishing Company, 1980), 115.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 117.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

of what he really believed. First, there is no doubt he saw justification and sanctification as occurring at the same moment in the life of the believer. Two examples should suffice. (a) Wesley specifically states in his Plain Account that sanctification begins "in the moment a man is justified."²⁰⁰ (b) In his sermon, "The New Birth," Wesley states, "When we are born again, then our sanctification, our inward and outward holiness begins; and thenceforward we are gradually to 'grow up in Him who is our Head.'"²⁰¹

Second, it is also clear that Wesley made a slight addition to the doctrine of justification. Rather than view the righteousness of Christ as strictly imputed, he stressed that the believer at justification also experiences "inherent righteousness":

Wesley, in a sense, rediscovered this evangelical doctrine of inherent righteousness by faith alone, even as Martin Luther had rediscovered the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Wesley's concept of inherent righteousness was a further development of the evangelical doctrine of justification by faith alone.²⁰²

In this context Outler's observation that Wesley saw grace as a "healing" or "restorative" force is especially significant. This seems to stand in sharp contrast to Luther's comment, "I accept grace as meaning the favor of God, not a

²⁰⁰ Wesley, Plain Account, 33.

²⁰¹ Robert W. Burtner and Robert E. Chiles, John Wesley's Theology: A Collection From His Works (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), 172.

²⁰² Wood, Pentecostal Grace, 115.

quality of the soul; God's favor, His merciful will, as it is revealed and proclaimed by Christ, is grace."²⁰³

Third, it is equally clear that Wesley felt this beginning of holiness could lead to a final state of perfection in which there would be "no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions are governed by pure love."²⁰⁴ Even though largely hypothetical, this "stage mentality" provided the backdrop for the more specific development of the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" as a second definite work of grace.

Post-Wesleyan Developments

The specific association of Wesley's perfectionism with the phrase "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" can be directly attributed to the influence of Wesley's successor, John Fletcher:

[Fletcher] did for Wesley's theology what no other man than himself, at that period, could have done. John Wesley traveled, formed Societies, and governed them. Charles Wesley composed unequalled hymns for the Methodists to sing; and John Fletcher, a native of Calvinian Switzerland, explained, elaborated, and defended the doctrines they heartily believed.²⁰⁵

²⁰³Cited in E. S. Williams, Systematic Theology (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1953), 2:205.

²⁰⁴John Wesley, Plain Account, 42.

²⁰⁵Luke Tyerman, Wesley's Designated Successor: The Life, Letters, and Literary Labours of the Rev. John William Fletcher (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1882), 7; quoted in Wood, Pentecostal Grace, 178.

During a stay at Trevecca College in the winter of 1770-71, Fletcher concluded that the experience of "entire sanctification" should be identified with the experience of Pentecost, thus, "He equated Christian perfection with receiving the Holy Spirit, or being 'baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire.'"²⁰⁶ This association of Pentecostal language with Christian perfection would continue to be a hallmark of the nineteenth-century Holiness movement, to be later appropriated by modern Pentecostalism.

A second way in which Fletcher influenced the Wesleyan tradition was in his doctrine of the "dispensations." He theorized that the Gospel existed in "degrees of faith" corresponding to "the different manifestations of Father, Son and Holy Spirit."²⁰⁷ He seems to be contending not only for one kind of Christian faith, but also for varying degrees within this faith.²⁰⁸ In his Third Check to Antinomianism (February 1772), Fletcher then proposes six "degrees" of spiritual life.²⁰⁹ The last two of these stages are especially pertinent for the development of Pentecostalism:

²⁰⁶John Fletcher, "Third Check to Antinomianism," in The Works of the Rev. John Fletcher, 4 vols. (New York: B. Waugh and T. Mason, 1835), 1:160.

²⁰⁷Wood, Pentecostal Grace, 179.

²⁰⁸Ibid., 180.

²⁰⁹John Fletcher, "Third Check to Antimonianism," in The Works of the Reverend John Fletcher, 2 vols. (London: Thomas Allman, 1834), 1:229.

(5) The life of the feeble Christian, or disciple of John, who is "baptized with water unto repentance for the remission of sins," and believing in "the Lamb of God," immediately pointed out to him, enjoys the blessings of the primitive Christians before the day of Pentecost. And, (6) The still more abundant life, the life of the adult or perfect Christian, imparted to him when the love of God, or power from on high, is plentifully shed abroad in his believing soul, on the day that Christ "baptizes him with the Holy Ghost and with fire, to sanctify him wholly, and seal him unto the day of redemption."²¹⁰

Although Wesley hesitated at any exact identification of sanctification with Baptism of the Holy Spirit, he nevertheless approved the above statements and wrote to Fletcher, "I do not perceive . . . that there is any difference between us."²¹¹ Thus by the end of Wesley's ministry the Holiness identification between sanctification and the day of Pentecost was in place, along with terminology which would later support the rise of modern Pentecostalism.

²¹⁰The Works of the Rev. John Fletcher. Vol. 1 (New York: B Waugh and T. Mason, 1835), 1:159-60.

²¹¹Ibid., 122.

CHAPTER IV

PENTECOSTAL ORIGINS

Historical Antecedents of Pentecostalism

The Pentecostal movement may be viewed as an outgrowth of three nineteenth century religious currents, each of which contributed to the theological framework out of which Pentecostalism would develop. Respectively, these three influences are the American holiness movement, the divine healing movement, and British millenarianism.

The American Holiness Movement

The Holiness movement is generally considered to be an outgrowth of the post-Civil War revivals.¹ "It was an attempt among certain Methodists to revive an interest in John Wesley's doctrine of sanctification (Christian perfection) because they felt that this emphasis had been neglected by Methodism."² The specific beginning of the movement may be identified with the editorial efforts of Timothy Merritt. The first edition of Merritt's Guide to Christian Perfection magazine "announced the presence of a struggling,

¹John Thomas Nichol, The Pentecostals (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1966), 5.

²Ibid.

new force within the American revival tradition."³ Holiness historian Melvin Dieter states that "It is a commonly accepted truism in American church history that from the time of the Great Awakening until the close of the nineteenth century revivalism was the dominant force in the shaping of American Protestantism."⁴ In his initial volume, Merritt issued a call for a revival of Wesley's perfectionism; a connection was made between the experience of entire sanctification in "certain Methodist societies in England in 1760 and 1762, and "the then incipient American holiness revival."⁵

Merritt had prepared the paper particularly for the "encouragement" of the "many" who were becoming involved in a renewed interest in the experience of Christian perfection within the Methodist Episcopal Church about that time."⁶

The first edition of the Guide insisted that Methodist ministers concentrate upon the subject of Christian holiness by all means possible.⁷

The result of Merritt's challenge was the casting of the Wesleyan tradition into a distinctive "Americanized" form which was a blend of historic Pietism, American

³Melvin Dieter, The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1980), 1.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., 1-2.

⁷Ibid., 2.

revivalism, and Wesleyan perfectionism.⁸ This unique identity set a pattern for movements which "developed special organizations dedicated to the promotion of entire sanctification; this eventually led to the creation of 'holiness churches' and other religious organizations which made this 'specialty' their priority concern."⁹

Dieter notes that adherents of the holiness movement shared the same theological views as Spener and Zinzendorf, but that they were also very pragmatically American.¹⁰

"Their pietism was a Wesleyan pietism oriented much more towards Christian activity than pietistic introspection."¹¹ Their importance for this paper is that they constitute the first stage in which Pentecostalism could be viewed as the result of a "continuum" beginning with Holiness religion, progressing to an emphasis upon Divine Healing and culminating in the outbreak of Pentecostalism at the turn of this century.

The holiness interpretation of Wesley insisted that all receive a "second crisis of evangelical faith" following the initial "crisis" of conversion.¹² This "second blessing," or "work," resulted in the devotee's "utter

⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 3-4.

¹¹ Ibid., 4.

¹² Ibid.

consecration of himself to God through Jesus Christ in the faith that God would free him from the inner disposition to willful sin and fill him with divine love."¹³

An added factor in this mix was the idealism of America, an optimistic feeling of national destiny:

The inherent optimism in this American dream was readily assimilated with the optimism of perfectionism in the holiness movement; the two were to be regular, traveling companions throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁴

Paul Chappell notes that the characteristics of the holiness movement served as a direct stimulus for the divine healing movement. First, most holiness adherents insisted on a "second work" experience of perfection or entire sanctification.¹⁵ This led naturally to a religious experience demarcated by "stages." Second, holiness advocates stressed that such perfection must be claimed immediately by the believer, whether evident or not.¹⁶ In the words of holiness evangelist Phoebe Palmer, ". . . come complying with the conditions and claim it. . . it is already yours. If you do not now receive it, the delay will not be on the part of God, but wholly with yourself."¹⁷ This "presumptive faith" approach would become very similar to attitudes of

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 5.

¹⁵ Chappell, "Healing Movements," Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 357.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

the healing movement in praying for the sick. A third influence provided by the holiness movement was the increasingly common reference to the sanctification experience as the "baptism of the Holy Ghost." In the 1850s Palmer began referring to Christian perfection with this term and was soon followed by such figures as Asa Mahan and others.¹⁸ Palmer was one of the first to adopt and popularize the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" terminology.¹⁹

Those espousing the term, "baptism of the Holy Spirit," found their textual base in Acts 1:8:

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.²⁰

Paul G. Chappell notes,

By propagating the doctrine of Christian perfection or the baptism of the Holy Spirit as purification from sin, the endowment with power, and the living of a consecrated life of holiness, the nineteenth-century Holiness movement provided the basic theological milieu in which the supernatural gifts of God, and in particular divine healing, would flourish.²¹

C. E. Jones observes that the effects of such beliefs can be clearly seen in the development of groups such as the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee):

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ This passage is taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

²¹ Chappell, "Healing Movements," Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 357.

Similarly, adoption of a three-work schema by the Cleveland, Tennessee-based Church of God about the same time may be attributed to the influence of this teaching. Emphasis on Spirit-guidance, faith healing, and premillennialism, which pervaded these Holiness groups, remained intact after they entered the Pentecostal group. The phenomenology of the experience of fire also remained.²²

As Melvin Dieter observes,

The pioneers of divine healing in America clearly demonstrate the interwoven connection between the Holiness and divine healing movements, and between the European and American healing movements.²³

The Divine Healing Movement

The Divine Healing Movement itself was presaged by such figures as George Fox, said to have witnessed healings during American travels in 1672, Alexander Mack Sr., a German Pietist who emigrated to America in the early 1700s, and also by such examples as the Shakers, Mormons, Noyesites (followers of Noyes), and Adventists.²⁴ These figures are said to have witnessed healings but obviously do not display any integrated or wholistic understandings of the subject. Their value is only exemplary.

The theology which specifically undergirds the Divine Healing Movement comes from the European influence of Johann Christoph Blumhardt, Dorothea Trudel, and Otto

²²C. E. Jones, "Holiness Movement," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 407.

²³Chappell, "Healing Movements," Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 357.

²⁴Ibid., 353-55.

Stockmayer.²⁵ The first of these, Blumhardt, was said to be instrumental in the healing of a German girl, Katarina Dittus, in 1843 in Germany's Black Forest.²⁶ Upon establishing a healing ministry, Blumhardt withdrew from the Lutheran church and established a "faith home" at Bad Boll.²⁷

The significance of Blumhardt lay in his association of illness with sin and the Devil.²⁸ He made a strong correlation between forgiveness of sins and physical healing.²⁹

Barth was later to assert that Blumhardt's emphasis upon sickness as the result of the human struggle with the devil contributed to a better understanding of healing in the NT than that which was proposed by the older orthodox, pietistic and rationalistic Protestant groups, including the Reformers. To Barth, Blumhardt made it plain that sickness is the manifestation of an ungodly and inhuman reality to which the Christian's attitude must be one of indignation and conflict. "the Christian must cooperate with God by exercising faith in him and praying to him for the elimination of this evil."³⁰

Blumhardt also said there could be no cure unless there was a believing contact of the subject's spirit.³¹

²⁵Ibid., 355.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

Dorothea Trudel is noted for ministering to several of her friends in 1851 in the Swiss town of Mannedorf on Lake Zurich. She anointed a number with oil according to James 5:14-15. As a result several "faith homes" were opened and Trudel became a leading figure of the genre. She has the distinction of being the first faith healer charged with practicing medicine without a license in 1856.³² She also began the practice of including prayers in her correspondence with those who were ill.³³

The most systematic theological presentation of divine healing would come from Otto Stockmayer, who in turn would become a primary influence on such American figures as A. J. Gordon.³⁴ Stockmayer opened his own faith home in Switzerland, published Sickness and the Gospel (n.d.), and became a familiar figure in the British Keswick conventions.³⁵ His main contribution was to articulate the "basic presupposition of divine healing, that deliverance from sickness could not be separated from the whole work of redemption."³⁶ Stockmayer found justification for this view in Matthew 8:16-17, as well as Isaiah 53:4 and kindred

³²Ibid., 356.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

Scriptures. The simple conclusion seemed to be that Christ had borne illness as well as sin on the Cross:

The connection between these two Scriptures, according to Stockmayer, shows that it cannot be God's final will for people to suffer physical infirmities and diseases since Christ had borne them on the cross for all humankind.³⁷

An interesting aspect of Stockmayer's thought was that the gifts of healing were resident in the Church, and that therefore the ill were not to seek out other ministers or practitioners simply because they might be said to possess special gifts.³⁸ An additional effect of his thought was defining healing faith as the faith of the individuals being prayed for rather than the elders or clergy. In seeming opposition to the normal textual understanding of James 5:14-15, Stockmayer insisted that the healing power conveyed to the Apostles was,

. . . no longer dependent upon the prayer of the elders, but rested it with the effectual and fervent prayer of any righteous person. Thus the circle widened and all the children of God were exhorted to pray for one another in the case of sickness. This development revealed the acute need for persons to be cleansed of sin (sanctified), since it is the prayer of a righteous person that is answered.³⁹

The effect of such a position was to supply yet another constituent element of Pentecostal theology:

When one accepts the basic presupposition of the faith healing movement that all sickness is ultimately related

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

to sin and Satan, and the presupposition of the Holiness movement that the believer is endued with the Pentecostal power of Acts, then the sanctified believer, who through God has power over sin and Satan, also has power over sickness. This thesis provided the fundamental basis for the intimate connection between perfectionism and divine healing.⁴⁰

Premillennialism

Premillennialism was a factor in Pentecostal theology in that it served as the rationale by which the new movement could be justified. Pentecostals felt that their tongues experience represented a latter day outpouring of the Spirit which in itself was a sign of the Second Coming in a Dispensationally-oriented, premillennial perspective. The fascination with prophecy exhibited by nineteenth-century England would become a direct stimulus for twentieth-century Pentecostalism.

An intriguing similarity between Pentecostalism and Premillennialism is exhibited by the ministry of Edward Irving. Modern millenarianism itself seems to have been a logical outgrowth of eighteenth-century Lockean optimism. Nineteenth-century English Christians began to think of themselves as "progressive millenarians" whose steady improvement would lead to a blessed age at the end of which Christ would appear. Individuals such as James Hatley Frere claimed to see Biblical fulfillments in contemporary

⁴⁰ Ibid., 357.

English affairs; Daniel 11:30, for example, was said to have been fulfilled in the Battle of Aboukir Bay.⁴¹

An additional factor in this mixture was the thought of Lewis Way, a wealthy lawyer who became fascinated with the concept of Jewish restoration in 1811.⁴² Converting a Jewish evangelistic group into a medium for his own ministry, Way advanced the novel concept that Christ would return not after the millennium, but before, the consequences being that such a "premillennial" Return placed the Church at least a thousand years closer to the event than millenarian views:

The doctrine of the premillennial advent, . . . seemed novel, probably mistaken, possibly heretical to most Anglicans of the day. In keeping with the standard Whitbyan eschatology, Christians had not been taught to expect the second coming during their own lives. The second advent, they felt, would occur only after the millennium and, therefore, must be more than one thousand years away.⁴³

In addition, the concept of a "premillennial" Second Coming also prompted a particular world view. Ernest R. Sandeen notes at least five ways in which Christian social and religious attitudes began to change:

1. Confidence in social progress decreased.
2. Lack of assurance in the Church's ability to remain pure or convert the world
3. An expectation of judgment

⁴¹Ernest R. Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1931 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 8.

⁴²Ibid., 9.

⁴³Ibid., 12.

4. Salvation only for a few
5. Criticism of established Churches⁴⁴

A second primary ingredient in this mixture was the influence of Edward Irving (1792-1834). Irving, a Scottish preacher who became popular in London, became a disciple of James Hatley Frere.⁴⁵ He was also a participant at the Albury conferences in 1826-28, the result of which was the following six points of "prophetical agreement":

1. This "dispensation" or age will not end "insensibly" but cataclysmically in judgment and destruction of the church in the same manner in which the Jewish dispensation ended.
2. The Jews will be restored to Palestine during the time of judgment.
3. The Judgment to come will fall principally upon Christendom.
4. When the judgment is past, the millennium will begin.
5. The second advent of Christ will occur before the millennium.
6. The 1250 years of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 ought to be measured from the reign of Justinian to the French Revolution. The vials of wrath (Revelation 16) are now being poured out and the second advent is imminent.⁴⁶

Sandeen notes that by 1830 "this form of eschatology was established with all adherents looking for Christ's return within a few years."⁴⁷

One more element of interest in Irving's ministry was the outbreak of "tongues" in his church. During October 1831, Irving's congregation experienced this occurrence and

⁴⁴ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 15-16.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 19-22.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 22.

"much of London was excited and alarmed" by the "sudden recovery of the apostolic gift."⁴⁸ Although at first dubious, Irving decided to settle the issue by appealing to the authority of a "prophetess" whose words were to be accepted as the authoritative recurrence of the original gift in the Corinthian church.⁴⁹ Sandeen quotes a London reporter's observation that the prophetess, who "only wanted the hint to be inspired with the aforesaid gift," then "roared and bellowed in such a manner that the whole of the congregation were thrown into a state of the greatest confusion."⁵⁰ Soon after these events Irving was tried for heresy and defrocked by the Scottish church.⁵¹

It is interesting that Pentecostal claims to initial outpouring of the Spirit were presaged by almost seventy years in the events of Irving's English congregation. Irving provided a premillennial emphasis accompanied by realization of supernatural gifts which were to occur

⁴⁸Ibid., 26.

⁴⁹Ibid., 27-28.

⁵⁰Ibid., 28.

⁵¹Sandeen notes that the official charge against Irving was Christological heresy. Irving seems to have taught that Christ assumed a fallen human nature and thus was tempted just as all humanity is tempted. A major work dealing with this issue is David William Dorries, "Nineteenth Century British Christological Controversy, Centering Upon Edward Irving's Doctrine of Christ's Human Nature" (Ph.D. diss., University of Aberdeen, 1987). Sandeen also feels that the Christological charge may have been a pretext so the Church could rid itself of Irving's embarrassing views, 29.

shortly before the parousia. These were a natural harbinger of Pentecostal views on the subject.

Yet another ingredient in the English eschatological ferment was the thought of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882). Darby, one of the founders of the Plymouth Brethren, advocated a futurist rather than an historicist interpretation of Revelation.⁵² Whereas Irving and almost all figures before Darby held the historicist view that Daniel and Revelation should be closely integrated and applied to contemporary events in European history (e.g., the Napoleonic Wars), the futurists believed that none of the events predicted in Revelation had yet occurred except for the first three chapters of the book.⁵³ Although this position originated with the Jesuits,⁵⁴ the Brethren movement popularized the concept throughout English society.

The basic beliefs of premillennialism were further refined as a result of the "Powerscourt Conferences," a series of prophetic conferences similar to the Albury meetings in which Irving had been involved.⁵⁵ The conferences lasted from 1831 until 1833. Darby utilized the latter of these meetings to emphasize the following points:

⁵²Ibid., 36.

⁵³Ibid., 37.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid., 38.

1. True believers were to be called out of the "apostate" churches.
2. He introduced the concept of a "secret rapture" and a "prophetic parenthesis" between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel.⁵⁶

"These two concepts constituted the basic tenets of the system of theology since referred to as dispensationalism."⁵⁷

Even though Darby would be met by disagreement within his own group, almost every British chiliast of the early nineteenth century would have agreed to the following points:

1. The divine authority of Scripture demanded that believers expect a literal fulfillment of Biblical prophecies.
2. Rather than be converted by the Gospel, the world was rushing toward judgment.
3. Christ would literally restore the Jews to Palestine at his return.
4. All of these events were foretold by the Bible and could be studied and "taught by the Spirit" for personal preparation and edification.⁵⁸

These views mixed with the inherent optimism of a young America in which were numerous chiliastic movements such as the Disciples of Christ, the Mormons, Shakers, and the Oneida community of John Humphry Noyes.⁵⁹ The greatest influence, however, was the introduction of Dispensationalism into conservative Christian thought via the Scofield

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 38-39.

⁵⁹ Sandeen, Roots, 42-49.

Reference Bible, the notes of which constituted Darby's English teaching.⁶⁰

The influence of this type of eschatology upon Pentecostalism was to provide a rationale for both its experience and its appearance. Interpreting the Holiness experience in a dispensationalist context allowed Pentecostalism to view itself as a Donatist movement in which purity was the sign of the "true bride." The impending parousia was also seen as the material cause for outbreaks of spiritual phenomena such as healing and glossolalia. Pentecostalism simply inserted itself as the missing piece in the patchwork quilt of the Holiness, Healing, and Prophetic movements in America during the nineteenth century.

Historical Origins of Pentecostalism

Charles Foxworth Parham

Parham (1873-1929) deserves recognition as the founder of Pentecostalism in that he formulated Pentecostal theology in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901.⁶¹ The specific foundations laid by Parham were evangelical-style conversion, sanctification, divine healing, premillennialism, and the eschatological return of Holy Ghost power evidenced by

⁶⁰ Ibid., 222-24.

⁶¹ J. R. Goff Jr., Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and The Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1988), 23.

tongues.⁶² J. R. Goff notes, "Parham's efforts gave Pentecostalism a definable theological corpus and instilled within the movement a fervent missionary emphasis."⁶³

Parham was a country youth who struggled with illnesses, possibly encephalitis and later rheumatic fever, became closely attached to his mother, and vowed to follow her religious example.⁶⁴ He began a Methodist supply pastorate in 1893 and by 1895 had started an independent ministry.⁶⁵ In 1898 he founded the Beth-el Healing Home in Topeka, Kansas and also began publication of a Holiness journal, the Apostolic Faith.⁶⁶ In 1900 Parham began a tour of Holiness religious centers and was greatly impressed by Frank W. Sandford's commune of Holiness believers at Shiloh, Maine.⁶⁷ From Sandford he heard reports of glossolalia occurring among missionaries and returned to Topeka convinced that the world-wide revival which would immediately precede the second coming of Christ was at hand.⁶⁸ In September of 1900 Parham started a Bible School in Topeka,

⁶²J. R. Goff Jr., "Parham, Charles Fox," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 660.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

and on January 1, 1901, one of the students, Agnes Ozman, received the experience of speaking in tongues.⁶⁹ During the next few days Parham and about half of the student body of thirty-four were "baptized with the Spirit."⁷⁰

Parham's Topeka movement did not grow, but was complemented by a revival in Galena, Kansas in 1903.⁷¹ Soon several thousand believers had joined him and he was able to establish a number of Apostolic Faith churches in Houston, Texas, in 1905.⁷² He began a Bible school in the same year in which students fanned out into the Houston area following ten-week training sessions.⁷³

Late in 1906 Parham became involved in establishing a work in Zion City, Illinois, evidently an attempt to wrest control from John Alexander Dowie's followers and create a "Pentecostal capital."⁷⁴ This effort caused him to delay visiting the fledgling Azusa Street revival, thus allowing the latter mission to establish its own identity. By the end of 1906 his leadership was in doubt.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 661.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Chappell feels more positive about Parham's Zion experience, noting that his meetings were successful and that he seems to have provided a link between the Pentecostal and divine healing movements:

Once again the people of Zion began to see God demonstrate his presence through divine healing, and for the first time many began to experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by speaking in tongues. The effect of Parham's ministry in Zion was to establish the city as the second most significant center in the world, for the spreading of the new Pentecostal message.⁷⁶

Chappell also notes that due to Parham's success in Zion the Pentecostal belief of the Baptism in the Spirit was channeled through a number of famous independent healing Pentecostal evangelists such as Fred F. Bosworth and John G. Lake.⁷⁷ In addition, Gordon Lindsay, a native of Zion, joined the healing movement and later became the editor of the Voice of Healing magazine.⁷⁸ His ministry continues on today at Christ for the Nations Institute in Dallas, Texas.⁷⁹ Another figure influenced by Parham at Zion was David J. Du Plessis, a South African who would become known as "Mr. Pentecost" for his ecumenical and international activities.⁸⁰

⁷⁶Chappell, "Healing Movements," Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 368.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid., 369.

In addition to the numerous individual or independent ministries, Parham's efforts at Zion also contributed to the formation of the largest Pentecostal denomination, the Assemblies of God.⁸¹ Dozens of Parham's Zion converts became part of this group, many of which would go on to become key leaders.⁸² Some of the most important of these were J. Roswell Flower, one of the founders of the Assemblies as well as founding editor of the Christian Evangel. Flower was also one of the organizers of the National Association of Evangelicals in 1942.⁸³ Three out of the original eight founders of the Assemblies of God in 1914 were Zion men.⁸⁴

Charles Parham and his multitude of Zion converts to the Pentecostal message played a vital role in the institutionalizing of the doctrine of divine healing as a permanent part of the twentieth-century Pentecostal movement. Through the ministry of Parham, of his disciple W. J. Seymour at Azusa Street, and of his converts at Zion City, the two doctrines of divine healing and the baptism of the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues became permanently associated in the gestalt of beliefs for the twentieth-century Pentecostal movement.⁸⁵

Parham believed that glossolalia was actually xenolalia (known foreign language), and thus surmised that such demonstrations presaged a period of unequalled missions

⁸¹ Ibid., 370.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

activity.⁸⁶ In his system, this latter-day revival indicated the end of the current church age and marked the return of the victorious Christ.⁸⁷ Along with his students, he initiated the first extensive period of Pentecostal growth.⁸⁸

The Azusa Street Revival

One of those enrolled for the ten-week course at Parham's Houston Bible institute in 1905 was a black holiness preacher named William J. Seymour.⁸⁹ Seymour was raised as a Baptist but joined the Methodist Episcopal Church upon reaching adulthood.⁹⁰ After moving to Ohio in 1900 Seymour became associated with the "God's Revivalist" movement founded by Martin Wells Knapp (1853-1901). After accepting the holiness doctrine of entire sanctification, he joined the Church of God Reformation movement, also known as the "Evening Light Saints."⁹¹ He soon moved to Houston (1903) and experienced the influence of Parham.⁹²

⁸⁶Goff, "Parham," Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 660.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid., 661.

⁹⁰H. V. Synan, "Seymour, William Joseph," Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 778-80.

⁹¹Ibid., 780.

⁹²Ibid.

While in Houston Seymour was invited to candidate at a Holiness church in Los Angeles which was connected with the Southern California Holiness Association.⁹³ He arrived in Los Angeles on February 11, 1906, and began meetings at the mission on Santa Fe Street two days later.⁹⁴ His prospective pastorate was terminated, however, when he insisted on preaching his first sermon on the necessity of speaking in tongues as evidence of the Pentecostal experience.⁹⁵ He was then locked out of the church and proceeded to find shelter at the residence of Richard Asberry, where prayer meetings were held weekly.⁹⁶ After several weeks Seymour and the others received the tongues experience and were forced to hold services on the front porch of the Asberry residence.⁹⁷ Within a week the group rented a building at 312 Azusa Street and the revival had begun.⁹⁸ On April 14, 1906, Seymour held his first service and on April 18, the day of the San Francisco earthquake, the Los Angeles Times ran an article mentioning "a weird babble of

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Cecil M. Robeck, "Azusa," Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 31.

⁹⁵ H. V. Synan, "Seymour," Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 780.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Robeck, "Azusa Street Revival," Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 32.

tongues" and "wild scenes" in the mission.⁹⁹ This resulted in hundreds of people seeking admission to the 40-by-60-foot building.¹⁰⁰

The Azusa Street experience had great significance for the future of Pentecostalism in that it focused upon bringing Holiness churches into the movement rather than merely creating new independent ministries or groups, as in the case of the Zion City efforts of Parham.¹⁰¹ Assemblies of God historian Mel Robeck notes that the Azusa Revival was actually the coming together of several "theological threads" in American religious life in the nineteenth century. Specifically, these were: (1) Restorationism--a return to the glory of the Book of Acts, (2) the idea of a "latter rain" outpouring of the Spirit accompanied by a great revival, (3) emphasis upon salvation as a crisis experience, and (4) a call for holiness of life similar to the English Keswick "overcoming life" view.¹⁰²

The fact that Seymour was black has naturally created the question of the racial origins of Pentecostalism. Pentecostal scholar Jim Tinney, for example, has

⁹⁹H. V. Synan, "Seymour," Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 780.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Chappell, "Healing Movements," Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 370.

¹⁰²Robeck, "Azusa Street Revival," Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 31.

argued that blacks searching for cultural religious identity "might do well to rediscover that an authentic black faith already exists. It is known as Pentecostalism."¹⁰³ Tinney argues that due to Seymour and the influence of Azusa, Pentecostal churches necessarily must admit origins that "are distinctively African and Afro-American."¹⁰⁴

Both black and white Pentecostalism in America can be traced back to a little band of black believers who met in a storefront church on Azusa Street in Los Angeles in 1906. Nearly every charismatic denomination in this country can trace its beginnings back to that black church setting. Whatever its biblical base or lack of it, Pentecostalism derives from black people in an immediate, although not exclusive, sense.¹⁰⁵

The problem with Tinney's argumentation is that he simply overlooks the significance of Parham and Topeka, as well as the origins of the oldest Pentecostal denomination in the United States, the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee). He also fails to note the fact that the main Pentecostal influence upon Seymour was Parham. While Pentecostalism is obviously multiracial and culturally complex, claims of Black origins based only upon Seymour seem to be oversimplifications.

An opposite view of Pentecostal origins is advanced by James R. Goff in a recent biography of Parham. Goff argues that, "It was Parham alone who formulated the

¹⁰³James S. Tinney, "Black Origins of Pentecostalism," Christianity Today 8 (October 1971): 4.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

distinguishing ideological formula of tongues as initial evidence for Holy Spirit baptism. That discovery, in effect, created the Pentecostal movement."¹⁰⁶ Relative to Parham's relationship with Seymour, it is interesting to note that the earliest Pentecostalism may not have been quite as multiracial as espoused. Parham, Goff notes, had a racial attitude which represented the Southern United States at that time, and that even greater racial feelings were present in some (such as Carother), but that others rejected all racist theories and attitudes (generally Dowie and the Holiness Movement).¹⁰⁷ It is interesting to note that Parham allowed Seymour to follow his classes in an adjoining room through a half-open door.¹⁰⁸ Goff also notes Parham's racial theories and Zionism, specifically his classification of "Negroes" with the "heathen races" such as the Malay, Mongolian and Indian.¹⁰⁹ There also seems to have been a developing tension between the two as Seymour advanced in intellectual independence.

When Seymour no longer accepted Parham's authority without question, the benign paternalism changed into hostility. Parham said that Seymour was "possessed with

¹⁰⁶James R. Goff, Jr. Fields White Unto Harvest, 164.

