

A SURVEY OF THE HISTORY AND DISTINCTIVES OF PENTECOSTALISM

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A SURVEY OF THE HISTORY AND DISTINCTIVES OF PENTECOSTALISM

Compiled by Dennis McBride - 1993

We must understand the history of Pentecostal thought if we are to understand the modern Charismatic Movement.

I. PENTECOSTALISM'S THEOLOGICAL ROOTS

A. JOHN WESLEY

John Wesley developed and taught the Wesleyan Holiness second work of grace doctrine, which says that at some point subsequent to salvation, and in response to his more complete dedication to God, the believer should experience a special infusion of the Holy Spirit's power (commonly called the doctrine of subsequence, second work of grace, deeper life, entire sanctification, or Christian perfectionism). Every believer should earnestly seek and expect this experience.

Today the Wesleyan Church and Church of the Nazarene view themselves as preservers of original holiness theology.

B. INDEPENDENT REVIVAL CHURCHES

As early Methodist holiness cooled, various independent revival churches sprang up to carry on and further develop the doctrine.

C. CHARLES FINNEY

Evangelist Charles Finney was the first to equate the second work of grace with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

D. EARLY PENTECOSTALISM

Early Pentecostalism was a synthesis of the teachings of many of these holiness churches and movements, but its key distinctive was the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by speaking in tongues.

II. PENTECOSTALISM'S BEGINNINGS

A. CHARLES FOX PARHAM (1873-1929)

1. Known as the "Founder" of the Pentecostal Movement, Charles Parham founded Bethel Bible School, Topeka, Kansas. It was a center of holiness and divine healing teaching.

2. Parham wanted to restore first century apostolic faith to the church. He challenged his students to study Acts 2 to determine the true evidence for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. They concluded that speaking with other tongues was the true evidence.
3. On January 1, 1901, student Agnes Ozman reportedly experienced the new blessing of the Spirit's baptism with its attendant tongues-speaking. With that, the Pentecostal Movement was off and running.

“Miss Ozman allegedly began speaking in the ‘Chinese language’ while a ‘halo seemed to surround her head and face.’ Following this experience, Ozman was unable to speak in English for three days, and when she tried to communicate by writing, she reportedly wrote in Chinese characters. During the next few days, about half the student body likewise received the experience. Sometime later Parham himself was baptized in the Spirit and from then on preached the doctrine in all of his meetings” (Moriarty, *The New Charismatics*, p. 22).

B. WILLIAM JOSEPH SEYMOUR (1870-1922)

1. William Seymour was a black Baptist preacher turned holiness advocate. He attended Parham's Bible Training School and adopted the view that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was even greater than a second work of grace: it was a third work (First comes salvation, then sanctification, then the baptism).
2. Seymour received the tongues experience at a prayer meeting in L.A., after which he founded the Apostolic Faith Mission at 312 Azusa Street. He held his first meeting there on April 14, 1906. That was the beginning of the Azusa Street Revival.
3. Of those meetings the Los Angeles Times reported, under the title, “Weird Babel of Tongues”:

“Meetings are held in a tumble-down shack on Azusa Street, near San Pedro Street, and the devotees of the weird doctrine practice the most fanatical rites, preach the wildest theories and work themselves into a state of mad excitement in their peculiar zeal. Colored people and a sprinkling of whites compose the congregation, and night is made hideous in the neighborhood by the howlings of the worshippers, who spend hours swaying forth and back in a nerve-racking attitude of prayer and supplication. They claim to have the

‘gift of tongues’ and to be able to comprehend the babel” (Moriarty, p. 21).

4. One would expect a secular newspaper to be unsympathetic to religious zeal, however, in October, 1906, Seymour invited Parham to hold a revival at the Azusa Street Mission, and Parham himself was repelled by the “wild uproar and spiritual pandemonium as he witnessed mediums from the numerous occult societies of Los Angeles contribute their seances and trances to the services” (Moriarty, p. 23).
5. Consequently, Seymour and Parham parted company after Seymour failed to heed Parham’s warnings about the dangerous excesses of his meetings.
6. Despite the split, the Azusa revival continued to spread with increased vigor.
7. The Azusa Street Mission became a training ground for Pentecostal Missionaries, who were sent throughout the world to spread their doctrinal views.

