

THE PENTECOSTAL / CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT: ITS FOUNDATION, ITS INFLUENCE, AND ITS DANGERS.

WEEK 1: THE HISTORY OF THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- As a 4 weeks study, our goal is to trace the history of the Pentecostal / Charismatic movement from its inception through to our modern day. Many claim this movement to be getting back to the book of Acts. Yet others believe the Lord is doing something new in our generation.
- It is important to understand, the Charismatic movement *came from the Pentecostals movement*. Therefore, we are going to start our study in the Pentecostal movement, find the Charismatic movement and then trace both of them as they grow into their respective, separate movements.
- After studying the history and finding its roots, we are going to spend two weeks studying the influence this movement has over our modern-day churches.
- Finally, we will define, if any, potential or real dangers facing the church that come from this movement.
- Why should we study this specifically?
 - Many of the phrases and much of the language that we may use in the church or with other Christians finds its roots in the Charismatic movement.
 - In order to realize the depth of influence, we must understand where this movement started.
 - Because of the massive influence over the church.
 - Those who hold to Charismatic teachings and practices still call themselves brothers and sisters in Christ. If they are then we want to see if their beliefs are in line with the Scriptures.
- Our schedule will look like this:
 - **Week 1: Introduction and The History of the Pentecostal movement**
 - Week 2: From Pentecostal to Charismatic and its influence in the modern-day church. Part 1
 - Week 3: How has this movement influenced the modern-day church? Part 2
 - Week 4: What are the dangers facing the church from this movement?

INTRODUCTION

- The influence of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement is so widespread and pervasive that some historians are beginning to speak of it as the third great epoch of church history, the first two being the Age of Catholicism (a.d. 100 to 1517) and the age of the Protestant Reformation (1517 to the present). At present the Charismatic and Third Wave "movements" are the fastest growing segment of Christianity world-wide.¹

ORIGINS

John Wesley (1703-1791)

- These earnest young men caused a sensation at Oxford by frequently meeting together for Bible study, communion, and prayer. They were derisively referred to as the Holy Club, Sacramentarians, Bible moths (feeding on the Bible as moths on cloth), Bible bigots, and Methodists. John was called the “curator” or “father” of the Holy Club.²
- The word *Methodist* came to mean “one that lives according to the *method* laid down in the Bible.”
- There were two doctrines that Wesley set forth to prove and that he made the foundation of his position at that time.
 - **Christian perfectionism and the witness of the Holy Spirit** (we are children of God **Rom. 8:16**).
- As his father, Samuel Wesley, lay on his deathbed, he tells John “The inward witness, son, the inward witness – this is the proof, the strongest proof of Christianity.”
- John Wesley placed higher value on “a clean heart, a single eye, a soul full of God!” than anything else.
- In arriving at his mature theological convictions, Wesley borrowed from many sources. His doctrines were distilled primarily from the Anglo-Catholic tradition of his personal background, rather than from the continental Reformed Protestant tradition. **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 salvation could be found by anyone.**³
- One of the key factors that Wesley brought into Christianity is the focus on **experience**. He taught that men could find their security in their salvation because of their **experience**.
- Commenting on his own conversion, Wesley said “I **felt** my heart strangely warmed. I **felt** I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an **assurance was given to me** that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.”

¹ <https://www.samstorms.org/all-articles/post/history-of-the-pentecostal-charismatic-movements>

² D. Partner, “Wesley, John,” ed. J.D. Douglas and Philip W. Comfort, *Who's Who in Christian History* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1992), 709.

³ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, Second Edition.