¹⁰⁷Walter Hollenweger, review of Fields White Unto Harvest, Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism, by James R. Goff, in Bulletin of the European Pentecostal Theological Association, 3 November 1989, 137.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 139.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 137.

a spirit of leadership." Now the black Pentecostals were "spook-driven" and "hypnotized." "The paternalistic racism which he had practiced prior to Azusa Street gave way to a harsher, more blatant racism."¹¹⁰

Finally, Hollenweger criticizes Goff's elevation of Parham as guilty of the same type of reasoning as used by Tinney above:

Goff dismissed W. J. Seymour as the pioneer of Pentecostalism because his ecumenical, race- and class-transcending understanding of Pentecost was by and large unsuccessful in the United States. Therefore the only candidate left is the racist Ch. F. Parham. With this kind of argumentation one can of course prove that Jesus Christ is not the founder of Christianity, because the Christian church very soon gave up certain aspects of Christ's example and doctrine.¹¹¹

The relationship between the two figures of Parham and Seymour remains to be explored. Some emphasize the role of Parham as father of Pentecostalism due to his theologizing of the Pentecostal experience. Others disparage Parham and advance Seymour as the true father of the faith in that he represents an interracial understanding of the Gospel.¹¹²

In the words of Hollenweger,

Parham's pacifism, his doctrine on the "Destruction of the Wicked," his animosity to medicine, his Anglo-Israel theories, his sympathy with the Ku-Klux-Klan - all this has been disregarded by pentecostalism. What is more, American Pentecostalism is not the only kind of Pentecostalism. Take away Seymour's understanding of Pentecost and all the statistical hallelujahs of Pentecostalism are silenced, because there is hardly a pentecostal movement in the Third World that does not hold Seymour's understanding of Pentecost. Furthermore,

¹¹⁰Ibid., 130,32.

¹¹¹Ibid., 137-38.

¹¹²Ibid., 138.

Pentecostalism has not yet come to its maturity. It could very well be that it offers the key to overcoming racism in the world today. I am confident that American Pentecostals also will discover that Pentecost is more than Parham's narrow ideology.¹¹³

Hollenweger concludes:

In the final analysis the decision between Parham and Seymour is not an historical but a theological one. Where does one see the decisive contribution of Pentecost: in the religious experience of speaking in tongues as seen by Parham, or in the reconciling pentecostal experience of Pentecost as seen by Seymour (which of course includes glossolalia and gives it an important role)?¹¹⁴

David Dorries remarks: "Parham crystallized the distinctive Pentecostal emphasis upon speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, whereas Seymour was responsible for spreading the concept across religious and racial boundaries."¹¹⁵

The Shearer Schoolhouse Revival

For reasons unknown historians seem to neglect this particular event as an origin for Pentecostalism. Generally, the question of origins begins with the Parham and Seymour revivals and proceeds directly to the formation of denominational groups. That this is an oversight seems indicated by the role assumed by the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee). This denomination is one of the oldest

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 138-39.

¹¹⁵David William Dorries, interview by author, 8 June 1990, Oral Roberts University.

and largest Pentecostal bodies in the world and most likely has the oldest direct identity as a Pentecostal denomination.¹¹⁶ The actual denominational identification of the group as the Church of God, however, was presaged by a series of events which culminated in an Azusa- or Topeka-like revival, which in turn served as the stimulus for the formation of the distinctively pentecostal group.

These events began when Missionary Baptist preacher R. G. Spurling and eight adherents sought to start a new religious group whose goal was "to restore primitive Christianity and bring about the union of all denominations."¹¹⁷ This group was instituted as the Christian Union on August 19, 1886, in Monroe County, Tennessee.¹¹⁸ In 1892 a second congregation was formed in nearby Cherokee County, North Carolina.¹¹⁹ Soon afterward, in the summer of 1896, a revival was held in the Shearer Schoolhouse in Cherokee County.¹²⁰ During these sessions people received experiences that were very similar if not identical to Parham's Topeka:

. . . men and women became enraptured by the Holy Spirit and spoke in unknown tongues. During the outpouring

¹¹⁶ Charles W. Conn, "Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.)," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 197.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 198.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

about 130 persons received the experience, which was identified in the Scriptures as the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It was also recorded that numerous afflicted persons were healed.¹²¹

As will be seen later, this event was unique in that it directly resulted in the formation of a large and influential denomination whereas Topeka and Azusa served as indirect influences.

Denominational Beginnings

Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee)

The previously mentioned Shearer Schoolhouse Revival soon led to the establishment of a more formal identity and on May 15, 1902 the group changed its name from the Christian Union to the Holiness Church.¹²² The group spread rapidly throughout Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia and on January 11, 1907, officially changed its name once again, calling itself the Church of God, "the name that had been used in the original compact in 1886."¹²³ Having established headquarters in Cleveland, Tennessee the group soon began a magazine, the Church of God Evangel, and due to a strong financial base reached through its centralized system, was able to engage in considerable evangelization and missions activities, as well as the establishment of a

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

Bible college and orphanage.¹²⁴ Currently the group has churches in all fifty states and mission outreaches in 107 countries.¹²⁵ In 1986 the centennial celebration of the group could claim 1,650,000 members world-wide.¹²⁶

Assemblies of God

The Assemblies of God, with more than sixteen million members worldwide, is the largest and most influential Pentecostal denomination.¹²⁷ Vinson Synan states that,

. . . founded by Charles Parham, and the Azusa Street revival, it was the first denomination to be entirely a product of the Pentecostal movement. The other earlier Pentecostal bodies had roots in the Holiness movement.¹²⁸

The group was organized in Hot Springs, Arkansas in 1914, as a fellowship of Pentecostal ministers.¹²⁹ Five reasons were given for calling the meeting: (1) to assist in the provision of sound doctrine for the increasing number of independent pentecostal churches, (2) to consolidate and conserve the Pentecostal efforts, (3) to establish a central foreign missions effort, (4) to establish Bible schools, and (5) to

¹²⁴Ibid., 198-202.

¹²⁵Ibid., 197.

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Vinson Synan, The Twentieth Century Pentecostal Explosion (Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1987), 15.

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹E. L. Blumhofer, "Assemblies of God," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 23.

provide a new organization for management of the spreading Pentecostal revival.¹³⁰

Although their stated intention was not to form a "denomination," the delegates proceeded to do exactly that.¹³¹

. . . the new church adopted a statement of faith which included the usual pentecostal article concerning speaking with tongues, while stating in another article that "entire sanctification" should be earnestly pursued" as a "progressive" rather than an instantaneous experience.¹³²

Synan notes that the statement placed the new group outside the Wesleyan tradition, "thus creating the first formal doctrinal division in the pentecostal movement."¹³³ An additional difference between this group and Southern pentecostalism was the adoption of congregational government. "In general the Assemblies of God represented the 'Baptistic' type of pentecostal church while the older ones were of the 'Methodistic' type."¹³⁴

Pentecostal Holiness Church

The Pentecostal Holiness Church has somewhat more complex origins in that it was the result of an amalgamation

¹³⁰Synan, Explosion, 18-19.

¹³¹Vinson Synan, The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 152.

¹³²Ibid., 152-53.

¹³³Ibid., 153.

¹³⁴Ibid.

of three different groups: The Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, the Holiness Church of North Carolina, and the Tabernacle Pentecostal Church.¹³⁵ These groups themselves were each outgrowths of the National Holiness Association movement which had originated in Vineland, New Jersey, in 1867 shortly after the Civil War.¹³⁶ All were Wesleyan in theology and had accepted the Pentecostal revival after 1906.¹³⁷ The result would be a denomination which strongly emphasized the Wesleyan experience of entire sanctification.¹³⁸

Theologically, the Pentecostal Holiness Church is known for its "five cardinal doctrines" of justification by faith, entire sanctification, baptism in the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues, divine healing for all provided in the atonement, and the imminent, premillennial second coming of Christ.¹³⁹ In the post-World War II era, the church became especially known for its theology of

¹³⁵H. V. Synan, "International Pentecostal Holiness Church," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 466.

¹³⁶Vinson Synan, Explosion, 149.

¹³⁷H. V. Synan, "International Pentecostal Holiness Church," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 466.

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹Synan, Explosion, 154.

divine healing through the ministry of one of its preachers, Oral Roberts.¹⁴⁰

As of 1986 the Pentecostal Holiness Church claimed 120,000 "adult baptized members" in the United States and a total of 1.6 million adherents world-wide.¹⁴¹ The group was one of the founders of the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America and remains classically Pentecostal, although one of its scholars, Vinson Synan, is perhaps the foremost voice in creating dialogue with the Charismatic movement at large.¹⁴²

Independent Charismatic Origins

Since the Charismatic movement is a relatively modern phenomenon, it seems most practical to examine the question of origins in general rather than to begin with historical antecedents. When the "neo-pentecostal" or "charismatic movement" began in the late 1950s, many adherents chose to remain in their historic churches.¹⁴³ Such attitudes were encouraged by David Du Plessis who maintained that all Christians of all churches were to seek

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 155.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 157.

¹⁴²Vinson Synan, "International Pentecostal Holiness Church," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 468.

¹⁴³S. Strang, "Nondenominational Churches," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 639.

the Pentecostal experience and that spiritual unity among all churches would eventually result.¹⁴⁴

In the older churches and the younger churches, in home churches and foreign churches, in Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Pentecostal churches, things are happening that can be understood only in the light of the eschatological fulfillment of Joel 2. God is pouring out His Spirit upon all flesh. It seems all churches are opening their windows and doors to the refreshing breezes of spiritual renewal.¹⁴⁵

By the 1970s, however, independent groups had begun to form. Names such as Derek Prince, Bob Mumford, Charles Simpson, Don Basham and W. J. Baxter were synonymous with nondenominational charismatic groups.¹⁴⁶ By 1977 there were so many of these that the Conference on Charismatic Renewal in the Christian Churches at Kansas City divided the sessions into two divisions--denominational charismatics and the independent groups.¹⁴⁷ By the 1980s a number of new training centers existed such as Rhema Bible Training Center in Tulsa, Christ for the Nations Institute in Dallas, and Liberty Bible College in Pensacola.¹⁴⁸ In 1986 Oral Roberts

¹⁴⁴David J. Du Plessis, The Spirit Bade Me Go (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1970), 31-32, 79.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., 120-21.

¹⁴⁶Strang, "Nondenominational Churches," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 639.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 639.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 640.

founded the Charismatic Bible Ministries as an independent fellowship of churches.¹⁴⁹

It should be noted that one practical stimulus for such creations was the Internal Revenue Service, which established strict guidelines for tax-deferred giving. One scholar notes that, "At times, IRS audits or the fear of audits caused independent charismatic churches to add ministries such as Bible schools, that were not their original intent."¹⁵⁰

Some unfortunate by-products of the independent movement were a number of questionable religious groups and practices, all of which placed themselves under the Charismatic "umbrella." The foremost of these was known as the "Shepherding Movement" (also referred to as the "Discipleship controversy").¹⁵¹ Due to the close relationship between four Charismatic leaders (Bob Mumford, Derek Prince, Don Basham, and Charles Simpson) a "covenant relationship" developed in which each shared their teaching with each other for "confirmation."¹⁵² The result was an informal "pyramiding" within the Independent Charismatic world which resulted in an oppressive spiritual authoritarianism. A

¹⁴⁹Ibid.

¹⁵⁰Ibid. 639.

¹⁵¹H. D. Hunter, "Shepherding Movement," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 783.

¹⁵²S. Strang, "Mumford, Bernard C., Jr. ("Bob")," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 631.

national network of followers formed a framework of "Shepherds" and "sheep" in which, similar to Loyola's Jesuits, the people were totally submissive to the "shepherd" over them.¹⁵³ This responsibility reached almost all areas of life, including tithing.¹⁵⁴

Fortunately, the movement was castigated by mainline Charismatics such as Pat Robertson and Katherine Kuhlman resulting in informal censure by concerned Charismatic leaders at Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1976.¹⁵⁵ The censured group, known as "Christian Growth Ministries," accepted criticisms and gradually disbanded their formal fellowship.¹⁵⁶ Only one of the group, Charles Simpson, still maintains the "shepherding" identity.¹⁵⁷

Earl P. Paulk

Other controversies have also arisen, for example the "Kingdom Now" theology of Earl P. Paulk. Paulk is another example of an influential Charismatic minister with

¹⁵³H. D. Hunter, "Shepherding Movement," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 784.

¹⁵⁴Hunter recounts how television evangelist Pat Robertson, a critic of the movement, found a twenty-year old student at Oral Roberts University who was drawing tithes from fellow students as part of their "submission." "Shepherding Movement," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 784.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

¹⁵⁷Howard Ervin, interview by author, 18 June 1990, Oral Roberts University.

classical Pentecostal roots. Raised in the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee), Paulk left his denomination in the 1960s and ultimately began a large independent work, Chapel Hill Harvester Church, in Atlanta Georgia. With a staff of eighteen full-time pastors serving a congregation of 4,000, Paulk's ministry includes extensive television programming accompanied by a number of books written by him.¹⁵⁸ Paulk also serves as a Regent for Oral Roberts University and is one of the foremost spokesman for the contemporary Charismatic movement.

The controversy surrounding Paulk comes from his "Kingdom Now" theology. He seems to be a type of postmillennialist who integrates Christ's "spiritual" kingdom with contemporary society in a manner that some feel contrary to historic Christianity. Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahaon in The Seduction of Christianity categorize Paulk's view on the basis that, ". . . those who expect to establish a perfect kingdom on earth prior to the return of Christ have a goal that bears much resemblance to humanistic plans for uniting the world in love, peace, and brotherhood."¹⁵⁹ Additional questions concerning Paulk are his concepts of human

¹⁵⁸ Tricia Weeks, "About the Author," in Satan Unmasked by Earl P. Paulk (Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1984), 318.

¹⁵⁹ Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahan, The Seduction of Christianity (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1985), 221.

sinfulness, the nature of Biblical revelation, and of justifying faith.

Oral Roberts

Granville Oral Roberts, "America's premier healing evangelist," was the son of a poor Pentecostal Holiness preacher.¹⁶⁰ In July 1935, he was healed of both tuberculosis and stuttering under evangelist George W. Moncey.¹⁶¹ Following ordination by the Pentecostal Holiness church in 1936, he quickly rose to prominence, serving four pastorates between 1941 and 1947.¹⁶²

Roberts began his healing ministry with an initial city-wide campaign in Enid, Oklahoma in 1947. Shortly afterward came his first book: If you Need Healing--Do These Things!.¹⁶³ This was shortly followed by his own monthly magazine, Healing Waters, and the establishment of his ministry headquarters in Tulsa, Oklahoma.¹⁶⁴ His greatest influence most likely came in 1955, when he began weekly telecasts of his healing campaigns.¹⁶⁵ Roberts represents a unique influence upon the Pentecostal/Charismatic world in

¹⁶⁰ Paul G. Chappell, "Roberts, Granville Oral," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 759.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

that he seems to represent both. In 1968 he transferred his membership to the United Methodist Church, following this with an even stronger television effort with prime-time programming in 1969.¹⁶⁶ His success in reaching as many as 64 million viewers at one time prompted Edward Fiske, Religious Editor of the New York Times, to declare that Roberts commanded more personal loyalty in the 1970s than any minister in America.¹⁶⁷

Robert's most well-known effort is surely the founding of Oral Roberts University in 1965 followed by his \$250 million City of Faith medical effort in 1981.¹⁶⁸ Although the latter has since closed, the university remains as a strong testimony to his influence as an American religious figure. ORU Vice-President Paul Chappell notes that Roberts' "ecumenical crusades" were instrumental in revitalizing the Pentecostal movement following World War II.¹⁶⁹ Relative to his doctrinal "niche," Chappell notes:

Theologically Roberts is basically a classical Pentecostal, who maintains that speaking in tongues is normative for every believer. His trademark, however, has been essentially an upbeat message of hope. The whole thesis of his ministry has been that God is a good God and that he wills to heal and prosper his people (3 John 2).¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 760.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 759.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 760.

Interestingly, while a number of noteworthy Pentecostal/Charismatic personalities have fallen into disrepute, no hint of scandal has ever plagued Roberts. Also to be noted is the fact that his name has not surfaced in popular works dealing with contemporary heresies, such as Hunt's Seduction. Perhaps his most controversial teaching is "Seed-Faith," which seems to insist that God materially rewards those who exercise faith in Him.

All of the figures and movements in this chapter seem to share a common heritage of Wesleyan Arminian theology which was conducive to various strands of revivalism such as the holiness movement, divine healing emphases and premillennial views of the end times. The question is whether this tradition, which greatly emphasizes spirituality, is truly spiritual. Does the emphasis upon experience, for example, become a type of works which is inimical to the primary tenets of Reformation soteriology? Pentecostals and Charismatics often use the same language as non-Pentecostals, but are they saying the same thing? The answer may be indicated in Pentecostal/Charismatic views of revelation, human sinfulness, and the nature of salvation.

CHAPTER V

MYSTICISM REFLECTED IN THE PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC UNDERSTANDING OF REVELATION

One dark night,
Fired with love's urgent longings
--Ah, the sheer grace!--
I went out unseen, My house being now all stilled;

In darkness and secure,
By the secret ladder, disguised,
--Ah, the sheer grace!--
In darkness and concealment,
My house being now all stilled;

On that glad night,
In secret, for no one saw me,
Nor did I look at anything,
With no other light or guide
Than the one that burned in my heart.¹

A common component of mystical theology is the attempt to define an epistemology which stresses knowing God from His "effects" rather than propositionally or cognitively. Since apophatic theology conceives of God as unapproachable, revelation necessarily becomes a matter of experience.

The positive counterpart to the negation that lay at the basis of apophaticism was the identification of personal

¹John of the Cross, "The Ascent of Mt. Carmel," in John of the Cross: Selected Writings, Kieran Kavanaugh, ed. and trans. (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 56-57.

religious experience as an epistemological principle in theology.²

A similar attempt to construct an experience-centered epistemology is reflected in contemporary Pentecostal and Charismatic scholarship. First, the authenticity of Christian faith is determined via personal encounter. The Christian life becomes the record of a series of "events" in which the reality of God is directly perceived, almost always beginning with an altar experience of salvation and proceeding to more definite spiritual encounters of sinlessness or Spirit-baptism evidenced by glossolalia. The emphasis upon experience remains symptomatic of the Pentecostal/Charismatic religious quest as believers continually seek additional spiritual gifts and graces.

Second, Scripture is interpreted in a subjective manner. In a confessional system, for example, the proclamation of the Gospel awakens spiritual life. Scripture then continues to serve as the primary directive for Christian life and doctrine, the norma normans which fashions the norma normata. Pentecostals and Charismatics also depend heavily upon Scripture; they merely interpret it in a manner which will support their experience. As Gordon D. Fee says,

²Jaroslav Pelikan, The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, vol.2, The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (1600-1700) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 259.

"the Pentecostal tends to exegete his experience."³ More precisely, Charismatics and Pentecostals are operating with a different principle of interpretation.

The goal of this chapter is to examine Pentecostal/Charismatic emphases upon the personal nature of revelation. Also to be considered is the role of Scripture in such systems.

Revelation as Personal Encounter

Independent Charismatics

The priority of experience in revelation is fundamental to Charismatic theology. E. W. Kenyon, called by many the father of the "word-faith" movement, distinguished between two kind of knowledge: revelation, or "faith knowledge" and "sense knowledge." The former lies in the realm above sense knowledge. It is "the knowledge that deals with things that the senses cannot discover or know without assistance from revelation knowledge." Once one has achieved this level whatever is spoken by faith becomes "immediately inspired and therefore dynamic in the particular situation or event to which it is addressed."⁴ Paul Yonggi Cho, Korean pastor of the "world's largest

³Gordon D. Fee, "Hermeneutics and Historical Precedent --a Major Problem in Pentecostal Hermeneutics," in Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism, ed. Russell Spittler (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 122.

⁴L. Lovett, "Positive Confession Theology," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 719.

congregation"⁵ asserts that, "By the spoken word we create our universe of circumstances." Those who can attain to the realm of faith knowledge are urged to realize that "You create the presence of Jesus with your mouth. . . He is bound by your lips and by your words."⁶ Even a preliminary survey of contemporary Charismatic leaders shows a common understanding of this concept.

Kenneth Hagin

The concept of spiritual power coming through "faith knowledge" is a primary tenet of the "positive confession" theology taught at RHEMA Bible college by such figures as Kenneth Hagin. Since in Greek usage, according to Hagin, rhema refers to something specifically stated, it is held that those who have the higher level of "faith knowledge" may achieve or have whatever they "speak in faith."⁷ As with all these figures, there is a tremendous emphasis upon spiritual revelations or knowledge in terms of power. Hagin discusses at length his "open vision" when Christ "talked with me for an hour and a half. . . ." During this time Hagin was told of God's desire for health for all those in His

⁵D. J. Wilson, "Cho, Paul Yonggi," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 161.

⁶Paul Yonggi Cho, The Fourth Dimension (Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1979), 83.

⁷Lovett, "Positive Confession Theology" in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 719.

"perfect will."⁸ Hagin also relates how that from the moment he began to speak in tongues he experienced the manifestation of the "word of knowledge." He specifically defines this gift as "supernatural revelation" concerning people, places or things present or past.⁹ Speaking in tongues is defined as "supernatural means of communication with God."¹⁰

Earl P. Paulk

The stress on the importance of subjective encounter continues in Paulk's assertion that "Many truths which were not recorded previously are now being revealed to God's people by the Holy Spirit."¹¹ Christians are urged to "remain open to additional revelation and understanding."¹² In his exegesis of John 16:13 Paulk notes that "fresh revelation is necessary to guide us into all truth." Yet at the same time he cautions that "The Holy Spirit never leads us to teaching that diminishes, negates or contradicts the

⁸Kenneth E. Hagin, The Ministry of the Prophet (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth E. Hagin, n.d.), 3.

⁹Ibid., 19.

¹⁰Kenneth E. Hagin, Seven Steps to Receiving the Holy Spirit (Garland, TX: Kenneth E. Hagin, n.d.), 9.

¹¹Earl P. Paulk, That the World May Know (Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1987), 85.

¹²Earl P. Paulk, Ultimate Kingdom (Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1986), 225.

revealed Word of God."¹³ While he attempts to maintain a balance between Scripture and personal revelation, Paulk still seems to emphasize the nature of revelation as private and personal. "God's Word," he notes, ". . . never even suggests an end to further insights." To the contrary, ". . . fresh, continuing revelation is necessary today for insights into the mysteries of the Kingdom."¹⁴ Although the term "insights" is evidently used in an attempt to soften the implications of inward revelation, there can be little doubt that Paulk sees revelation as continuing past Scripture in an inward and dynamic manner:

Some people believe that prophecy is not for today. They believe no new things can be learned about spiritual truth. Why has the Holy Spirit come if He is going to tell us only things that are in the Bible? The Holy Spirit brings fresh insights and fresh revelation to guide us into truth and to judge and defeat Satan. The Holy Spirit tells us future events."¹⁵

Paulk stresses that speaking with tongues is only a beginning in the experience of knowing God. Beyond this are the four "meat principles" of revelation, knowledge, prophecy and teaching.¹⁶ The first of these, "revelation," is defined as the "secrets of God's heart" unfolded through

¹³Earl P. Paulk, Thrust in the Sickle and Reap (Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1986), 74.

¹⁴Earl P. Paulk, Held in the Heavens Until . . . God's Strategy for Planet Earth. (Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1985), 124.

¹⁵Ibid., 125.

¹⁶Earl P. Paulk, Satan Unmasked (Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1984), 11.

the Holy Spirit. It tells us "what God wants and asks today." This would be applied to "specific answers or solutions." "Knowledge" is defined as "those things known through personal experience."¹⁷ "Prophecy" tells of things to come.¹⁸ All of these are necessary if the church is to fulfill its goal.

Anyone who says we have already received all of God's revelation hasn't read the Scriptures. . . Until we are able to implement that likeness of Jesus within ourselves, we will not be able to move in the areas of Sonship to which God has called us. God want us to ascend to higher spiritual concepts leaning totally on the Holy Spirit.¹⁹

An interesting aspect of Paulk's position is his exegesis of those texts he deems supportive of his position. John 16:13, for example, is understood in the sense of continuing revelation through the gift of prophecy.²⁰ Deuteronomy 29:29²¹ is explained in the sense of continuing personal revelation in Christians today. Likewise Amos 3:7²² is applied in the context of a continuing line of both

¹⁷Ibid., 12.

¹⁸Ibid., 13.

¹⁹Ibid., 106.

²⁰Paulk, Held in the Heavens, 124.

²¹"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever." The King James Version of the Bible.

²²"Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets." The King James Version of the Bible.

prophecy and prophets.²³ There seems to be no recognition of any unique revelatory capacity in either the office of Prophet or Apostle. All of the Independent Charismatic figures seem agreed that the offices of Prophet and Apostle continue unabated in the church.

Kenneth Copeland

Copeland concentrates upon stressing the power of God in believers' lives rather than discussing or emphasizing the nature of inward revelation. Nevertheless, his view of how personal revelation operates can be gleaned from a recently published "vision" Copeland received. The "prophecy," delivered during a Dallas campaign, was later published in written form in Copeland's paper, Believer's Voice of Victory. The content of the prophecy is that Jesus never claimed to be God, and that God is pleased when humans attempt to be like Him.

The more you get to be like Me, the more they're going to think that way [critically] of you. They crucified Me for claiming that I was God. But I didn't claim I was God; I just claimed I walked with Him and that He was in Me. Hallelujah. That's what you're doing.²⁴

The message proceeds to further discuss the "Spirit realm" by prophesying that believers will experience disembodied experiences:

²³Paulk, That the World May Know, 120.

²⁴Kenneth Copeland, "Take Time to Pray," Believer's Voice of Victory, February, 1987, 9.

Oh, there's no time nor distance in the Spirit realm. You'll be connected together at times like you've never witnessed before. Suddenly you'll be standing in that country, and suddenly you'll deliver a message and then suddenly you'll be right back in your kitchen again. ²⁵ Oh, I have some outstanding things, saith the Lord.

Bruce Barron notes that shortly following this event Copeland gave another prophecy in a televised crusade in which he expounded upon Jesus' statement, "Before Abraham was, I am," (John 8:58) by exclaiming, "I am too!" This statement created a furor throughout the Trinity Broadcasting Network and resulted in a frustrated attempt to arrange a meeting between Copeland and Walter Martin, a well-known evangelical cult analyst.²⁶ The issue remains unresolved.

Although Copeland formally maintains a strict allegiance to Scripture, it seems clear that his concept of revelation is typical of Charismatic emphases upon inwardness and subjectivity. The principle of authority for the prophetic messages seems to come only from the person delivering them, with no appeal to any external standard.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Bruce Barron, "Why Settle for Riches if You Can Be A God? Updating the Word-Faith Controversy," Pentecostalism in the Context of the Holiness Revival: Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Wilmore, KY, November 10-12, 1988, 6.

Oral Roberts

Perhaps the best-known aspect of Roberts' theology that relates to an inward concept of revelation is his teaching that believers can pray in tongues and then "interpret back to themselves" in terms which they can understand. In testifying to his own experience Roberts notes that,

. . . my spirit had bypassed my mind, and by the help of the Holy Spirit. . . was using my tongue as the vehicle of expression to God so I could better get His response.
27

This is Robert's exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14:14. Paul's exhortation to pray with both the spirit and the understanding is understood to mean the process of "praying back to one's self" in a manner which brings rational comprehension.

When I pray in tongues I direct it toward a need or a goal, then interpret back God's response to my mind and follow it by praying in English with real and deep understanding.²⁸

Those who exercise this function are enabled to speak to God in a "new tongue, on a different wavelength than you use intellectually as you speak to Him through your mind."²⁹ Roberts seems to build upon the same category of inward

²⁷ Oral Roberts, Three Most Important Steps to Your Better Health and Miracle Living (Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts University, 1976, revised 1981), 99.

²⁸ Ibid., 105.

²⁹ Oral Roberts, The Holy Spirit in the Now II (Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts University, 1974), 63.

spiritual revelation as do the rest of the Charismatic leaders considered in this chapter.

Classical Pentecostals

Pentecostals place great emphasis on the experiential element of their faith. They have also displayed great spontaneity in being able to adapt the Pentecostal experience to almost any theological tradition. There are, for example, Pentecostal Calvinists, even though Calvin himself held that the visible gifts had ceased.³⁰ James I. Packer has created a list of unique distinctives common to those who call themselves "Pentecostals." Among these are (1) the assertion that apostolic gifts have not ceased, (2) prophecy, understood as "receiving and relaying messages directly from God, and (3) high estimation of tongues as a personal prayer language.³¹ While Packer's definition of "Pentecostals" includes non-classical groups ("Neo-pentecostals), such characteristics are equally indicative of classical groups.

Theologically, Pentecostals show a pattern similar to Independent Charismatics in that they allow for inward revelation while at the same time espousing a strong commitment to Scripture. The methodology is to appeal to

³⁰Gordon L. Anderson, "Pentecostals Believe in More Than Tongues," Pentecostals From the Inside Out, ed. Harold B. Smith (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1990), 54.

³¹James I. Packer, "Pentecostalism 'Reinvented,'" Pentecostals From the Inside Out, 146.

spiritual gifts as a supplement to the Bible and doctrine, thereby allowing for charismatic messages or prophecies without depreciating the Bible. Donald Dayton notes a distinct change in the concept of prophecy as a gift when Pentecostalism emerged from its Wesleyan antecedents:

In early years "prophecy" tended to be interpreted more naturalistically as preaching or testifying, but with the change there is a discernible tendency toward the more supernaturalistic and "ecstatic". . . . Those who stayed closest to the Wesleyan tradition emphasized the ethical consequences and the "graces" rather than the gifts of the Spirit, but the push was increasingly toward the "spiritual gifts and graces"--especially where the fascination with Pentecost was most intense.³²

The close association between mysticism and such phenomena as tongues and prophecy is indicated by Rudolph Otto's description of mystical experience as awareness of "Awefulness," "Overpoweringness," and "Energy."³³ Robert Anderson describes such an experience as totally devoid of rational content:

In its raw, elemental state the religious consciousness conceives of its object as a blind and overpowering force, or a spirit. The goal of the religious impulse is possession of and by this spirit, and the means to that end are often crudely mystical, enthusiastic, magical and orgiastic.³⁴

³²Donald Dayton, Theological Roots of Pentecostalism (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1987), 93.

³³Rudolph Otto, The Idea of the Holy, trans. John W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), 11-21.

³⁴Robert M. Anderson, Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 10.

Since the time of Plato, glossolalia has been recognized as an altered state of consciousness in which ecstatic speech is dissociated from the mind of the participant.³⁵

Although Anderson's treatment is severe, it nevertheless seems descriptive of Pentecostal concepts. A distinctive tenet of Classical Pentecostals is their contention that gifts such as tongues and prophecy come upon the believer and are not subject to the will of the believer. This is a basic belief which sets them apart from contemporary Charismatics. This seems to place them more in the category of "mantic prophecy," in which the subject functions almost entirely as a passive recipient of revelation. Pentecostals themselves, of course, are not remotely aware of such comparisons. They have chosen to formulate their beliefs within the context of an experience which is meaningful for them. Thus there is no awareness of any doctrinal or theological impropriety:

. . . since Pentecostals are by experience Pentecostal, they cannot do theology in such a way that their Pentecostal experience is denied, particularly not when their experience of the Spirit of Christ appears to have been both everyday and virtually universal among first century Christians. To them, it is not a question of what gnostic "knowledge-by-initiation" Pentecostals have gained, but of what dynamic and institutionalized Church has forfeited by neglect.³⁶

³⁵ Ibid., 11.

³⁶ Mathew S. Clark and Henry I. Lederle, What is Distinctive About Pentecostal Theology? (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1989), 34.

Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee)

The oldest Pentecostal denomination accepts without reservation the continued gifts (charismata) divided into three categories of gifts of revelation, power, and utterance. "The ability to exercise these gifts does not reside with man but with God."³⁷ The question as to how one is chosen to demonstrate the gifts, however, became a matter of inward purity:

Q. How may we discern interpretations?

A. By being in close touch with the Lord yourself, and being assured that the interpreter is clean and pure in every sense.³⁸

Belief in continuing spiritual gifts remains one of the denomination's Doctrinal Commitments.³⁹ This emphasis on the importance of experiencing such spiritual charismata should be understood in the context of a church which from its beginning steadfastly opposed all creeds.

