

STRAIGHTWAY

"And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him" [Mark 1:18].

CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

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A PERSPECTIVE OF MODERN PENTECOSTALISM

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Beginning in 1969, with several controversies from certain leaders of Pentecostalism, I occupied an impressive place in the oldest continuing pentecostal seminary in the United States. It was founded by a presbyterian minister who was also a lawyer. Also, I was a writer for a denominational Sunday School quarterly for adults, a member of a denominational board of education, and often a guest speaker for special occasions and Bible conferences in several pentecostal denominations. The controversies which I met in these areas led me to make a complete exodus from pentecostalism in identity and fellowship, and I finally founded Foundations Bible College in 1974. I was a member of the World Congress of Fundamentalists as it

was being formed and since that year have participated in every Congress since the first session in 1976.

This article is a presentation of a perspective outlined in four main areas: the history of pentecostalism; the early music of early pentecostalists; the contributions of pentecostalism; and the modern apostasy of pentecostalism.

The Early Birth of Pentecostalism

The history of the birth of early pentecostalism covers just about one century, from 1830 to 1930. In a twofold estimate we identify all the movements, first, that believed in the distinctive of "the baptism of the Holy Spirit" as a

complement doctrine to the teaching of being born of the Holy Spirit as related to regeneration by grace; and, second, of those who believed in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit as being available or active in the Body of Christ down through Church History. This is not a definition of pentecostalism that will suit all Christians, but we believe that history grants an association with pentecostalism in this designated 100 years, and especially in the early years of its beginning.

We could go back earlier to the days of George Whitefield and John Wesley to give examples of emotional excesses which appeared in the revivals of these two unusual men of God. George Whitefield had to return to America from England to especially admonish and correct emotionalism of some of his converts. Wesley identified men in his day whom he called "enthusiasts," such as Maxwell and Bell. It is historically incorrect to think that an excess of emotionalism is only a trademark of the pentecostalists and the charismatics. Every genuine revival has brought zeal to the front, which, at times, has gone beyond wisdom.

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Early Identifications

The following early movements in the nineteenth century association towards pentecostalism are seen in their order of appearances in history as: the Edward Irving movement which began in 1822 in London, England, and reached on into Scotland; indirectly, the J. N. Darby movement of the Plymouth Brethren which began in 1827 in London and Ireland and finally reached Scotland; also indirectly, the Dwight L. Moody ministry at Northfield, Massachusetts, from 1891 through 1898, a movement also led by the teaching and preaching of R. A. Torrey and his ministry on "the baptism of the Holy Spirit"; the Topeka, Kansas, ministry which began in 1891, a movement under Charles Parham; the Azusa Street Mission of Los Angeles, California, a movement under William J. Seymour, a convert of Charles Parham; the Evan Roberts ministry which began in 1904, a movement particularly in Wales; and the Smith Wigglesworth so-called "prophecy" and ministry which began in 1905, a movement commenced by that so-called "prophecy" as given to David Du Plessis in South Africa, and continuing on there through 1936.

Early Pentecostal Denominations

After these seven *movements* were theologically sifted, with some dying out in their own time, seven pentecostal *denominations* would be born into their distinctive existence as "pentecostalists."

This indicated that those who had shared earlier affinities with the doctrinal distinction of the difference

between being born of the Holy Spirit and Baptized (or Filled) with the Holy Spirit would not follow the direction and terminology of "pentecostalism." A number of them either ceased from existence or did not follow the direction that demanded certain definitions of "the Gifts of the Holy Spirit" with an emphasis upon what is now known as the "glossolalia," or formerly identified only as "speaking with tongues," or "speaking in unknown tongues."

All earlier teachings of "the baptism of the Holy Spirit" would now be tested by all of the former movements except those definitely desirous to pursue a pentecostal denomination. Their own unpretentious historians lay claim that the first pentecostal denomination was organized as early as 1896 and the last denomination as late as 1936. It became clear that the earlier influences of Darby and Moody-Torrey would be disconnected from the later growing pentecostal phenomena.

