

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

WEEK 3: THE INFLUENCE OF THE MOVEMENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- 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

- This week we are going to finish our look at the history of the various movements which have brought us to where we are in church history.
- Today, we are going to start by looking at what was happening in the mainline, conservative church when all of this was taking place. For the most part, it was Princeton Theological Seminary and the Presbyterian church who were trying to hold the line for conservative belief and practice.
- We are also going to look at three other main teachings in our church today which started long ago: **psychology** in the church, the **power of positive thinking** and the **word of faith movement**.
- These three teachings or ideas have their roots, once again, in Wesley's man-centered theology.

WHAT WAS GOING ON IN THE MAINSTREAM CHURCH?

- While we have been studying the rise of Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movements, it would be helpful to stop for a moment and find out what was going on in the mainstream churches that allowed this movement to come to fruition.
- As the Pentecostal church and all their offshoots began to take form and gain influence through charismatic men and seminaries, *where were the orthodox churches and their stalwarts of the faith.*

Fundamentalism and Liberalism: Too Many Battles...Not Enough Men

- *Shall the Fundamentals win?* This was a book written by a liberal Baptist pastor, Harry Emerson Fosdick, in 1922. This was in response to a long battle which came to be known as *The Fundamentalist – Modernist Controversy* which started in the late 1800's.

- “The present world situation smells to heaven!” Fosdick exclaimed. “And now, in the presence of colossal problems, which must be solved in Christ’s name and for Christ’s sake, the Fundamentalists propose to drive out from the Christian churches all the consecrated souls who do not agree with their theory of inspiration. **What immeasurable folly!**”¹
- **Fundamentalism:** “...type of conservative religious movement characterized by the advocacy of strict conformity to sacred texts. Once used exclusively to refer to American Protestants who **insisted on the inerrancy of the Bible.**”²
 - In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Christian fundamentalists vigorously opposed theological modernism, which, as the “higher criticism” of the Bible, involved the attempt to reconcile traditional Christian beliefs with modern science and historiography.³
- **Modernism/Liberalism:** “In the present conflict, the great redemptive religion which has been always known as Christianity is battling against a totally diverse type of religious belief, which is only more destructive of the Christian faith because it makes use of traditional Christian terminology.”⁴
 - **“According to Christian belief, man exists for the sake of God; according to the liberal Church, in practice if not in theory, God exists for the sake of man.”⁵ (1923)**
- **What are the fundamental doctrines?**
 - **God...Humanity...Scripture...Christ...Salvation.** Machen would go on to say that “Indifferentism about doctrine makes no heroes of the faith.”⁶
- “While some fundamentalists rejected, repudiated and renounced scientific investigation and Biblical criticism, demanding a literal interpretation of scripture, some modernists attempted a reconciliation between the new knowledge and the old faith by adapting Christian teachings and principles to rapidly changing world-views.”
 - Orthodox religious beliefs seemed threatened by advancing knowledge; humans appeared capable of voluntary control over conditions and circumstances formerly assigned to supernatural power.
 - Ancient superstitions associated with primitive Christianity, passive submission to medieval theology, and reliance upon contrived phantoms **were supplanted with a growing self-confident realism; high expectations which anticipated continual progress and constant change became almost habitual.** Within this intellectual ferment, thoughtful churchmen disclaimed the divinity of Jesus, doubted the inerrancy of scripture, discounted the virgin birth, discarded the vicarious atonement, and dismissed the second coming.

¹ <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2020/05/the-fundamentalist-modernist-controversy/>

² <https://www.britannica.com/topic/fundamentalism>

³ Ibid.

⁴ J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, (GR, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 150.

⁵ Ibid., 129.

⁶ <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2020/05/the-fundamentalist-modernist-controversy/>

- From 1900 – 1950, the church was faced with a new teaching called Pentecostalism, which challenged all that was commonly held to regarding the Holy Spirit and the order of the church.
 - They were faced with liberal interpreters of the Bible who called on science to interpret the Bible. There were no miracles, no inspiration, no real Jesus and no real sin or substitutionary atonement.
 - Man was essentially good; he had surpassed the old primitive ways of needing the crutch of religion and had moved into reason.