- It would be his teaching on Christian perfectionism or entire sanctification that would be the seedbed for the Pentecostal movement 100 years later.
- **Methodists can hold this doctrine of sinless perfection based upon Wesley's definition of actual sin.**
 - “**Nothing is sin**, strictly speaking, but a voluntary transgression of a known law of God. Therefore, every voluntary breach of the law of love is sin; and nothing else, if we speak properly. **To strain the matter farther is only to make way for Calvinism.** There may be ten thousand wandering thoughts, and forgetful intervals, without any breach of love, though not without transgressing the Adamic law. But Calvinists would fain confound these together. **Let love fill your heart, and it is enough!**”⁴
- **Involuntary transgressions (from ignorance, error, and evil tempers), according to Wesley, were not properly called sins. Therefore, regenerated Christians would continue to be guilty of involuntary transgressions and would need to practice regular confession.**
- Furthermore, Christians continued to face temptation, and Wesley acknowledged that it was possible for a regenerated Christian to commit voluntary sin if, the Christian ceased “actively trusting in God through Christ and living in the divine presence,” which would also necessitate confession of sin.
- The power over sin received at regeneration was just the lowest stage of Christian perfection according to Wesley. Based on 1 John 2, Wesley proposed three stages in the Christian life: little children, young men, and finally fathers.
 - Young men were defined as those who had experienced victory over temptation and evil thoughts. Fathers were defined as mature Christians who were filled with the love of God.
- **Wesley believed this last stage of Christian maturity was made possible by what he called entire sanctification (1 Thessalonians 5:23).** In Wesley's theology, **entire sanctification was a second work of grace received by faith that removed inbred or original sin**, and this allowed the Christian to enter a state of perfect love—“**Love excluding sin**” as stated in the sermon “**The Scripture Way of Salvation.**”
- Wesley described it as having “purity of intention,” “dedicating all the life to God,” “loving God with all our heart,” and as being the “renewal of the heart in the whole image of God.” A life of perfect love meant living in a way that was centered on loving God and one's neighbor.
- Wesley believed that this emphasis was a peculiar heritage given to the Methodists in trust for the whole Church.
- For Wesley, the preaching of Christian perfection was crucial to the spiritual health of a Methodist church. He taught that “Where Christian perfection is not strongly and explicitly preached, there is seldom any remarkable blessing from God; and consequently little addition to the society, and little life in the members

⁴ Wesley, J. (1872). The Works of John Wesley (Third Edition, Vol. 12, p. 394). London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room

of it.” He urged preachers “Till you press the believers to expect full salvation [entire sanctification] now, you must not look for any revival.”⁵

- By 1740, Wesley’s ideas on theology were fairly well cast in the permanent mold that would shape the Methodist movement. Briefly stated, they involved two separate phases of experience for the believer: the first, conversion, or justification; the second, Christian perfection, or sanctification. In the first experience the penitent was forgiven for actual sins of commission, becoming a Christian but retaining a “residue of sin within.” This remaining “inbred sin” was the result of Adam’s fall and had to be dealt with by a “second blessing, properly so-called.” This experience purified the believer of inward sin and gave a person “perfect love” toward God and humanity.⁶
- Wesley did not always find it easy to keep this doctrine paramount within Methodism. The Calvinist branch of the Methodist societies, led by **George Whitefield, roundly rejected the “second blessing” theory**. In May of 1768, Wesley wrote his brother Charles in distress that, “Unless both you and I stand in the gap in good earnest, the Methodists will drop them both.”
- Wesley also saw his most trusted advisor, John Fletcher, argue that the second blessing was in reality a **“baptism in the Holy Spirit”** as well as a cleansing experience. Although he disagreed with Fletcher on this point, Wesley nevertheless appointed Fletcher to be his designated successor as head of the Methodist societies. In his last year of life, Wesley wrote to his friend Adam Clarke, “If we can prove that any of our local preachers ... speak against it, let him be a local preacher or leader no longer ... [he] cannot be an honest man.” It thus became the first great holiness church.⁷
- **In 1782, Francis Asbury** took over the Methodist movement in the Americas and said, “the only preaching that did good was the kind which ‘presses the use of the means and urges holiness of heart.’”⁸
 - A seminary bearing his name, Asbury Theological Seminary, in KY in the early 1900’s. It is the flagship seminary for the Wesleyan-Holiness movement hosting over 1700 students and training both men and women for the pastorate.

Charles Finney (1792-1875)

- In 1821 he experienced a dramatic conversion and reported a vivid **“baptism in the Holy Spirit”** accompanied by “unutterable gushings” of praise. Following his license to preach in 1824, he made a study of Christian doctrine and by **1836 became convinced that entire Sanctification was possible in this life.**⁹
 - According to Finney, **after a true experience of conversion a person could achieve the coveted state of Christian perfection or sanctification by simply exercising free will and cultivating “right**

⁵ Brown, Allan (1 November 2011). "Key Passages That Teach the Concept of Entire Sanctification". God's Bible School and College.

⁶ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, Second Edition.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

intentions.” **Sin and holiness, he explained, could not exist in the same person.** While Finney’s “Oberlin theology” differed somewhat from the traditional holiness views of the Wesleyans, such differences as there were came mainly from his reformed background.