The seven historic pentecostal denominations are still known as: Church of God of Cleveland, Tennessee, 1896; Pentecostal Free Will Baptist, 1907; Pentecostal Holiness, 1911; Fire Baptize Holiness (Congregational Holiness or Pilgrim Holiness), 1911; Assemblies of God, 1914; International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, 1923; and Pentecostal Church of God of America, 1927. It should be acknowledged that the last two mentioned were the result of a split from earlier ones. Even in Canada there would be a denomination born near this later time.

The Early Music of Early Pentecostals

Although I have made a complete exodus from pentecostalism, I remember my own childhood background in an early, historic pentecostal home. My father was a minister in the early denominations. I had expressed as a child to my dear father, on a number of occasions, that pentecostal music was not to be understood as traditionally good church music. And those were the days of the early pentecostalist as identified with Stamps-Baxter music. My father did not have any background in music and was only a congregational singer, but he definitely saw the flesh in the early music, and others recognized it as well. My father, in those early days, always took a stand against anything that might appear to lean towards the flesh or any small group of individuals who through their own subjective impressions made claim of any additional revelation from God. My father died in 1969, but I'm sure he never imagined what would happen, finally, in pentecostalism and in the charismatic "Rock Gospel" music of our present day. Of course, since then we have seen a great "take-over" of contemporary Christian music in all of its forms and carnality.

But as a boy I grew up and saw the complete transition to the modern neo-pentecostal and charismatic apostasy. This apostasy now includes both false doctrinal belief and contemporary church music. In 1969 I found myself in the extreme crucible of doctrinal change by the general superintendents and bishops of the

various pentecostal denominations. I was “requested” to appear before “bishop’s councils” in those days for my strong Bible stand on the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God as well as the writing of my first textbook, *The Quest for Christian Purity* (1963).

The Early Pentecostal Campmeetings

The particular geography of Harnett, Sampson, and Johnston counties, in North Carolina, was the his-torical cradle for the birth of several national and/or state pentecostal denominations east of the Mississippi River at the beginning of the twentieth and after the Azusa Street mission in Los Angeles, California.

In those early years the newer pentecostal denominations, in their Bible conferences, campmeetings, and union services, worshipped with only songs of testimony, revival, and praise, with an emphasis upon Wesley’s “burning heart” worship or the early Nazarene Hymnal. There was not a general emphasis upon the older, more formal denominational church doctrine at the time of their birth. This was in a period when souls were first being saved by amazing grace, and young Christian lives were first being established in holiness and the spirit-filled walk. I believe, in those days, this beginning was among a people who truly believed in the fundamental teachings of the Holy Scriptures yet were without a formal or academic understanding of the orthodox seminary view. Any and every excess of the flesh, “in the Spirit” so-called, was

immediately dealt with and they were rare in those days. The simplistic Word of God, alone, was preached.

In contrast to that early time, the older denominations—presbyterians, methodists, and some baptists—already existing in this geographical area and more formal and traditional in their church music and liturgy, worshipped with more stately English and American hymns of Bible doctrine (the Trinity, the Word, creation, nature, and providence) rather than the musical emphasis of the new, early pentecostalists. The liturgy of these two contrasting protestant groups was different, but I believe they were both believers in the fundamental teachings of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as well as heirs to the Protestant Reformation. Also, there was some fellowship across these lines as well.

The Transition of Pentecostal Music

After World War II, although it was beginning to appear in the 1940s, the Youth for Christ came into existence. These were good days with this movement before the presence of contemporary music, including “Rock,” and Billy Graham’s compromises with the ecumenical movement and the apostasy of the time. The early Youth for Christ was a very blessed national experience, along with other conservative church movements which brought a genuine fellowship together. This made a transition and brought many of the new-born Christians of the early historic pentecostal denominations of the early twentieth century into

fellowship with the older orthodox denominations in evangelistic crusades, youth services, fellowship meetings, Sunday school workshops, and even Bible conferences. I was born again at Bob Jones University in the late 1940s and preached in the Youth for Christ, played the trombone, and my dear wife was a special soloist for a number of various youth groups of the time, including Christian boat cruises up the Potomac planned by the fellowship churches around Washington, D.C., where preaching and soul-winning were emphasized.