C. THE AZUSA STREET REVIVAL

From 1906 to 1913 the Azusa Street Revival took place at the Apostolic Faith Mission in Los Angeles.

“In a day of racial segregation, blacks and whites assembled together in worship and ignored the ‘color-line.’ Men and women shouted, wept, danced, fell into trances, spoke and sang in tongues, and interpreted the messages into English” (Moriarty, p. 21).

D. THEOLOGICAL AFTERMATH

1. Parham and Seymour were monumental figures in Pentecostalism.
2. Parham gave the movement its doctrine of tongues as evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and its view of the restoration of the apostolic faith in the latter times (more about that later).
3. Seymour intensified and popularized Parham’s views.
4. Every Pentecostal movement owes its origins directly or indirectly to the Azusa Street Revival.

II. PENTECOSTALISM'S CHARACTERISTICS

As Pentecostalism progressed, five characteristics developed, and are still true of mainline denominational Pentecostalism:

A. IT IS RESTORATIONIST IN ORIENTATION

Tenets of restorationism:

1. God is reviving the church, who lost her power historically.
2. He is restoring her first-century apostolic authority and power.
3. The sign of restoration revival is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

B. IT EXALTS SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS

1. It is experience-oriented, which blurs the centrality of Scripture. Experience has become the measure of truth.
2. Spirituality is measured by the number or intensity of one's encounters.

C. IT IS PRONE TOWARD PERSONALITIES

In addition to high profile, highly emotional preachers, the movement continues to generate a slate of Christian celebrities and personalities (e.g., musicians and actors).

D. IT IS THEOLOGICALLY, DOCTRINALLY, AND BIBLICALLY THIN

1. It places a heavy emphasis on Pentecostal distinctives (healing, Baptism of Holy Spirit, tongues, Second coming of Christ).
2. Often other doctrines are virtually ignored.
3. Systematic biblical exposition is almost non-existent.

E. IT DESIRES UNITY IN THE CHURCH, YET OFTEN BRINGS DIVISION.

III. THE NEO-PENTECOSTAL DELIVERANCE REVIVAL

A. ITS DEFINITION

“Neo” = New.

B. ITS SPREAD

The movement was spread chiefly by independent preachers who:

1. Subscribed to Pentecostal doctrine but were not aligned with or accountable to a Pentecostal denomination (such as the Assemblies of God or Four Square Church).
2. Had a stronger emphasis on miraculous manifestations.
3. Deliverance evangelists saw themselves as spiritual catalysts in God’s healing process.

C. ITS CHARACTERISTICS

1. Popularized a doctrine of salvation that included physical health and healing as an essential part of the believer’s deliverance.
2. By 1940 the central focus of revival meetings was the moment of miracle (when the “miracle event” occurred in the meeting).
3. Responsible church leaders (especially Assemblies of God) were appalled and disgusted by the outlandish claims and personality cults emerging from this new emphasis.
4. Questionable motives and methods of fundraising developed.
 - a. They taught not only physical but financial healing.
 - b. Were powerful money raisers.
5. They taught a distorted view of faith
 - a. Faith = a power or force with which Christians could supposedly “move things” - even the God of the universe.
 - b. Made God an impersonal responder to man’s wishes. Robbed him of His divine sovereignty, and His loving

prerogative to say no to His children when it's in their best interest.

6. Preoccupation with Satan, demons, and spiritual warfare.
7. Incessant boasting of new revelations.
8. Anti-intellectual spirit.

The Holy Spirit will teach you all things, so why burden yourself with academics?

9. Despite all that, the movement was generally viewed as indicative a deeper work of the Holy Spirit.

IV. NEO-PENTECOSTAL DELIVERANCE REVIVAL'S KEY PERSONALITIES

Three key individuals sparked the revivalist movement and played a prominent role in shaping and giving it further direction: William Branham, Oral Roberts, Gordon Lindsay.