One of the first rules, and one that stood out very prominently and was held inviolable, at least in protestation, was an anticreedal attitude. Nothing must be written down that can be taken as a creed. The early leaders were very fearful of creeds.⁴⁰

³⁷Ray H. Hughes, Church of God Distinctives (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1968), 48.

³⁸Book of Minutes: A Compiled History of the Work of the General Assemblies of The Church of God, vol.1 (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1922), 125.

³⁹Church of God Sixty-Second General Assembly Minutes (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1988), 14.

⁴⁰Hollis R. Gause, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine of Holiness in the Church of God," Centennial Heritage Papers, 1986 (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press,

Even though the denomination manifested a continuing high view of Scripture until recent times, the emphasis upon experience accompanied by anticreedal attitudes created a natural priority of experience over Scripture. In the words of Charles W. Conn,

. . . the Church of God is solidly, basically, and determinedly a fundamental, holiness, and Pentecostal Church. It has frequently changed its administrative structure and its rules of membership, but not once has it changed a single doctrine it has held from the beginning.⁴¹

Assemblies of God

The Assemblies of God, the largest Pentecostal fellowship in the world, identifies its roots directly with early Pentecostal revivals rather than seeing itself as an outgrowth of the Holiness movement.⁴² From its earliest period this group has emphasized intense personal experience in terms of the "baptism with the Holy Ghost" witnessed through tongues and spiritual manifestations.⁴³ As in the Church of God, the Assemblies determined from their earliest period that their new church "should not be a creedal one and not too tightly organized." Consequently, no binding

1989), 26.

⁴¹Charles W. Conn, Like A Mighty Army (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1955), 272.

⁴²Vinson Synan, The Twentieth-Century Pentecostal Explosion (Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1987), 15.

⁴³Vinson Synan, The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 133.

creed or statement of faith was adopted. While professing the common pentecostal tenet of glossolalia as the "initial evidence" of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the group nevertheless sought to allow more doctrinal latitude than their more restrictive Southern brethren. Any doctrinal restraints that would hinder the new movement were to be steadfastly avoided.⁴⁴ Many of the early leaders had ties to John Alexander Dowie's Zion City, as well as other Chicago-area independent missions. "These centers especially influenced those who led the denomination in its formative years."⁴⁵

Pentecostal Holiness Church

In identifying John Wesley as "the spiritual and intellectual father of the modern holiness and pentecostal movements," Vinson Synan reminds us that Wesley's doctrines "were distilled primarily from the Anglo-Catholic tradition in which he was educated, rather than from the continental Reformed Protestant tradition."⁴⁶

If the Calvinist taught that only the elect could be saved, the Methodist taught that anyone could find salvation. If the Calvinist could never be certain that he was in the elect circle, the Methodist could know from a crisis experience of conversion that he was

⁴⁴Synan, Explosion, 20.

⁴⁵E. L. Blumhofer, "Assemblies of God," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 24.

⁴⁶Synan, Holiness-Pentecostal Movement, 13-14.

saved. From the beginning, Methodist theology placed great emphasis on this conscious religious experience.⁴⁷

The Pentecostal Holiness Church truly reflects the Wesleyan dependence upon religious experience. The central motivation for the initial formation of the denomination was an effort to revive the "Wesleyan experience of entire sanctification."⁴⁸

Revelation as Scripture

Independent Charismatics

While Charismatics lack formal statements concerning their view of Scripture as revelation, it would be fair to say that none among them are aware of adopting any attitude critical of the Bible. The authority of Scripture seems to be accepted as a "given," while more emphasis is placed on personal or prophetic revelations.

Earl P. Paulk

Earl Paulk, in a written response to David Hunt's The Seduction of Christianity,⁴⁹ states a formal credo that begins with Scripture and is surprisingly "evangelical" in tone:

⁴⁷Ibid., 14.

⁴⁸R. P. Spittler, "International Pentecostal Holiness Church," Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 466.

⁴⁹Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon, The Seduction of Christianity (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1985).

I believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

I believe in only one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious suffering and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return to earth in power and glory.

I believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.

I believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is empowered to live a godly life.

I believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; of those who are saved to the resurrection of life and of those who are lost to the resurrection of damnation.

I believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ as His body in the world.⁵⁰

Paulk notes that "Anyone who can read will understand and comprehend God's written word."⁵¹ Christians are able to "share with God" in recovering the earth "through Holy Spirit revelation based on the foundation of God's written Word. . ."⁵² John 16:13 is deduced as assurance that believers will be guided "into all truth."⁵³ 2 Peter 1:3-4

⁵⁰Paulk, That the World May Know, xi-xii.

⁵¹Ibid., 142.

⁵²Paulk, Thrust in the Sickle and Reap, 72.

⁵³Paulk, Held In The Heavens Until, 124-25.

is a primary proof text for Paulk's view of how believers share in the "divine nature of Jesus."⁵⁴

Kenneth Hagin

Hagin constantly appeals to Scripture to support his exegesis. In his own words, "When you get out beyond the written Word of God, you're getting out too far. Stay with the Word."⁵⁵ John 14:13 is exegeted to show the believer's right to "demand" answers from God in prayer.⁵⁶ The King James Version is found wanting in comparison to "another translation" of Matthew 16:19, which Hagin reads as, "Whatsoever things ye refuse to be permitted on earth will be refused to be permitted in heaven."⁵⁷ He appeals to the "Word of God" as teaching the Pentecostal doctrine of speaking with other tongues as the evidence of "Baptism in the Spirit."⁵⁸ The Scriptures are presented as the authority for establishing the difference between being "born of" the Spirit and being "filled with" the Spirit.⁵⁹ The "first step" of salvation is to "read what is written in the

⁵⁴ Ibid., 197.

⁵⁵ Kenneth E. Hagin, The Believer's Authority (Tulsa, OK: RHEMA Bible Church, 1984), 49.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 23.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 69.

⁵⁸ Hagin, Seven Steps, 8.

⁵⁹ Kenneth E. Hagin, The Bible Way to Receive the Holy Spirit (Tulsa, OK: RHEMA Bible Church, 1981), 2.

Gospels that we may know that Jesus is the Son of God."⁶⁰ He obviously feels no tension over accepting the authority of Scripture in his system.

Kenneth Copeland

Kenneth Copeland appeals to 2 Corinthians 5:17 for his view of the Christian as a "New Creation."⁶¹ The Amplified Bible is quoted to establish Romans 5:17 as a proof text for the "authority of the believer."⁶² 1 John 3:8 is produced as evidence that Satan has lost dominion over this world.⁶³ Romans 4:17 is said to teach that "God speaks of things that are not as though they are," and that believers thus should make the same claim.⁶⁴

Oral Roberts

Oral Roberts constantly appeals to Scripture as his religious authority. He has published two special editions of the Bible, as well as a three-volume New Testament

⁶⁰Kenneth E. Hagin, Zoe: The God-Kind of Life (Tulsa, OK: RHEMA Bible Church, 1981), 28.

⁶¹Kenneth Copeland, The Force of Righteousness (Forth Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1982), 4.

⁶²Copeland, Force, 17.

⁶³Kenneth Copeland, Our Covenant with God (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1976), 10.

⁶⁴Ibid., 38-39.

commentary.⁶⁵ The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah accompanied by Matthew 8:17 is presented as the basis for divine healing.⁶⁶ Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost was "inspired by the Holy Spirit," likewise the Pentecost prophecy of Joel 2:28-30.⁶⁷ Matthew 17:20 is "one of the most powerful seed-faith Scriptures in the Word of God."⁶⁸ The "Bible way to be saved" is "the most important phase of redemption" and is the "simplest and easiest of all . . . formulas set forth in God's Holy Word."⁶⁹

An interesting aspect of all of the above is that they appeal to Scripture for support, and evidently accept its authority on an informal basis, yet not one of the above figures openly endorses the inerrancy of Scripture. Their terminology concerning inspiration is identical to the "moderate" evangelical view which prefers to speak of authority or reliability, but does not accept a strong view

⁶⁵Holy Bible with Personal Commentary by Oral Roberts. King James Version (Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts Evangelistic Association, 1981); George M. Lamsa, The Holy Bible Translated from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts, Oral Roberts, Ed. (Philadelphia: A.J. Holman Co., 1961); Oral Roberts, The New Testament Comes Alive: A Personal New Testament Commentary. Three vols. (Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts, 1984).

⁶⁶Holy Bible With Personal Commentary, 64.

⁶⁷Oral Roberts, The Holy Spirit in the Now II, 46.

⁶⁸Oral Roberts. The New Testament Comes Alive: A Personal New Testament Commentary, Vol.1 (Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts, 1984), 104.

⁶⁹Oral Roberts in The Holy Bible Translated from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts. George Lamsa, trans., Oral Roberts, Ed. (Philadelphia: A.J. Holman Co., 1961), 15-16.

of inerrancy. With the exception of Paulk, who was trained in a liberal seminary (Candler School of Theology in Emory University) and doubtless knows the implications of his statements, the greater probability for most Charismatic leaders is that they simply take Scripture for granted and proceed accordingly.

In any case, mere usage of Scripture does not establish orthodoxy. As previously noted, Paulk initially appears to be more conservative in his understanding of Scripture as revelation. The Canon is viewed as "closed"; the Bible is held to be "written under inspiration of the Holy Spirit," and the Scripture itself is "the only infal-
lible, authoritative Word of God."⁷⁰ This apparent "conser-
vatism," however, seems strongly contradictory to more frequent assertions which seem to relativize Scripture as a norm. This is illustrated by Paulk's appeal to the impor-
tance of the office of the "Prophet" as a continuing reality in the Church:

The prophet is not just one method that God uses; he is the only method He uses to speak to this generation. The prophet is God's only means of informing this generation of new and greater insights into recorded revelation in God's Word [emphasis mine].⁷¹

While the Bible is "the basis for truth," God still "speaks

⁷⁰Paulk, That The World May Know, xi, 25, 83.

⁷¹Earl P. Paulk, The Wounded Body of Christ (Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1983), 51.

direction to prophets and apostles in every generation."⁷²
 ". . . fresh, continuing revelation is necessary today for
 insights into the mysteries of the Kingdom."⁷³ Without the
 ministry of contemporary "prophets," "the Spirit of God
 cannot move over the dry bones of the Church."⁷⁴ This
 exercise of prophecy is so critical that even the Second
 Coming of Christ depends upon it:

Jesus cannot come until the apostolic ministry is re-
 established. We are now in the period of the prophets.
 Today God is raising up prophets who are under the
 anointing of God, but the period of the apostolic
 ministry will soon return also. Only then can Jesus
 Christ come again.⁷⁵

The exact manner in which this gift is to function
 is supposedly in close accord with Scripture. Spiritual
 revelation should never "diminish," "negate," or "contra-
 dict" the revealed Word of God.⁷⁶ At the same time,
 however, "a Prophet is not be judged."⁷⁷ This statement is
 very difficult to understand, in spite of the fact that
 Paulk attempts to soften the implication by stating it is
 permissible to judge a prophet's "utterances."⁷⁸ Since a

⁷²Paulk, Thrust in the Sickle, 74.

⁷³Paulk, Held In The Heavens, 124.

⁷⁴Ibid., 188.

⁷⁵Ibid., 228.

⁷⁶Paulk, Thrust In The Sickle, 74.

⁷⁷Paulk, Satan Unmasked, 125.

⁷⁸Ibid., 125.

church would normally be under the authority of an "apostle," it is difficult to understand the seemingly independent nature of the "prophet." The "prophet" is critically important in Paulk's system because, "The prophet is God's only means of informing this generation of new and greater insights into recorded revelation in God's Word."⁷⁹ Yet it is difficult to see how any "prophetic utterances" could be judged since,

whether one's doctrines are liberal or conservative is not the issue. The issues are not based on appearances or methods of worship. The primary issue is Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone.⁸⁰

Methodologically, believers are to approach each Scripture passage only with the motive of finding "the purpose or goal of that scriptural passage."⁸¹ Yet at the same time, believers are to "remain open to additional revelation and understanding."⁸² One cannot help but question this procedure from the perspective of sound hermeneutics. The appeal to finding the "purpose or goal" of each specific passage sounds positive, but in reality is expressive of the Biblical Theological movement of the 1940s and 50s. The approach is extremely dialectical. One becomes free to create multiple interpretations.

⁷⁹Paulk, The Wounded Body of Christ, 51.

⁸⁰Paulk, Held in the Heavens, 142.

⁸¹Paulk, That The World May Know, 92.

⁸²Paulk, The Ultimate Kingdom, 225.

There is also the question of the status of prophetic utterances. Do they possess the same normative value as Scripture itself? Paulk's answer seems to be an unequivocal "yes."

Revelation must come by the Spirit. The Bible says that holy men of old were moved upon by the Spirit and they wrote the things God spoke to them. The compilation of these writings are what we know as 'the bible.' Why can't holy men in our day get this same inspiration for God? Is what we say any less important than God's Word spoken by holy men of old? If the Holy Spirit leads us to unchanging truth, His message today should be totally consistent with that spoken in past ages.⁸³

This position seems to create a logical difficulty with both hermeneutics and canon. William A. Griffin, in an article extensively analyzing Paulk's "Kingdom Now" theology observes:

Paulk does not add to the canon but he does offer new understanding of the true meaning of Scripture. And since this new "revelation comes only through divine impartation by the Holy Spirit," it is not verifiable by the normal methods.⁸⁴

The end result of such a method would seem to be the loss of meaning altogether. An example is the prophecy noted by Paulk biographer Tricia Weeks. In 1982 Paulk gave a prophesy concerning the then leader of the PTL (Praise The Lord) Network, Jim Bakker, which stated that Bakker had been "called by God as a world-wide demonstrator of God's

⁸³Paulk, Satan Unmasked, 132.

⁸⁴William A. Griffin, "Kingdom Now: New Hope or New Heresy?" Probing Pentecostalism: Society for Pentecostal Studies Seventeenth Annual Meeting, Nov. 12-14, 1987, CBN University, 239.

Kingdom."⁸⁵ Further, both Bakker and Pat Robertson (President of the Christian Broadcasting Network [CBN]) "were in the spirit of the two witnesses in the Book of Revelation."⁸⁶ Such lofty prophetic stature was soon discounted by the unfortunate events of Bakker's fall.

It is theoretically possible that the prophecy was valid and would have applied to Bakker had he remained "true" to his calling. The point is that the reality of such utterances is incapable of being determined. Since no Scripture or doctrine is involved, one merely interprets current events in the manner most agreeable to personal bias. The prophecy can be both true and not true at the same time. This in turn prompts the question of the necessity of any extra-Biblical prophecy. If no doctrine is involved, and if the Scripture cannot be utilized as a check, where is the meaning? Again, a religious statement which is neither verifiable nor falsifiable by any doctrinal norm is simply meaningless.

Oral Roberts faces the same questions of authority and verifiability. Due to his extremely conservative background Roberts is generally supportive of more "evangelical" understandings of Scripture. At the same time, he remains consistent with his Pentecostal heritage in emphasi-

⁸⁵ Tricia Weeks, The Provoker: A Biography of Earl Paulk (Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1986), 51-52.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

zing the value of glossolalia as a "prayer language" which may function as an alternate source of revelation. Christians who practice speaking in tongues "are now able to speak to God in the prayer language of the Spirit." "They are able to have direct communication with God."⁸⁷ In spite of his high estimate of Scripture, Roberts' emphasis upon continuing revelation in the church seems inimical to Biblical authority.

The pressing issue which continues to face all of the Independent Charismatics is the problem of verification. While all spiritual experiences (Christian or not) are "valid," not all are true. The concept of "prayer language" which is a "direct communication with God" seems to allow for considerable abuse by those who may know little of God's written Word. The question of spiritual authority also becomes of paramount importance. The result can be a religious system in which the authority of the Holy Spirit is advanced as a hermeneutic which competes with the authority of church and Scripture. The final authority seems to become the subjective experience of the individual.

Classical Pentecostals

Historically Pentecostals have allied themselves closely with fundamentalists in espousing extremely conservative views of Scripture. Even though at times inconsis-

⁸⁷ Roberts, The Holy Spirit in the Now I, 41.

tent, Pentecostal beliefs were founded on the certainty of an absolutely authoritative, inerrant Word from God. In addition, there was also a clear evangelical identity which set pentecostals apart from subjective liberal efforts to restate the gospel.

Now the scene is changing. Pentecostal scholars are rapidly discarding their evangelical identity. In addition, a new attitude toward Biblical revelation is evident. The question seems to be whether mere formal adherence to Scripture accompanied by an experience-centered epistemology will provide a satisfactory doctrinal foundation for future generations. Contemporary Pentecostals face at least two challenges: (1) the issue of theological identity, and (2) the issue of a Pentecostal understanding of Scripture.

The Old Pentecostalism

Relative to identity, the term "Pentecostal" was originally synonymous with commitment to evangelical beliefs. Assemblies of God author Carl Brumback notes that upon publication of the "Five Fundamentals" in 1910, "Pentecostal believers had no reservations whatsoever about accepting the label, 'Fundamentalists.'"⁸⁸ Historian George Paul delineates the Pentecostal Holiness Church as deriving from "the conservative, fundamentalist movement in American

⁸⁸ Carl Brumback, Suddenly . . . From Heaven: A History of the Assemblies of God (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1961), 130-131.

religion" which resulted in the formation of such groups as the Wesleyan Methodists and the Church of the Nazarene.⁸⁹ Church of God theologian Hollis Gause affirms that "Pentecostalism has its origins in a conservative Protestant milieu."⁹⁰ Likewise Historian Charles W. Conn could observe in 1956:

Not only is the Pentecostal movement basically and thoroughly Christian, but its theology is fundamental and its concepts are the historic concepts of the Christian faith.⁹¹

Even a non-Pentecostal Francis Schaeffer could contend:

. . . a very strong positive thing is that the old Pentecostals taught a great deal of basic Christian doctrinal content. Content was their prime test for fellowship and acceptance; you had to hold the right doctrine, or you were not accepted in the church or allowed to be a pastor. The old pentecostalism placed a tremendously strong emphasis on the content of Scripture, and that became a dynamic source of evangelism.⁹²

While older Pentecostals may actually have expressed hostility toward creeds or "formalism," there can be little doubt that their basic theology would be classified as either fundamental or conservatively evangelical.

⁸⁹Paul, George Harold. "The Religious Frontier in Oklahoma: Dan T. Muse and the Pentecostal Holiness Church" (Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma Graduate College, 1965), 1.

⁹⁰R. Hollis Gause, "Issues in Pentecostalism," in Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism, ed. Russell Spittler (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 111.

⁹¹Charles W. Conn, Pillars of Pentecost (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1956), 23.

⁹²Francis A. Schaeffer, "The New Super-Spirituality," in The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982), 3:389-90.

This evangelical identity was fortified by a clear understanding of the content of Scripture. As late as 1980 General Overseer Ray H. Hughes profiled the view held by the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee):

In the light of a new, concerted attack on the inerrancy of Scripture, I want to declare again that the Church of God believes in the whole Bible, rightly divided, and that the Bible as God gave it is wholly true and that there is in no way a mixture of error and truth.⁹³

A 1959 instruction manual for young people from the same denomination proclaims that, "Every word of the Bible is God's word, and therefore the Bible is without error."⁹⁴ Assemblies of God scholar and official Ernest S. Williams observed, "There is mystery as to how God used men, preserving them from error, in giving forth His word."⁹⁵ The Statement of Fundamental Truths of the same group declares:

The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct.⁹⁶

The Pentecostal Holiness Church in its Church Manual affirms that, "We believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of

⁹³ Ray H. Hughes, "The Inerrancy of the Bible," Church of God Evangel, 28 July 1980, 2.

⁹⁴ Ralph E. Day, Our Church of God Faith: A Manual of Instruction for Young People (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1959), 22.

⁹⁵ Ernest S. Williams, Systematic Theology (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1953), 1:73.

⁹⁶ Cited in "The Assemblies of God: 1941-1967--The Consolidation of a Revival Movement," William W. Menzies (Ph.D.diss., University of Iowa, 1968), 329.

the Holy Scriptures,"⁹⁷ and that, "The Pentecostal Holiness Church has from its inception believed the Bible to be the inspired, inerrant and authoritative Word of God."⁹⁸

The New Pentecostalism

In contrast to the above, current Pentecostal thought reveals a considerable shift in attitudes toward both theological identity and Scriptural content. Pentecostal scholar Gary McGee notes a considerable shift is taking place. In past years, Pentecostals usually "added their pneumatological distinctives to standard evangelical doctrines."⁹⁹ The response of the evangelical community, however, was to "look askance at Pentecostal pneumatology, viewing it as a distortion of doctrinal traditions."¹⁰⁰

Among younger Pentecostal scholars a growing tendency has developed to "forsake" classical evangelical theology in search of systems which are more reflective of Pentecostal experience and tradition. In the field of Missions, for example, Paul A. Pomerville has proposed that Pentecostalism provides a needed corrective to evangelical

⁹⁷The Pentecostal Holiness Church Manual (Franklin Springs, GA: Advocate Press, 1981), 35.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Gary B. McGee, "The Indispensable Calling of the Pentecostal Scholar," Assemblies of God Educator 35.3 (July-Sept., 1990), 3.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

missiology.¹⁰¹ A class handout distributed to the Pentecostal Foundations class at the Church of God Graduate School of Theology calls for a "Pentecostal Approach to Scripture" which recognizes the limitations of reason as well as the role of experience in knowing the truth:

Ironically, while certain cutting-edge trends in recent theology have moved closer to these Pentecostal emphases (e.g., narrative theology, theology as praxis, the community's role in interpretation, etc) we Pentecostals have tended to move further away from these emphases as we have adopted the approaches, methods, and, in some cases, the curricula of other (non-Pentecostal) traditions. We believe that the Pentecostal content which we have been attempting to infuse secondarily into our Bible study is being effectively sabotaged by the powerful and pervasive teaching impact of non-Pentecostal methods. We consider the pursuit of a distinctly Pentecostal approach to Scripture to be absolutely essential right now if we are to survive and our children are to become Pentecostal.¹⁰²

This statement is illustrative of a critical question concerning Pentecostal attitudes toward the Bible. The issue is whether it is indeed possible for the Pentecostal structure to survive within the environs of an evangelical grammatical-historical hermeneutic. While it is reasonable to pass on doctrine or tradition from generation to generation, how is it possible for mere experience to be passed on, at least with any degree of assurance? Pentecostalism begins in mysticism; its conceptual content is trans-rational if not irrational. While the shelter of private

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²"A Pentecostal Approach to Scripture," Church of God Graduate School of Theology, Spring, 1985.

experience may seem to protect faith from hostile rational analysis, Pentecostalism faces an inward paradox when it addresses the Biblical texts upon which it bases its own claims. To insist on the uniformity of the Acts experience, for example, presents considerable difficulty if the New Testament text is understood in normal grammatical and historical terms. Likewise the spiritual phenomena in 1 Corinthians assumes a vastly different meaning if understood in terms of the New Covenant in fulfillment of the Old. Pentecostal scholars are naturally aware of such difficulties and it is interesting to note the current options being exercised in Pentecostal scholarship.

First, there is the option of simply ignoring the tension and attempting to preserve an evangelical hermeneutic within a Pentecostal framework. Assemblies of God scholar William Menzies, for example, claims that there is no such thing as a "Pentecostal theology" due to the fact that "a Pentecostal theology is simply a 'full gospel' biblical theology that restores the experiences of Pentecost to its rightful place in Christian theology."¹⁰³ Younger Pentecostal scholars have no time for such an option. In the words of Mark McLean,

. . . it is my contention that not only is a Pentecostal hermeneutic a vital necessity if we are to have an effective ministry to our 'modern' world, it is

¹⁰³Mark McLean, "Toward A Pentecostal Hermeneutic," in PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Vol. 6, Number 2, Fall, 1984, 35.

inescapable. A Pentecostal hermeneutic will either be a well-articulated, canonically based expression of normative Christianity, or the twentieth century Pentecostal movements will wither after the deaths of their charismatic leaders and become the religious oddities discussed in the opening chapters of future books. . . .¹⁰⁴

A second, more popular option is to "recast" hermeneutics into a mold which will fit the Pentecostal/Charismatic experience. Theologically this involves breaking with the "evangelical" label followed by the attempt to forge a new hermeneutic, hopefully more at peace with modernity. The first step, reconsidering the appellation of "evangelical," is evidenced in the work of numerous thinkers. Church of God educator Winston Elliott observes that:

I must confess that while I tried for a long time to maintain strong continuity with my fundamentalistic, dispensational roots, I feel more in tune with my Pentecostal heritage when I open to charismatics, to Biblical theology, and to contextualization than I am with the rigid, dogmatic position I was taught in college and seminary.¹⁰⁵

Church of God educators Jackie and Cheryl Bridges Johns note,

We have discovered the rationalism of twentieth century evangelical Christianity an inadequate vehicle for

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 36.

¹⁰⁵Winston Elliott, "Continuity/Discontinuity Between Protestantism and Pentecostalism," Old and New Issues in Pentecostalism: Society for Pentecostal Studies Nineteenth Annual Meeting, Nov.16-18, 1989, California Theological Seminary, Fresno, CA, 3.

passing on a faith which honors the active presence of the Holy Spirit in the contemporary world.¹⁰⁶

Gerald T. Sheppard feels that the "flirtation with fundamentalism" on the part of Pentecostals who hoped for greater acceptance by historic churches will give way to a discovery of "new options within the politics of exegesis, corresponding to a fresh understanding of the biblical promise of deliverance."¹⁰⁷

Cecil M. Robeck, an Assemblies of God faculty member at Fuller Seminary, feels that while Pentecostals have gained from association with evangelical groups such as the NAE, there have also been some losses, specifically a pacifistic distinctive regarding war, a limitation on the role of women in ministry, and the importation of such "evangelical" issues as inerrancy into Pentecostal theology.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Jackie David Johns and Cheryl Bridges Johns, "Yielding to the Spirit: A Pentecostal Approach to Bible Study," Old and New Issues in Pentecostalism: Society for Pentecostal Studies Nineteenth Annual Meeting, Nov. 16-18, 1989, California Theological Seminary, Fresno, CA, 2.

¹⁰⁷ Gerald T. Sheppard, "The Seduction of Pentecostals Within The Politics of Exegesis: The Nicene Creed, Filioque, and Pentecostal Ambivalence Regarding an Ecumenical challenge of a Common Confession of Apostolic Faith," The Distinctiveness of Pentecostal-Charismatic Theology: 1985 Society for Pentecostal Studies Fifteenth Annual Meeting, Mother of God Community, Gaithersburg, MD, Nov. 14-16, 1985, 2.

¹⁰⁸ C. M. Robeck, Jr., "National Association of Evangelicals," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 635-36.

The latter statement also demonstrates the second main shift in Pentecostal thought, namely, its view of Scripture. Emphasizing that inerrancy is an "imported issue," Robeck states,

I think it's significant to note that in the history of Pentecostalism I'm unaware of any Pentecostal denomination that formulated a doctrine of Scripture that talked about inerrancy. I think the big issue has always been the issue of authority--the issue of "Is it believable?"--and the assumption has always been, "Of course it is."¹⁰⁹

Robeck feels that rather than being a fundamental part of the Pentecostal psyche, inerrancy has only become an issue since the early seventies, largely in relationship to the controversies in the Missouri Synod and Southern Baptist circles."¹¹⁰

Also indicative of current attitudes is the article on "Hermeneutics" by Church of God scholar French Arrington in the newly-published Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements. While asserting that Classical Pentecostals have always accepted the Protestant Reformation view of the sole sufficiency of Scripture, he notes that "Like their fellow Evangelicals, Pentecostals have struggled with the definitions of infallibility and inerrancy as they apply

¹⁰⁹Cecil M. Robeck, interview by author, 16 May 1990, Fuller Theological Seminary.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

to the biblical text."¹¹¹ While avoiding a liberal view of a merely human Word from God, they also "stop short of the extreme fundamentalistic view of Scripture as a static deposit of truth that the interpreter approaches through his/her rational faculties alone."¹¹² Instead of what he perceives as an overly rational approach, Arrington argues for a "pneumatic" or "charismatic exegesis" in which "the Spirit serves as the common context in which reader and author can meet to bridge the historical and cultural gulf between them."¹¹³ When this happens, the Bible truly becomes "a book for the believer."¹¹⁴

This more subjective approach seems consistent with Pentecostal emphases upon the priority of experience. Current President of the Society for Pentecostal Studies Donald Dayton reminds that Pentecostalism's assertion of the Acts experience as normative places it "in a long tradition of a 'subjectivizing hermeneutic.'"¹¹⁵ Gordon Fee notes that Pentecostals traditionally begin with their experience

¹¹¹ French Arrington, "Hermeneutics," Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, Burgess, McGee and Alexander, eds., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, 381.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., 382.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Donald W. Dayton, "Toward A Theological Analysis of Pentecostalism," The Distinctiveness of Pentecostal-Charismatic Theology: 1985 Society for Pentecostal Studies Fifteenth Annual Meeting, Mother of God Community, Gaithersburg, MD., 16.

and develop their hermeneutics in a "pragmatic" manner.¹¹⁶
 "The Pentecostal tends to exegete his experience."¹¹⁷

The problem, however, is that such an approach seems to open the door for modern methods which do not allow for classical propositional understanding of Scripture. Older Pentecostals simply asserted both the reality of their experience and the inerrancy of Scripture. The latter seems to have operated as an informal corrective in an atmosphere which did not stress theologizing. While there were excesses, "American Pentecostalism. . . treated Scripture in very much the same way as. . . other forms of American fundamentalism or evangelicalism."¹¹⁸ Inerrancy acted as an informal restraint which prevented excesses. No such restraint is present in the newer options. Instead, Pentecostals are opting for a much more subjective approach to meaning. As Michael Dowd observes,

Pentecostals first and foremost offer an experience with God - not a way of understanding God. One does not experience the Living Word by boiling the biblical text down and then extracting "transcultural biblical principals [sic]."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶Gordon D. Fee, "Hermeneutics and Historical Precedent--a Major Problem in Pentecostal Hermeneutics," in Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism, ed. Russell Spittler (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 121.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 122.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 121-22.

¹¹⁹Michael B. Dowd, "Contours of a Narrative Pentecostal Theology and Practice," The Distinctiveness of Pentecostal-Charismatic Theology: 1985 Society for Pentecostal Studies Fifteenth Annual Meeting, Mother of God

The logical complement to this subjective approach is an increasing affinity for the "new hermeneutic" and its derivatives such as "story" or "narrative" theology. While the term can be difficult to define, the "new hermeneutic" may generally be viewed as any process of Biblical interpretation in which the meaning of the text comes primarily from the role of the interpreter rather than from the text itself. The heritage of modern linguistic studies posits a gulf between reader and text which prevents the reader from truly understanding the author's purpose or circumstances. In other words, there can be no "transcultural" permanent meaning embedded in the text itself. Instead, "meaning" comes when the reader creates what is called a "fusion of horizons" in which meaning is "created" by allowing the text to speak to the modern situation. "Context," then, is not just the setting of a verse in the Bible, but also the cultural situation in which the reader encounters the text. To put it simply, modern theorists do not "find" the meaning of a text; they "create" it. Scripture is viewed not as an objective set of propositions containing timeless truths, but rather as an inspired source from which truth can be created for modern circumstances. Theology itself then becomes a series of "stories" or "narratives" in which each community recounts the reception of "The Story" into its cultural milieu. This is why Michael Dowd can say "Narra-

tive theology has continually proclaimed that 'propositional truth is not the whole truth,'"¹²⁰ and that:

Whenever we can acknowledge that all of our propositions, creeds and statements of fundamental truths are secondary reflections upon the primary stories, and that The Story necessarily produces not one, but many theologies, we shall have made progress in our being able to love one another not in spite of our differences but because of them.¹²¹

Pentecostal Jerry Camery-Hoggart can say, "With the discovery of narrative theology we are suddenly on the cutting edge of [the] contemporary theological scene."¹²²

A Charismatic Proposal

Still another option is offered by Howard M. Ervin, Chairman of the Department of Old Testament at Oral Roberts University. Ervin argues that Pentecostals/Charismatics need "an epistemology that meets the criteria of empirically verifiable sensory experience (healing, miracles, etc.) and does not violate the coherence of rational categories."¹²³ Just as Arrington argues for a "pneumatic exegesis," Ervin presents a "pneumatic epistemology." The classical grammatical/historical approach, Ervin argues, has not been sufficient in that "it placed the text at the service of

¹²⁰ Ibid., 12.