Because of this widening of the fellowship of the early pentecostals with other fundamental, orthodox churches and Christians, suddenly the music of the early pentecostals expanded to include the Rodeheaver Songbook and the Broadman Hymnal, as well as the "Singspiration Favorites" for special voices.

Now the entire repertory of Christian songs of the two formerly different groups became the very same. This included the song-forms of the anthem in which whole sections from the Bible were set to music; the congregational hymns, which set forth clear, definitive phrases of Bible doctrine; the testimony songs of evangelism, sung by soloists, duets, and quartets; and the youth chorus for the proper emotional responses to the young convert to Christianity such as joy, peace, faith, assurance, and edification of the heart. This variety also centered around great English and American hymn compositions with lyrics which were born earlier in history from the days of the sixteenth century through

the nineteenth century. However, there were some new composers in the early twentieth century who were beginning sacred compositions according to the simple traditions before them, too. The Lillenas publishing company (Nazarene) represented many of them, besides the updates of the Rodeheaver Songbook and the later "Singspiration Favorites."

The Biblical fire from these early pulpits, the revival hearts from the congregation, as well as the proficient presentations of the special singing groups brought worship services with great reverence, conviction, holiness, and humility to the people, as well as times of simple, refreshing blessing and joy. These were the most prominent conditions and responses of the human hearts in those days. There was not the modern rhythm and fast-moving, jumpy lyrics with little beauty in the melodic theme which now dominate the music of our time. This "middle period" of the pentecostal churches, immediately after World War II through the 1950s, was the best period for the best music of pentecostal denominations which had been born at the beginning of the 1900s. Songs came bursting forth: "Now I Belong to Jesus," "Ship, Ahoy," "It is Well With My Soul," "Jesus Saves," and many more. In fact, this period was the very best period of church music in the entire twentieth century. I look back now across almost seventy-five years of my own life and make that estimate of church music. It certainly cannot be said of the church in America now.

As a boy, I was there; my two

sisters were there; my dear mother was there; my father preached there—in the 1940s and the 1950s. Our lives were spent like this while living in Virginia and Washington, D.C. Dad and his family and friends, all came to Dunn in Harnett, Sampson, and Johnston counties, North Carolina, from time to time, when large crowds, to the thousands, attended. I saw that the music finally grew away from the Stamps-Baxter shaped notes and took hold of the traditional, classical forms of the English and American hymns, with even a church orchestra, now and then, filling the air.

But What Has Happened to Church Music Now, Everywhere?

“Rock and Roll” music was really born in the 1950s but exploded in the 1960s and took over America and finally the world. Its early history reveals that it was called “Rock and Roll” as a result of a listening audience who responded to disk jockey Alan Freed by naming it so from a “rock and roll” action which accompanies the illustration of a Saturday night sexual affair in the back seat of an automobile. Elvis Presley, in a decade, would tell us that his “pelvis rock,” rhythm-beat started in his mind from his memory of his home pentecostal church in Memphis, Tennessee, when the church became emotional and shouted in the aisles. I attended, as an observer only, the Charismatic Conference, July 22-26, 1987, in New Orleans, in which I witnessed a “prophetic utterance,” so-called, which was given by a reputed “Charismatic prophet.” He said that “God has

reserved ‘Rock and Roll’ music for the end-time of history because of His reaction against formal church music and doctrine, and the need of God’s people, emotionally and spiritually, in their victory and power for the last days.”

Therefore, from these generational evidences, we can see that both the world and the church have joined forces with the sound of each other. Many, many composers, performers, and musicians have consorted together to weld a synthesis in the reputation of fleshly and spiritual concepts into the modern, ecumenical secular-religious amalgamation. It is this kind of music which is dismantling the former classical and traditional standards of music in the church. It has already happened.

How Did It Happen?

