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Genuine Pentecostal Traditioning

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Item Type	Article
Authors	Carpenter, John B.
Publisher	Asia Pacific Theological Seminary
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Download date	2026-07-16 10:28:43
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/236908

GENUINE PENTECOSTAL TRADITIONING:
ROOTING PENTECOSTALISM IN ITS EVANGELICAL SOIL:
A REPLY TO SIMON CHAN

John B. Carpenter

Simon Chan, of Singapore's Trinity Theological College, has recently written a call for Pentecostals to develop a tradition of their own. He calls this quest "traditioning."¹ Pentecostal's relative lack of interest in their tradition is seen in the lack of a "history" category at Pentecostal Charisma House Books.² Chan is especially concerned that the "failure of traditioning" is a large part of the problem of not passing on the authentic Pentecostal experience.³ He cites nearly stagnant growth of the Assemblies of God in its American homeland to suggest that at least there Pentecostalism appears to be stalling. He seems to believe that many Pentecostals have lost confidence in some of the distinctive teachings of the movement, especially that glossolalia is the initial physical manifestation of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Chan's stated goal is to reformulate the Pentecostal tradition so as to "recover" the original experience and, hence, the original vigor. In all of this he is to be commended.

However, Chan's call for a new Pentecostal traditioning is not to be taken at face value. A genuine movement toward traditioning would have to take into account the actual historical tradition of the movement. We

¹ Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000). Hereafter, references to Chan refer to this publication, unless stated otherwise.

² Elesha Coffman, "Explaining the Ineffable," *Christian History Newsletter*, August 31, 2001, referenced to Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997 [1971]).

³ Chan, p. 10.

may sometimes wish our tradition had elements in it that other movements have or that our movement did not have some of the elements it, in fact, does have. Nevertheless, we cannot with integrity say we are merely seeking to re-establish a “tradition” while we are, in reality, advocating entirely new doctrines and practices. Is this what Chan is doing? Certainly his stated goal to restore Pentecostal orthopathy is a laudable one. Indeed, I believe one of the high points of his book is his pointing to Jonathan Edwards’ *The Religious Affections* as an example of orthopathy. The frequently overlooked experiential dimension to Puritan faith and church life, powerfully revived during the Great Awakening of the 1740s, is a significant and historically appropriate signal forward to genuine Pentecostal traditioning. Because New Light Puritanism, through the Baptists, does have a real position in the Pentecostal family tree, Chan could have made the case that Pentecostals should accentuate that part of their spiritual ancestry. If Chan had centered his book around Edwardsean New Light Evangelicalism, it could both accomplish what he wants (a new traditioning) while doing so within the confines of Pentecostalism’s genuine spiritual inheritance. Indeed, that is a book that one day—hopefully soon—should be written. But, unfortunately, it is not Chan’s book.

Chan’s citation of Jonathan Edwards’ is as significant as it is ironic. Edwards was at the cross-roads of American evangelicalism, especially its Reformed revivalistic wing. Though highly creative, Edwards was essentially a defender of Puritan theology against the inroads of the so-called enlightenment. His genius was in his ability to marry Reformed orthodoxy and Puritan orthopathy and defend them both against the anthropocentric assumptions of the English enlightenment.⁴ This makes Edwards an ironic citation for Chan because Chan seems, at points, to be engaging in an anti-evangelical polemic and to have surrendered the evangelical doctrines of revelation to the “enlightened” philosophers of our own day.⁵ Douglas Oss, professor of hermeneutics and New

⁴ Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 305 describes, “The chief critic of Arminianism forging a weapon out of the very Lockean materials which ‘enlightened’ theologians and deists had claimed as their own.” See particularly Edwards’ *A Careful and Strict Enquiry into the modern prevailing Notions of that Freedom of Will, Which is supposed to be essential to Moral Agency, Vertue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame*.

⁵ Chan, p. 30 does recognize the traditional holism of Christian theology and the modern (“Cartesian”) break with that holism, but he does not recognize that the

Testament at Central Bible College (Assemblies of God) at Springfield, Missouri, USA, observed, “The same mentality that attempts to separate Pentecostalism from its evangelical roots also embraces many modernist presuppositions and rejects cardinal commitments of evangelicalism.”⁶ Oss, writing from the heart of Pentecostalism, is emphatic that it is a movement within Evangelicalism and partaking fully in its doctrines of scripture.