A. WILLIAM BRANHAM (1909-65)

1. Initiator and acknowledged chief “prophet” of the movement.
2. Described as “A small, apparently humble, mild-mannered individual with penetrating eyes, he held audiences spellbound with tales of perpetual dialogue with God and mysterious visitations from angels. The simplicity of his messages had worldwide appeal, and his legendary gift, the ‘word of knowledge,’ left audiences in awe. Branham spent long grueling hours on the platform praying for the sick and pronouncing them healed. The neo-Pentecostal world believed Branham to be a prophet to their generation” (M, p. 40).
3. He reported that throughout his life he was **guided by an angel** who gave him “the charge (to pursue his ministry)” in 1946.
4. His goal was to reach the world with the “deliverance message,” which had been given to him by an “angelic being.”

5. His teachings became increasingly controversial as time passed. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, many ministry doors were being closed to him and his message.
6. Some of his doctrines:
 - a. “Latter rain” of Joel 2:23 = independent neo-Pentecostal churches of his day.

(Compare Joel 2:23 w/ 2:28, noting that v. 28, which they relate to Day of Pentecost, follows the promises of v. 23).
 - b. Viewed denominationalism as the church’s greatest enemy. Prophesied that by 1977 all denominations would be devoured by the World Council of Churches under the control of the Roman Catholics, and that the Rapture and then worldwide destruction would occur.
 - c. That Satan and Eve had engaged in sexual intercourse out of which Cain was conceived.
 - d. Pioneered the theory of imparting the Holy Spirit and various other spiritual gifts through the laying on of hands.
 - e. Prophesied that Los Angeles was about to “go beneath the ocean.”
 - f. Declared that the doctrine of the Trinity was a “Babylonian heresy” inherited from Roman Catholicism.
 - g. In 1963 he allegedly received a revelation that he was Elijah, the end-time messenger of the last days. The revelation demanded that Christians leave their “dead churches” and “denominations” and pledge their loyalty to him.
7. Note: Positive confession Charismatics (Kenneth Hagin, for example) consider Branham to be one of the greatest prophets of the twentieth century.
8. Branham’s theology profoundly affects the charismatic theology of our day.

9. Critique:

“Two things are certain: Branham’s doctrinal aberrations and false prophecies validate that he was not a prophet; and his unbiblical angelic encounters may have been the result of tremendous stress and fatigue, his imagination, a lie, or the Devil, but they were not from God” (M, p. 122).

“His experiences in and of themselves were of a personal, subjective nature and will never, this side of heaven, be proven or disproven by objective inquiry. . . . Such speculations force us to confront the claims of Branham not as to whether he truly received angelic visitations but rather regarding (1) the claims he made for angelic dispensing spiritual gifts; (2) the doctrinal content of his teachings as a result of his experiences; and (3) whether these experiences produced godly character and maturity in Branham’s spiritual life” (M., p. 120).

B. ORAL ROBERTS

1. The premier “healer” of the early movement.
2. First to bring healing crusades into homes via television.

C. GORDON LINDSAY

Gifted administrator, organizer, and publicist of the movement.

V. THE LATTER DAY RAIN MOVEMENT

A. ITS DEVELOPMENT AND INFLUENCE

1. The Neo-Pentecostal deliverance movement gave birth to the Latter Rain Movement in 1948.
2. Formally called The New Order of The Latter Rain.
3. Taught that God was progressively restoring first century truths to the church beginning with the Reformation. The Latter Rain movement would usher in a complete restoration of first-century truths.
4. Their doctrinal positions were significant in that their influence on the contemporary Charismatic Movement are clear.

B. ITS THEOLOGICAL DISTINCTIVES

1. Restorationism

The view that God has been progressively restoring truths to the church since the Reformation. These restored truths include justification by faith (Martin Luther), water baptism by immersion (the Anabaptists), holiness (John Wesley), divine healing (A.B. Simpson and John Alexander Dowie), and the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Azusa Street Revival), followed by a flurry of restored truths emerging from God's final move: The Latter Rain.

2. Fivefold Ministry

The belief that apostles and prophets are being restored to the church, making the fivefold ascension gifts recorded in Eph. 4:11 fully operational. The church cannot be fully effective without all five offices (apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher) functioning in the Body of Christ.