¹²¹ Ibid., 22.

¹²² Ibid., 18.

¹²³ Howard M. Ervin, "Hermeneutics: A Pentecostal Option" PNEUMA 3:2 (Fall, 1981), 12.

rationalistic and propositional theology."¹²⁴ Likewise the new hermeneutic is lacking due to its overemphasis on existentialism as well as its "dis-ease" with the world view of the Bible.¹²⁵ The answer to the quandary lies in an acceptance of Scripture as the word of God on the basis "of an intuitive, non-verbal communication between God and man, namely miracles."¹²⁶

While Ervin's thought becomes somewhat difficult to follow at this point, he seems to be arguing for the acceptance of Scripture on the basis of its mystical nature and as an expression of church tradition. His own epistemology is Eastern Orthodox and he is strongly committed to the Eastern view of Scripture and tradition. Essentially he attempts to bypass both the issue of inerrancy as well as the New Hermeneutic by appealing to the nature of Scripture as "sacred literature," to be approached outside the boundaries of human rationality. For greater clarification of his position he appeals to the Eastern writer, Georges Florovsky:

The Scriptures are "inspired," they are the Word of God. What is the inspiration can never be properly defined--there is a mystery therein. It is a mystery of the divine-human encounter. We cannot fully understand in what manner "God's holy men" heard the Word of their Lord and how they could articulate it in the words of their own dialect. Yet, even in their human

¹²⁴Ibid., 14.

¹²⁵Ibid., 15.

¹²⁶Ibid., 21.

transmission, it was the voice of God. Therein lies the miracle and the mystery of the Bible, that it is the Word of God in human idiom. And in whatever the manner we understand the inspiration, one factor must not be overlooked. The Scriptures transmit and preserve the Word of God precisely in the idiom of man.¹²⁷

Ervin concludes that a proper understanding of Scripture will so combine the factual and mystical elements that a "pentecostal" understanding can be produced which is both historical and spiritual.¹²⁸

Analysis

An important common denominator of both Charismatic and Pentecostal groups is that they share the same principle of interpretation regarding Scripture. It is interesting, for example, that Earl P. Paulk specifically instructs believers never to "interpret the Scriptures to prove a doctrinal principle or method, but only to find the purpose or goal of that scriptural passage."¹²⁹ Obviously such an approach is hostile to any concept of an analogia fidei. If anything, it expresses the supposed neutrality of the Biblical Theological movement, a movement which has demonstrably failed in its objective.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Georges Florovsky, Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View (Belmont, MS: Nordland Pub. Co., 1972), 27, cited in Ervin, "Hermeneutics," 18.

¹²⁸ Ervin, "Hermeneutics," 23-24.

¹²⁹ Earl P. Paulk, That the World May Know, 92.

¹³⁰ Brevard Childs, Biblical Theology in Crisis (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1970), chap. 4 passim.

The same quest is exemplified in Classical Pentecostal efforts to establish a "pneumatic" or "charismatic" exegesis. Oral Roberts University scholar Howard Ervin more clearly outlines the methodology involved in such a task when he suggests that Charismatics must develop "an epistemology that meets the criteria of empirically verifiable sensory experience (healing, miracles, etc.) and does not violate the coherence of rational categories."¹³¹ Just as the Classical Pentecostal Arrington argues for a "pneumatic exegesis," Ervin presents a "pneumatic epistemology." The classical grammatical/historical approach, he argues, has not been sufficient in that "it placed the text at the service of rationalistic and propositional theology."¹³²

Ervin is equally unhappy with the new hermeneutic in that it overemphasizes existentialism and seems to live in a state of "dis-ease" with the world view of the Bible.¹³³ The answer, he insists, lies in an acceptance of Scripture as the word of God on the basis "of an intuitive, non-verbal communication between God and man, namely miracles."¹³⁴ A proper understanding of Scripture will so combine the factual and mystical elements that a "pentecostal" under-

¹³¹Ervin, "Hermeneutics," 12.

¹³²Ibid., 14.

¹³³Ibid., 15.

¹³⁴Ibid., 21.

standing can be produced which is both historical and spiritual.¹³⁵

The foremost question for hermeneutics remains that of content. How does one establish "orthodoxy?" Are all stories or narratives equally correct? At the most recent meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, for example, an official from the United Pentecostal Church presented a paper titled "The Oneness View of Jesus."¹³⁶ This is a group which holds a view of the Trinity determined to be heretical by historical Christianity. Again, how do Charismatics define themselves within the ongoing ecumenical dialogue? Are the differences between Catholic and Protestant traditions resolvable through "narrative theology?"

The difficulty concerns the type of thinking that is being utilized. The issue is epistemological--what is the role of reason in its relationship to faith? No evangelical theologian denies our absolute dependence on the Spirit as a guide for all truth. Nor does anyone doubt that true perception of God's word will always be spiritual. The difference is that evangelicals do not accept the cognitive barrier placed between God and humanity by modern theology. He really is there--and He really has spoken! Contemporary

¹³⁵ Ibid., 23-24.

¹³⁶ David K. Bernard, "The Oneness View of Jesus," Society for Pentecostal Studies Nineteenth Annual Meeting: Old and New Issues in Pentecostalism, California Theological Seminary, Fresno, CA, Nov.16-18, 1989.

Pentecostal and Charismatic scholarship seems to be jettisoning the cognitive element in search of a hermeneutic which can be neither verified nor falsified.

CHAPTER VI
MYSTICISM REFLECTED IN THE PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC
UNDERSTANDING OF SIN

The purpose of this chapter is to explore parallels between common mystical understandings of sin and its presence in humanity with Pentecostal/Charismatic views. A common ingredient in Eastern theology, for example, is a Pelagian view of the Fall in which humans are not guilty of the sin of Adam.¹ Pelikan offers the illustration provided by Simeon the New Theologian:

The spiritual theology of Simeon was summarized in his doctrine of the vision of God as light. Although men were blind as a result of sin and could not see the divine light, the cleansing gift of salvation made it possible for 'the pure in heart' to see God, as the Sermon on the Mount promised, and to see him truly.²

Meister Eckhart was accused of deifying humanity in his own mysticism, which was based on a similar if not identical view of human potential:

All that is past, all that is present and all that is future, is created by God in the innermost of the soul. Everything that God works in all the saints, God works in the innermost of the soul. The Father begets His Son

¹Jaroslav Pelikan, The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of the Development of Doctrine, vol. 2, The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (1600-1700) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 260.

²Ibid.

in the innermost of the soul, and begets you with His only-begotten Son as not less than Him.³

Eckhart's concept of a "spark" in the soul led him to the logical conclusion that it was possible to find and experience God as the final outcome of the mystical quest.⁴ Lewis Beck offers an accurate paraphrase of Eckhart's view:

The spark is ontologically like the Son in the Trinity; it is for this reason possible for us to know God. . . . Thus man is reborn; he loses himself, and God gives him his self back again, by a kind of trinitation process.⁵

The same theme of a spiritual "spark" is common to both Pentecostal and Charismatic theology. In Independent Charismatic thought there seems to be universal consensus that natural humanity is capable of engaging on its own spiritual quest. This becomes a process which seems the same as the Eastern concept of deification or "theosis." Classical Pentecostals reflect a more conservative theological heritage, but almost always within the context of Wesleyan views of prevenient grace. Natural ability and sin are defined in a manner which accommodates mystical experience. They tend to show a divided world-view in which human

³Meister Eckhart, "A Sermon for St. Dominic's Day," in Treatises and Sermons of Meister Eckhart, trans. James M. Clark and John V. Skinner (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), 59.

⁴Lewis White Beck, Early German Philosophy (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969), 53.

⁵Ibid.

sinfulness is affirmed, while the reality of justification by grace through faith is denied.

The Nature of Humanity

Classical Pentecostal Views

The Pentecostal/Charismatic understanding of the nature of humanity and the consequent understanding of the nature of both sin and righteousness is pivotal in understanding the differences between these movements and the heritage of the Reformation. From the Pentecostal perspective there seems little disagreement with general Reformation understandings. Writers and scholars in the Church of God, for example, seem orthodox in their views. Donald Bowdle states that there is "no appreciable difference" in the Hebrew terms for "image" and "likeness," thus avoiding the bifurcation of Irenaeus.⁶ The specific nature of the "image" is held to be "a spiritual image," since "God is essentially a spiritual being."⁷ In commenting on John 4:24 Bowdle notes,

Jesus intended to impress upon us the marvelous realization that there is a part of our nature--the immaterial or spiritual--corresponding to the essential nature of God Himself.⁸

⁶Donald N. Bowdle, Redemption Accomplished and Applied (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1972), 23.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., 24.

The formal definition of God's image corresponds to Reformed theology:

Since God is incomprehensible and in all points cannot be fully explained with reference to His spiritual form, we may conclude that this image at its very least is a mental, moral and social likeness.⁹

Relative to the composition of human nature, however, Bowdle seems to adopt a trichotomist view. Initially he notes that the individual being "consists of two distinct principles, one material and the other immaterial."¹⁰ The immaterial aspect, though, in turn consists of two parts, "soul and spirit."¹¹ This view is defined as trichotomy. Although Bowdle is careful to avoid asserting that this is his own position, its inclusion seems expressive of denominational opinion.

E. S. Williams presents a similar view from the Assemblies of God. The "Let us" statement of Genesis 1:26 indicates both plurality in the Godhead and agreement and cooperation on the part of this plurality in the creation of humanity.¹² The elements of the Image of God are understood as morality, reason, immortality, and "kinship" with God.¹³ There is no extensive discussion of the subject. The human

⁹Ibid., 25.

¹⁰Ibid., 28.

¹¹Ibid., 29.

¹²Ernest S. Williams, Systematic Theology (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1953), 2:95.

¹³Ibid., 117-18.

constitution is understood to be trichotomic, corresponding to the pattern of the Trinity.¹⁴ Riggs states the position in catechetical form:

What is meant by the likeness and image of God?

A. Man is tripartite (spirit, soul and body) like God is triune (Father, Son and Holy Spirit); his will is inviolate, like God's; and he, too, will endure forever. In his original creation, man was perfectly holy and blessed.¹⁵

After the Fall original innocence and holiness were lost, but humanity retained at least a marred form of the image.¹⁶ The position seems the same as that of Reformed categories of the "broader" and "narrower" images. Depravity seems to be understood in a relative sense. Williams objects that "some have gone so far as to teach that man is totally depraved therefore his every part and action are corrupt."¹⁷ While sin "penetrates every part" of our being, still, "elements of goodness. . . are apparent."¹⁸ Original sin is defined as a "bias of human nature toward evil."¹⁹

The Manual of the Pentecostal Holiness Church contains no discussion of anthropology, preferring to

¹⁴Ibid., 108.

¹⁵Ralph M. Riggs, We Believe (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1954), 93.

¹⁶Williams, Systematic Theology, 1:4.

¹⁷Williams, Systematic Theology, 2:134.

¹⁸Williams, Systematic Theology, 1:135.

¹⁹Williams, Systematic Theology, 2:136.

discuss Repentance, Faith, Justification, Regeneration, Adoption and Sanctification, followed by Pentecostal distinctives.²⁰ The closest the document comes to a formal statement concerning human nature is Article Nine of the "Articles of Faith":

We believe that Jesus Christ shed His blood for the complete cleansing of the justified believer from all indwelling sin and from its pollution, subsequent to regeneration (I John 1:7-9).²¹

Here, of course, the emphasis is on the distinctive Pentecostal Holiness position concerning sanctification. A Pentecostal Holiness Catechism presents the following definition of the purpose and state of human creation:

Q. For what purpose was man created?

A. To love, serve, and glorify God, and enjoy Him forever.

Q. In what state were Adam and Eve created?

A. They were created perfect, in the moral, intellectual and spiritual image of God.²²

The parallel with the Westminster Confession is especially obvious in the first question, with the same content as Westminster implied in the second.

Relative to human composition, J. A. Synan makes the following observation concerning human nature:

²⁰ Leon O. Stewart, A. D. Beacham, Donna Steward, and Shirley Spencer, eds., Pentecostal Holiness Church 1981 Manual (Franklin Springs, GA: Advocate Press, 1981), 23-40.

²¹ Ibid., 22.

²² Paul F. Beacham, Advanced Catechism (Franklin Springs, GA: Publishing House of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, n.d.), 5.

The thing that distinguishes man from all other forms of life in the earth is his capacity to know and love God, to be aware of eternity and to prepare for it. It is the capacity to sin--and to be conscious of it--to long for holiness and to be unhappy without it. This capacity to know God, to seek God, to love God, to enjoy God, is something which God has built into the delicate structure of every human soul; and as Augustine said to God, "Thou hast made man for thyself, and he will ever be restless until he finds his rest in Thee."²³

This capacity is present in every human being, although it "may not be acted upon."²⁴ Still, "God has amply provided the grace and blessing that can and will abundantly satisfy this capacity in man."²⁵ The framework seems to be that of Wesley's concept of "prevenient grace," a popular concept within Pentecostalism.

The Classical Pentecostal view of the nature of man seems to contain at least three ingredients. First, trichotomy is the preferred theory for explaining the human person. Second, the image of God is viewed in terms hospitable to Eastern or mystical categories. Third, the effects of sin are relativized via an appeal to some type of inherent capacity for belief within every person. Such a view is very similar if not identical to Wesley's prevenient grace as well as to Eastern and mystical precedents.

²³J. A. Synan. Christian Life in Depth (Franklin Springs, GA: Advocate Press, n.d.), 19.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

Independent Charismatic Views

The Independent Charismatic world offers a number of involved views concerning human nature. Earl P. Paulk, for example, represents a contemporary theological debate which is anchored in a particular view of the nature of humanity. This view, known as the "Kingdom Now" theology, is a variety of postmillennialism in which the church is pictured as attaining absolute dominion over the earth:

It proclaims that through the exercise of saving faith, and through ethical conformity to God's revealed law, regenerate men will increase the extent of their dominion over the earth.²⁶ It is a religion of conquest-- conquest through ethics.

A view such as this is possible because of a fundamental conception of human nature. According to Paulk, "We are created with the potential to become like Christ."²⁷ The image of God in humanity is seen as the ability to exercise free will which continues in every person.²⁸ Because humanity is endowed with this ability, we must "correct" faulty theological views concerning human nature:

Man is not an unworthy "worm." Man was created in the image of Almighty God with the potential of being like Jesus in the world. Man has the potential of demonstrating that Christ-like identity. He must allow the Spirit of God to direct his thoughts and actions toward attaining the full stature of Jesus Christ. a man consumed with becoming like Jesus doesn't sound like a

²⁶ Gary North, Liberating Planet Earth (Ft. Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1987), 45.

²⁷ Earl Paulk, Thrust in the Sickle and Reap (Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1986), 47.

²⁸ Ibid., 69-70.

"worm" to me! We must correct our thought patterns about who we are. Success stories which emphasize materialistic gain become tiresome, but sometimes underneath those details is truth--we are made in the image of God with unlimited, tremendous potential.²⁹

Another explanation of the Image of God offered by Paulk is the Barthian understanding of "male and female":

Notice, that when God spoke of the creation of man, He gave us only one description. He gave the specific description of His image as male and female. He gave no other qualifications or description. He simply said, "In Our image," meaning male and female.³⁰

The consequence of this image are "paradise laws" which, if followed, will allow believers to fulfill the Adamic Commission. Specifically these are: [1] to be fruitful and multiply, [2] to subdue and have dominion, and [3] to observe proper dietary practices.³¹ The result of obeying such "laws" is that believers will become true overcomers "with the same authority and power that Christ had."³²

God's likeness is male and female. God's image is properly related ministries following the leading of the Spirit. In that understanding, we become one and we overcome with authority because we have the blessing of God.³³

In neither of these views is there any indication of "depravity" or radical distortion of human nature due to the

²⁹Ibid., 134-35.

³⁰Earl Paulk, Satan Unmasked (Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1984), 279.

³¹Ibid., 282-95.

³²Ibid., 257.

³³Ibid., 298.

Fall. Also clear is the implication that Christians are responsible for their own destiny and consequently under the law.

This presents the question of exactly what effect the Fall did have on humanity. Paulk observes that in the Fall humanity lost a number of religious prerogatives. First, "communication with God was lost;" this is recovered by "praying in the Spirit."³⁴ Second, "Self-identity was lost."³⁵ Third, "We've lost communication and the ability to know who we are," which Paulk calls the "fruit of innocence."³⁶ Fourth, "Confidence was lost. . . because of guilt."³⁷ Finally, "Adam and Eve lost their power to command the earth."³⁸ This last ingredient is especially relevant in Paulk's scheme of "restoration." Just as God intended to use Adam as a "prototype that will restore the whole universe," so also must believers "learn to use that heavenly power and authority before the Kingdom can be established."³⁹

³⁴Earl Paulk, Held in the Heavens Until . . . God's Strategy for Planet Earth (Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1985), 36.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid., 37.

³⁸Ibid., 38.

³⁹Ibid., 41-42.

The qualifying factor in this view seems to be the assumption that by conversion Christians receive the powers of a "pre-Fall" human nature. The image of God is understood as a direct ontological identity seemingly unaffected by sin:

Adam and Eve were placed in the world as the seed and expression of God. Just as dogs have puppies and cats have kittens, so God has little gods.⁴⁰ Seed remains true to its nature, bearing its own kind.

When God said, "Let us make man in our image," He created us as little gods, but we have trouble comprehending this truth.⁴¹

The result of such a constitution is that those who are truly "Sons of God" are to "usher in the age of the resurrection" must broaden their vision.⁴²

Evangelical author Dave Hunt in his Seduction of Christianity objects that Paulk's view fits a general framework of extremist writers such as John G. Lake, who states:

Man is not a separate creation detached from God, he is part of God Himself God intends us to be gods. . . . He is calling forth a soul-awakening to the realization that the man within is the real man. The inner man is the real governor, the true man that Jesus said was a god."⁴³

⁴⁰ Paulk, Satan Unmasked, 96.

⁴¹ Ibid., 96-97.

⁴² Ibid., 102.

⁴³ Cited in Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon, The Seduction of Christianity (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1985), 219.

Although Paulk denies this, stating that "I do teach a difference between man seeking to be 'like God' which is sin, and being created in the 'image of God'. . .," the implications of his view still seem very close to extremist thinkers.

Kenneth Hagin seems to arrive at the same destination as Paulk, only by a slightly different route. He understands the image of God as a Godly quality within Adam:

Man was never made to be a slave. He was made to reign as a king under God. That kingly being was created in the image and likeness of god. He was created on terms of equality with god, and he could stand in God's presence without any consciousness of inferiority.⁴⁴

The point, of course, is that humanity somehow stands on a level almost equal to God Himself. In commenting on Psalm 8:4,5 (" . . . thou hast made him [man] a little lower than the angels" [KJV]), Hagin notes,

In some translations there is a number or letter by the word "angels" in the text. If you look in the margin you'll find that the Hebrew word here is Elohim--the same word or name for God. The Hebrew Bible actually says (talking about man), "Thou hast made him a little lower than God." That means God has made us as much like Himself as possible. He made us in His image. He made us in His likeness.⁴⁵ He made us the same class of being that He is Himself.

Again there is the familiar theme of being in the same "class" or "species" as God. There is the same ontological understanding of the Divine nature within the individual:

⁴⁴Kenneth Hagin, Zoe: The God-Kind of Life (Tulsa, OK: RHEMA Bible Church, 1981), 35.

⁴⁵Ibid., 36.

God took something of Himself, which was spirit, the life of God, and put it into man. You see that life manifested in man. You see it in his spirit and soul. You see it in his body, even after he had died spiritually.⁴⁶

The result of such a creation is that humanity possesses tremendous spiritual authority. Since "God is a faith God," who made humanity "a faith man," "Man," therefore, "belongs to God's class."⁴⁷ Since humans therefore live "in the creative realm of God," they are no longer subject to "the weakness message."⁴⁸

Charles Capps, one of Hagin's favorite teachers, is specific in comparing the human constitution to God's own nature:

Man is such an exact duplication of God that he is a three-fold being: spirit, soul, and body. He is a spirit, he has a soul, and he lives in a body. Each part relates to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.⁴⁹

When God breathed life into Adam, "Adam became an exact duplication of God's kind."⁵⁰

Kenneth Copeland is even more specific concerning the Image and its implications.

At creation God set into motion a law which I call the law of genesis, or the law of beginnings. According to

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Charles Capps, God's Image of You (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1985), 25.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 27.

this law of genesis, every living thing was created by God to produce after its own kind. Man was no exception to this rule. God is a Spirit and Adam was created in God's own image and likeness, a spirit-being.⁵¹

According to this "law," humanity takes on the spiritual nature of whatever "spiritual father" is being served. Adam, for example, experienced spiritual death through the Fall; he assumed "the nature of Satan."⁵² When Jesus is received as "Lord of our life," however, this position is reversed.

Adam's life came from the inside of God, and essentially the same thing occurs in the New Birth. You were dead in sins and trespasses until God recreated your spirit and gave you His life. When you accepted the sacrifice of Jesus, the Spirit of God hovered over your body and a new spirit-life which⁵³ had never existed before was spawned inside you.

The concept of spiritual "imagery" is thus used negatively to portray the state of the lost, while positive terms are used which indicate a complete restoration of righteousness for believers:

When you were born again, the Bible says you became bone of His bone. You have rights and privileges because you have been born of the Spirit of God. God has been reproduced on the inside of you! These rights are yours because Jesus of Nazareth paid the price for the sin problem and caused you to be reborn.⁵⁴

⁵¹Kenneth Copeland, Our Covenant with God (Ft. Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1976), 7-8.

⁵²Ibid., 9.

⁵³Kenneth Copeland, The Force of Righteousness (Ft. Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1982), 18.

⁵⁴Ibid.

Just as in Paulk and Hagin the emphasis is consequently placed upon spiritual authority or power as believers "retake" the world for God. There seems to be no concept of depravity or existing sinfulness in lives of believers. Adam was created "in God's class"; he was made in the "likeness" of God and, "consequently, had a free will."⁵⁵ Those who accept Christ experience a similar ability to experience freedom and "dominion": "Jesus has provided His body of believers with the power and authority to overcome Satan in this world."⁵⁶

An equally strange theme in Copeland (also present in Hagin) is the concept that God Himself has to exercise "faith" in order to accomplish His purpose:

Man was created from the faith-filled words of God-- words of power, dominion, and life. Those words came from the very insides of God where the dominion and authority lies; so all of the power that it took to have dominion over the earth was a part of man from the very beginning. Man was made out of that power.⁵⁷

Because such power is available, all who are in Christ Jesus can "live like Him, talk like Him, and act like Him."⁵⁸

Again, the problem with this view seems to be the necessity of seeking an additional spiritual "stage" before

⁵⁵ Kenneth Copeland, The Power of the Tongue (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1980), 5.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 12.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁸ Kenneth Copeland, Now Are We In Christ Jesus (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1980), 7.

Christianity can be truly realized. The mere realization of one's faith is not enough. Instead, the Christian needs to "have a full understanding of what righteousness is and what it means. . ."⁵⁹ The implied spiritual norm seems so high that few could really be successful.

Oral Roberts elaborates in detail his view of the nature of humanity and the consequent means for its redemption. Adam is viewed as the "organic representative" of humanity.⁶⁰ The critical ingredient in Roberts' system is the manner in which humans were created in the image of God:

We are made in the image of God as we've already studied in the book of Genesis. We were made a spirit. After God created the human body out of the earth, He breathed the spirit into this piece of clay and man became. . . MAN BECAME. He became a living being . . . he became a living soul . . . he became a total personality.⁶¹

Humanity was first created in God's "own image," that is, "His spiritual and moral likeness," which gave Adam the "stamp of His own being and personality."⁶² The meaning of this image lay in the fact that Adam was truly a "whole man"; unfortunately, he lost his "wholeness" through disobedience and consequently "became a divided, fragmented,

⁵⁹ Ibid., 17-18.

⁶⁰ Holy Bible With Personal Commentary by Oral Roberts. King James Version (Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts Evangelistic Association, 1981), 6.

⁶¹ Oral Roberts, The Holy Spirit in the Now II (Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts University, 1974), 71.

⁶² Oral Roberts, The Holy Spirit in the Now I (Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts University, 1974), 15.

miserable, unhappy human being."⁶³ "Since then man has been unwhole."⁶⁴

Generally, the elements of the image are listed as: (1) power of communication, (2) power of togetherness, (3) an endowment of personal power, and (4) the power of choice.⁶⁵ More specifically, however, the primary element of the image is defined as "spirit."

We believe that man originated as a spirit and was placed inside a body composed of the chemicals of the dust of the ground. Then because the spirit was put into him by God, who is Spirit, man BECAME a living soul. . . a spiritual being.⁶⁶

The exact constitution of this being was trinitarian, just as God is trinitarian:

God made man a trinity. Genesis 2:7 tells us, 'And the Lord God formed Adam out of the soil of the earth (physical), and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (spiritual); and man became a living being (soul).' Man is body, soul and spirit.⁶⁷

Hebrews 4:12 is utilized as a proof text for this position in what seems to be a Gnostic type of hermeneutic:

It may be extremely difficult for the best of theologians to explain the difference between soul and spirit, but there is a difference, and the Word of God is able to divide the two, one from the other. The body is of

⁶³ Ibid., 35.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Oral Roberts, The Holy Spirit in the Now III (Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts University, 1975), 17-18.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 40.

⁶⁷ George M. Lamsa, The Holy Bible Translated from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts, ed. Oral Roberts, (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Co., 1961), 13.

the earth, the coarsest of the trinity of which man consists. The soul is the result of the inbreathing of the Spirit of God. Thus, the spirit of man is the farthest removed from the material and is the finest of the trinity.⁶⁸

This theme of the "spirit" of humanity provides the cornerstone for Roberts' theological system. At the Fall, the truly spiritual element was replaced by the "ascendancy" of the mind.⁶⁹ In commenting on John 7.35-39 Roberts states:

[Jesus is] talking about the image and likeness of God in you. He's talking about that spiritual part of you that died back there at the time of Adam and Eve.⁷⁰

The punishment of Adam in the Fall specifically was loss of the ascendancy of his "spirit" over his intellect. The "mind" assumed control and "from that day to this man has lived as if he never had a soul, as if he were not created by God."⁷¹ The proper understanding of salvation or the new birth is the restoration of this missing ingredient.

Q: What is the purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

A: The Bible says that God made man in His image. That is, we are made in the spiritual and moral likeness of God. God is not speaking of a physical shape. He was talking about His spiritual and moral likeness.

That is why we have to be born again by the Holy Spirit. God is trying to restore His moral and spiritual likeness, His truth, His life, His values, to us inside.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Oral Roberts, Holy Spirit in the Now I, 75.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

Q: Does this mean than that our spirit inside will be remade in the image of God?

A: Without a doubt. This happens when God saves us. We are made a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). This is the work of the Holy Spirit.⁷²

In a manner seemingly parallel to Hagin, Copeland, and Paulk, Roberts views salvation as an inward ontological change, or an infusion of righteousness, as opposed to imputation. In commenting on Acts 2:38 He makes perhaps his clearest statement concerning what actually happens in salvation:

This means that when a man repents of his sins and believes on Jesus, out of his belly, his innermost being, the Holy Spirit will start flooding up like a river. . . . In that moment the Holy Spirit is trying to re-integrate the total personality of man. In that moment He's going all the way back to Eden when God created man a spirit, and the spirit was supreme; the spirit was dominant; it had the ascendancy over the mind. Once again the spirit of man comes to the forefront and the mind and the body are governed by the spirit. MAN, FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT,⁷³ BECOMES A RE-INTEGRATED PERSONALITY AS GOD MADE HIM.⁷³

The result of this experience is that "abundant life" becomes possible for all believers. Since God made man in His image, "perfect as He is perfect," our discovery of ourselves as God intended us to be means that "abundance of life in every sense of the word" is available for all believers without exception.⁷⁴

⁷²Ibid., 55.

⁷³Ibid., 76.

⁷⁴Lamsa, The Holy Bible Translated from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts, 3.

This ideal of restored inward and outward harmony and balance through Christ is the foundation upon which Oral Roberts University is established. Students are reminded that they are "spiritual beings." "You can only be fully human when your mental and physical powers are in harmony with your spirit."⁷⁵ The very purposes for which Oral Roberts established the university was not only for knowledge and healing, but also,

. . . to seek the wisdom of God to balance that knowledge and help bring back the learning process begun in original man in Eden where the spirit was dominant over mind and body, yet in a clear unity with God, with self, with mankind, with earth and heaven.⁷⁶

In keeping with this theme the school emblem bears the figure of a triangle with the theme "Educating The Whole Man." Each side of the triangle is labeled, respectively, "Body," "Mind," and "Spirit." This emphasis upon "wholeness" or harmony explains the schools considerable emphasis upon aerobics and physical conditioning, as well as the outward appearance of its students.

The Nature of Sin

Even a casual survey of the above positions indicates that Pentecostal/Charismatic understandings of human nature can appear to be very Biblical. It is interesting, for example, that the continuing emphasis on defining the

⁷⁵Oral Roberts, The Code of Honor (Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts University, 1984), 5.

⁷⁶Ibid., 6.

image of God in a functional manner is very close if not identical to Reformed concepts of the "broader" image of God.⁷⁷ A transition can easily be made from such functional views to a mystical "spark" which serves as the basis of religious experience. The problem is that any attempt to portray unregenerate humanity as possessing some type of spiritual ability eventually has a distorting effect upon soteriology. Wesley's prevenient grace, for example, may be harshly criticized by the Reformed tradition, but the latter have their own problems in presenting an anthropology which may be too hospitable to the unregenerate. It is no accident, for example, that the optimism of an Earl P. Paulk sounds very similar to the proclamation of Christian reconstructionism voiced by Rousas J. Rushdoony and Gary North.

One way of testing any anthropology is through its understanding of the nature of sin. It is here that the true structure of any view of human nature can be determined. Even though terminology and proof-texting can be confusing, any faulty view of human nature will provide an equally faulty definition of sin. The result will be an understanding of grace in terms of merit. It is here that Pentecostal/Charismatic constructs seem to oppose the

⁷⁷For example as presented by Dutch Reformed theologian G. C. Berkouwer, Man: The Image of God (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962).

Reformation emphasis of justification by grace through faith.

Classical Pentecostal Views of Sin

Church of God scholar Donald N. Bowdle reflects perhaps the most conservative understanding of human sinfulness when he asserts, "The whole range of man's faculties was affected by the fall, necessitating urgent and radical redemption."⁷⁸ Consequences of the Fall are physical death, the curse upon the earth, and spiritual death.⁷⁹ Human sinfulness is defined in an inclusive manner:

Depravity, from the negative standpoint, is man's want of original righteousness and holy affections toward God; positively, it is the corruption of his moral nature and bias toward evil.⁸⁰

The extent of this corruption in human character is further defined by an exact quote from the Westminster Confession:

The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in, the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.⁸¹

The historical significance of Adam is strongly emphasized by portraying him as the federal representative of the human race so that as his sin becomes "the judicial ground

⁷⁸ Bowdle, Redemption, 30.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 42-43.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 43.