- One of Finney’s theological innovations was his increasing tendency to identify the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” as the means of entering into entire sanctification. By 1840, he spoke of “permanent sanctification” through such a baptism. He also proposed the possibility of receiving subsequent “fresh” receptions of the Holy Spirit for believers. The use of this type of “Pentecostal” language served only to widen the wedge between Finney and his former Calvinist colleagues.¹⁰
- In the 19th century, there were Methodists who sought to revitalize the doctrine of Christian perfection or holiness. The holiness movement grew to be interdenominational and gave rise to a number of Wesleyan-holiness denominations, including the Free Methodist Church, Church of the Nazarene, the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), The Salvation Army, and the Wesleyan Methodist Church.
- An early promoter of holiness was American Methodist Phoebe Palmer. Through her evangelism and writings, Palmer articulated an “altar theology” that outlined a “shorter way” to entire sanctification, achieved through placing oneself on a metaphorical altar by sacrificing worldly desires.
 - As long as the **Christian placed themselves on the altar and had faith that it was God’s will to accomplish sanctification, the Christian could be assured that God would sanctify them.** Palmer made sanctification an instantaneous act accomplished through the exercise of faith.¹¹
 - **Many holiness denominations require pastors to profess that they have already experienced entire sanctification.** This emphasis on the instantaneous nature of Christian perfection rather than its gradual side is a defining feature of the Wesleyan-holiness movement.

THE HOLINESS MOVEMENT

- The Holiness movement is a Christian movement that emerged chiefly within 19th-century Methodism. The movement is Wesleyan in theology and is defined by its view of personal sin, and emphasis on the doctrine of a second work of grace generally called entire sanctification or Christian perfection.
- For the Holiness Movement “the term ‘perfection’ signifies completeness of Christian character; its freedom from all sin, and possession of all the graces of the Spirit, complete in kind.”
- A number of evangelical Christian denominations, parachurch organizations, and movements emphasize those beliefs as central doctrine
- This movement, started by Wesley, was then pushed to its extremes by Charles Finney during what has been deemed The Second Great Awakening.

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Williams, Jeffrey (2010), *Religion and Violence in Early American Methodism: Taking the Kingdom by Force.*

- Finney instituted the altar call, pleading during that prolonged service for sinners to come forward, kneel at the bench before the platform, confess their sins, and be saved. The New Measures were necessarily bound to Finney's theology, which was also **not only new but an intentional and decided departure from the Calvinism** and from the doctrine of the sovereignty of God that dominated the First Great Awakening.
- Finney believed that human beings could choose whether they would be corrupt by nature or redeemed, referring to original sin as an "anti-scriptural and nonsensical dogma". **Finney denied the notion that human beings possess a sinful nature.** Therefore, if Adam leads us into sin, not by our inheriting his guilt and corruption, but by following his poor example, this leads logically to the view of Christ, the Second Adam, as saving by example. This is precisely where Finney takes it, in his explanation of the atonement.
- You had Wesley who taught that you could eradicate original sin and have a second blessing of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And Finney who taught that there was no original sin, and we can be perfect.
- Both men taught a post-conversion baptism of the Spirit and that the Christian, in order to be saved and walking with the Lord, must be perfect.
- As was said about Finney "his influence on subsequent Pentecostalism may be said to have been, in fact, more in the realm of form and temperature than in the realm of content and ideas."¹²
- All historians agree that modern-day Pentecostalism finds its roots in both Wesley and Finney, their only disagreement is who influenced them more.
- **"From Methodism through American revivalism and the person and work of Charles Finney . . . the line is a straight one that leads through the holiness movement directly into Pentecostalism.** The holiness movement seems to have arisen from a variety of causes, principal of which were the demoralizing after-effects of the American Civil War, the dissatisfaction of many within Methodist churches with the 'holiness,' or the adherence to Wesleyan perfectionist doctrine of the Methodist Church, and a corresponding concern for the advance of modern liberal views in theology and of wealth and worldliness in the church as a whole. The theological center of the holiness movement, true to its name and its Wesleyan heritage, was a second experience, specifically a conversion into Scripture holiness, sanctification, or as it was often called, perfect love. This center assured the subsequent experience an import it was later to assume in Pentecostalism. It was directly from the holiness movement, for instance, that Pentecostalism adopted the use of the expression the baptism in the Holy Spirit for its second (or third) Christian experience."¹³