3. Spiritual Disciplines

Various disciplines like deliverance (the casting out of evil spirits to free the believer from sickness, sin, and demonic influences), fasting (going without food for long periods of time to liberate the body from sickness, fatigue, and human weakness), and the laying on of hands (a ritual performed by anointed leaders to impart the Holy Spirit and other spiritual blessings and gifts) were all viewed as necessary elements to restore the church to its New Testament brilliance.

4. Prophecy

The view that the practice of personal prophecy is being restored to the church. Prophecy would no longer be restricted to general words of exhortation, but would include personal detailed revelations for guidance and instruction.

5. Recovery of True Worship

The belief that God's manifested presence is dependent upon a certain order of worship involving singing in tongues, clapping, shouting, singing prophecies, and a new order of praise dancing.

6. *Immortalization of the Saints*

The belief that only those believers moving in the truth of Latter Rain restoration, not necessarily all in the church, will attain an immortal state before Christ returns.

7. *Unity of the Faith*

The doctrine that the church will attain unity of the faith before Christ returns. (Moriarty, pp. 60-61.)

C. *A comparison of the characteristics of various Pentecostal movements*

<i>PENTECOSTALISM</i>	<i>NEO-PENTECOSTAL DELIVERANCE</i>	<i>LATTER RAIN MOVEMENT</i>
1. Restorationist	1. Restorationist	1. Restorationist
2. Experience-centered	2. Experience-centered	2. Experience-centered
3. Personality-centered	3. Personality-centered	3. Personality-centered
4. Theologically thin	4. Theologically thin	4. Theologically thin
5. Divisive	5. Divisive	5. Divisive
	6. Sensationalistic	6. Sensationalistic
	7. Cultlike figures	7. Cultlike figures
	8. Erroneous deliverance methods	8. Erroneous deliverance methods
	9. Scandalous fund-raising techniques	9. Scandalous fund-raising techniques
	10. False faith appropriation	10. False faith appropriation
	11. Preoccupation with Satan	11. Preoccupation with Satan
	12. New revelations	12. New revelations
	13. Anti-intellectualism	13. Anti-intellectualism
		14. New restoration orientation
		15. Fivefold ministry
		16. Extreme spiritual disciplines
		17. A new prophetic outlook
		18. Recovery of true worship
		19. Immortalization of the saints
		20. Unity of the faith (or the faithful)

Source: Michael Moriarty, *The New Charismatics*, Zondervan, p. 62.

VI. *THE FULL GOSPEL BUSINESS MEN'S FELLOWSHIP*

A. *ITS BEGINNINGS*

1. It's founder, Demos Shakarian, claimed that God gave him a vision of how he would reach the world with the full gospel message through his organization.
2. Held its first meeting in 1953, with Oral Roberts as its speaker.

B. ITS GOALS

1. The goal of the Pentecostal movement was not to create a new denomination, but to infiltrate all denominations with the Pentecostal message.
2. This has been accomplished largely through the FGBMF.

VII. THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT (RENEWAL)

A. ITS BEGINNINGS AND IMPACT

1. April 3, 1960, Father Dennis Bennett of St. Mark's Episcopal parish in Van Nuys, California, announced to his congregation that he had received the Baptism of the H. S. with accompanying gift of tongues.
2. He resigned his pastorate and became vicar of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Seattle, WA, which grew into one of the largest charismatic churches in the Northwest.
3. By 1966 the movement had penetrated the Roman Catholic Church.
4. In 1974, 30,000 Charismatic Catholics gathered at Notre Dame to celebrate the movements 8th birthday.
5. Throughout the 1960s virtually every denomination experienced "speaking in tongues."

B. ITS DISTINCTIVE CLAIMS

1. Experiencing Jesus - Personal (spiritual, or often allegedly physical and actual) encounters with Jesus which led to being baptized with the Holy Spirit.
2. Power - Spiritual power necessary for godly living, witnessing, obedience to God's Word, serving others.
3. Worship - Emphases on contemporary and vital worship.
4. Prayer - "Praying in the Spirit" became a common phrase, meaning "praying in unknown tongues." Supposedly higher plane of worship.
5. Sign gifts - First-century miracle power and manifestations.