⁸¹ Ibid., 47.

of [our] condemnation, so also does Christ become the judicial ground of [our] justification.⁸² The state of humanity after the Fall is understood in a distinctly Reformed manner. Although the image of God has been "desperately marred, it has not "been effaced," and "that is what renders [humanity] redeemable."⁸³ James L. Slay also endorses human inability, stressing that "Man by nature is a depraved creature;. . . prone to sin."⁸⁴ This understanding of depravity, however, is distinctly Wesleyan in that those who reach "the age of accountability" become responsible for their sins.⁸⁵ Philemon Roberts likewise sees a universal effect of sin upon humanity; sin is viewed as bringing "death, both physical and spiritual" upon all creation.⁸⁶ In addition, sin remains as an "original nature" in believing Christians.⁸⁷ The Pentecostal distinctive is then offered as a remedy for such inbred sin:

One aspect of entire sanctification subsequent to regeneration is the eradication of this original sin.

⁸² Ibid., 45.

⁸³ Ibid., 47-48.

⁸⁴ James L. Slay, This We Believe (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1963), 62.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 62.

⁸⁶ Philemon Roberts, God's Will for God's People: A Treatise on Sanctification (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1958), 31-32.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 36.

It is the cleansing from all defilement of the flesh in order that love may reign supreme.⁸⁸

David Bishop states that Adam was created as "a free moral agent," but lost his standing through sin:

His sin resulted in spiritual death. His moral likeness to God was lost. His original righteousness was no more. Turning toward self rather than toward God, his intellect and affections became depraved, and his fellowship with God was severed. Because of the unity of the race in Adam and the organic unity of mankind, Adam's sin was imputed to all members and succeeding generations of the human family."⁸⁹

Within this distinctly Wesleyan framework the inherent sinfulness of humanity is admitted, but with the proviso that "Entire sanctification becomes the cleansing from every particle of this inherent nature of depravity that has clung to man."⁹⁰

Assemblies of God scholars also see humanity as drastically affected by sin through Adam, suffering sin in all its results.⁹¹ Sin is recognized as the "the violation of any rule of duty," as well as "in inherent corruption of nature."⁹² The Pentecostal Holiness Church also sees sin as

⁸⁸Ibid., 37.

⁸⁹David S. Bishop, "Our Heritage of Faith in the Redemptive Work of Jesus Christ," in Centennial Heritage Papers, 1986. Sixty-First General Assembly of the Church of God, R. Hollis Gause and Steven J. Land, eds. (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1989), 51.

⁹⁰Philemon Roberts, God's Plan, 40.

⁹¹Riggs, We Believe, 96.

⁹²Williams, Systematic Theology, 2:134,136.

something transmitted to all of Adam's descendants.⁹³ The official Manual of the group, however, simply does not discuss Creation, Original Sin, or the Imago Dei. In a typical Wesleyan fashion, it is theorized that not only does everyone have an inherent capacity to know God, but that "God has amply provided the grace and blessing that can and will abundantly satisfy this capacity in man."⁹⁴

Within Classical Pentecostalism as a whole there seems to be an insistence on an anthropology which sounds in many ways orthodox, yet at the same time insists on some type of spiritual ability also being resident in humanity. The practical effect seems to be that although sin is understood theoretically as Adamic corruption, in practice it is associated with individual acts. True awareness of the Adamic nature also seems to be hindered by appeal to the Holy Ghost as a principle by which even the vestiges of sin may be eradicated. Although all Pentecostals do not believe this, they have yet to clarify their position regarding the exact relationship of the believer to his/her sinful nature.

Independent Charismatic Views of Sin

Within the Independent Charismatic world there is an even greater emphasis on sin as something that can be totally overcome by believers. Earl P. Paulk states that

⁹³Beacham, Catechism, 6.

⁹⁴J. A. Synan, The Christian Life in Depth, 19.

we regain the confidence and innocence lost in the Garden by being "clothed in His righteousness."⁹⁵ To the Christian "True life means overcoming sin in the world through faith"; this is accomplished by "setting up a kingdom by which God can judge the world."⁹⁶ According to Paulk's "Kingdom Now" theology, the fact that humanity was created with the potential for God-likeness means that "God wants to establish and unfold the mysteries of the Kingdom today."⁹⁷ The struggle with sin in the human constitution is understood in what seems to be an allegorical manner:

The battle between good and evil was possible because of the soulish area of man. The soul of man (his wisdom, reason, and decision-making process) was called the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This is the area in man where Satan still has his greatest victories. This area is the tree of understanding, the tree of knowledge, the tree where our minds become gods and we are controlled by what we think is right and wrong. People become gods unto themselves.⁹⁸

Kenneth Hagin does not discuss the subject of inward sin extensively, but his extreme emphasis upon the authority of the believer leaves little doubt that sin can be expelled in the life that will claim the promises of faith:

. . . I have authority over him [the devil] because I have authority over my own life. I can tell him to

⁹⁵Paulk, Held in the Heavens, 63.

⁹⁶Ibid., 118.

⁹⁷Paulk, Satan Unmasked, 96.

⁹⁸Ibid., 150.

leave my house immediately. I also can control situations as long as people are in my presence.⁹⁹

Charles Capps also emphasizes the possibility of complete victory over sin in this life. After Adam fell Christ came to give Adam's power back to us.¹⁰⁰ Capps' reasoning is also based on the analogy of God's image in us:

Man was created in the image of God and His likeness. There was creative power that flowed out of the mouth of God and you were created in the image of God. Then according to the Scriptures and what Jesus said, you have the same ability dwelling or residing on the inside of you.¹⁰¹

Capps' message to the one who has been truly born again is that, "The Word of God implanted into your spirit caused you to become a new creation that never existed before, born again of the Spirit of the living God."¹⁰²

Kenneth Copeland deals with the problem of sin through a simple parallel he finds in 2 Corinthians 5:21: "God made Jesus, who knew no sin, to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. As believers in Jesus Christ, we are the righteousness of God Himself!"¹⁰³ Obviously there is little room in such a life for sin of any type. Deuteronomy 28:1-14 is also utilized to

⁹⁹Kenneth E. Hagin, The Believer's Authority (Tulsa, OK: RHEMA Bible Church, 1984), 60-61.

¹⁰⁰Charles Capps, The Tongue: A Creative Force (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1976), 14.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 17.

¹⁰²Ibid., 18.

¹⁰³Copeland, The Force, 5.

establish that as long as believers are obedient to God they will not be harmed.¹⁰⁴ Thus sin, if present, is so severely limited as to be almost nonexistent. A tremendous difference is also presupposed between believers in the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament the "power of sin was operating throughout," as exemplified in Noah's drunkenness.¹⁰⁵ Old Testament saints were distinctly inferior to New Testament believers because "spiritual death was lodged in their hearts."¹⁰⁶ Believers who have come to Christ on New Testament terms are told that, "the power of eternal life enveloped your spirit and a new man was born inside you."¹⁰⁷ Believers can therefore act upon the promises of God "the same way Jesus did."¹⁰⁸ Again, sin, even if formally admitted, becomes so negligible that it becomes an embarrassment even to admit its presence!

Oral Roberts appeals for victory over sin through the "spiritual element" which is made new in Christ. Because we are "spiritual beings" all of our problems "are spiritually based."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴Copeland, Our Covenant, 20.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 35.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 36.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 38.

¹⁰⁹Oral Roberts, Holy Bible With Personal Commentary, 75.

From the moment of creation God showed that man's spirit--not his mind or his body--is to be the governing power of his life on earth. Man's spirit is to have supremacy over the mind and body and bring them together into a unified, harmonized whole man in which God would live "in" the person.¹¹⁰

Within this context "sin" becomes occasional, a willful act committed when we know better.¹¹¹ In commenting upon John 9:34-91 Roberts states:

Jesus made a powerful theological explanation of sin here. He is saying, When you do wrong and you do not know it is wrong, it is a mistake, but when you do wrong and you know it is wrong it is sin.¹¹²

Sin is clearly defined in Arminian terms with little if any emphasis upon any "sin principle" remaining in lives of believers.

All of the above demonstrate the common theme of so emphasizing the ontological life in Christ that sin becomes almost non-existent. Classical Pentecostals tend to be more formally Biblical, but offer no constructs or practical applications on how to connect their more conservative view of human sinfulness with their typically Wesleyan soteriology. Sin seems to be recognized in name or theory only, without frankly dealing with it in everyday life.

¹¹⁰Oral Roberts, Three Most Important Steps to Your Better Health and Miracle Living (Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts University, 1976, Revised, 1981), 76.

¹¹¹Oral Roberts, The New Testament Comes Alive: A Personal New Testament Commentary, vol.1, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts, 1984), 54-55.

¹¹²Ibid., 434.

The Independent Charismatics display what seems almost to be contempt for anyone even admitting the existence of sin. Whether as a formal principle or an outward act, those who have true "spiritual authority" are expected to rise above sin and have lives unaffected by the mundane failures of this world. The inevitable result of both of these constructs would seem to be a life under the law which could, and would, end in the very opposite extreme from the victory over sin so ardently sought.

CHAPTER VII

MYSTICISM REFLECTED IN THE PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC UNDERSTANDING OF SALVATION

The classic mystic path to spiritual perfection, known as the Scala Perfectionis, consists of three stages: the purgative life, the illuminative life, and the unitive or contemplative life.¹ A similar pattern seems evident in Pentecostal and Charismatic definitions of religious experience as a process in which the new birth serves as only a beginning leading to a higher stage of spiritual perfection which will hopefully qualify the believer for his/her heavenly reward. This concept of a "stage" or graded spirituality seems common to all Pentecostals and Charismatics. At the same time, both groups strongly feel that they are adhering to the truths of the Protestant Reformation. They display no awareness of the tensions between experience-centered and Word-centered constructs. The critical question is whether seemingly "orthodox" terms are being used in conjunction with an essentially different religious experience. It is the purpose of this chapter to

¹Michael Cox, Handbook of Christian Spirituality (New York: Harper and Row, 1983), 28.

examine the content of Pentecostal/Charismatic religious experience.

The Ordo Salutis

Classical Pentecostals

Classical Pentecostal scholars define the Order of Salvation in terms reflective of the Calvinistic side of the Reformation. Donald Bowdle observes that:

While the Bible does not explicitly furnish a complete order of salvation, it does offer us a sufficient basis for such an order. (The closest approximation to an ordo salutis in the Scriptures is Paul's statement in Romans 8:29,30: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.") That basis is construed from the very full and rich enumeration of the operations of the Holy Spirit in applying the work of Christ to individual sinners and of the blessings of salvation imparted to them, and the constant indications of the relationships in which different ministries of the Holy Spirit in the work of redemption stand to each other.²

He then proceeds to enumerate the "essential elements in an evangelical rationale": "That order in the economy of redemption preferred here is: foreknowledge, predestination, effectual calling, repentance, justification, regeneration, union with Christ and adoption, sanctification, and glorification."³ The emphasis here seems clearly Calvinistic in

²Donald Bowdle, Redemption Accomplished and Applied (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1972), 60.

³Ibid., 60-61.

stressing the priority of Divine Decrees as opposed to faith or justification:

The plan of God, of which the ordo salutis is the subjective expression, is an eternal plan. Like the decrees to create and to permit the fall, God's decrees to provide salvation and mediate that salvation to all who believe are inscrutably immense in their magnitude. By design, that plan extends into eternity past to the counsel of God Himself; by application, it projects into eternity future, as the redeemed soul persists in conscious and cognitive activity.⁴

Guy Duffield and Nathaniel Van Cleave adopt a similar approach, discussing the "application of the provisions of the Atonement" under the sequential topics of Election, Repentance, Faith, Justification, Regeneration, Adoption, Sanctification, and Assurance, culminating in the Security of the Believer.⁵ The Pentecostal "distinctive" of Holy Spirit Baptism is added as a later chapter.

Independent Charismatics

Leading Charismatic preachers and writers do not offer any formal construct of the order of salvation, at least in those terms. Experience seems to be the universal ingredient with discussions of justification or sanctification always subordinate to spiritual events. There is some discussion of the subject among Charismatic thinkers such as J. Rodman Williams, a professor at Regent (formerly C.B.N.)

⁴Ibid., 61.

⁵Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, Foundations of Pentecostal Theology (Los Angeles, CA: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1983), 206-60.

University. Representing the broader Charismatic perspective, Williams discusses salvation under the respective rubrics of Calling, Regeneration, Justification, Sanctification, and Perseverance.⁶ It should be noted, however, that Williams is a Presbyterian who became a Charismatic. He naturally carries the influence of his tradition with him. It seems clear that both Classical Pentecostal authors and the more conservative Charismatic approach of Williams attempt to project a classically Calvinistic view of the Order of Salvation.

The Beginning of Salvation: Justification

Classical Pentecostals

Church of God

Common definitions of justification seem to pattern themselves after Reformation understandings. The specific "type" of understanding, however, seems more Calvinistic than Lutheran. Although the term "justification by faith" is common, there is never any mention of "justification by grace through faith. Bowdle, for example, observes that although the concept of "justification by faith" was present in the earliest fathers, ". . . the doctrine did not find its explicit expression until the Reformation."⁷

⁶J. Rodman Williams, Renewal Theology, vol.2, Salvation, the Holy Spirit, and Christian Living (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Academie Books, 1990), passim.

⁷Bowdle, Redemption, 75.

The Reformers rejected any teaching of a progressive justification, contending, unlike the terms of their Roman Catholic antecedents, that it was instantaneous and complete, depending upon no further satisfaction for sin.

Ray H. Hughes discusses justification in similar terms:

The one cardinal principle of the Reformation which stands out above all others is the doctrine of justification by faith. Very simply the reformers came to the scriptural conclusion that salvation is not by works but by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Good works cannot save a man, but the faith that responds to grace produces good works. One is brought into a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ as Saviour.⁹

James L. Slay appeals to basic language sources for a definition of justification which sounds extremely orthodox:

Scriptural righteousness or justification is not due to subjective goodness, nor is it according to usage or custom. A justified person stands in the proper relation to God not because he is good, not because he is worthy. He stands justified, or properly related to God, because to him has been imputed Christ's righteousness. The attitude of God toward the believing man has been changed. Where God did condemn, He now acquits; where He did repel, He now admits to favor.¹⁰

Slay proceeds to define the relation of justification to works in what seems to be exemplary terminology:

It is not the character nor conduct of the believer that bestows this positional favor. The procuring cause of our justification is Christ. Through His obedience and righteousness, we are accorded the blessings of justification (John 20:21; First Corinthians 3:21-23).¹¹

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ray H. Hughes, Church of God Distinctives (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1968), 23.

¹⁰James L. Slay, This We Believe (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1963), 60.

¹¹Ibid., 60-61.

Pentecostal Holiness Church

The Discipline of the Pentecostal Holiness Church (1937) specifically states as part of its "Basis of Union," that, "We believe, teach and firmly maintain the Scriptural doctrine of justification by faith alone. (Romans 5:1)."¹² The content of this statement, just as in the Church of God, seems to reflect a common Reformation tradition as witnessed in the following catechism statements:

Q. What is justification?

A. An act of God's grace by which He pardons the guilty sinner, and accepts him as righteous. It differs from regeneration in that it does not involve a moral change in the person.

Q. What is the ground of justification?

A. The redemption of Jesus Christ made possible by His death on the cross as the sinner's substitute.

Q. What is the condition of justification?

A. On the basis of Christ's redemptive work God offers the penitent sinner the perfect righteousness of Christ; and as he by faith appropriates that righteousness God imputes it to him for his justification.

Q. Is not justification by faith and works?

A. No, we are justified by faith alone in the sight of God; but our good works show to those about us that we have been justified.¹³

¹²Discipline of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, 1937 (Franklin Springs, GA: Publishing House of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, n.d.), 11.

¹³Paul F. Beacham, Advanced Catechism (Franklin Springs, GA: Publishing House of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, n.d.), 14.

Assemblies of God

The Assemblies of God likewise stresses the forensic nature of justification. Ernest W. Williams appeals to the original meaning of the term:

The word "dkaioo" means in general "to declare a person to be just;" that one's moral character is in conformity with the law; to declare that the demands of the law as a condition of life are fully satisfied with regard to a person. . . Justification includes acquittal, freedom from punishment, restoration of divine favor.¹⁴

Williams further quotes the Scofield Reference Bible in asserting that "Christ, on the sinner's behalf, establishes the law by enduring its penalty, death."¹⁵ Assemblies of God statements also stress the forensic and declarative nature of the act:

Q. What does justification mean?

A. Justification means that God declares one to be free from guilt ("just as if" he had not sinned) and declares him to be righteous in His sight.¹⁶

Salvation is defined as "obtained by grace and not by works," and believers are reminded that, "We are not able to save ourselves by our own good works, as is so clearly taught in this [Romans 5:1] and other writings of Paul. It

¹⁴Ernest W. Williams, Systematic Theology (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1953), 2:245.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ralph M. Riggs, We Believe (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1954), 53.

is wholly of grace."¹⁷ Calvin is also quoted at length in asserting justification as an act of acceptance in which the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us: "Calvin's emphasis that salvation is entirely through Christ, with nothing in man to merit the same, is the teaching of Scripture."¹⁸ At the same time, however, strong hesitation is expressed concerning the "once-for-all" nature of justification:

A questionable belief concerning justification is that 'Justification takes place once for all and applies to all sins, past, present, and future, and thus involves the removal of all guilt and of every penalty.' We believe justification applies to all sins in the past, but to make it include also all sins of the future without regard to character, or willingness to walk with God, seems like broadening the scope of justification too far. If all are to be judged for their works, and their works prove to be evil, it is questionable that the justification of such will stand. . . .¹⁹

Duffield and Van Cleave also add to the Classical Pentecostal position by espousing justification in terms consistent with the Reformation. Justification is "being declared righteous in the eyes of God."²⁰ It is "that act of God whereby He declares righteous him who believes on Christ."²¹ The understanding of the righteousness of God as being imputed rather than imparted seems clear:

¹⁷P. C. Nelson, Bible Doctrines (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1971), 48-49.

¹⁸Williams, Systematic Theology, 2:247.

¹⁹Ibid., 245-46.

²⁰Duffield and Van Cleave, Foundations, 220.

²¹Ibid.

To impute means to put to the account of. Justification by faith does not impart Christ's Righteousness to the sinner nor infuse him with it so that it becomes part of his inner nature. . . . Justification reckons to the sinner the Righteousness of Christ, so that God sees him through the perfect Righteousness of His Son.²²

Independent Charismatics

As one begins to progress toward the more Charismatic spectrum, J. Rodman Williams also maintains a conservative view. Justification "does not mean to make righteous or just but, . . . to declare or pronounce righteous."²³

There is nothing in sinful man that merits God's approbation. Accordingly, it is not the righteous (there are none), but the unrighteous whom God justifies.²⁴

Williams reminds that "There is nothing, absolutely nothing, in us--whether we be the most moral or the most immoral of people--that makes this possible."²⁵ To the contrary,

I should make clear that imputation of the righteousness of Christ is far different from an infusion of righteousness. It would be a serious mistake to assume that we are justified by virtue of God's putting righteousness within us.²⁶

Earl P. Paulk

As one passes into the more extreme Charismatic perspective, however, a considerable change begins to be

²²Ibid., 224.

²³Williams, Renewal Theology, 2:63.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., 64.

²⁶Ibid., 68.

noticed. In examining the writings of Paulk, for example, it is striking that justification by faith is seldom mentioned. If anything, justification is understood in a synergistic manner.

The just shall live by faith. We must learn how to demonstrate God's faith. The return of apostolic ministries will stir faith in God's people. God will begin to work through apostles in miraculous power. The day for confirming ministries 'with signs following' is very near.²⁷

God is presented as "looking for obedience and faith," while Abraham was able to have faith that God would provide because "he lived by the faith principle."²⁸ The rationale of Paulk's view seems to be viewing justification (and salvation as a whole) as part of a "system" or "higher principle" which functions almost as some higher, impersonal "law." Satan was in charge of "world systems," while Jesus came to "establish another system through God's plan of recovery."²⁹

God's new plan is what Jesus meant by seeking "that which was lost." Jesus' confrontations with the devil announced to the enemy, "You are now the god of this world, but I have come with a new system from God Himself. Now we going to see which one of these systems wins."³⁰

²⁷ Earl P. Paulk, To Whom is God Betrothed: Examining the Biblical Basis for the Church's Support of National Israel (Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1985), 70-71.

²⁸ Ibid., 54.

²⁹ Earl Paulk, Held in the Heavens Until . . . God's Strategy for the Planet Earth (Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1985), 35.

³⁰ Ibid.

It is important to understand that Paulk sees his "system" as improving upon the mere claims of a salvation gospel. Part of being "in the system" is to realize that there is another aspect to gospel proclamation:

For the most part, we have heard the gospel about Christ without hearing the gospel of Christ, that is, Jesus Christ's gospel. Both views are necessary for a Kingdom mentality. The gospel about Christ, Christ's identity, and the gospel of Christ, Christ's proclamation, are distinct and diverse.³¹

This view is very similar to Harnack's definition of "two Gospels" in the New Testament. Since Paulk's theological background is that of liberal Methodism, one wonders if he has adapted this theme for his own "Kingdom Now" theology.

According to Paulk's view, the Gospel about Christ deals with His role as "the Messiah, Emmanuel, our Savior."³² The Gospel of Christ, however, "is all about authority to rule."³³ Paulk claims that ". . . the Holy Spirit began to reveal to me that the difference between the gospel about Jesus and the gospel of Jesus has misrepresented the Church's witness to the world."³⁴ Paulk notes that many people have been converted by "verbally confessing" Christ as the Son of God, "but unfortunately, some Christians have never been converted to demonstrating the

³¹Earl Paulk, Thrust in the Sickle and Reap (Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1986), 21.

³²Ibid., 22.

³³Ibid., 33.

³⁴Ibid., 23.

Kingdom which Jesus proclaimed."³⁵ The central idea is that the preaching of Jesus during the forty days following His resurrection constitutes a "gospel" in its own right; further, "it is incumbent upon us to preach that same gospel."³⁶ The actual content of this "gospel" is quite specific:

The "good news," the gospel of the Kingdom, is that Satan no longer has any authority! He lost it when Jesus gave the keys of death, hell and the grave to His Church! The good news is that we can say, "By the power and authority of God, I adjure you, devil! You have no authority in my life!"³⁷

The proclamation of this "kingdom gospel" results in drastic effects in lives of believers:

Did Jesus preach the gospel to the poor to make them content in their poverty? Is it "good news" to tell poor people that they should be satisfied without shelter, clothing and food? A poverty mentality is not the "good news" message of God's church! The good news of the Kingdom is that Jesus Christ is the way out of poverty; He is the Lord of finances. He not only owns the cattle on a thousand hills--He owns the hills as well!³⁸

As one reads Paulk, any concept of justification in the normal, forensic sense begins to break down into a "different gospel." He is critical, for example, of those who overly emphasize "personal salvation." "Concentrating

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., 28.

³⁷ Ibid., 29.

³⁸ Ibid.

on personal salvation causes many churches to forget the Kingdom message."³⁹ Further,

Personal salvation alone, without the Kingdom concept, is not enough. We are saved for a purpose--to change the society in which we live.⁴⁰

While the implications of Paulk's position for eschatology and church mission are to be considered in the latter part of this chapter, it is necessary to clarify what he means by the gospel of the "Kingdom." In his view, the primary mission of church and Christians is to restore the earth to that which was lost in its rebellion against God. It is in this context that the meaning of "faith" is understood:

We must be children of faith. Through Jesus Christ, we return obedience to planet earth. Our obedience to God recovers that which was lost. Whatever was lost through rebellion is restored through the seed of Jesus Christ in His Church. Our obedience restores the earth to the place God intended it to be in the beginning.⁴¹

The importance of Jesus Christ is that He "demonstrated total obedience in the flesh."⁴² Because of this, He has become our "standard," the "firstfruit of the Church."⁴³ Now, "corporately," the Church is to "learn obedience as

³⁹ Earl Paulk, Satan Unmasked (Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1984), 80.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 81.

⁴¹ Paulk, Held in the Heavens, 109-110.

⁴² Ibid., 110.

⁴³ Ibid.

Jesus Christ did."⁴⁴ The emphasis of salvation is thus transferred from what God has accomplished in Christ, to what humanity accomplishes in God. There seem to be distinct parallels between this view of the atonement and the teachings of Abelard or the Socinians.

Paulk is well aware that this constitutes a different approach than that of historical Christianity. "A salvation church," he complains, "is content to snatch souls from hell."⁴⁵ The "Kingdom church," however, not only "snatches people from hell," but also "disciples Christians to subdue the world around them."⁴⁶

The Kingdom concept is that we have the power to change the circumstances where we live. We can take dominion over our circumstances through Jesus Christ. We can begin to claim who we are in this world and take authority over our lifestyles.⁴⁷

Another difference between a "Kingdom" church and "gospel" church is its concept of mission. A "Salvation Church" is primarily interested in evangelism.⁴⁸ Conversely, a "Kingdom Church" seeks to change the total circumstances encountered in society:

The thrust of a Kingdom ministry, however, is to become a witness by addressing people's lifestyles. We can go to other countries and preach that Jesus

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Paulk, Satan Unmasked, 187.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 188.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 189.

Christ will save people from hell, but until we demonstrate power and authority in Jesus Christ we will never change wicked governments. Kingdom people actively attempt to change adverse circumstances.⁴⁹

Some may understand this as a mere expansion of the Gospel to all levels of society. A closer analysis, though, reveals that something subtle is being added to the Gospel message:

The Kingdom of God will never be established by Salvation churches. They have a beautiful place in God's plan. Salvation is the first step toward God. The Kingdom will come, however, when people are challenged in their lifestyles, when they acknowledge spiritual authority, and become obedient to their callings. [underlining mine]⁵⁰

In addition to mere "salvation," a "Kingdom Church" will add such ingredients as "casting out devils, Kingdom preaching and taking authority."⁵¹ The reason such events will be possible is that believers who truly understand will reach a new understanding of "covenant" with God.

Christians with spirits expressing the "image of God" recognize that obedience is God's covenant requirement. We may not even fully understand the reasons for God's commands, but we follow Him willingly. God said to Abraham, "I'm in covenant with you. I want you to give Me your son." . . . Abraham demonstrated the image of God.⁵²

Again,

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 190.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Earl Paulk, That The World May Know (Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1987), 138.

Covenant is established by our willingness to obey God. Spiritual dreams and visions are given by the Holy Spirit to those who are seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.⁵³

The reason, for example, that Kenneth Copeland is so important in the Charismatic world is that,

This man has brought the body of Christ to an understanding of covenant with God and the kind of faith Abraham knew in implementing that covenant.⁵⁴

The message for believers is thus that mere salvation is not enough. In answer to the question, "How do we know that we are the seed of Abraham," Paulk answers, "First, we know because we are in Jesus Christ."⁵⁵ This is followed by an additional step:

Secondly [sic], we must be in covenant with God. Our covenant is reflected in our lifestyles. Salvation and water baptism are the initial covenant, but we must account to God with our entire lives. Seeking first the Kingdom of God with our minds, souls, and energy is covenant.⁵⁶

Although perhaps admirable in its goals, Paulk's understanding of the "Kingdom Church" seems to be righteousness under the Law. In commenting on obedience in spiritual worship, for example, he states, "One person's disobedience will keep others from entering the Kingdom."⁵⁷ God demands total compliance:

⁵³Ibid., 184.

⁵⁴Ibid., 14.

⁵⁵Paulk, Satan Unmasked, 230.

⁵⁶Ibid., 230-31.

⁵⁷Ibid., 29.

God wants us to give our wills, knowledge, and total obedience to Him. We must not allow ourselves to control certain areas of our lives.⁵⁸

Paulk is also aware that he is offering a distinctively different type of church:

For our purposes, I am going to make a distinction between a Salvation Church and a Kingdom Church. Some prefer a Salvation Church. A person always has that option, but with that choice comes a warning from God. This message can make a difference in our eternal understanding of God and our responsiveness to Him.⁵⁹

This is a serious warning that there exists another "type" of Christianity, the neglect of which, in Paulk's opinion, can have eternal consequences.

Kenneth Hagin

Hagin does not offer a detailed treatment of justification, preferring to discuss the general topic of "salvation" as the natural right of every human being.⁶⁰ He does, however, discuss sufficient corollaries of justification to permit a glimpse into his actual thought. First, faith is understood in a manner seemingly contrary to Christian thought. In his writing entitled Having Faith In Your Faith Hagin presents a picture of faith in which it has a power of its own, and even has itself as its object! "In other words, having faith in your words is having faith in

⁵⁸ Ibid., 150.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 187.

⁶⁰ Kenneth E. Hagin, The Believer's Authority (Tulsa, OK: RHEMA Bible Church, 1984), *passim*.

your faith."⁶¹ Mark 11:23 is understood in a fashion which places the primary responsibility for the believer's welfare upon the individual's capability to "believe":

Notice two more things about this 23rd verse: (1) He believes in his heart; (2) he believes in his words. Another way to say this is: He has faith in his own faith.⁶²

Redemption in this context becomes much more than imputation or legal representation; it assumes the character of a personal, inward, struggle in which all who will can become victorious: "This redemption is personal. It is an absolute redemption from the dominion of the devil."⁶³

To understand the thought of Hagin and his peers, it is necessary to survey their concept of the influence of language in its relation to faith. The reason that individuals such as Hagin and Copeland are known as "Word-Faith" teachers, or the "Faith Movement," is because they attribute an ontological dynamic to spoken language. Charles Capps, one of Hagin's primary teachers, states that,

God's Word that is conceived in your heart, then formed by the tongue, and spoken out of your own mouth, becomes a spiritual force releasing the ability of God within you.⁶⁴

⁶¹Kenneth E. Hagin, Having Faith In Your Faith (Tulsa, OK: RHEMA Bible Church, 1980), 4-5.

⁶²Ibid., 4.

⁶³Ibid., 9.

⁶⁴Charles Capps, The Tongue--A Creative Force (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House Publishers, 1976), 7.

According to Capps, "words are the most powerful thing in the universe;" they function as a "spiritual law" just as surely as any natural law.⁶⁵ Through language whatever "image" of God was lost in the Fall is restored ontologically through the exercise of human faith:

The image inside you is produced by words and also released in words. God's Word causes faith to come, then faith-filled words perfect the image. Words release the image and give substance to it. It is a complete cycle.⁶⁶

Since the imago Dei is understood almost solely in terms of God's nature being imparted to our nature, any true Christianity consequently consists of spiritual ability and authority over the opposing forces of the world:

The creative power of God will work for you as you speak it. Your words [are] based upon the authority of God's Word.⁶⁷

The assumption of such "creative power" resident within the believing individual then leads to a drastically different understanding of the "righteousness of God." Whereas Luther's understanding of the term would be passive, that we are justified, or "made" righteous, through faith, the concept advanced by the Word-Faith movement is that of an inner quality, or "essential" righteousness of God, which

⁶⁵ Ibid., 8.

⁶⁶ Charles Capps, God's Image of You (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House Publishers, 1985), 51.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 48.

becomes a part of our nature through the exercise of our faith. Capps proclaims:

We must realize that we're not sinners saved by grace. We have been made the righteousness of God in Christ, and we can be filled with the knowledge of God's will--if we'll study the Word of God.⁶⁸

Those who realize that they are "the righteousness of God (not a poor unworthy sinner)," will lose even the desire to sin!⁶⁹ Capps continues:

". . .I am the righteousness of God in Christ. Not a poor sinner, crawling around in the dust, begging and pleading. . ."⁷⁰

Those who stand aghast at such a view are derided for lacking a full understanding of what the Christian life should be:

Religious people always get disturbed when you even imply that you are righteous. Some churches that call themselves "Full Gospel" will not allow a certain music tape to be played in their services, because one verse says, "I am the righteousness of God in Christ." They don't want anyone singing about being the righteousness of God in Christ. They're still poor old sinners saved by grace.⁷¹

This view of salvation thus completely ignores the imputation of righteousness in justification, choosing instead to visualize an actual impartation of Christ's righteousness which is almost equal to a new creation at regeneration.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 15.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 74.