¹² F.D. Brunner

¹³ <https://www.samstorms.org/all-articles/post/history-of-the-pentecostal-charismatic-movements>

PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT BEGINS

- Pentecostalism has its roots in three sources: 1) the theology of John Wesley; 2) the revivalism of Charles Finney; and 3) the emergence of the National Holiness Movement (NHM), which was an attempt to preserve historic Wesleyanism.¹⁴
- The move from the NHM into Pentecostalism began in Topeka, Kansas, with Charles Fox Parham.
- Allegedly converted at the age of 13, Parham claims to have been healed while in college, thus preparing him for ministry. He was initially involved in the NHM and travelled as an independent evangelist/healer until he arrived in Topeka in 1898. He founded the Divine Healing Mission there which was later re-named the Apostolic Congregation and Divine Healing Home.
- He was kicked out of the NHM because of his horrible sexual immorality.
- So, like all good false teachers, in 1900 he established the Bethel Bible Institute where he taught his students that the inevitable result of Spirit-baptism was speaking in tongues.
 - Until now, though, none had experienced it for themselves.
- At 7:00 p.m. on New Years Day, 1901, Agnes N. Ozman, one of Parham's students, spoke in tongues. This event marks the beginning of the classical Pentecostal movement.¹⁵

BRIEF EXCURSUS

- Up until this point, all those who hold Pentecostal beliefs struggle with one issue, *there is no consistent or real evidence of the sign gifts from the 1st – 20th Century.*
- This statement is not accepted by those who argue for the continuation of the sign gifts. There were sporadic, at best, times throughout 1900 years that men and women wrote about prophecy, tongues and miracles happening.
- The entire controversy exists because the miraculous gifts of the New Testament age did cease and did not occur for almost 1,900 years of church history and certainly have not continued in an unbroken line. Questions about their presence today as well as differing opinions, even among charismatics, regarding the nature of tongues, prophecy, and certain other gifts are due to the fact that they ceased. Chrysostom, a fourth-century theologian, testified that they had ceased so long before his time that no one was certain of their characteristics.¹⁶
 - I want you to really understand what Dr. Edgar is saying, there are so many differing opinions on how the gifts operate because there was a 1900-year gap in their operation.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ https://www.the-highway.com/cessation_Edgar.html

- John Chrysostom (349 AD – 407 AD) was a powerful preacher who was a cessationist. Even he did not know the last time these gifts were used.

- There are 4 writings that most continuationists point to in order to show some continuity throughout the history of the church.

- Justin Martyr (approx. AD 100-165)
- Irenaeus (approx. AD 120-202)
- Novatian (approx. AD 210-280)
- Gregory Neocaesarea (AD 213-270)

- **An example of the supposed evidence** “...the miracles that he was said to perform. These were mostly miracles of healing, but we are also told that he could control the course of a river in flood, and that the apostles and the Virgin appeared to him and guided his work.”¹⁷

- While we do not solely base our theological beliefs on church history, there is overwhelming and compelling evidence that the church was not practicing any of the sign gifts for centuries.

What was happening at this time in Christian society?¹⁸

- Another theological movement arose during the last years of the century that deeply disturbed conservative religious leaders, and in particular those in the holiness ranks. This movement, known as “**the Social Gospel**,” was the brainchild of Washington Gladden, a Congregational minister from Massachusetts, and Walter Rauschenbusch, a Baptist minister and teacher at Rochester Theological Seminary.
- Rejecting capitalism and “capitalistic Christianity,” they requested a new system which they called “Christian Socialism.” Believing that such “social sins” as poverty, irresponsible use of wealth, social ostracism, and unhealthful and indecent living conditions were as bad as individual sins, they called for a “social conversion” of American life.
- Rauschenbusch brought the message to the church in his *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (1907), *Christianizing the Social Order* (1912), and *The Theology of the Social Gospel* (1917).
- This movement deeply affected all the major churches of America, but none as deeply as the Methodist Church, which by 1908 had adopted the “Social Creed of the Churches” along with other members of the newly created Federal Council of Churches.
- Interestingly enough, the very groups that the social gospel advocates wished to help, that is, the poor, the destitute, and the underprivileged, were the very ones who joined the holiness and Pentecostal churches and most bitterly denounced the Gladdens and the Rauschenbusches.

¹⁷ <https://prodigalthought.net/2013/03/15/did-certain-gifts-cease-after-the-first-apostles/>

¹⁸ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, Second Edition.