6. New revelations - God speaking directly to individual believers. This is the heart of the movement.
7. The Word - The Baptism supposedly enables believers to know the deeper truths of the Scriptures, which are revealed directly by the Holy Spirit.
8. Demonic activity - Heightened awareness of spiritual warfare. Practicing gifts of deliverance and exorcism.
9. Apocalyptic - Increasing expectancy of the Lord's return.
10. Evangelism - Baptism of the Spirit supposedly brought greater power for effective evangelism.

VIII. THE MANIFESTED SONS OF GOD

A. ITS CHARACTERISTICS

1. Most militant Charismatic group.
2. Known also as the "Church of the Living Word" or "The Walk."

B. ITS THEOLOGICAL DISTINCTIVES

1. Emphasized "new levels of revelation" through apostles and elders.
2. Taught three unorthodox doctrines:
 - a. Humanity can become divine
 - b. Sinless perfection
 - c. Christians can become Christ (Present immortality of the saints)
3. The group dissipated but their doctrines were assimilated into other Pentecostal groups and are still evident today.

IX. THE POSITIVE CONFESSION MOVEMENT

A. ITS DEFINITION

"Those promulgating positive confession theology teach that believers can bring into existence what they state with their tongue, since faith is a confession and the tongue is a force. Many contemporary televangelists push this doctrine as a key to health, wealth, and happiness" (Moriarty, p. 78).

B. ITS FOUNDER

1. Originated with E.W. Kenyon: A controversial pastor, evangelist, author.
2. He was influenced by the teachings of Charles Wesley Emerson at Emerson College, which embraced New Thought Metaphysics (which teaches that true reality is spiritual, that the spiritual is the cause of all physical effects, and that the human mind through positive mental attitude and positive confession has the power to create its own reality: either health and wealth, or sickness and poverty).
3. Kenyon was not a Pentecostal, but widely read by them.

C. ITS THEOLOGICAL DISTINCTIVES

1. Avid promoter of divine healing and linked bodily healing to the strength of one's confession.
2. Believed that Christ's death provided healing and prosperity to all believers. They had simply to confess it to be true.
3. Also taught that Jesus Christ was imputed with Satan's nature on the cross, died spiritually, and went to hell to suffer in our place.
4. His theological legacy includes four cardinal doctrines of the Word of Faith (Positive Confession) movement:
 - a. Guaranteed health
 - b. Guaranteed wealth and prosperity
 - c. The spiritual death of Christ
 - d. Christians are little gods

D. ITS INFLUENCE

1. His doctrines were adopted by current TBN regulars, Kenneth Hagin, Copeland, Capps, Price, and others.
2. It has been documented that Hagin, the contemporary patriarch of the Pos. Confession movement, gleaned most, if not all, of his teachings from Kenyon, despite his claim that they were given to him directly by God via visions, revelations, and personal visitations of Jesus.

X. THE NEW CHARISMATICS

THEIR THEOLOGICAL AGENDA INCLUDES:

A. ESTABLISH THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH.

Christianize the world so Christ will return.

B. RESTORATION OF THE CHURCH TO THE FIRST CENTURY AUTHORITY AND POWER.

“According to the new Charismatics, restoration involves the recovery of all divine principles and truths that were known, believed, taught, and experienced by the first-century church” (Moriarty, p. 90).

C. THE FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY (EPH. 4:11).

D. WALKING IN PRESENT-TRUTH (NEW REVELATIONS).

Restoration prophet Bill Hamon claims that any Christian (even fellow Charismatics) who does not abandon his or her denominational affiliation, embrace Present-truth teachings, and become full-fledged restorationists, will eventually team up with the Antichrist. Any minister who dares oppose Present-truth teachings will be discarded by God.

“The Basic-Charismatics will eventually become full fledged fruitful Present-truth Charismatics or they will wither on the vine. They will eventually have to make a decision between staying with their denomination, which may join the antichrist world church system, or going all the way with the anointed Body of Christ.

“Before Jesus returns, every Christian will have to make a decision between being identified with the humanistic denominational structured church system or the spiritual Present-truth restored Church. Basically, these individuals are called "Charismatic," but they are not the ones who made the Charismatic truths known around the world. . . .