The answer is simple: along with the departure of the modern churches away from the spirit and truth of the Bible, the music itself as an art form has forsaken the law, order, design, purpose, and beauty of the “T,” “C,” and “D” mathematical forms for the classical and traditional standards of compositions and arrangements and has left its moorings of historic, Biblical Christianity. The “T” theory deals with tone, tune, time, tonic, timbre, tempo, theme, theory, etc.; the “C” theory deals with chord, concord, consonance, cadence, chromatic, concerto, contrapuntal, counterpoint, composition, etc.; and the “D” theory deals with diatonic, diapason, dynamics, dissonance, decadence, demented, drugs, deva, etc. When music persists in dissonance, and the beat of rhythm cheats in its classical

time in note or measure, the only thing left is discord, noise, and false rhythm. Modern "Rock and Roll" music, so-called, cheats and compromises itself in each of the above-mentioned rules of order and uses the loud decibels to cover it up. It is not the syncopated note here and there that is not permitted in music; it is the cheating of the true, mathematical value that causes the fleshly and sensuous to appear in the syncopation and otherwise. When you mix country, rhythm-and-blues, and other modern concepts together, you simply get some form of "Rock Music."

When musical "form" is overcome by human "freedom" (lawlessness), the noble art forms of music are destroyed. Then, as contemporary church music has become, it is no more a noble art form fit or decent for worship of the true and living God, but rather a worldly concoction of the sensual and fleshly song.

In Fundamentalism

It is the concerned opinion of this writer, there are too many musicians, even in fundamentalism, who have endeavored to carve out a special niche for their own musical position and, in turn, gain a following after them. This has now produced too many opinions and followings for the churches to rightly choose in order to know what is meant by scriptural separation. Therefore, there is no unity of definition and solidarity among us in our Christian testimony for church music and family music in fundamentalism. Some do not believe "a scriptural separation" can be applied at all to music, per se; others

draw the line at the composition only, not the composer or performer; still others believe that if the message or lyrics are right, then that is all that is necessary to be right. Still others do take a stand against some performers like Steve Green, but do not object to the use of Ralph Carmichael, a drunkard and one who fellowships with the apostasy. Very, very few choose to draw the line at the very place we draw it for who will preach in our pulpits, while others no longer draw a line even in the guest preacher who preaches in their pulpit who fellowships those who fellowship the apostasy.

Considerable time now has passed since the earlier beginnings of Dr. Frank Garlock, Dr. William McCrea, Tim Fisher, and others. They are typical of those whose moorings were more sure in their earlier days, but now they have mutated away from scriptural separation as even they in their earlier days were reputed to believe. It is the humble opinion of this writer that there was a day when scriptural separation was honorably a part of the orthopraxy of the fundamentalists, but now the orthodoxy hangs on a door of one hinge. Orthopraxy is missing from a much needed door of consistent testimony in our time. It is too late to have an agreed testimony of church music among the fundamentalists any more. We have taken too much time with the matter of "Guilty By Association" as it is pled for against those who are "offended" by a certain music in which they should not be judgmental, while all the time the same persons are extremely unkind and insulting to those who they "offend" in reaction against them. I have copies of letters by

such men who not only “offend” but will judge the motive of the separatist— which only God can do.

The battle for scriptural separation in fundamentalism is passed; we will no longer monitor or see a different perspective in the issue. We must live with the present difference and see where it will take us in the next generation. Each one of us must seek God about changes that could be coming to fundamentalism as a result of the lack of diligence in church music. Even if we reject the formal Contemporary Christian Music (CCM), it is no indication we will reject contemporary christian music. Undoubtedly, the time has come when the Bible and prayerfulness could bring about a separation from a fundamentalist as well as an ecumenist.

The Contribution of Historic Pentecostalism

The contribution of historic pentecostalism lies in two prominent areas: first, the earlier pentecostal movement was going along parallel to the last of the true revivals before them; second, the earlier pentecostal movement did have distinctive doctrinal affinities with the Protestant Reformation as well as the Fundamentalist movement which commenced in the early twentieth century against the liberalism and modernism which had crept into the mainline denominations. It must be remembered that there was at least one pentecostal denomination which did not have any Articles of Faith concerning their belief in the Gifts of the Spirit or the matter of “speaking in tongues.” It is very unfortunate