- In fact, the holiness people taught a negative “social gospel” of their own. Rather than trying to reform society, they rejected it. In the holiness system of values, the greatest “social sins” were not poverty, inequality, or unequal distribution of the wealth, but rather the evil effects of the theater, ball games, dancing, lipstick, cigarettes, and liquor.

THE AZUSA STREET REVIVAL¹⁹

- The Azusa Street Revival functioned as an important catalyst to the growth of American Pentecostalism. In January of 1906, an African American minister named William J. Seymour moved to Los Angeles and began holding cottage meetings with a small number of followers. After the first outbreak of speaking in tongues in April 1906, the group began to grow and become racially integrated. Seymour moved his congregants to a dilapidated building on 312 Azusa Street, located in downtown Los Angeles.
- Scores of people began to "fall under the power" and to speak in tongues. Seymour's preaching of judgment and divine wrath seemed to have significance, for the great San Francisco earthquake hit on April 18, 1906. In the same month the volcano Vesuvius erupted. Many took these events as eschatological signs of the end and flocked to Seymour and his group of disciples.²⁰
- Over the next few years, thousands of individuals traveled to Azusa Street to experience miraculous healings, tongues, and spontaneous worship. Religious services were held three times a day, and the attenders were racially diverse (at least initially).
- Over time, the revival started to dissipate. Seymour lost his influence and died in 1922. Although the building was condemned and destroyed in 1931, the revival remains a defining event for early Pentecostalism.
- Azusa had its share of critics who were convinced the participants were lunatics. Additional bad press occurred when spiritualists and mediums from the occult societies in Los Angeles began to attend and to participate in their own special way. G. Campbell Morgan, a highly respected evangelical preacher, called the Pentecostal movement "the last vomit of Satan," while R. A. Torrey claimed that it was "emphatically not of God, and [was] founded by a Sodomite." In his book, *Holiness, the False and the True*, Harry Ironside in 1912 denounced the movement as "disgusting . . . delusions and insanities" and accused their meetings as causing "a heavy toll of lunacy and infidelity."²¹

¹⁹ https://www.thearda.com/timeline/events/event_211.asp

²⁰ <https://www.samstorms.org/all-articles/post/history-of-the-pentecostal-charismatic-movements>

²¹ [Ibid](#)

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?²²

- The most important classical Pentecostal denomination, *The Assemblies of God*, was established in 1914, when several leaders gathered in Hot Springs, Arkansas from April 2 to 12th. In 1916 at the General Conference in St. Louis the denomination affirmed Trinitarianism, leading to the departure of some 155 preachers and over 100 congregations. The unitarian Pentecostals then formed separate splinter groups, out of which would eventually emerge the United Pentecostal Church or "Jesus Only" church.
- Aimee Semple McPherson (1890-1944) and the *International Church of the Foursquare Gospel* (1927)
- *The Latter Rain Movement* emerged in Saskatchewan, Canada, where about 70 students had gathered to fast, pray, and study the Word of God in November of 1947.
 - ...for years following Azusa Street there had been little power and minimal evidence of the gifts of the Spirit among Pentecostals. Now suddenly people were "falling under the power" of God, kneeling in adoration and worship, together with the impartation of spiritual gifts through the laying on of hands. Thousands from both Canada and the U.S. attended the Sharon Camp Meeting in North Battleford on July 7-18, 1948, where reports of healings and the power of God were plentiful.

The Charismatic Movement

- Differing from the Pentecostals, the Charismatics emerged from within established denominational churches and Bible colleges and seminaries. They were not known for their wild practices of the gifts of the Spirit. While they hold to a continuation of all the gifts, they also hold to a distinctly reformed view of Scripture.

The Third Wave Movement

- The Third Wave, a phrase coined by C. Peter Wagner, refers to the growing, and increasingly organized, numbers of conservative evangelicals who now embrace the full range of spiritual gifts. Principal among those in the Third Wave is the Vineyard. The "first wave" of the Holy Spirit, explains Wagner, was the classical Pentecostal movement that began in 1906. The "second wave" was the charismatic movement that saw traditional denominations embrace the ministry of the Holy Spirit in 1960-61.
- The "third wave", therefore, is the **embracing** by evangelicals of the gifts of the Spirit while at the same time **rejecting** several of the classical Pentecostal and charismatic distinctives.

²² [Ibid](#)