• **Pentecostalism came into the church quickly as the church did not know how to take the Bible.**

- The conservatives were trying to keep the Bible in the church, the Modernists (Liberals) were trying to keep it out and the Pentecostals were teaching that there was a new movement of the Spirit outside the Bible.
- **The church had been weakened by theological laziness and a desire to please the world. If things were not going down hill fast enough, enter psychology.**

Norman Vincent Peale and the Dawn of Psychology and the Church

- **John Wesley** decided that the Bible was not enough and taught a Christian perfectionism by redefining what sin is and that we can eradicate our sinful nature.
- **Charles Finney** taught that we had no sinful nature and that we are essentially morally neutral and that an emotional response to God was the way to salvation. He relied on the theology of Wesley and the tricks of the theater of his day.
- **The Pentecostals** found the church boring and the Bible lacking. They believed the Holy Spirit was poured out again, for a second Pentecost and that for people to be *really saved* or *really blessed* they needed a second or subsequent filling of the Holy Spirit. This would be evident by the speaking of tongues.
- **The Liberals**, at the same time, stopped believing all things that were not scientifically or historically proven. They believe the Bible is a good place to start, but certainly does not have all the answers nor does it have anything from God, especially miracles.

• **With that as our backdrop, enter Norman Vincent Peale.⁷**

- Born on May 31, 1898, in Bowersville, Ohio, he was a Methodist minister who served a variety of churches in Ohio, and before long Norman, too, began to consider ministry as his vocation.
 - When he was a boy, one of his teachers accused him of being “a weak willy-nilly” and he soon realized the teacher’s assessment was correct. He saw that he would need to **push himself past a deep-rooted inferiority complex and crippling self-doubt.**
- In 1922 he was ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and was assigned a small congregation in Berkeley, Rhode Island. Two years later he moved to Brooklyn, New York where he established himself as a gifted communicator so that in only three years, he grew a church from 40 to 900 members.

⁷ <https://www.challies.com/articles/the-false-teachers-norman-vincent-peale/>

- He spent a few years at another Methodist congregation in Syracuse, New York, before changing his affiliation to the Reformed Church in America so he could pastor Marble Collegiate Church, one of the oldest Protestant congregations in America. When he arrived, this church had around 600 members; upon his departure 52 years later, it had 5,000. **It was here that he would gain worldwide acclaim and *notoriety as a teacher of positive thinking.***
- Peale developed a fascination with psychiatry as an answer, or partial answer, to his congregant's problems. **While he was at Marble, he teamed up with a Freud-trained psychiatrist, Dr. Smiley Blanton, to begin a religious-psychiatric clinic in the church basement.** They wanted to respond to the psychological needs of their congregation and especially the deep-rooted effects of the Great Depression. In 1951 this clinic was organized into the American Foundation of Religion and Psychiatry, with Peale as president and Blanton as executive director.
 - **How did psychology get into the church?**⁸ Peale really pioneered the integration of psychological concepts with biblical teachings. What caused the psychological counseling industry, to grow was that they would put on luncheons.
 - The psychiatric organizations would invite priests and pastors and they would explain that they were sort of all in the same business, dealing with problems of mankind, and they all wanted to help.
 - Yet, there were areas that were sort of out of bounds for the pastors, and that only those with psychiatric or psychological credentials could really perform well and be helpful.
 - **What was the catalyst for allowing this to come into the church?** Much of the church had *missed out on evolution.* They were not for a marrying of the church with the theory of evolution. Therefore, many pastors and seminary leaders were ostracized and put on the fringe of being an academic. When psychology came around...they didn't want to miss out again.
 - They were looking for respect from the "scientific" community instead of looking to the Bible.
 - **Pastors of the day were told:** We need a medical doctor for our physical illnesses. We need pastors, priests, for our spiritual needs, and then we need psychologists, psychiatrists, for our mental needs. It intimidated many, many pastors.⁹
- During his lifetime, Peale authored 46 books, and the most successful by far was *The Power of Positive Thinking*. Published in 1952, it stayed on the New York Times list of bestsellers for 186 consecutive weeks and sold 5 million copies, making it one of the bestselling religious books of all-time. It began words:
 - *This book is written to suggest techniques and to give examples which demonstrate that you do not need to be defeated by anything, that you can have peace of mind, improved health, and a never-ceasing flow of energy. In short, that your life can be fully of joy and satisfaction.*

⁸ <https://www.thebereancall.org/content/how-did-psychology-enter-church>

⁹ Ibid.