that the fundamentalists did not encourage more Biblical pentecostalists. However, among a very few of the earlier fundamentalists there were several of them, like Bob Jones, Sr., and William Ward Ayer, etc., who did encourage some of the individual pentecostal leaders of that time who were sound in their doctrine. It must be remembered that most of the earlier pentecostalists came from the Methodists and Baptists with a smaller number from the Presbyterians. This index is not as well known as it should have been, but other historians do note it. It is the confirmed conviction of this writer that from his studies he believes the earlier pentecostal preachers avidly contributed to the preaching of the second coming of the Lord Jesus above and ahead of the former denominations of their time. Most of the early pentecostalists were pre-millennialists. That is not true, now. Because of the claim of “awakenings” among them, now many have moved to the post-millennialist position. There were some union services held between some pentecostalists in the evangelistic crusades of the fundamentalists. My own father, from the 1930s and even as late as the 1950s, was often involved in those crusades of the early fundamentalists in Virginia, Washington, D.C., and other places. He was truly a fundamentalist in their Biblical affinities.

As a boy, growing up in pentecostalism, I never met a pentecostalist who did not believe in the infallibility, inspiration, inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures; the trinity; the Virgin Birth of the Lord Jesus; the sinless life of Christ; the Substitutionary

Atonement; the Crucifixion, the Bodily Resurrection, the Bodily Ascension of Jesus; the Second Coming of Christ; the Millennial Reign of Christ; and the destinies of heaven and hell according to the Holy Scriptures. A number of the early pentecostals had insights to the Bible without the theological and academic vocabulary to go with it.

As a boy, growing up in pentecostalism, I never met a pentecostalist who did not consider himself a part of the Protestant Reformation Faith, the revivals of Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, John Wesley, and other true Awakenings and Revivals of the past. The King James Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures was the only English version they knew. Their faith was so simple; their hearts were fervent; but they were not Christians who would go beyond the fundamentals of the Christian Faith into the depths of the various theological systems which came after the Reformation. The early pentecostals were simple, honest, and hungry for God. I also knew some hypocrites and fleshly individuals, but they did not lead in the work in the early days. The definitions of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit were not strained or according to the neo-pentecostal and charismatic new definitions. Most of their definitions were quite practical rather than mystical and unscriptural. They simply prayed for the sick, had good impressions; many of them were extremely honest and would not dare make the great claims of the modern pentecostalists. They would live right, work hard, and raise their families according to righteousness and love.

The Apostasy of the Pentecostalists

The apostasy of the pentecostalists also commenced in the early 1950s within their own ranks. They were not deceived or misled by the heresies from without their own denominations. Their emphasis upon the Gifts of the Spirit increased phenomenally, extending greater liberties to the flesh and emotionalism. They began to neglect to believe and teach the Christ of the Manger and the Christ of the Cross of Calvary; the emphasis upon "The Upper Room" and diversified definitions of the Gifts, new revelations, voices, visions, and dreams came. Even in the late 1940s and through the 1950s, the names of Oral Roberts, Branham, Tommy Hicks, Jack Coe, A. A. Allen, David Du Plessis, and other names of lesser note were beginning to influence the pentecostal denominational leaders as well as a few other denominations. These earlier men were considered, at that time, independent personalities that threatened the movement. They preached openly prosperity theology and a new "divine healing." They told it everywhere that God's people should have the best of a materialistic life and that God would reward "faith" for there was nothing impossible that faith could and would not do.

A little span of time elapsed when controversy began about them. They had gone further in their claims of visions, dreams, audible voices from God, so-called, as well as the boast of the power of healing in their right hand along their own self-personified prayer lines. Formerly, the earlier pentecostalists never had prayer

lines but prayed for the sick through their pastor and his deacons or elders (in the plural). However, the pentecostal personalities won all of the pentecostal denominational leaders, and they have succumbed to their influence and finance. Businessmen of wealth and influence were a singular force that changed the denominational pentecostal leaders. Money changed the view of the Gifts of the Spirit and the organization of the churches. This was already in effect by the end of the 1950s.