⁷⁰ Capps, The Tongue, 18.

⁷¹ Capps, God's Image, 35.

Righteousness! RIGHTEOUSNESS! Not unworthy nature, God doesn't have that, He is Righteousness. He said you're partakers of the righteousness of God.⁷²

The very "nature of God" should "dominate" the spirit of those who are born again.⁷³ Those who believe become partakers of His divine nature, "very capable of fellowship with Deity."⁷⁴ Such fellowship is possible because the "new creation" of 2 Corinthians 5:17 has become a "higher creation" which is ontologically different from that which existed previously:

You see, confessing that your are unworthy after being born again is contrary to the Word. You were unworthy, but that old man died with Christ. You are now a new creation in Christ. Anyone in Christ cannot be unworthy.⁷⁵

Kenneth Hagin echoes the philosophy of Capps. Commenting on Ephesians 2:1, John 5:24 and 1 John 3:14, he asserts, ". . . eternal life is the nature of God;" further, "to become a child of God means that we become partakers of the divine nature--eternal life."⁷⁶ This sounds rather positive, but the actual content is far from traditional orthodoxy:

When we receive eternal life, the satanic nature passes out of us. I'm not talking about the flesh

⁷²Capps, The Tongue, 35.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid., 117.

⁷⁵Ibid., 20-21.

⁷⁶Kenneth Hagin, Zoe: The God-Kind of Life (Tulsa, OK: RHEMA Bible Church, 1981), 27.

now. I'm talking about the spirit--the real you--
the man on the inside.⁷⁷

The result of this experience is that "certain changes" are produced in a life "almost at once": ". . . you can see it in a person's habits. You can see it in his speech. It changes conduct, corrects habits and forms new ones."⁷⁸ Christianity is defined as ". . .that divine act which changes a man from the family of Satan to the family of God instantly."⁷⁹ This act, however, "will have an effect on your life, habits, and qualities."⁸⁰ Hagin states his view perhaps in the most accurate manner when he says, "I would say, I've got God's life in me. I got God's power in me."⁸¹

Obviously, not all Christians can display such a life-changing experience. What about the multitudes that do not enjoy such spiritual freedom? The answer is another subtle addition to the doctrine of salvation. Salvation itself is the result of human volition:

Receiving Jesus is an act of the will of man, acting on the Word. You know that you're without a savior, without an approach to God, without eternal life; and you just look up to God and say, "I know that."⁸²

⁷⁷Ibid., 27-28.

⁷⁸Ibid., 9.

⁷⁹Ibid., 26.

⁸⁰Ibid., 10.

⁸¹Ibid., 21.

⁸²Ibid., 29.

Those who would have the "higher" Christian life, though, face an additional decision: ". . . it is not enough just to take Jesus as your Savior. You also must acknowledge His lordship over your life."⁸³ Christians desiring the "higher life" are portrayed as spiritual immigrants who are seeking to become "naturalized citizens" in the kingdom of God:

But before we can do this, we must swear allegiance to the new fatherland, so to speak, and make our absolute, unconditional break with the old fatherland. So we must confess Jesus as Lord; as the new ruler of our heart life as well as our intellectual life.⁸⁴

But this quest is something more than Christian initiation:

One of the difficulties that confronts people is that they wish to have Jesus as Savior, but not as Lord. Many people want Him as their Savior from hell, but they don't want Him as their ruler on earth.⁸⁵

The true reality of the new birth is not mere forgiveness, but rather the restoration of a higher spiritual life:

In the new birth, we are brought into vital union with Jesus Christ. All that most people think they have in the new birth is forgiveness of sins. They don't know about being in union with God.⁸⁶

The authentic Christian life goes far beyond mere justification to an ontological impartation which actually makes us "like" God:

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 40.

Even many in the great body of Full Gospel people do not know that the new birth is a real incarnation. They do not know they are as much sons and daughters of God as Jesus. They only have a hazy concept of what God has done, of what He is to them, and of what they are to God.⁸⁷

The incarnation God has given through the new birth has returned us to the "lost authority we had in the Garden of Eden."⁸⁸ Christians who realize this thus face life with a mandate to conquer and overcome every negative circumstance or situation:

Jesus was first divine, and then He was human. So He was in the flesh a divine-human being. I was first human, and so were you, but I was born of God, and so I became a human-divine being! God is living in us!⁸⁹

Again, the concept of the "righteousness of God" is slightly changed. Romans 5:17, for example, is interpreted in a manner which "complements" justification by faith:

We know a great deal about grace (we've heard that preached) and we've sung 'Amazing Grace.' And thank God for the grace of God. But we've also received "the gift of righteousness."

I don't think the Church as a whole knows what Paul is talking about when he says that. We've heard very little teaching on the subject. It's receiving the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness that enable one to reign.⁹⁰

The result of this "realization" is a life of spiritual victory in which "we can rule over opposition, persecution,

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 55.

tests, trials, circumstances, poverty, sickness, demons, or anything else that would cause us to be a failure."⁹¹

Such figures illustrate the critical importance of adding the two small words "by grace" to the phrase "justification by faith." Paulk, Hagin, Capps, et al. heartily affirm belief in justification, but with concepts of faith, righteousness, and grace which result in a system far different than that intended by Luther (and hopefully by Calvin). Any attempt to add the phrase "by grace" to their systems would seem to create an unresolvable conflict.

Kenneth Copeland

Copeland likewise stresses the reality of the New Birth as an ontological change to a higher spiritual sphere. In commenting on 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 he states:

Being in Christ Jesus makes you a new creature, or a new creation. The literal Greek text says a new species of being which never existed before. When you become a new creature, your spirit is completely recreated. Old things are passed away, all things become new, and all things are of God. You need to realize that you are not a spiritual schizophrenic--half-God and half-Satan--you are all-God. The problem area is not in your spirit; it lies in your mind and body. It is every believer's responsibility to take God's Word and renew his⁹² mind; then he can use that Word to control his body.

Again, this "ontological understanding" of the righteousness of Christ constitutes a slight addition to ordinary Christian salvation as per Copeland's analysis of

⁹¹ Ibid., 62.

⁹² Kenneth Copeland, Now Are We In Christ Jesus (Ft. Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1980), 16-17.

Ephesians 4:20-24:

Just knowing that you have been made the righteousness of God in Christ is not enough. You need to have a full understanding of what righteousness is and what it means to you as an individual believer.⁹³

The important factor in these Charismatic positions seems to be a trichotomic anthropology which draws a direct correlation between the Image of God in humanity and the category of "spirit" in each human being. Salvation thus becomes a "recreation" of that part of humanity which expressed an original Edenic spiritual unity with God.

Oral Roberts

Roberts, although in many ways more conservative than his peers, nevertheless shows this same understanding of salvation. He recounts how from 1947 to 1948 he conducted huge evangelistic crusades throughout America and the continents. "In every service," Roberts states, "in every sermon, in every healing line I would always say, 'God's greatest miracle is the saving of your soul.'"⁹⁴ But now, Roberts notes, there has been a change:

But I go a step further now. I talk about a whole man being saved--spirit, mind, and body. This is top priority for me, for you, for everyone. I call it whole-man healing, whole-man salvation. Or simply becoming a full human being again as God intended when

⁹³ Ibid., 17-18.

⁹⁴ Oral Roberts, Three Most Important Steps to Your Better Health and Miracle Living (Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts University, 1976; Rev. 1981), 64.

He made man in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26).⁹⁵

According to Roberts, disease should be understood as "disease," "something out of order in the system."⁹⁶ Salvation thus becomes a matter of restoring the lost harmony:

And the only way to begin your journey to making you whole is to begin in your spirit--which God created in His spiritual and moral likeness. This likeness or image is God's essence, the essence of His own being. To be born of God in your spirit today is a restoration of God's own essence or nature to yourself. You take on this spiritual reality in your being. Through it you can learn to respond to every situation you face by using your spirit--your inner self--then let this response flow up through your mind and body until your response is the whole-person response. You can face dis-ease or dis-harmony as God made you to respond--from your spirit, which is God's own way of doing it.⁹⁷

Roberts theorizes that because "we are spiritual beings all our problems are spiritually based."⁹⁸ The solution to such problems lies in the attainment of a higher spiritual state:

So to get an answer for your problems, you've got to get back into the spirit--God's Spirit and your spirit--the way you were made--and the way God remakes you when you repent of your sins and believe on Jesus as your personal Savior and then experience His Holy Spirit working in your life every day.⁹⁹

In all of the above systems salvation is incomplete without "something else;" and that "something else" seems very similar to the "theosis" concept of Eastern mystical

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 69.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 73.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 75.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 76-77.

Christianity. Although not one of the above figures would deny either the sinfulness of humanity or the total necessity of the grace of God in salvation, a confusion still seems to exist in at least two areas. First, there is a confusion of regeneration with justification, resulting in an identification of the new birth with forgiveness of sins. The result is a mingling of Law and Gospel which makes the Biblical doctrine of justification by grace through faith very difficult to understand. Second, there is a very obvious "theology of glory" in which classic themes of the Cross and human suffering have no place.

The Continuance of Salvation: The Law and the Gospel

The continuance of the Christian life in Classical Pentecostal tradition is commonly discussed under the rubrics of "sanctification" followed by "baptism in/of the Holy Spirit." Independent Charismatics do not seem to use the terminology of "sanctification" to any great extent. Charismatics do, however, seem to be as concerned about the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" as Classical Pentecostals. The primary concern in surveying both groups is to determine whether doctrines of holiness and/or Spirit-baptism constitute an implicit denial of salvation by grace through faith. As always, the terminology can be misleading in that all parties may ardently claim loyalty to Reformation doctrines. The issue, however, is whether, just as in the theology of Wesley, it is possible to perhaps begin with grace, but end

in works. The critical question is whether Pentecostal and Charismatic doctrines of Christian spirituality are in reality law rather than gospel--and consequently whether they are truly saving in their application.

Since Classical Pentecostals treat the doctrines of sanctification and Spirit-baptism in a manner which allows separate analysis, the Classical understanding of both sanctification and baptism in/of the Spirit will be considered first. Then Independent Charismatic views will be treated. Although, as stated, Charismatics do not treat these topics separately, it still is possible to glean something of their concept of the Christian life from the logical implications of their writings.

Sanctification in Classical Pentecostalism

Church of God

In the Church of God materials especially a tension begins to develop between concepts of justification and sanctification. Relative to the latter, the denomination clearly associates itself with a "second definite work" motif: "Sanctification is a second definite work of grace in the plan of salvation. It occurs after a person has been justified by Christ and born again of His spirit."¹⁰⁰ Whereas justification deals with "acts" of sin; sanctifica-

¹⁰⁰Douglas Leroy, I Didn't Know That! (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1973), 35.

tion deals with the "sin nature we inherited."¹⁰¹ The end result seems to be total eradication of sinful human nature:

In justification the "old man" is repressed; in sanctification the "old man" is destroyed. Justification destroys the "shoots" of sin; sanctification destroys the "roots" of sin. Justification includes pardon, which is a judicial act. Sanctification includes a cleansing, which is a priestly function.¹⁰²

A constituent of such eradication is the enabling of the believer to live according to the commands of Christ:

Thus, sanctification produces in man the desire and the ability to replace sin with virtue. "Instead of lying, there is to be truth. Instead of stealing, there is to be work and generosity. Evil talk is to be replaced by that which is edifying; while bitterness, wrath, and anger are to be removed in favor of kindness and forgiveness one to another." As Paul said, we are to put off the old man and to put on the new man.¹⁰³

The earliest beginning of the Church of God is associated with an 1896 Holiness revival in which three men became "much enthused religiously," and went into Cherokee County, North Carolina, and began a meeting at the Schearer school house.¹⁰⁴ "They preached a clean gospel, and urged the people to seek and obtain sanctification subsequent to justification."¹⁰⁵ As a result of this meeting, "quite a

¹⁰¹Ibid., 32-33.

¹⁰²Ibid., 32.

¹⁰³Ibid., 33.

¹⁰⁴Book of Minutes: A Complete History of the Work of the General Assemblies of The Church of God, vol.1 (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1922), 10.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

large number professed salvation and sanctification through the blood of Christ."¹⁰⁶

This emphasis on sanctification as a second definite work would naturally fit in a threefold salvation order with the pentecostal experience completing the process. Such a definite threefold order was indicated early in Church of God history:

Q. Should we, as the Church of God, allow our ministers to teach that a person is not born of God until he is sanctified?

A. . . . The all important thing is to get souls saved, sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost, and somewhere they will be born again. We can all agree on conversion, and sanctification as a definite work of grace, and speaking in tongues as the evidence of being baptized with the Holy Ghost.¹⁰⁷

Neither can there be any doubt that the Church of God strongly endorsed the holiness concept of sanctification as a definite experience subsequent to regeneration:

Here is a company of people that have been "born again," they are regenerated and become children of God. They know, too, what it is to have a hand to hand conflict with the "old man" of sin, and to submit their case to "Him without the camp" for final settlement. They remember well how they came off that bloody battlefield all covered with the crimson flow. Well do they remember the first time they were able to say, "I'm sanctified wholly by the blood of the Lamb." This experience was too real--this epoch in life was too vivid--for these brave war-scarred veterans to ever deny it and weaken down and say, "I guess I was mistaken, I-I-I got it all at once."

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ "Eighth Annual Assembly," Churches of God, Cleveland, TN., Jan 7-12, 1913, in Compiled Minutes, 129.

Here is a company of sturdy soldiers, both men and women, that are so thoroughly established in the doctrine of sanctification as a definite and distinct experience subsequent to regeneration that they, like their brothers and sisters of old, would burn at the stake, or be torn by the wild beasts, rather than deny it. . . . And they know they received this wonderful experience after they were converted.¹⁰⁸

A precise definition of the "event" nature of "entire sanctification" is provided by Philemon Roberts: "We mean simply that the second great crisis experience in a man's life that deals specifically with sin is entire sanctification or the removal of the Adamic nature; this is the second blessing."¹⁰⁹ Not all commentators, however, have maintained the same clarity. The official statement of the church's position contains great ambiguity: "We believe in sanctification subsequent to the new birth, through faith in the blood of Christ; through the Word, and by the Holy Ghost."¹¹⁰ The problem is that "subsequent" may apply equally to a progressive understanding as well as the "climatic event" view. The response on the part of some scholars has been to merely affirm both a "positional" and a "practical" facet, without attempting clarification:

Positional sanctification is experienced in the believer's new relationship to Christ subsequent to

¹⁰⁸ General Overseer's Address at the Eleventh Annual Assembly of the Churches of God, Nov. 1-7, 1915, Cleveland, TN in Compiled Minutes, 182-83.

¹⁰⁹ Philemon Roberts, God' Will for God's People (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1958), 67.

¹¹⁰ Hollis R. Gause, Church of God Polity (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1973), 227.

justification and regeneration. . . . Practical sanctification is a pursuit of the devotional life.¹¹¹

The language here seems applicable to sanctification as progressive process, yet only a few pages later the author cautions: "This particular experience wrought by the Holy Spirit must be sought earnestly by the believer."¹¹² But the author then proceeds to define "the practical dimension of sanctification" in terms of process with an exact quote of the Westminster Shorter Catechism:

The practical dimension of sanctification, then, may be defined as "the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness."¹¹³

The same ambiguity appears in other authors. James L. Slay, in This We Believe, an official "Worker's Training Course" for the Church of God, defines sanctification as "separation" in which "the sanctified person is placed in a position of service because of his relationship or connection with God."¹¹⁴ This state is obtained by separating oneself subsequent to regeneration:

. . . sanctification has to do with separation, and this separation is subsequent to, or because of, something else. The sanctified person or thing has been chosen first and then separated. The act of choosing has to do with capability; the fact of sanctification with responsibility. The sanctified person is placed in a

¹¹¹Bowdle, Redemption, 95-96.

¹¹²Ibid., 98.

¹¹³Ibid., 99-100.

¹¹⁴Slay, This We Believe, 64-65.

position of service because of his relationship or connection with God. Therefore, sanctification, or the act of being set apart, is subsequent to regeneration.¹¹⁵

Yet immediately following the author states: "Sanctification begins in regeneration and is the result of faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, through the Word and by the Holy Spirit."¹¹⁶ Again, the issue is left unsettled. Denominational leader and educator Ray H. Hughes in a key volume, Church of God Distinctives, simply does not discuss sanctification but rather emphasizes the "holiness distinctive" in an extended discussion of Pentecostal life styles.¹¹⁷ Final resolution of the question seems to have been left purposely ambiguous by denominational leaders and writers.

Pentecostal Holiness Church

The Pentecostal Holiness Church seems extremely consistent in clearly emphasizing its traditional view of sanctification as a "second definite work" experience: "We believe also that entire sanctification is an instantaneous, definite, second work of grace, obtainable by faith on the part of the fully justified believer (John 15:2; Acts 26:18)."¹¹⁸ Notice here the phrase "fully justified."

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 66.

¹¹⁷Hughes, Distinctives, 115-134.

¹¹⁸Discipline of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, 1937 (Franklin Springs, GA: Publishing House of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, n.d.), 11-12.

Justification seems to be viewed as process in the Roman Catholic sense; there seems to be no concept of imputation or of a "once-for-all" act. The result of "entire sanctification" is the "complete cleansing of the justified believer from all indwelling sin and from its pollution."¹¹⁹

Doctrinal materials of the denomination are even more specific in rejecting any view of "progression" in the sanctification experience:

- Q. Is not sanctification obtained by progress and spiritual growth?
- A. No, sanctification is received by a definite act of appropriating faith in the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ. Every blessing flowing out of the atonement, is received by faith, and not by human effort.
- Q. Are not some people sanctified at the time they are saved?
- A. No, if one should be sanctified at the time of conversion, then reason and Scripture would require that all who are saved are also sanctified. Only a very short period may elapse between the experiences, but they cannot on any ground be made the same.¹²⁰

The emphasis on sanctification is so strong that even the salvation of the believer stands in question:

- Q. What if a justified believer should die without receiving or knowing about sanctification?
- A. Anyone who dies justified and free from the responsibility of personal guilt and sin, is fully prepared for heaven by virtue of the atonement of Christ. On the same ground infants and irresponsible people are saved. The infant has sin in his nature, but not

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Beacham, Catechism, 16.

personal guilt, therefore the blood of Christ avails for him.

Q. What will be the result if a saved person sees the light and does not seek sanctification?

A. Since God wills it and commands His people to be sanctified, such a person would be in great danger of committing the sin of rebellion against God and thereby forfeit his justification.¹²¹

Later denominational materials have softened the harsh tone, but a clear position regarding sanctification as a second definite work is clearly discernable. First, a connection is made between the Atonement and the "complete cleansing" of the individual:

We believe that Jesus Christ shed His blood, not alone for our justification and the forgiveness of actual transgression, but also the "complete cleansing of the justified believer from all indwelling sin and from its pollution," and that this transaction takes place subsequent to (or after) regeneration.¹²²

To insure no misunderstanding the "second definite work" character of the experience is also emphasized:

"Entire sanctification" in the sense of the above cleansing, and in the sense of a complete dedication to God, including a full and unreserved "setting apart" or "consecration" of the life to God, is an instantaneous, definite, second work of grace obtainable by faith on the part of the fully justified believer.¹²³

¹²¹Ibid., 16-17.

¹²²Pentecostal Holiness Church 1981 Manual (Franklin Springs, GA: Advocate Press, 1981), 36.

¹²³Ibid.

Assemblies of God

If the Pentecostal Holiness Church represents the extreme "right" of the sanctification issue, the Assemblies of God would have to be associated with the extreme "left." Historically, the Assemblies has held to a "progressive" view as opposed to the "second definite work" motif. The official "Statement of Fundamental Truths" offers the following definition:

Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God (Romans 12:1,2; I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:12). The Scriptures teach a life of "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). By the power of the Holy Ghost we are able to obey the command: "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15,16).

Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing his identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and by faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:1-11,13; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:12,13; I Peter 1:5).¹²⁴

Just as in the Church of God, attempts are made to mediate between the extremes. Sanctification is said to have a "twofold meaning": separation from evil and devotion to God.¹²⁵ One could even say that, "In one aspect sanctification is an instantaneous work."¹²⁶ Such a definition, however, is closely associated with justification: "When we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and accept Him as our

¹²⁴Minutes, The Forty-Third General Council (Indianapolis, Indiana, August 8-13, 1989), 148.

¹²⁵Nelson, Doctrines, 103.

¹²⁶Ibid., 104.

savior, we are justified by faith in Him and stand before God without any condemnation on our souls."¹²⁷ Because of this union all Christians may be designated as "saints."¹²⁸

Conversely, sanctification is also a "progressive work, carried on by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. . . until we attain a perfect likeness to Himself."¹²⁹ "This may be a long process and may require many experiences, including many chastenings of the Lord."¹³⁰ According to William W. Menzies,

Sanctification is the progressive work of the Holy Spirit in the life of believer [sic]. As Regeneration it is the impartation of new life to the new convert; as sanctification it is the development of that spiritual life already begun.¹³¹

Some homage is paid to the "second definite work" concept, but only in terms of Christian initiation. Each believer is said to be sanctified "positionally" when Christ is accepted while sanctification itself "is primarily a work of the Holy Spirit in the soul, strengthening the holy qualities which are born into man through regeneration and bringing about their increase."¹³²

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 104-105.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 105.

¹³¹ William W. Menzies, Understanding Our Doctrine (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1980), 40.

¹³² Williams, Systematic Theology, 2:258-59.

John Wesley is presented as believing in "both an instantaneous and a progressive sanctification:

Wesley believed in both imputed and imparted sanctification. He believed that in the new birth believers were sanctified in that they became God's holy people, worthy of being called saints.¹³³

The extreme Wesleyan position of total eradication of sin is denounced as not being authentic to his true theology:

[Wesley] contended for Christian perfection, divine love ruling the life, rather than sinless perfection, since human infirmities were sinful in the true sense, being deviations from perfect holiness.¹³⁴

For a full definition of sanctification, Williams appeals to Baptist theologian A. H. Strong:

Sanctification is the continuously transforming power of Christ's life; that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit by which the holy disposition imparted in regeneration is maintained and strengthened.¹³⁵

Assemblies of God theologian G. Raymond Carlson offers an almost identical definition:

Sanctification is God's continuing process of restoring us; recreating in us the beauty He originally planned. The work will be complete when our redemption is complete and we receive glorified bodies.¹³⁶

The work of sanctification is specifically stated as beginning at conversion.¹³⁷

¹³³Ibid., 260.

¹³⁴Ibid., 261.

¹³⁵Ibid., 263.

¹³⁶G. Raymond Carlson, Our Faith and Fellowship: A Study of the Assemblies of God History and Beliefs (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1977), 73.

¹³⁷Ibid., 74.

The outcome of all three of the above classical views is to place the believer in a position of being unable to distinguish between the Law and the Gospel. The Church of God is deliberately vague, so that one does not know really what to believe. This can lead to a state of indifference in which one simply ignores the question and attempts to reform as much as possible during different revival periods, trusting that God will somehow make up the difference.

Nor is the situation any better in the Assemblies of God. The Assemblies' approach sounds more orthodox, but again, there is a failure to discriminate between Law and Gospel. The specific problem in the Assemblies is that although sanctification is properly begun at the moment of the new birth, there is no rationale or explanation for obtaining the "baptism of the Spirit." Granted its exceptional nature, granted that it is for all who will have it, just how does one obtain it? Or, more properly, just when is one qualified to have it? Since the Assemblies of God renounces perfection, insisting on a gradual growth in sanctification, when does one become a candidate for Holy Spirit Baptism? There really is no answer to this question. One simply has no way of knowing how far along the "scale" one has progressed.

Perhaps the most consistent of the above groups is the Pentecostal Holiness Church. This group specifically

declares for entire sanctification as a definite experience subsequent to regeneration. This represents an extremely elevated role of Law in the Christian life. The best that one could hope for would be a negative benefit of at least being made aware of the claims of the Law. Any positive outcome, however, would depend on whether salvation was truly presented in gospel terms.

The problem with all of these groups is that they consistently mingle Law and Gospel. They strongly preach what they think is the Gospel without being remotely aware that they are actually preaching the Law. There seems to be no spiritual deliverance in such a system. The experience offered is essentially mystical. Whether one begins with Wesley's gradual ascent or seeks to reach the holy in one bound, as in the second definite work tradition, Christianity still becomes a matter of progress from one spiritual stage to another.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit in Classical Pentecostalism

Church of God

Discussion of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal theology must involve at least two parameters: (1) the "event" status of the experience, and (2) the belief in "tongues as the initial evidence." Relative to the first of these, all Pentecostals are united in their view that there is a separate experience called the "Baptism of the

Holy Spirit" which is available (and should be normative) for all Christians. This experience (with the theme of "speaking in tongues as the initial evidence" strongly emphasized) is classified as the "principal distinctive" of the Church of God.¹³⁸ In the words of Ray H. Hughes:

We believe "in the baptism of the Holy Ghost subsequent to a clean heart" and "in speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, and that it is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost."¹³⁹

The "event" status of the experience is also strongly emphasized: "The experience of the baptism of the Holy Ghost does not take place simultaneously with conversion, but it is an experience separate and apart from the New Birth."¹⁴⁰ At this point an interesting statement is made by Hughes concerning the nature of the spiritual event:

At this point, it would be good to clarify a mistaken idea which many who are uninformed about the Church of God have projected. It is believed by them that the Church of God believes in three works of grace: Salvation, Sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. But the Church of God does not consider the baptism of the Holy Ghost as a grace but as a gift to empower for service. It is a gift given to man to make him a more effective servant in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁴¹

Hughes appears to be deemphasizing the concept of spiritual "stages," but the terminology seems irrelevant. As Larry Hart observes, "When a Classical Pentecostal saint asks a

¹³⁸Hughes, Pentecostal Distinctives, 32-33.

¹³⁹Ibid., 34.

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 35.

fellow believer whether he has 'the baptism,' he is referring to a post-conversion, crisis tongues-experience."¹⁴² The issue is the same as in Wesley's theology; regardless of terminology, the concept of a "state" of spiritual existence is projected. The fact that the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" is referred to as an "experience" in the same manner as sanctification indicates that this is the actual content of the theological position.¹⁴³

The purpose of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is consistently presented as an "endowment (or 'endowment') of spiritual power."¹⁴⁴ "The baptism of the Holy Ghost is power for service."¹⁴⁵ This spiritual power has a twofold benefit. First, it assists the believer to maintain spiritual standards:

The blood of Christ can deliver man from the power of the devil, but the delivered person must welcome the Spirit into his life completely or else the citadel of the soul can be evermore taken by Satanic powers.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴²Larry Douglas Hart, A Critique of American Pentecostal Theology. Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, January, 1978, 104.

¹⁴³"Sanctification is an experience of the believing Christian, the regenerated and justified individual."
". . . The Baptism of the Holy Ghost is an experience for believers." James L. Slay, This We Believe, 65,85-86.

¹⁴⁴Wade H. Horton, Pentecost Yesterday and Today (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1964), 21.

¹⁴⁵Leroy, I Didn't Know That!, 43.

¹⁴⁶Slay, This We Believe, 86.

Second, it grants the recipient "power to witness" in an effective manner: "We believe in the baptism with the Holy Ghost subsequent to a clean heart . . . the enduement of power for service."¹⁴⁷

Relative to the phenomenon of tongues itself, little is said concerning either the nature of the utterances or meaning of the "initial evidence." Instead, the Acts occurrences are projected as a pattern with the value of the "initial evidence" evidently presumed as being for the individual recipient:

. . . the accumulated evidence of the scriptural experiences of the baptism of the Holy Ghost corroborate the doctrine of the speaking with other tongues as the initial evidence. In three instances out of five, the Scripture definitely states that the recipients spoke with tongues. In the other two cases where speaking with tongues is not recorded, by rightly dividing the Word of God one inevitably comes to the conclusion that speaking with tongues also accompanied the infilling of the Spirit on those occasions. (Acts 2:4, Acts 10:44-46, Acts 19:1-6; Acts 1:17, Acts 8:14-17)¹⁴⁸

The "initial" character of tongues is held to in no way discriminate against other "evidences" of the Spirit which will appear following Spirit-Baptism:

Although the church holds to the position of speaking with tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, by no means does it claim that this is the only evidence that one has been baptized with the Holy Ghost.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷Gause, Polity, 229.

¹⁴⁸Hughes, Distinctives, 35-36.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., 37.

Assemblies of God

The Assemblies of God is equally firm in insisting that "The baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues is distinct from and follows the new birth."¹⁵⁰ There is the familiar emphasis upon "tongues" as the "scriptural pattern" of initial physical evidence for Baptism of the Spirit: The Day of Pentecost fulfilled the principle and established the pattern of evidence."¹⁵¹ One interesting facet is presentation of the belief as "dispensational":

We believe the Baptism is dispensational in emphasis. Many people doubt the validity of the Baptism because they have not seen the same emphasis on it throughout the Church age. Yet, these same people do not deny the doctrine of justification by faith just because the Church did not teach and emphasize it for centuries. But one day, Martin Luther had a revelation of Biblical truth that became the doctrine God used to revive and revolutionize the Church.¹⁵²

A common differentiation is also made between those who have received the "Baptism" and those merely regenerated:

While the Holy Spirit indwells all true believers (Romans 8:9), it does not follow that all believers are Spirit-filled. Believers are baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is the agent. On the other hand, Christ is the agent who baptizes us with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; John 1:33; Acts

¹⁵⁰ Charles T. Crabtree, This I Believe (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1982), 61.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 68.

¹⁵² Ibid., 75.

2:33; Luke 24:49). This experience is called the "promise of [the] Father."¹⁵³

The benefits of receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit are as follows:

(1) a greater love and understanding of God's Word; (2) a desire to pray and an ability to pray; (3) a desire for holiness and Christlikeness; (4) a holy boldness to witness; (5) a deep love for the brethren; (6) a yearning compassion for the lost; and (7) an overflowing "joy in the Holy Ghost."¹⁵⁴

A candid admission is also made concerning the question of how one may receive this experience:

While the Bible has much to say about the Baptism, it has little to say as to how we may receive the experience. The work of baptizing believers is God's work. The emphasis of Scripture is not on how we should receive, but on how God will give.¹⁵⁵

Relative to the value of speaking in "other tongues," Ernest S. Williams observes a twofold benefit in that they are a sign of "rest" and "refreshing" as in Isaiah 28:11-12.¹⁵⁶

In making this application he seems to misunderstand the Messianic content of the verse.

The Pentecostal Holiness Church

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is specifically

¹⁵³Carlson, Our Faith and Fellowship, 47-48.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., 51.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

¹⁵⁶Ernest S. Williams, Systematic Theology, 3:49.

defined as an "endowment of power for service poured out upon the fully cleansed believer."¹⁵⁷

Regeneration prepares the believer for the sanctified experience. The sanctified experience prepares us for the infilling of the Holy Ghost. And the infilling of the Holy Ghost prepares us for a great life work of usefulness in witnessing for Christ and bringing souls to Him.¹⁵⁸

This experience is obtainable by a "definite act of appropriating faith on the part of the fully cleansed believer."¹⁵⁹ Those who receive this experience are not to "take it for granted," but rather are "to live a clean and consecrated life, free from sin, strife, worldliness and pride."¹⁶⁰

Just as in the Church of God and the Assemblies of God, speaking in tongues is the "initial" evidence of this experience.¹⁶¹ The experience itself is quite definite, "just as distinct, as either regeneration or sanctification."¹⁶² While every Christian "has the Spirit in a measure, . . . all christians do not have the Pentecostal

¹⁵⁷W. H. Turner, The Difference Between Regeneration, Sanctification And The Pentecostal Baptism (Franklin Springs, GA: Publishing House of the P.H. Church, 1947), 28.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., 39.

¹⁵⁹Pentecostal Holiness Church 1981 Manual, 37.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., 38.

¹⁶¹Ibid.