- His foremost contribution to the world was this notion that thoughts are causative, that our thoughts can change our lives, our health, our destiny. Readers were thrilled with this notion that if they believed it, they could have it, or be it, or do it.
- "...a form of mental activity called **imaging**. It consists of vividly picturing, in your conscious mind, a desired goal or objective, and **holding that image until it sinks into your unconscious mind**, where it releases great, untapped energies. It works best when it is combined with a strong religious faith, backed by prayer, and the seemingly illogical technique of giving thanks for benefits before they are received. **When the imaging concept is applied steadily and systematically**, it solves problems, strengthens personalities, improves health, and greatly enhances the chances for success in any kind of endeavor." (Positive Imaging)

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- "Some of us begin to speak in tongues right away, but for others it may take a little while. Yet, we can be sure that it isn't the Lord that is withholding from us. In my case, no one taught me correctly about the Holy Spirit. So, I had a lot of natural fear regarding speaking in tongues. **It was as though I had a mental block**, even though I desired it. I really struggled to overcome those things. In fact, I went down to the altar probably ten times, and not once did I ever pray in the spirit! I felt like it was **my fault**, that **I was doing something wrong**, that **something in me was broken**.
 - Finally, I just shut myself in my room and said, "I am not leaving this room until I speak in tongues—I'm not letting one word of English leave my mouth!" I think that was my breakthrough, **because although it wasn't a conscious thing**, I didn't realize that I was the one who had to open my mouth, use my lips, my tongue, my voice and choose to speak.¹⁰

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- **None of this would be remarkable, except that he taught it as a minister who claimed to be a Christian.** Yet as a Christian minister he denied that God was a being, saying "Who is God? Some theological being? He is so much greater than theology. God is vitality. God is life. God is energy. As you breathe God in, as you visualize His energy, you will be reenergized!"¹¹
 - **He told Phil Donahue**, "It's not necessary to be born again. You have your way to God, I have mine. I found eternal peace in a Shinto shrine ... I've been to Shinto shrines and God is everywhere. ... Christ is one of the ways! God is everywhere."
 - He denied the very heart of the Christian faith and replaced it with his doctrine of positive thinking.
 - **In 1966 Billy Graham** said, "I don't know of anyone who had done more for the kingdom of God than Norman and Ruth Peale or have meant any more in my life for the encouragement they have given me."

¹⁰ <https://terradezministries.com/2018/10/31/speaking-in-tongues/>

¹¹ *Plus: The Magazine of Positive Thinking*

- **Since the time of Wesley, Christianity has been turned into a results-based religion.** This is why a man like Billy Graham would praise an openly pagan man like Peale, *he got results*.
- **Why did Peale get results?** He took the focus off God and His holiness and placed in on the person. He had reduced God to nothing other than a force to be manipulated to do what we desire *it* to do.

WORD OF FAITH MOVEMENT (PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER)