There was a remnant, however, who did not embrace or fellowship such a departure from their Biblical faith. However, the neo-pentecostal historians of the new movements refused to write up those controversies or their Biblical arguments. That remnant did not believe in extant revelation outside of the Holy Scriptures. Neither did they define the Gifts of the Holy Spirit as the new pentecostal crusaders did. They believed strongly in the Protestant Reformation, while the new pentecostals and charismatics only preached that it was unfortunate how that the reformers, like Martin Luther, did not see that the teaching of the Holy Spirit was much greater, and would have been more effective if the reformers had not spent their time on doctrine and theology. Of course, the remnant was attacked, and ultimately the pentecostal denominations departed from their own earlier moorings and earlier doctrines and removed the true pastors of the Word of God from their pulpits and sent them to the backwaters of the small churches. This is the very same thing that the Methodists and others did to their pastors when modernism

came to their denominations.

The main departure from the early pentecostals became manifest in the strange definition and interpretation and changing of the place of the various Gifts of the Spirit in the churches. Of course, we must acknowledge that most of the earlier people who followed the pentecostal movement and denomination commenced among the common folk. There was considerable ignorance in some places. The problem of this particular observation concerns the fact that their pastors, evangelists, and ministers were not usually well-trained for the thorough needs of the pulpit and the congregation. There were a few who were exceptionally trained and godly, but they could not be everywhere. This was compounded by the poverty of music as espoused by the use of the Stamps-Baxter congregational and special musical groups. This became a half-way house to the later "Rock Gospel," which we have presented in this article, which has, since then, become rampant among the neo-pentecostals. Singing began, even in the late 1950s, to be more important than the preaching of the Word of God.

By the 1960s, the pentecostal phenomena entered into the liberal, formal denominations and was identified as "neo-pentecostal." The Episcopalians were the first to "join-in" in the state of California. We must keep in mind that this decade was the time when the "new-pentecostal" (or "neo") definition among their denominations entered the liberal churches and became the title for the first new movement. This title did not apply to the earlier

pentecostalists. In the 1960s they were then identified as "neo-pentecostalists." So-called "impressions," "emotional demonstrations," "tongues," "dreams," "visions," and "voices" became most prominent in their worship services. Personally, I have not known of sinners who became Christians who became neo-pentecostalists. I am sure there were some. However, the neo-pentecostalist and charismatic converts simply came from liberal churches and remained liberal but added the pentecostal label.

By the 1970s, the neo-pentecostals were received at Notre Dame in the high ranks of the priests, bishops, and nuns of Romanism. The name of "charismatic" began, more and more, to replace "neo-pentecostal." At least one cardinal endorsed the "outpouring" at Notre Dame. By 1987, in the New Orleans Charismatic Conference, it was declared that the word "charismatic" was to be the new title of the interdenominational pentecostalists of the modern "awakening." Priests spoke of "the Baptism of the Holy Ghost" as simply a renewal of that which the Roman Catholics had received at their infant baptism or confirmation at age twelve.

There still remained a very small remnant in the pentecostal denominations who spoke of themselves as "puritans in pentecostalism," but they had very little influence towards their puritan hope of changing things. There were fewer yet who made an exodus, entirely, from all pentecostalism. Dr. O. Talmadge Spence was one of the first of them. He became a separatist

fundamentalist and remains so until this day.

On the horizon, the "Vineyard Ministry" is the most powerful influence with its boast of the "laughing revival," and it is the most dangerous of any pentecostal ministry. There is occult among them as there is also in spots throughout the entire charismatic movement. The Vineyard preachers boast that they have gone beyond Bible doctrine and that the Holy Spirit alone is leading them. They believe God is now tearing up all former doctrinal stipulations and bringing in the immediate leadership of the Holy Spirit to His people.

All of the present pentecostal movements endorse and fellowship both the Billy Graham ministry as well as Roman Catholicism. It was Pope John XXIII who predicted there would be "a new pentecost" after his day if the Roman Vatican and Roman Catholic people would open up "their window" to it. It has indeed happened, and it is the most artistic deception and apostasy of our time. Far greater than the lesser ecumenists, Promise Keepers, etc. are the Charismatic forces in the world.

Our understanding must be kept simple in this: the greatest heresy the pentecostalists have ever espoused has been, first, the substitution of extant revelations for the Bible; and, second, the exalting of "speaking with tongues" as the hallmark for the highest spiritual evidences of the Christian life. Also, "speaking in tongues" has become an avenue for revelation later than the Bible for the latter days.