¹⁶²Beacham, Catechism, 19.

baptism with the Spirit."¹⁶³ The experience of sanctification is a necessary preliminary for this experience, according to Peter's speech before the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15:8,9.¹⁶⁴ The exact difference in the two experiences are as follows:

. . . in sanctification the justified believer is cleansed by the Holy Spirit with the blood of Christ; and in the Baptism with the Spirit, Christ is the Agent, and the Spirit is the element with which He baptizes the sanctified believer.¹⁶⁵

Living the Christian Life as an Independent Charismatic

As mentioned above, Charismatics dwell little on any discussion of "sanctification," preferring to concentrate on the "empowering" of believers through the Holy Spirit. Regardless of the terminology, the call to a life of perfection and devotion is clearly expressed.

Earl Paulk

Paulk asserts that "The baptism of the Holy Spirit is to empower us to become God's witness, through which He can find a standard by which He can judge the world in righteousness."¹⁶⁶ It is not "just an emotional experi-

¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., 20-21.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 20.

¹⁶⁶Earl Paulk, To Whom is God Betrothed: Examining the Biblical Basis for the Church's Support of National Israel. (Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1985), 32.

ence," but rather "an enduement of authority" to accomplish God's purposes on Earth.¹⁶⁷ The experience at Pentecost is interpreted in terms congruent with historic Classical Pentecostal understandings: "The Spirit of God dwelling in us is the essence of Pentecost."¹⁶⁸ "Pentecost endued a united body with power from on high."¹⁶⁹ Yet there is a basic difference between this position and that of the Pentecostals. Paulk maintains that his position is not the concept of the Pentecostal experience held by traditional Pentecostal churches. "Pentecostals," he asserts, "sought an 'experience' instead of a life of power."¹⁷⁰ "A tremendous difference exists between the two."¹⁷¹

The exact nature of this difference will be seen most clearly when Paulk's "Kingdom Now" theology is considered. Succinctly put, his great stress on spiritual authority makes believers responsible for overcoming the effects of evil in this life:

To those who are faced with afflictions, hear the Word of the Lord: Unless God directs you by a holy visitation or prophetic confirmation that He is using your physical body as a vicarious sacrifice to accomplish a great purpose in the Kingdom of God, you should begin to implement God's Word for total healing. Begin to move by faith according to what God has spoken in His

¹⁶⁷ Paulk, Held in the Heavens, 69.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 72.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 164.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

Word, not according to advice from the world. Let the principles of God activate life in the physical body.¹⁷²

The reason for such a demand is that those who are "in right relationship with God" will experience "wealth and abundance."¹⁷³ "This is God's original plan and intention."¹⁷⁴

. . . wealth is a sign of God's blessings. When God is recognized as the source and man lives in total obedience to Him, man prospers [underlining mine].¹⁷⁵

Believers who walk in the "will of God" can have "whatever they ask in Jesus' name."¹⁷⁶

Clearly this concept of spiritual "freedom" becomes great bondage to the law for those who attempt such standards. God is made subject to "formulas" or "spiritual laws" which seem to dictate his sovereignty. Perhaps the strongest argument against such a system is that in the final analysis God is not sovereign at all.

Just as Earl Paulk emphasizes the believer's role in the "Kingdom Now," Kenneth Hagin applies the same presuppositions, only emphasizing his particular emphasis on "Word-Faith." According to Hagin, most Christians are sick

¹⁷²Ibid., 176.

¹⁷³Paulk, Satan Unmasked, 150.

¹⁷⁴Ibid.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., 157.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., 68.

because they "do not know their rights and privileges in Christ."¹⁷⁷

I know it from experience (this is what separates the men from the boys). I've been preaching for more than 45 years. I believe that it's the plan of God the Father that no believer should ever be sick.¹⁷⁸

Believers have such authority over the devil that they can control the welfare of not only their own beings but also the lives of their immediate family or loved ones.¹⁷⁹

God's plan for us is that we rule and reign in life as kings: to rule and reign over circumstances, poverty, disease, and everything else that would hinder us. We reign because we have authority. We reign by Jesus Christ. In the next life? No, in this life.¹⁸⁰

God didn't intend us to be poverty-stricken. He said we are to reign in life as kings. Who would ever imagine a king being poverty-stricken? ¹⁸¹The idea of poverty just doesn't go along with kings.

In addition, Hagin displays a Wesleyan-like emphasis on the "law of love" as the way to Christian perfection. Those who want "perfect faith" are to learn to walk in love; "When you begin to walk the love walk, your faith will be perfected."¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷Kenneth Hagin, A Better Covenant (Tulsa, OK: RHEMA Bible Church, 1980), 7.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., 14-15.

¹⁷⁹Hagin, The Believer's Authority, 33.

¹⁸⁰Ibid., 39.

¹⁸¹Ibid., 41.

¹⁸²Kenneth Hagin, Faith Worketh by Love (Tulsa, OK: RHEMA Bible Church, 1979), 27.

Just as in Paulk, the potential for human Godliness turns into bondage to the law. "When you are not walking in love, the law of faith is not going to work for you."¹⁸³ In addition to the consequences for human responsibility, there is the familiar theme of God's power being subject to a "spiritual law" which seems to limit His sovereignty.

Oral Roberts

As might be expected from his Classical Pentecostal background, Roberts seems to lay more stress on the "baptism of the Holy Ghost." Christ offers us the new birth, but this is followed by a second experience of "baptism in the Holy Spirit":

That's the second stage--to be baptized to be immersed, in the Holy Spirit. First of all, you are born again by the Holy Spirit. You receive the person of the Holy Spirit when you are saved or born again. Now these are synonymous terms: saved, salvation, born again. We are talking about the same thing when we use these different phrases. You receive the Holy Spirit when you are saved because He gives you a new life. God's Spirit bears witness with your spirit that you belong to Him (Romans 8:16). But there is a dimension of the Holy Spirit that's called a baptism. It's not a He, it's an it. The Holy spirit is a He. The Holy Spirit is a person. But the baptism in the Holy Spirit is an it. It's an experience. It's a dimension of the Holy Spirit himself.¹⁸⁴

Christians who realize their true spiritual heritage and truly accept the conclusions of Holy Spirit power in their

¹⁸³Ibid.

¹⁸⁴Oral Roberts, Holy Spirit in the Now II, 13.

lives are pictured as modern-day Elishas, capable of receiving "the double-portion power of God."¹⁸⁵

Congruent with this understanding of righteousness available for all is a definition of sin which makes it a matter of human volition:

We sin with our will. Sin is no light thing. Sin is not a mistake that we make. Sin is not something we do when we do not know better. Sin is a willful thing. It is when we know and then we "will" to do wrong.¹⁸⁶

Thus Christians are faced with the demands of the Law as a continuing force in their lives. Just as in Wesley, there is at least the hypothetical possibility that such demands may indeed be satisfied.

The End of Salvation: Redemption and Restoration

Classical Pentecostals

Classical Pentecostals see the culmination of salvation in a literal, premillennialist construct which seems consistent with early dispensational influences.

In general, Pentecostal eschatology may be characterized as premillennial, expecting the second advent of Christ prior to the establishment of the thousand-year kingdom of Revelation 20.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Oral Roberts, How God Speaks to Me (Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts University, 1964), 34.

¹⁸⁶ Oral Roberts, The New Testament Comes Alive: A Personal New Testament Commentary, vol. 1, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts, 1984), 54-55.

¹⁸⁷ D. J. Wilson, "Eschatology, Pentecostal Perspectives on," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 264.

The distinctive Pentecostal element in this construct is provided by a self-identification of Pentecostalism with a final outpouring of the Spirit as prophesied by Joel, which immediately presages the parousia. Walter J. Hollenweger describes the typical Pentecostal pastor as one who "knows that he is the servant of the final age of revival, which has returned to the earth in the days before the end."¹⁸⁸

There is no time to bother with the past. What matters is the present. Even the history of the Pentecostal movement is little known.¹⁸⁹

Pentecostal leader Wade Horton observes that,

The eyes of all Protestant Christianity are focused upon two phases of our Christian religion; namely, Modernism and Pentecostalism. The Fundamentalists, which are called "the middle-of-the-roaders," are between the two.¹⁹⁰

"With all my heart," Horton states, "I believe this is our day."¹⁹¹ God is seen as overlooking previous religious movements until his choice of Pentecostalism for the final fulfillment of the program of redemption:

God passed by the religious leaders when Christ was born. He did the same at Pentecost. He did the same in Martin Luther's time. This procedure was repeated when God chose Wesley, Whitefield, and others to awaken the sleeping and backslidden church in England. He chose humble bands of saints around the world to be recipients of the last day outpouring of the Holy Ghost. God has

¹⁸⁸Walter J. Hollenweger, The Pentecostals (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972), 413.

¹⁸⁹Ibid.

¹⁹⁰Wade H. Horton, Pentecost Yesterday and Today (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1964), 39.

¹⁹¹Ibid., 40.

graciously given us this divine effusion of spirit and grace, to do service for Him and His kingdom.¹⁹²

Assemblies of God scholar Ernest S. Williams speaks of "dispensational fluctuations" in spiritual manifestations:

The Church may be likened to the moon. . . . As the moon waxes and wanes, so has the spirituality of the Church. When spirituality has been low, manifestations of the Spirit have ceased. As the spiritual tide has returned, manifestations of the Spirit have reappeared.¹⁹³

This common understanding of Pentecostalism as the fulfillment of prophecies of the "last days" is accompanied by a strong emphasis upon the premillennial variety of chiliasm. Assemblies of God scholar P. C. Nelson, for example, appeals to the twentieth chapter of Revelation for support concerning the literal one thousand year reign of Christ on earth.¹⁹⁴ This belief is then considered under two rubrics, "postmillennial" and "premillennial." The postmillennialists, who hold that the gospel will finally succeed before Christ returns for the millennium, are portrayed as "Modernists" who "take this view or else utterly deny the return of Christ."¹⁹⁵ Opposed is the "Premillennial view," which is "held by all Fundamentalists."¹⁹⁶ This view holds that humanity "will prove a

¹⁹² Ibid., 113.

¹⁹³ Ernest S. Williams, Systematic Theology, 3:52.

¹⁹⁴ Nelson, Doctrines, 151.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 151-52.

complete failure and that, instead of getting better, the world is ripening for judgment, and that it is not going to drift gradually into, or evolve into, a millennium."¹⁹⁷

Instead, Christ will personally appear to judge an exceedingly evil world and reign for one thousand years.¹⁹⁸

Nelson notes, "This is one of the cardinal doctrines of the Assemblies of God."¹⁹⁹

Likewise, the Manual of the Pentecostal Holiness Church states that Christ will reign for one thousand years on earth, with His Second Coming occurring before this period is initiated:

we mean His coming "with all the saints" will be the event that shall inaugurate the millennial (one thousand years) reign of Christ on earth. That period will be preliminary and preparatory in purpose. It is preliminary to the final and absolute regeneration of all that belongs to this mundane creation.²⁰⁰

The "Advanced Catechism" for the Pentecostal Holiness Church poses the following question and answer:

Q. Will all the dead be resurrected at the same time when Christ comes?

A. There will be at least a thousand years between the resurrection of the just and unjust. The resurrection of the righteous will begin with those caught away in the rapture, and be completed at the close of the Tribulation Period. The resurrection of the

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 152.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ 1981 Manual, Pentecostal Holiness Church, 30.

wicked will not take place until after the Millennium.²⁰¹

The Church of God Declaration of Faith follows the same pattern by insisting that members are to believe

In the premillennial second coming of Jesus. First, to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to Him in the air.²⁰² Second, to reign on the earth a thousand years.

The subsequent world view resulting from this assumption is stated by Bob Lyons:

A biblical understanding of the society in which we find ourselves is that it is moving rapidly toward its cataclysmic consummation. Left alone, man, by and large, has the tendency to turn toward evil. The society in which we live, therefore, is moving not toward a utopian experience, but toward the Tribulation.²⁰³

Independent Charismatics

The traditional Pentecostal view stands opposed by much Independent Charismatic theology. Foremost is the "Kingdom Now" theology of Earl P. Paulk. Basing his eschatology upon a view of spiritual authority which produces "total ability" in Christians, he urges establishment of the visible Kingdom of God through the Church:

The generation of Spirit-filled Christians who reap the great harvest of the Lord in the last days will proclaim the gospel of Christ throughout the earth. A clear

²⁰¹Beacham, Advanced Catechism, 24.

²⁰²Bulletin (Cleveland, TN: Church of God School of Theology, 1990-92), 6.

²⁰³Bob E. Lyons, Kingdom of Priests (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1977), 155.

understanding of Christ's "gospel" is essential to those who reap this harvest.²⁰⁴

The result of fulfilling this commission is a view of Church and society which sounds very much like the Reconstructionism of Rousas Rushdoony and Gary North:

Jesus Christ came to bring judgment and justice to the world. He came that He might take over world governments! Those who believe in the separation of church and state may cry, "heresy!" Who decided that such a separation should exist?²⁰⁵

This type of total authority made immediately available to Christianity constitutes a theonomy. William A. Griffin notes that "It advocates nothing less than dominion over the earth."²⁰⁶ Even more serious is the seemingly complete violation of the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms. Just as there is a confusion of Law and Gospel, there is also a confusion of the Kingdom of Christ with the kingdom of this world. Once again, the Law reigns.

The same emphasis is illustrated by Kenneth Hagin:

You're identified with Christ in what He did. So when are we to reign as kings? During the Millennium? In 'the sweet by and by'? No, in life! The potential is there, and it belongs to you. I'm going to live up to the full potential of what belongs to me in Christ Jesus.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴Paulk, Thrust in the Sickle, 21.

²⁰⁵Ibid., 23-24.

²⁰⁶William A. Griffin, "Kingdom Now: New Hope or New Heresy?" Probing Pentecostalism: Society for Pentecostal Studies Seventeenth Annual Meeting, November 12-14, 1987; CBN University, 227.

²⁰⁷Hagin, Zoe, 46-47.

Hagin protests that "our trouble is that we relegate everything to the future!"²⁰⁸ "[Satan]," he states, is subject to the Church: "We can dominate him. We have authority over him."²⁰⁹ Thus Christians are left totally responsible for their own welfare, and, of course, consequently subject to the Law.

Oral Roberts is also a chiliast, but emphasizes the classical Pentecostal tradition. He makes a direct connection, for example, between the birth of the Zionist movement at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of Pentecostalism. Both of these are viewed as the fulfillment of Joel 2:26-28, consistent with the Pentecostal penchant of insisting upon a literal Israel as recipient of literally fulfilled Biblical prophecies.²¹⁰ Roberts also sees the Charismatic movement as a major component of Biblical prophecy:

One of the major explanations of this Charismatic Movement is that it fits in perfectly with prophecy. It fits in perfectly with the purposes of God that in the last part of the last days there is to be this mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit.²¹¹

Roberts feels that an essential part of this Charismatic revival was the beginning of the Catholic Charismatic

²⁰⁸Hagin, The Believer's Authority, 20.

²⁰⁹Ibid.

²¹⁰Oral Roberts, Holy Spirit in the Now II, 44-46.

²¹¹Ibid., 46.

Renewal in the United States in 1967.²¹² He observes that such a movement would not have been possible without the Vatican Council, which "opened the door for this."²¹³

The main question to be asked of Roberts' view deals not so much with Reconstructionism as with ecumenism. The great emphasis upon the Holy Spirit as a principle of unity for all denominations seems difficult to warrant, given the legitimate doctrinal and historical differences that exist between denominations. Does the Holy Spirit not care about the difference between Roman Catholic and Reformation concepts of salvation? What is the status of Judaism in light of the Gospel? Such questions can only be reasonably addressed from within confessional frameworks. Simply asserting the Spirit as a principle of unity seems insufficient.

All of the above views seem to show primary misunderstandings which drastically affect their concept of the Christian life. Endemic to all Pentecostal and Charismatic systems seems to be the concept of Christianity as a series of spiritual "stages," in which perfection is at least a theoretical if not actual possibility. Certain proof-texts are consistently misunderstood. 2 Corinthians 5:17, for example, is understood by all Charismatics studied as teaching an absolutely new creation in Christ, almost a

²¹²Ibid.

²¹³Ibid., 47.

return to an Edenic position. Even beginning Greek students are aware that the specific adjective used by Paul in this verse (kainos rather than neos) indicates "new" in the sense of being radically changed, not newly created. The Christian is the same person who existed before conversion but now operates with a new spiritual principle received in the new birth. Likewise the phrase "the righteousness of God" is consistently misapplied in an ontological sense, making the actual content of justification an impartation rather than an imputation of righteousness. The difficulty is that justification may be discussed in seemingly Biblical or orthodox terms so that the inevitable confusion between Law and Gospel fails to be discerned.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine the Pentecostal and Independent Charismatic movements for mystical themes which might indicate the presence of a theology alien to the basic Reformation concepts of sola Scriptura, sola gratia, and sola fide. The evidence suggests that such a theology does exist and, further, may be foundational for Pentecostal and Independent Charismatic religion.

The existence of this theology can be most clearly demonstrated by focusing upon those theological concepts which most clearly display either the presence or absence of mystical spirituality. Three of the most important of these would be theological views concerning (1) the nature of revelation, (2) the nature of humanity, and (3) the nature of religious experience. The procedure followed in this chapter will be to compare Pentecostal/Independent Charismatic views with "orthodox" views in each of these areas.

The Nature of Revelation

Any attempt to define "orthodoxy" in terms of Reformation theology would seem to require concepts which

generally would be in opposition to the movements studied in this work. The first element would have to be the Protestant view of Scripture as revelation. This would also include the Protestant "approach" to Scripture. The Bible is accepted as the word of God through its authority, the latter being confirmed via the internal witness of the Holy Spirit. Rather than being rational, this conviction carries its own proper "mysticism" in that the Reformers recognized that spiritual truth can only come through the Spirit. The point of severance with modern subjective systems, whether the Pentecostal "new hermeneutic" or Independent Charismatic theologies, is that the meaning of the text lies in the text itself, not in the individual or community. The question becomes one of obedience rather than inductive methodology or inward impression.

It is in this context that mysticism may indeed exert a positive influence on Christian faith. The theologia crucis, for example, calls us to a mystical understanding of the ineffable God revealed in the sufferings of Christ. The mysticism espoused by Luther was centered in the Cross and thus protected from the theology of glory. This type of mysticism is not objectionable; to the contrary, it is an essential ingredient of the Christian faith:

What, then, constitutes the mysteries of God? Simply Christ himself; that is, faith and the Gospel concerning Christ. The whole Gospel teaching is far beyond the grasp of our reason and our physical sense;

it is hidden to the world. It can be apprehended only by faith. . .¹

Within this system doctrine necessarily and properly forms the receptacle in which believers receive spiritual experiences. Whatever is not supportive of Christ and His Church is either irrelevant or invalid. The very nature of the Law and the Gospel demands that we begin the religious quest by accepting the word of the Gospel. Such a beginning is doctrinal in nature. Doctrine must precede and mold experience. To reverse the procedure leads to no doctrine, and, ultimately, no meaningful experience.

The extreme emphasis upon priority of experience among the Pentecostals and Independent Charismatics leads to a view of revelation in which the Scripture is subordinated to experience. Subjectivity seems to lead to a spiritual obscurantism in which meaning lies beyond any attempt at verification or falsification. Pentecostals may smugly say, as William MacDonald puts it, "Either you know what I am talking about (by experience) or you do not. If you do not, you would not know if I told you."² In the words of Mathew S. Clark and Henry I. Lederle:

¹Martin Luther, "Stewards of the Mysteries of God," in Sermons of Martin Luther, vol. 6, Sermons on Epistle Texts for Advent and Christmas ed. John Nicholas Lenker, trans. John Nicholas Lenker and others (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 70.

²William MacDonald, "Pentecostal Theology: A Classical Viewpoint," in Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism, ed. R. Spittler (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 66.

. . . since Pentecostals are by experience Pentecostal, they cannot do theology in such a way that their Pentecostal experience is denied, particularly not when their experience of the Spirit of Christ appears to have been both everyday and virtually universal among first century Christians. To them, it is not a question of what gnostic "knowledge-by-initiation" Pentecostals have gained, but of what dynamic an institutionalized Church has forfeited by neglect.³

This emphasis on inwardness, however, can lead to a reversal of revelation. Instead of being recipients of revelation, Pentecostals and Charismatics tend to become dispensers of revelation. The emphasis upon glossolalia and continuing revelatory gifts, for example, stress the role of believers in becoming sources of revelation. Concepts of the continuing role of apostles and prophets also provide auxiliary channels of revelation which are often deemed equal to Scripture.⁴

Also to be noticed is the tendency toward a divided epistemology. Distinguishing between "sense knowledge" and "revelation knowledge," for example is reminiscent of intellectual obscurantism as exemplified in such figures as Tertullian and Siger of Brabant. The relationship of faith to knowledge in such a system approaches that of

³ Mathew S. Clark and Henry I. Lederle, What is Distinctive about Pentecostal Theology? (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1989), 34.

⁴ An interesting example of such revelation which has been codified is the messages of deceased faith healer William Branham. Twenty-two of Branham's messages have been placed in a book, with each unit or saying enumerated in the same manner as Scripture. William Marrion Branham, Conduct, Order, Doctrine of the Church (Jeffersonville, IN: Spoken Word Publications, 1973).

Kierkegaard, and eventually seems to produce the same dilemma--lack of content.

The continuing emphases upon fresh insights and revealed mysteries as Christians progress in their faith is strongly reminiscent of mystical levels of revelation. Classical Pentecostals would not be comfortable with such concepts but Independent Charismatics seem to come very close. Believers experience inward spiritual revelation in a manner which is disconnected from any cognitive or ratiocinative activity. Thus an alternate channel of revelation is created which seems to circumvent the necessary function and regulatory nature of Scripture and Church.

This emphasis upon experience has a corollary effect upon Pentecostal views of Biblical revelation. While the fundamentalistic/evangelical roots of the movement have historically produced very conservative views of Scripture, it seems most accurate to say that such views were not necessarily expressive of the true essence of Pentecostalism itself. The fact that contemporary Pentecostal scholars are busily searching for a distinctive "pentecostal" hermeneutic indicates not so much a decline or deviation, but rather a "coming to terms" with the actual content of their own theology.

Another factor in this hermeneutical quest is the status of additional revelation through spiritual gifts. While Pentecostals say less about it than do Charismatics,

the acceptance of revelatory gifts brings into question the status of the Scripture as the ultimate revelation. While all figures in both movements are quick to affirm the sole authority of Scripture, the question is whether such affirmations are of any material value. If, within a subjectivizing hermeneutic, personal direction or prescriptions may be given through a special or private revelations, how does formal acceptance of Scripture have any meaning for the welfare of believers? Also to be questioned is the assumption of an apostolic authority for various charismatic figures. What becomes the locus for spiritual authority?

Charismatics have a greater problem in that they have no ecclesiastical structures other than loose associations of independent congregations. Pentecostals at least have a visible ecclesiastical structure and tradition. Still, the problem is not easily solved. Any study of Pentecostal development during the past twenty years will reveal a great deal of uncertainty concerning both doctrinal content and the relation of church to society. In essence Pentecostalism has identified itself with social mores rather than doctrine and thus is suffering from a lack of content within as it seeks modernization.

The Nature of Humanity

A second "orthodox" corollary is the absolute sinfulness of human nature and the consequent absolute necessity of the total grace of God for salvation. If

depravity is not total, salvation is not total. This also involves seeing redemption in its eschatological nature. The fact that we are to be "little Christs" does not mean that we become gods, but that we display in some way the same pattern of suffering and redemption to a broken world. Gaining our ultimate spiritual goal through suffering is not the most popular method, but it is demonstrably the most Christlike.

A primary ingredient for confessional theology is an anthropology which at least can begin by confessing. The sine qua non for a Biblical view of humanity demands an awareness of human sinfulness. The consequences of this position are far-reaching. Viewed from a Scriptural perspective, any attempt to allow for human autonomy produces soteriological confusion. The attempt to fuse some type of human ability with grace inevitably results in a type of grace which becomes law. In such systems grace is no longer gratuitous but becomes a law unto itself. The emphasis upon human sinfulness produced by sola gratia results in a truly-saving soteriology, even though such cannot always be explained in terms of human freedom.

Pelagian or Semi-Pelagian concepts of human ability seem universal in both groups. There is no essential difference in the anthropology of Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. Mysticism, whether Tibetan Buddhism or Western revivalism,

cannot function without some reciprocal element present in human nature. Again, Classical Pentecostals are the more conservative group with stated views often reflecting classical Reformed positions similar to the Westminster Catechism. The same tension exists in Pentecostal systems, however, which existed in the spirituality of Wesley. The concept of any type of "prevenient grace" is essentially mystical in nature. The initial affirmation of human sinfulness and gratuitous justification, although Biblical and constructive in intent, will eventually be neutralized in any system which allows for human ability. This applies equally to formulations of prevenient grace as well as broader constructs of the image of God in humanity.

The most questionable aspect of both movements is the Charismatic appeal to the human "spirit-nature" as the element which allows for deification and contact with God. The same concept of divided nature is found in Independent Charismatic concepts of Christology. Christ is presented as acting in either his human or divine capacities alternatively, or perhaps as suffering in only His human nature.

Classical Pentecostals and Independent Charismatics were also unified in their views of the human constitution. Throughout the research for this paper, not one Pentecostal or Charismatic figure endorsed dichotomy. Some type of tripartite view seemed endorsed by all. This may be part of the key to understanding how the Pentecostal/Charismatic

system works. While the question itself is often given short shrift in seminary theology classes, a trichotomous view of humanity combined with a view of the Imago Dei which stresses the element of spirit may be what makes the Pentecostal/Charismatic view distinctive. If so, the lesson is that nothing in theology is really unimportant.

Relative to the Imago Dei, it is also noteworthy that almost all saw it in an ontological context, as the possession of power or ability as well as moral prowess. The language used here can be misleading in that it may sound very orthodox. Only when the Image of God is understood in its proper relation to human sinfulness can the danger of confusion be avoided.

The Nature of Religious Experience

Congruent with orthodox emphases upon the authority of Scriptural revelation and the sinfulness of human nature is an emphasis upon salvation which demands total grace for a total salvation. The difference between such a soteriology and more mystically-oriented "progress" constructs is that grace is exhaustive and salvation is complete. Again, grace realized in synergistic systems (which is all mystical systems have to offer) inevitably becomes a component of works. Viewed only ontologically, Christians think of it quantitatively rather than qualitatively. Effort produces a corresponding amount of grace. The quest for perfection continues.

Opposed to this stands the orthodox emphasis upon the absolute sovereignty of God. Since it is grace which gratuitously closes the gap, the Christian life assumes the character of response rather than becoming a spiritual quest. The spiritual rationale becomes response as opposed to effort.

Also worthy of note is the understanding of the Atonement as a once-for-all sacrifice. The presentation of Christ as an offering is central. Likewise the emphasis upon the salvific value of the death of Christ is central. Proper emphasis upon the Two Natures protects the event of the Cross. According to His human nature Christ, who is also true God, died for humanity. Salvation is complete in that offering.

The centrality of Christ also affects orthodox views of the Christian Hope. Extremely literalistic views of the kingdom may be distorted into a process concept in which the kingdom becomes mundane. Pentecostal and Charismatic emphases upon the autonomous role of humanity in salvation produce a view of the kingdom in which even the Christian Hope becomes an expression of human ability and potential. Thus the kingdom may lose its spiritual identity. Conversely, orthodox theology stresses the primacy of faith. The promises of God are understood spiritually rather than carnally. The mission of the Church, the reign of Christ,

and all events in between are understood in the context of the Church as the spiritual Israel.

Consistent with mystical themes of human nature is the concept of the Christian life as a series of stages. This seems very similar to mystical concepts of purgation, illumination, and union. Just as in mysticism, the Christian life becomes more of a "quest" than a reality. As stated before, the problem with this is that Christian living eventually turns toward the Law. If being a "new creature in Christ" means that an individual has the same potential as Adam, who then will be saved? The problem here is very similar to that faced by Luther. If God will give sufficient grace for all to obey the Law, then there is no reason for failure. Even more devastating within Charismatic circles (also implicitly present in Pentecostalism), is the expectation to be free not only from sin, but from illness and poverty as well.

Also basic to Pentecostal and Independent Charismatic theology is an understanding of justification in synergistic terms. In no Pentecostal or Charismatic volume or writing has the author found any occurrence of the expression "justification by grace through faith." It is reasonable to assume that both Pentecostals and Independent Charismatics are unaware of the significance of this statement.

Of course there is no concept in either camp that Christians are "sinners saved by grace." This construct simply does not exist in either Classical Pentecostal or Independent Charismatic theology. The idea of being "at the same time saved and a sinner" would be considered heretical. In the same vein, there seems to be no concept in either group of the passive righteousness of God. With Pentecostals and Charismatics salvation is actual and dynamic. "If you've got it, you flaunt it."

A similar theme which Charismatics especially seem to misapply is the phrase "the righteousness of God." The ontological understanding of this phrase seems not only in opposition to Paul's own understanding of it as "the righteousness of faith," as expressed in Romans 1:16-17, but also constitutes a revival of the heresy of Osiander. Justification becomes the imparted righteousness of Christ rather than His imputed righteousness. At this point the Independent Charismatics seem to adopt a distinctly Roman soteriology.

Another common salvation theme is the concept of faith as somehow having its own power. For figures such as Kenneth Hagin it would be accurate to say that believers actually must "have faith in their faith." A seemingly universal concept in the Independent Charismatic movement is that God is somehow subject to spiritual "laws" which may be

invoked at will. This has strong parallels with both mysticism and magic.

In its own way mysticism is more self-gratifying than its orthodox competition. Any system which recognizes some inherent spiritual element or remnant of the "image" in humanity automatically has the right to claim whatever portion of divinity that partial image involves. New Age writer Shakti Gawain, for example, offers a program of "creative visualization" which urges that those seeking improvement must realize their "God-Like nature":

We may go through many different experiences and processes on our search, but eventually we are gradually restored to ourselves. That is, we come back into an experience of our true selves, the God-like nature or the universal mind that is within us all. Through this experience we are eventually restored to our full spiritual power, the emptiness inside us is filled up from within, and we become radiant beings, sharing the light and love that comes from within us with everyone around us.⁵

Those who would change their lives with this principle must have three elements: (1) desire, (2) belief, and (3) acceptance.⁶ A critical part of this entire process is "Prosperity Programming" in which the universe is to be viewed as "a cornucopia of everything that your heart could ever desire, both on the material plane and on emotional, mental, and spiritual planes as well."⁷

⁵Shakti Gawain, Creative Visualization (San Rafael, CA: New World Library, 1978), 42-43.

⁶Ibid., 53-54.

⁷Ibid., 62.

Everything you need or want is here for the asking; you only need to believe that it is so, to truly desire it, and to be willing ⁸ to accept it, in order to have whatever you wish.

Charismatic leaders would not associate themselves with the New Age Movement. But are the assumptions underlying the theme of prosperity theology truly different?

The same problem seems evident in the "Word-Faith" theology of Kenneth Hagin. The constant stress on the power and authority of the believer also seems to become a binding force upon God. Again the question is whether religion, however well-intended, is actually operating on a mystical or magical basis which is inherently inimical to a religion which stresses grace and the sovereignty of God.

Another area of controversy lies in Independent Charismatic views of the Atonement. There seems to be a strong tendency to see salvation secured not by Calvary, but rather by Christ's struggle with demonic forces during His time in the tomb. It seems extremely dangerous to make such specific delineations, since such do not seem warranted by Scripture and could threaten the centrality of the Cross. According to the Formula of Concord,

It is enough to know that Christ went to hell, destroyed hell for all believers, and has redeemed them from the power of death, of the devil, and of the eternal damnation of the hellish jaws. How this took place is something that we should postpone until the other world, where there will be revealed to us not only this point, but many others as well, which our blind

⁸ Ibid.

reason cannot comprehend in this life but which we simply accept.⁹

Pentecostal and Independent Charismatic views of the Christian hope are strongly integrated with chiliasm. Both groups adhere to the idea that Israel continues as a special people of God and will someday receive the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant literally. While Earl P. Paulk is an exception to this view, both groups commonly fit into a premillennial, Israel-oriented eschatology. A common element in this position is the "pure church" refrain, as old as the Donatists. The "true" church is viewed as possessing a higher spiritual experience which sets them apart from their neighbors and will ultimately be rewarded in the end-time.