- Essek William (E.W.) Kenyon (1867–1948).¹² There is a good chance you have never heard of this man before now. One of the reasons is that he was heavily plagiarized by Kenneth Hagin.¹³ We will discuss Hagin further later, but the **father of the word of faith movement (Kenyon) brought together several thoughts:**
 - **New Thought or Higher Thought Movement¹⁴.**
 - God or Infinite Intelligence is “supreme, universal, and everlasting”
 - divinity dwells within each person, that all people are spiritual beings
 - “the highest spiritual principle is loving one another, teaching and healing one another”
 - “our mental states are carried forward into manifestation and become our experience in daily living”
 - This movement was based on the teachings of Phineas Quimby (1802–1866), an American mesmerist and healer. He developed a belief system that included the tenet that illness originated in the mind as a consequence of erroneous beliefs and that a mind open to God's wisdom could overcome any illness. (**He was not a Christian but found Hinduism far more compatible**).
 - **Higher Life Movement or the Keswick Movement:** The main idea in the Keswickian theology of the Higher Life movement is that the Christian should move on from his initial conversion experience to also experience a second work of God in his life.
 - This work of God is called “entire sanctification,” “the second blessing,” “the second touch,” “being filled with the Holy Spirit,” and various other terms. Higher Life teachers promote the idea that Christians who receive this blessing from God can live a more holy, that is less sinful or even a sinless, life.
 - The Keswick approach seeks to provide a mediating and biblically balanced solution to the **subnormal Christian experience**. The teaching has been that every believer in this life is left with the natural proclivity to sin and will do so without the neutralizing influence of the Holy Spirit.
 - Movements have accepted a form of Keswickian theology, like Christian and Missionary Alliance.
 - This thought comes directly from the Wesleyan-Holiness Movement.

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E._W._Kenyon

¹³ <https://www.kenyons.org/plagiarism-of-ew-kenyons.html>

¹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Thought

- **Finally, the Faith Cure Movement.**

- Christian movement which maintains a belief that physical disease or illness can be cured or healed by God's supernatural intervention, when the prayer of faith is prayed; this and is part of salvation.¹⁵
- With all of that in his pocket, E.W. Kenyon was the first to really push the word of faith movement.¹⁶
 - At the heart of the Word of Faith movement is the belief in the "force of faith." It is believed words can be used to manipulate the faith-force, and thus **actually create what they believe Scripture promises (health and wealth). Laws supposedly governing the faith-force are said to operate independently of God's sovereign will and that God Himself is subject to these laws. This is nothing short of idolatry, turning our faith—and by extension ourselves—into god.**
 - From here, its theology just strays further and further from Scripture: **it claims that God created human beings in His literal, physical image as little gods. Before the fall, humans had the potential to call things into existence by using the faith-force.** After the fall, humans took on Satan's nature and lost the ability to call things into existence. To correct this situation, Jesus Christ gave up His divinity, became a man, died spiritually, took Satan's nature, went to hell, was born again, and rose from the dead with God's nature. **After this, He sent the Holy Spirit to replicate the Incarnation in believers so they could become little gods as God had originally intended.**
- While the modern-day fathers of the WFM were Kenneth E. Hagin and Kenneth Copeland, their theology largely stemmed from E.W. Kenyon, who is termed the "grandfather" of the movement.¹⁷
 - The WFM emerged from the Charismatic movement in the "early 1970s". Hagin's Rhema Bible Training Centre in Tulsa, Oklahoma (which has branches in South Africa and Australia), was the seedbed for the dispersion of WFM doctrine into churches.
 - The WFM teaches that health and prosperity are God's will and these are realised through positive confession – "a positive statement of confident faith".
 - Some of the more "extreme" proponents also hold to the **inherent power of spoken words**, God being subject to rules of faith, the concept that believers become like God, and the doctrine of Jesus' spiritual death on the cross before his rebirth in hell.
 - Well known WFM names are Frederick Price, Charles Capps, Marilyn Hickey, Lester Sumrall, Bob Tilton, Creflo Dollar, Benny Hinn, Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyer, T.D. Jakes, Ray McCauley and Theo Wolmarans.

¹⁵ <https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=spiritus>

¹⁶ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Word-Faith.html>

¹⁷ <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.1011.3130&rep=rep1&type=pdf> p. 7

A DEPARTURE FROM THE WORD OF GOD

- Two major beliefs that Wesley brought into the Church was Christian perfectionism and living your life based on your experiences.
- From that point on, men and movements have shaped the church's landscape attempting to bring more of a focus on man, and less on the doctrine of God.
- When the Word of God is abandoned, man is left to his own fanciful desires and interests without any immediate consequence.
- "What we think of God must determine our interpretation of what we see all around us, both in the church and in the world."¹⁸
- It is from a very low view of God and high view of man that all of this nonsense has come into the church and has been accepted as normal and even spiritual.

¹⁸ Maurice Roberts, *The Thought of God*, (Peoria, IL, Banner of Truth: 2016) 34.
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