“Denominational pride or an independent self-willed and proud spirit will separate a Christian minister from the Bride of Christ just as it separated Lucifer from being a minister of God in His heavenly domain. God sacrificed Jesus for the formation of the Church and its perfection in unity. How much more will God sacrifice any minister who is hindering the perfection and unification of His Church? No individual is indispensable” (*The Eternal Church*, pp. 274, 333. Cited in Moriarty, pp. 88-89).

E. UNITY OF THE FAITH

1. Unity of heart must take precedence over unity of doctrine.
2. Jesus and the gospel are all that matters.
3. Jesus *cannot* return until the church is united.

F. DOMINIONISM

1. The church must be militant to recapture the domain surrendered to Satan in the fall.
2. Dominion rallies through the country (Larry Lea, etc.).
3. Pat Robertson, 700 Club founder and former Presidential candidate said,

“What's coming next? . . . I want you to think of a world (with) . . . a school system . . . where humanism isn't taught anymore and people sincerely believe in the living God . . . A world in which there are no more abortions . . . juvenile delinquency is virtually unknown . . . The prisons are virtually empty . . . There's dignity because people love the Lord Jesus Christ.

“And I want you to imagine a society where the Church members have taken dominion over the forces of the world, where Satan's power is bound by the people of God, and where there is no more disease and where there's no more demon possession. . . .

“We're going to see a society where the people are living Godly, moral lives, and where the people of God . . . will have so much that they will lend to others but they will not have to borrow . . . and the people of God are going to be the most honored people in society . . . no drug addiction . . . pornographers no longer have any access to the public whatsoever . . . the people of God inherit the earth . . . there's a Spirit-filled president in the White House, the men in the Senate and the House of Representatives are Spirit-filled and worship Jesus, and the Judges do the same. . . .

“You say, that's a description of the Millennium when Jesus comes back . . . [but] these things . . . can take place now in this time . . . and they are going to because I am persuaded that we are standing on the brink of the greatest spiritual revival the world has ever known! . . . Hundreds of millions of people are coming into the Kingdom . . . in the next several years . . . we've got to understand the nature of prosperity and prepare for what God's going to do . . . God is

going to put us in positions of leadership and responsibility and we've . . . got to think that way . . . you mark my words, in the next year, two years . . . the next three or four, we're going to see things happen that will absolutely boggle our minds! Praise God” (from a speech delivered at the "Satellite Network Seminar" held December 9-12, 1984, at Robert Tilton's Word of Faith World Outreach Center in Dallas, Texas. Cited in Moriarty, pp. 164-65).

G. *PROPHETS, PROPHECY, AND THE PROPHETIC MOVEMENT*

1. Prophetic messages to the church will prepare the way for Christ's return.
2. Prophets are the revelers of the meaning of Scripture.
3. Paulk says, “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. Who will speak to this generation if God does not raise up prophets?” (Moriarty, p. 97).
4. If you need a word from the Lord, don't go to Scripture or to teachers of the Word, go to the local prophet. He will give you direct revelation from God re: your circumstances.
5. Indecently - All televised prophecies are to be rejected. No way to authenticate the prophet or his words. Biblical prophecy always operated within the context of the local church.
6. We are to seek God in prayer and diligently search His Word.

H. *APOSTLES*

Defined as traveling evaluators of the health, doctrine, and direction of churches. Give authoritative guidance - often directly from God Himself.

I. SIGNS AND WONDERS

1. Higher level of gifts and manifestations even than first-century church.
2. Primary impetus through John Wimber and the Vineyard Fellowship movement.
3. So-called third wave ministries:
 - a. First wave = Pentecostal movement
 - b. Second wave = Charismatic movement
 - c. Third wave = Signs and Wonders movement
4. Estimated 20 million members in the third-wave movement.

J. GUARANTEED HEALTH AND PROSPERITY

K. LITTLE GODS TEACHING

L. RESTORATIONISM

“The doctrinal system driving the new Charismatics is essentially a synthesis of the various strands of teaching gleaned from Pentecostalism, the neo-Pentecostal deliverance revival, the Latter Rain movement, the charismatic movement, the Manifested Sons of God, the positive confession movement, and similar fringe movement, and fashioned into a systematic doctrine centered around the concept of restorationism.”