The greatest problem with Pentecostal and Charismatic views of salvation is that they seem to reflect a religion of law rather than grace. It is paradoxical that movements which emphasize miracles, healings and total spiritual deliverance from all adversity in reality offer only the righteousness of the Law. This is all the more regrettable in that thousands of faithful adherents thus live in the constant condemnation produced by continuing futile attempts at perfection. This is the same bondage offered by mysticism in its futile attempt to gain true "union" with the divine.

⁹The Book of Concord, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. and ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 492.

Evaluation

The intriguing aspect of Pentecostal and Independent Charismatic theology is that it can sound very Biblical to the uninitiated. Upon close examination, however, there seems to be a clear conflict with orthodox tenets. The new birth, for example, is pressed to the point of an entirely new existence, the "new creature" is understood as qualitatively different from the unregenerate sinner. The issue is the understanding of redemption. There is such an emphasis upon the ontological change that the juridical and forensic meaning of forgiveness is simply overlooked. Inconsistencies abound, but are simply ignored. Why, for example, would Christians have to die? Why is illness tolerated (as it must be) in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches and institutions?

The most negative aspect of all is that illness and death may be interpreted as signs of divine disapproval or lack of individual faith. It is not wise to become ill or show weakness in an environment of divine healing and miracles. This creates its own divided spiritual experience with devout students and adherents preaching or teaching what they do not possess and cannot admit.

Another interesting mystical aspect of the Independent Charismatics is the concept that some human attribute such as words or faith can be "used" to accomplish divine results. This comes very close to magic as well as mysti-

cism. Also extremely mystical is the presentation of salvific goals in terms of "harmony" and "balance" within the individual. Such emphases seem similar to the concepts of Eastern religions.

Requisite to such assumptions of human nature is a view of sin in which its ontological presence is denied. Classical Pentecostals sound more theological and at times "orthodox" in their definitions of sin. Both groups, however, suffer the same eventual conclusion of relegating sin to the category of "transgression" while making no allowance for the principle of sin existing in lives of believers. Righteousness may be viewed ontologically, but sin is considered accidental.

The question of salvation is also related to the universal identification of Pentecostals and Independent Charismatics with chiliasm. Again, Pentecostals are more classically premillennial and Charismatics more radical and, in some cases, post-millennial. The common ingredient of both is an emphasis upon literalism accompanied by a stress on the continuing importance of Israel as a nation. The "Kingdom Now" theology of Earl Paulk would be the most mystically-oriented view in that the emphasis upon literally creating the Kingdom in present-day society creates two kinds of churches--those which preach mere "salvation" as opposed to the true "kingdom" movements.

Just as extreme views of faith tend to undercut God's sovereignty, so also non-spiritual views of the kingdom undermine the spiritual identity of Christ's kingdom both in this world and the next. The emphasis upon visible aspects of God's kingdom being realized through the Church in society is much more dangerous than it sounds. Just as God's own nature may be distorted into a process conception, so also his Kingdom may be made mundane. Just as humanity plays an increasing role in its own salvation through "faith," in the same way the Kingdom of God becomes an expression of human ability and potential, and thereby loses its true identity.

The question remains whether Pentecostals and Independent Charismatics should be considered heretical, or, conversely, whether they may in some way be subsumed under the umbrella of orthodoxy. To what extent should they be indicted on the basis of parallels which seem to exist in non-Christian groups or figures? What is the essential nature of Pentecostal and Independent Charismatic religion?

Obviously, the mere existence of parallels does not constitute culpability on the part of religions or religious movements. The fact that the New Age Movement or E. W. Kenyon might contain themes which sound similar to Kenneth Hagin or Kenneth Copeland does not mean that they would identify with those views. There is a legitimate question, however, as to whether the belief systems of the Pentecostal

and Independent Charismatic movements reflect the same type of spirituality. Many aspects of prosperity theology sound reasonable. We do sow what we reap; it is equally true that God rewards those who diligently seek him and, indeed, someday will give them life eternal. The problem comes when innocent-sounding principles are turned into spiritual formulas or "laws" which become binding upon God.

In 1951 a sociologist named William Goode published a work entitled Religion Among the Primitives, a comprehensive examination of general religious tenets present in the religions of primitive tribes.¹⁰ The intent of the work was to establish at what point religion ceases to be "religion" and becomes, instead, "magic." Goode's method was to compare magic with religion through a series of "variables" by which the two could be distinguished.¹¹ Utilizing these "variables" as a rough outline, one can arrive at a meaningful critique concerning the nature of Pentecostal/Charismatic religion. The question is at what point does the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement cease to be Christianity in the orthodox sense and become essentially "magic" or at least "mystical" in a heterodox sense.

Applying Goode's variables, the following observations seem pertinent:

¹⁰London: Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1951.

¹¹Ibid., 53-55.

1. Religion becomes magic when it becomes a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Requisite to all of the above groups is a centrality of the person in which religion serves some type of practical purpose. Whether health, possessions, or success, the good of the practitioner becomes intimately involved with the divine plan.

2. Religion becomes magic when it concerns itself with concrete goals versus abstract goals. Little of the devotional material surveyed for this work stresses worship or faith for the sake of worship or faith. The Pentecostal/Charismatic movement is extremely goal-oriented. These goals are almost always visible in nature, whether immediate success in business or establishing the visible kingdom of God on earth.

3. Religion becomes magic when it concerns itself with individual rather than communal ends. Again, one senses in the Independent Charismatic movements a tremendous emphasis on the individual. There seems to be little sense of the larger body of Christ, the Church. The terminology is indeed used, the subject discussed at length, but in actual practice the group is intimately associated with the welfare of the individual. The victory of the Church implicitly means the triumph of the person; there seems to be little sense of the corporate Body of Christ.

4. Religion becomes magic when it is viewed as a specific power enshrined in an individual practitioner.

Christianity properly conceived displays a strong emphasis upon the priesthood of all believers. Spiritual power or privilege is not relegated to a special group of "anointed" persons who have gained a spiritual standing superior to the ordinary masses. Here the Independent Charismatics seem at a greater disadvantage than the Pentecostals. The latter have more of a sense of the Church whereas the former are often busy hurrying from one religious "leader" to the next, in search of who currently has the greatest "anointing." This obviously has an adverse effect on permanence within the visible Body of Christ.

5. Religion becomes magic when it assumes a potentiality for evil as well as good. Former Oral Roberts University professor Charles Farah notes the story of Wesley Parker, a twelve-year old diabetic who died because his parents refused medicine and decided to "trust in God."¹² Another example is the untimely death of Old Testament scholar Hobart Freeman due to his refusal of medicine.¹³

Another aspect of this particular variable is that people can be and are misled by unscrupulous leaders who become so involved with power and plenty that whatever spirituality is present is soon discarded. While examples of such excesses exist in all denominations, Independent

¹²Charles Farah, From the Pinnacle to the Temple (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1980), 1-7.

¹³Gary Sather, interview by author, 29 August 1990, Oral Roberts University.

Charismatics seem especially susceptible due to their conviction that they must "come out" of the visible Church and establish the true "spiritual" church.

6. Religion becomes magic when it assumes a manipulative rather than a supplicative character. The continuing tendency to make God subject to prosperity formulas or "laws" of success violates the profile of both worship and worshipper. The proper sense of "mystery" in Christianity is when the result is truly left in the hands of God. The greatest faith, the greatest Christian commitment, comes when one gives God a chance to say, "No!"

In comparison with extreme Independent Charismatic movements, Classical Pentecostalism seems preferable due to the presence and control of ecclesiastical bodies and at least a formal adherence to Scripture. Still, genuine problems exist concerning the once-for-all nature of justification, the meaning of grace, and, consequently, the meaning of righteousness. In the final analysis, Classical Pentecostalism is the same righteousness, the same system, the same epistemology as Roman Catholicism.

The result of this study has been to arrive at more definitive conclusions concerning the nature of the Pentecostal and Independent Charismatic religious experience. Classical Pentecostalism, although historically conservative, is in a state of flux. No one is really sure where the movement is going. Strong views of Biblical authority

are held among the laity, with equally liberal approaches advocated in colleges and seminaries. Holiness-type camp meetings continue while at the same time Pentecostals are participating in ongoing dialogues with Rome and the charismatic movement worldwide. Howard Ervin believes that Pentecostals have entered a "post-Pentecostal" age in which they have lost their original spiritual dynamic. Scholars are functioning with different religious criteria than their constituency. They seem to be busily imitating the intellectual world they so admire, but at the same time they are rapidly losing their own identity.¹⁴

Independent Charismatics display even less conformity, being almost without control regarding central tenets of the Christian faith. The subjective world of the individual seems to swallow up all systems, creating severe problems in the area of spiritual authority and religious orthodoxy. This group is especially significant in that the contemporary charismatic movement is moving away from denominational identities toward the Independents. The fastest-growing and largest charismatic churches are currently those of the Independent camp.

The element that seems to be missing in all of this is the Church. The Independent Charismatic movement seems to consist of "islands" of believers, without any meaningful

¹⁴Howard Ervin, interview by author, 28 January 1991, Oral Roberts University,

ecclesiology. The corollary, obviously, is also a lack of any sound sacramental theology. The extremely inclusive nature of Charismatic congregations robs the sacraments of meaning. Emphasis is placed upon the concept of "fellowship" with no evidence of confessional understandings. Pentecostals seem to fare better since they have existed longer and have a more fully-developed cultural identity. Still missing, however, is any meaningful understanding of tradition or creeds. Believers are left with their experience and their Bible. What will happen when the authority of the latter has been eroded?

This study has also produced a challenge for those churches identified with a more confessional, historic view of the Christian faith. Are there elements in "Reformation" churches which could allow for some of the above errors? The answer to this demands that even seemingly innocuous theological assumptions be tested by Scripture. Consider the relationship of Christianity to culture. The Reformed view sounds commendable in its assertion that the regenerate must live Pro Rege, that the church must be realized in every social relationship or communal organization. The concept, however, that the Church is to fulfill a "cultural mandate" for the kingdom of heaven seems very close to the assumptions of "Kingdom Now" theology. In the more extreme formulations, such as Abraham Kuyper's, the seeds seem to be present for an overemphasis upon the visible kingdom of God

in mundane society. Such a view could easily make common cause with many charismatic figures in urging civil disobedience as well as the erection of societies within societies in which the Church could tend to lose its Gospel message due to the emphasis upon Christianity as a "new law."

Also to be considered is the relationship between Lutheran and Reformed theology on the question of the Image of God in humanity. It seems that the Reformed position, which stresses the existence of a "broader" image of God in the unregenerate, may play into the hands of Charismatic theology. Just as in mysticism proper, Pentecostal and Charismatic religion operates upon the supposition of some spiritual ingredient or ability that is inherent in humanity; some "point of contact" has to be present for the system to work. It would seem that Lutheran theology would have a stronger position in its contention that there is no "broader" image still present, but that the entire image of God was destroyed in the Fall.

Another point of contention concerns the question of dichotomy or trichotomy, a point often considered hardly worthy of discussion. Yet if the latter position is pressed to its Charismatic extreme, one easily arrives at not only a divided humanity, but a divided salvation as well. This is a clear testimony that in theology there are really no "unimportant" points.

In conclusion, it would appear from the discussion above that the three components identified as constant in mystical experience are all present in Pentecostal and Independent Charismatic theology. The priority placed upon experience, a view of the Imago Dei which posits some type of divine "spark" in humanity, and the concept of a salvation which proceeds by "stages" all seem to reflect Pentecostal and Charismatic spirituality.

Both the Pentecostal and Independent Charismatic movements contain many devout adherents who would never knowingly violate the basic tenets of Christianity. The question is whether the Pentecostal/Charismatic message in its essence really expresses the primary tenets of the Reformation. Viewed from the perspective of commonly held concepts which seem consistent throughout the mystical tradition, it appears that Classical Pentecostal and Independent Charismatic theology is much more closely associated with mystical spirituality than that expressed by the primary Reformation tenets of sola Scriptura, sola gratia, and sola fide.

GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Published Sources

- Ayling, Stanley. John Wesley. New York: William Collins Publishers, 1979.
- Beck, Lewis White. Early German Philosophy. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969.
- Berkouwer, G. C. Man: The Image of God. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1962.
- Book of Concord. Translated and Edited by Theodore G. Tappert. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959.
- Burtner, Robert W. and Robert E. Chiles. John Wesley's Theology: A Collection From His Works. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982.
- Cannon, William Ragsdale. The Theology of John Wesley: With Special Reference to the Doctrine of Justification. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1946.
- Cell, George Croft. The Rediscovery of John Wesley. New York: Henry Holy and Company, 1935.
- Chappell, Edwin Barfield. Studies in the Life of John Wesley. Nashville: Smith and Lamar, 1915.
- Childs, Brevard. Biblical Theology in Crisis. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1970.
- Cox, Leo George. John Wesley's Concept of Perfection. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1964.
- Cox, Michael. Handbook of Christian Spirituality. New York: Harper and Row, 1983.
- Cross, E. L. and E. A. Livingstone, eds. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. 2d ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. S.v. "Taylor, Jeremy."
- Dieter, Melvin. The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1980.

- Dorries, David William. "Nineteenth Century British Christological Controversy, Centring Upon Edward Irving's Doctrine of Christ's Human Nature." Ph.D. diss., University of Aberdeen, 1987.
- Eayrs, George. John Wesley: Christian Philosopher and Church Founder. London: The Epworth Press, 1926.
- Edwards, Paul, ed. Encyclopedia of Philosophy. New York: MacMillan Pub. Co., 1967. S.v. "History of Mysticism," by Ninian Smart.
- Eckhart, Meister. "A Sermon for St. Dominic's Day." In Treatises and Sermons of Meister Eckhart. Translated by James M. Clark and John V. Skinner. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958, 58-62.
- Elwell, Walter A, ed. Evangelical Dictionary of Theology. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984. S.v. "Mysticism," by D. D. Martin.
- Fitchett, W. H. Wesley and His Century: A Study in Spiritual Forces. 2d ed. New York: Eaton and Mains, 1912.
- Fletcher, John. "Third Check to Antinomianism," In The Works of the Reverend John Fletcher. Vol.1. London: Thomas Allman, 1834.
- _____. "Third Check to Antinomianism," In The Works of the Rev. John Fletcher, Vol. 1. New York: B. Waugh and T. Mason, 1835.
- Florovsky, Georges. Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View. Belmont, MS: Nordland Pub. Co., 1972. Quoted in Howard M. Ervin, "Hermeneutics: A Pentecostal Option." in PNEUMA 3:2 (Fall, 1981): 11-25.
- Gawain, Shakti. Creative Visualization. San Rafael, CA: New World Library, 1978.
- Goode, William. Religion Among the Primitives. London: Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1951.
- Green, Brazier. John Wesley and William Law. London: The Epworth Press, 1945.
- Hagglund, Bengt. History of Theology. Translated by Gene J. Lund. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1968.
- Harkness, Georgia. Mysticism: Its Meaning and Message. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973.

- Hopkins, Linda. "The Flight From the World: A Study of the Origins of Third- and Fourth-Century Desert Asceticism." M.A. thesis. Oral Roberts University, 1988.
- Inge, William R. Christian Mysticism. 7th ed. New York: The World Publishing Company, 1964.
- _____. Mysticism In Religion. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1948.
- Jay, Elisabeth, ed. The Journal of John Wesley: A Selection. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- John of the Cross, "The Ascent of Mt Carmel." In John of the Cross: Selected Writings, ed. and trans. Kieran Kavanaugh. New York: Paulist Press, 1987, 41-154.
- Lindstrom, Harald. Wesley and Sanctification: A Study in the Doctrine of Salvation. New York: Abingdon Press, n.d.
- Luther, Martin. Sermons of Martin Luther. ed. and trans. John Nicholas Lenker. Vol. 6, Sermons on Epistle Texts for Advent and Christmas. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983.
- Migne, Jacques Paul, ed. Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Vol. 7(2). "Contra Haereses," by Irenaeus. T.25 "Oratio de Incarnatione Verbi," by Athanasius.
- Monk, Robert C. John Wesley: His Puritan Heritage. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966.
- Mueller, John Theodore. Christian Dogmatics. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1934.
- Otto, Rudolph. The Idea of the Holy. Translated by John W. Harvey. London: Oxford University Press, 1923.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of the Development of Doctrine. Vol. 2, The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (1600-1700). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974.
- Piette, Maximin. John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1937.
- Rahner, Karl, ed. Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi. New York: Seabury Press, 1975. S.v. "Mysticism," by Karl Rahner.

- Richardson, Alan and John Bowden, eds. The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983. S.v. "Mysticism," by E. J. Tinsley.
- Sandeen, Ernest R. The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1931. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Schaeffer, Francis A. "The New Super-Spirituality." In The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview. Vol. 3. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982, 381-401.
- Schmidt, Martin. John Wesley: A Theological Biography. Vol.1. Translated by Norman P. Goldhawk. Nashville: Abingdon Press, n.d.
- Taylor, Jeremy. The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living. Edited by Thomas S. Depler. New York: The World Publishing Company, 1956.
- The Cloud of Unknowing. New York: Harper and Row, 1948.
- Thornton, Martin. English Spirituality: An Outline of Ascetical Theology According to the English Pastoral Tradition. New York: Cowley Publications, 1986.
- Tuttle, Robert G. Jr. Mysticism in the Wesleyan Tradition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989.
- _____. "The Influence of the Roman Catholic Mystics on John Wesley." Ph.D. diss. Bristol University, 1969.
- Tyerman, Luke. Wesley's Designated Successor: The Life, Letters, and Literary Labours of the Rev. John William Fletcher. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1882. Quoted in Laurence W. Wood. Pentecostal Grace, 178, n. 9. Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press of Zondervan Publishing House, 1980.
- Underhill, Evelyn. Mysticism. 12th ed. London: Methuen and Co., 1962.
- Wesley, John. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection. London: Epworth Press, 1983.
- _____. Letter #6, May, 1738, "Wesley's Description of Events Leading to His Experience on May 24, 1738." In John Wesley: An Autobiographical Sketch of the Man and His Thought, Chiefly from His Letters. Edited by Ole E. Borgen, 27-35. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966.

White, Charles Edward. The Beauty of Holiness: Phoebe Palmer as Theologian, Revivalist, Feminist, and Humanitarian. Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press of Zondervan Publishing House, 1986.

PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC BIBLIOGRAPHY

Published Sources

- Anderson, Gordon. "Pentecostals Believe in More Than Tongues." In Pentecostals From the Inside Out, ed. Harold B. Smith. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1990, 53-64.
- Anderson, Robert Mapes. Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Barrett, David B., ed. World Christian Encyclopedia. Nairobi, Kenya: Oxford university Press, 1982.
- Beacham, Paul F. Advanced Catechism. Franklin Springs, GA: Publishing House of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, n.d.
- Bishop, David S. "Our Heritage of Faith in the Redemptive Work of Jesus Christ." In Centennial Heritage Papers, 1986, ed. Hollis R. Gause and Steven J. Land. Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1989, 51-56.
- Book of Minutes: A Compiled History of the Work of the General Assemblies of The Church of God. Vol. 1. Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1922.
- Bowdle, Donald N. Redemption Accomplished and Appied. Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1972.
- Branham, William Marrion. Conduct, Order, Doctrine of the Church. Jeffersonville, IN: Spoken Word Publications, 1973.
- Brumbach, Carl. Suddenly . . . From Heaven: A History of the Assemblies of God. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1961.
- Burgess, Stanley M., Gary B. McGee and Patrick H. Alexander, eds. Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1988. S.v. "Church Growth," by C. P. Wagner. "Healing Movements," "Roberts, Granville Oral," by Paul G. Chappell. "Classical Pentecostalism," by H.V. Synan.

"Charismatic Movement," by P. D. Hocken. "Bennett, Dennis Joseph," by L. Christenson. "Church of God (Cleveland, TN)," by Charles W. Conn. "International Pentecostal Holiness Church," by H.V. Synan. "Black Holiness-Pentecostalism," "Positive Confession Theology," by L. Lovett. "Mumford, Bernard C. Jr." "Nondenominational Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches," by S. Strang. "Hagin, Kenneth E.," by R. M. Riss. "Pentecostal Hermeneutics," by French Arrington. "European Pietist Roots of Pentecostalism," by D. D. Bundy. "Holiness Movement," by C. E. Jones. "Parham, Charles Fox," by J. R. Goff Jr. "Seymour, William Joseph," by H. V. Synan. "Azusa," National Association of Evangelicals," by Cecil M. Robeck. "Assemblies of God," by E. L. Blumhofer. "Shepherding Movement," by H. D. Hunter. "Cho, Paul Yonggi," by D. J. Wilson. "Assemblies of God," by E. L. Blumhofer. "International Pentecostal Holiness Church," by R. P. Spittler.

Capps, Charles. God's Image of You. Tulsa, OK: Harrison House Publishers, 1985.

_____. The Tongue: A Creative Force. Tulsa, OK: Harrison House Publishers, 1976.

Carlson, G. Raymond. Our Faith and Fellowship: A Study of the Assemblies of God History and Beliefs. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1977.

Cho, Paul Yonggi. The Fourth Dimension. Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1979.

Church of God Sixty-Second General Assembly Minutes. Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1988.

Clark, Mathew S. and Henry I. Lederle. What is Distinctive About Pentecostal Theology? Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1989.

Conn, Charles W. Like A Mighty Army. Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1955.

_____. Pillars of Pentecost. Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1956.

Day, Ralph E. Our Church of God Faith: A Manual of Instruction for Young People. Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1959.

Dayton, Donald. Theological Roots of Pentecostalism. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1987.

- Discipline of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, 1937.
Franklin Springs, GA: Publishing House of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, n.d.
- Dorries, David William. Interview by James F. Breckenridge, Oral Roberts University, 8 June 1990.
- Du Plessis, David J. The Spirit Bade Me Go. Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1970.
- Duffield, Guy P. and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave. Foundations of Pentecostal Theology. Los Angeles, CA: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1983.
- Farah, Charles. From the Pinnacle to the Temple. Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1980.
- Fee, Gordon D. "Hermeneutics and Historical Precedent--A Major Problem in Pentecostal Hermeneutics." In Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism, ed. Russell Spittler. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976, 118-32.
- Gause, Hollis R. "The Historical Development of the Doctrine of Holiness in the Church of God." In Centennial Heritage Papers, 1986, ed. Hollis R. Gause and Steven J. Land. Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1989, 9-29.
- _____. "Issues in Pentecostalism." In Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism, ed. Russell Spittler. Grand Rapids: Baker Book house, 1976, 106-16.
- _____. Church of God Polity. Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1973.
- Goff, J. R. Jr. Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and The Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism. Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1988.
- Hagin, Kenneth E. The Believer's Authority. Tulsa, OK: RHEMA Bible Church, 1984.
- _____. Zoe: The God-Kind of Life. Tulsa, OK: RHEMA Bible Church, 1981.
- Hollenweger, Walter. Review of Fields White Unto Harvest, Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism, by James R. Goff. In Bulletin of the European Pentecostal Theological Association, 8 (3 November 1989): 135-39.
- _____. The Pentecostals. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972.

- Holy Bible with Personal Commentary by Oral Roberts. King James Version. Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts Evangelistic Association, 1981.
- Hughes, Ray H. Church of God Distinctives. Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1968.
- Hunt, Dave and T. A. McMahon, The Seduction of Christianity. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1985.
- Lamsa, George M. The Holy Bible Translated from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts. Edited by Oral Roberts, Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Co., 1961.
- Lederle, Henry I. Treasures Old and New. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988.
- LeRoy, Douglas. I Didn't Know That! Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1973.
- MacDonald, William. "Pentecostal Theology: A Classical Viewpoint." In Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism, ed. Russell Spittler. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976, 58-74.
- Menzies, William W. "The Assemblies of God: 1941-1967--The Consolidation of a Revival Movement." Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1968.
- _____. Understanding Our Doctrine. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1980.
- Minutes, The Forty-Third General Council of the Assemblies of God. Indianapolis, IN: 8-13 August, 1989.
- Nelson, P. C. Bible Doctrines. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1971.
- Nichol, John Thomas. The Pentecostals. Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1966.
- North, Gary. Liberating Planet Earth. Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1987.
- Packer, James I. "Pentecostalism 'Reinvented,'" In Pentecostals From the Inside Out, ed. Harold B. Smith. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1990, 145-50.
- Paul, George Harold. "The Religious Frontier in Oklahoma: Dan T. Muse and the Pentecostal Holiness Church." Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Oklahoma Graduate College, Norman, Oklahoma, 1965.

- Paulk, Earl. Held In The Heavens Until. . . God's Strategy for Planet Earth. Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1985.
- _____. Satan Unmasked. Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1984.
- _____. That The World May Know. Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1987.
- _____. The Wounded Body of Christ. Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1983.
- _____. Thrust in the Sickle and Reap. Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1986.
- _____. To Whom is God Betrothed: Examining the Biblical Basis for the Church's Support of National Israel. Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1985.
- _____. Ultimate Kingdom. Atlanta, GA: K Dimension Publishers, 1986.
- Riggs, Ralph M. We Believe. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1954.
- Roberts, Oral. The Holy Spirit In The Now I. Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts University, 1974.
- _____. The Holy Spirit in the Now II. Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts University, 1974.
- _____. The Holy Spirit in the Now III. Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts University, 1975.
- _____. The New Testament Comes Alive: A Personal New Testament Commentary. Vol. 1, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts, 1984.
- _____. Three Most Important Steps to Your Better Health and Miracle Living. Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts University, 1976, Revised 1981.
- Roberts, Philemon. God's Will for God's People: A Treatise on Sanctification. Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1958.
- Slay, James L. This We Believe. Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1963.
- Stewart, Leon O., A. D. Beacham, Donna Stewart, and Shirley Spencer, eds. Pentecostal Holiness Church 1981 Manual. Franklin Springs, GA: Advocate Press, 1981.

Synan, J. A. Christian Life in Depth. Franklin Springs, GA: Advocate Press, n.d.

Synan, Vinson. The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971.

_____. The Twentieth-Century Pentecostal Explosion. Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1987.

The Pentecostal Holiness Church Manual. Franklin Springs, GA: Advocate Press, 1981.

Weeks, Tricia. The Provoker: A Biography of Earl Paulk. Atlanta: K Dimension Publishers, 1986.

Williams, Ernest S. Systematic Theology Vols. 1 and 2. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1953.

Williams, J. Rodman. Renewal Theology. Vol. 2, Salvation, the Holy Spirit, and Christian Living. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Academie Books, 1990.

Wood, Laurence W. Pentecostal Grace. Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press of the Zondervan Publishing Company, 1980.

Articles, Pamphlets and Interviews

"A Pentecostal Approach to Scripture," Class Handout, Church of God Graduate School of Theology, Spring, 1985.

Barron, Bruce. "Why Settle for Riches if You Can be a God? Updating the Word-Faith Controversy." In Pentecostalism in the Context of the Holiness Revival: Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Asbury Seminary, Wilmore, KY, 10-12 November, 1988, 1-42.

Bernard, David K. "The Oneness View of Jesus," In Old and New Issues in Pentecostalism: Society for Pentecostal Studies Nineteenth Annual Meeting, 16-18 November 1989, California Theological Seminary, Fresno, CA, A1-30.

Copeland, Kenneth. Now Are We In Christ Jesus. Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1980.

_____. Our Covenant with God. Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1976.

_____. "Take Time to Pray," Believer's Voice of Victory, 9 February 1987, 9.

_____. The Force of Righteousness. Forth Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1982.

_____. The Power of the Tongue. Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1980.

Dayton, Donald W. "Toward A Theological Analysis of Pentecostalism." In The Distinctiveness of Pentecostal-Charismatic Theology: 1985 Society for Pentecostal Studies Fifteenth Annual Meeting, Mother of God Community, Gaithersburg, MD, 14-16 November 1985, D1-26.

Dowd, Michael B. "Contours of a Narrative Pentecostal Theology and Practice." In The Distinctiveness of Pentecostal-Charismatic Theology: 1985 Society for Pentecostal Studies Fifteenth Annual Meeting, Mother of God Community, Gaithersburg, MD, 14-16 November 1985, E1-48.

Elliott, Winston. "Continuity/Discontinuity Between Protestantism and Pentecostalism." In Old and New Issues in Pentecostalism: Society for Pentecostal Studies Nineteenth Annual Meeting, 16-18 November 1989, California Theological Seminary, Fresno, CA, C1-23.

Ervin, Howard. Interview by James F. Breckenridge, Oral Roberts University, 18 June 1990.

_____. Interview by James F. Breckenridge, Oral Roberts University, 28 January 1991.

_____. "Hermeneutics: A Pentecostal Option." in PNEUMA 3:2 (Fall, 1981): 11-25.

"Foreign Missions Overview." Advance, September 1989, 27.

Griffin, William A. "Kingdom Now: New Hope or New Heresy?" In Probing Pentecostalism: Society for Pentecostal Studies Seventeenth Annual Meeting, 12-14 November 1987, CBN University, 226-67.

Hagin, Kenneth E. Having Faith In Your Faith. Tulsa, OK: RHEMA Bible Church, 1980.

_____. Seven Steps to Receiving the Holy Spirit. Garland, TX: Kenneth E. Hagin, n.d.

_____. The Bible Way to Receive the Holy Spirit. Tulsa, OK: RHEMA Bible Church, 1981.

_____. The Ministry of the Prophet. Tulsa, OK: Kenneth E. Hagin, 1984.

Hughes, Ray H. "The Inerrancy of the Bible." Church of God Evangel, 28 July 1980, 2, 26.

"IPHC United States Statistical Summary for 1988," General Evangelism Department, International Pentecostal Holiness Church, 1988.

Johns, Jackie David and Cheryl. "Yielding to the Spirit: A Pentecostal Approach to Bible Study." In Old and New Issues in Pentecostalism: Society for Pentecostal Studies Nineteenth Annual Meeting, 16-18 November 1989, California Theological Seminary, Fresno, CA, H1-31.

McGee, Gary B. "The Indispensable Calling of the Pentecostal Scholar." Assemblies of God Educator 35 (July-September 1990): 1, 3-5, 16.

McLean, Mark. "Toward A Pentecostal Hermeneutic." In PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies. 6 (Fall, 1984): 35-56.

Robeck, Cecil M. Interview by James F. Breckenridge, Fuller Theological Seminary, 16 May 1990.

Roberts, Oral. The Code of Honor. Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts University, 1984.

Rodgers, John. "Human Finitude and Evangelicals," Review of Evangelical Essentials: A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue in In Trust, New Year, 1990.

Sather, Gary. Interview by James F. Breckenridge, Oral Roberts University, 29 August 1990.

Sheppard, Gerald T. "The Seduction of Pentecostals Within the Politics of Exegesis: The Nicene Creed, Filioque, and Pentecostal Ambivalence Regarding an Ecumenical Challenge of a Common Confession of Apostolic Faith." In The Distinctiveness of Pentecostal-Charismatic Theology: 1985 Society for Pentecostal Studies Fifteenth Annual Meeting, Mother of God Community, Gaithersburg, MD, 14-16 November 1985, G1-15.

Synan, Vinson. Interview by James F. Breckenridge, Oral Roberts University, 3 April 1990.

The Fundamental Teachings of the Eastern Orthodox Church. St. Louis: OLOGOS, n.d.

"The General Secretary's Report." Advance, September 1989, 8-9.

Tinney, James S. "Black Origins of Pentecostalism," Christianity Today, 8 October 1971, 4-6.

Walker, Andrew. Interview by James F. Breckenridge, Oral Roberts University, 20 April 1990.