Chan speaks of “recovering” the original experience but then recommends traditions radically foreign to that original experience. Most notably, he writes, “The official view of scripture inerrancy is copied rather uncritically from the fundamentalists.”⁷ But he offers no reasons for this assertion. Though supposedly seeking a Pentecostal traditioning, he notes that inerrancy is, indeed, a genuine part of the Pentecostal tradition. Rather than working with that genuine tradition, he claims (without citation) that the inheritance here is “copied rather uncritically,” thus implying that this part of the Pentecostal tradition need not be retained. If he could show that commitment to inerrancy had some significant, self-aware opposition in the roots of Pentecostalism, he could, perhaps, progress with his case that inerrancy need not be a part of Pentecostal traditioning. However, he does not do that. He simply dismisses the “wooden” doctrine of inerrancy out of hand (with no examination of its definers, such as Carl F. H. Henry or the Chicago Council on Biblical Inerrancy.) Such a move signals that there is some other agenda at work rather than mere “traditioning.”

1. Chan’s Neo-orthodox and Mystical Myth of Origin

While consistently denigrating Evangelicalism, Chan advocates two sources of “traditioning” that he believes will make for a stronger foundation for Pentecostalism and which he apparently believes are complementary: Barthianism and the Catholic “contemplative tradition.”⁸

Barthian word-spirit dichotomy that he prefers to evangelical holism is a product of that modern break.

⁶ Douglas A. Oss, *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today* (Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996), p. 86.

⁷ Chan, p. 21. Oss, *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today*, p. 86 noted, “Indeed, there is a pronounced trend among some in the Pentecostal academy to reject inerrancy and biblical authority.”

⁸ Chan, pp. 11-12.

Once again, the pristine Pentecostal experience he is seeking to recapture was not historically rooted in either of these traditions. Hence, if “traditioning” necessarily means returning to the roots (even if accentuating some roots while neglecting others), then Chan would have to establish that somehow Catholic mysticism is lurking in the Pentecostal family tree. Also, he would also have to show that somehow Barthianism is related to that tradition. Of course, it could be argued that since Protestantism has (at least chronological) lineage through Catholicism, despite the thoroughgoing nature of the Reformation the connection with Catholic mysticism was never completely severed. However, the Reformers who lay at the root of the movements which lead up to Pentecostalism would insist that they were thoroughgoing in their efforts to root out all vestiges of Catholicism.⁹

Nevertheless, it can be argued, as some “postliberals” do today, that there are distinct theological similarities between Barthianism and Catholic mysticism (with a different notion of “catholicity” from formal Catholic theology).¹⁰ But Chan never makes the case for such a residual link with Catholic mysticism. Indeed, given the sharpness with which most of the traditions pouring into Pentecostalism severed their links with the Catholic past, such a case would be very difficult to make. Without it, though, Chan cannot be said to be doing Pentecostal traditioning but replacing the historical tradition with an entirely new “myth of origin,” a myth in both the literary sense of being a meaningful

⁹ For example, the leading early Puritan William Perkins, *Whole Treatise on the Cases of Conscience* (London: John Leggat, 1604, 1632), p. 313, when warning against the pursuit of wealth, to ward off any suspicion that he is getting near to the Catholic doctrine of “holy poverty,” he specifically calls the practice of giving all riches to the poor and then living off alms to be “Popish conceit.” While such Puritans may have been willing to retain what they could from the Catholic tradition, they were intentional and thoroughgoing in their elimination of anything they believed was touched with the “Papist” error. In their view, sacramentalism was at the heart of that error.

¹⁰ Curtis Freeman, electronic correspondence, May 12-14, 1997. See Yoder and McClendon, “Christian Identity in Ecumenical Perspective,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (Summer 1990), pp. 561-80. My notion of catholicity is C1 and C2 but not C3 according to Curtis W. Freeman, “Toward a *Sensus Fidelium* for an Evangelical Church: Postconservatives and Postliberals on Reading Scripture,” in *The Nature of Confession: Evangelicals and Postliberals in Conversation*, eds. Timothy R. Phillips and Dennis Okholm (Downer’s Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1996), pp. 162-79.

story of origins and in the colloquial sense of being simply false. He who controls the “myth of origin,” controls the movement.¹¹

Chan’s preference for the Catholic tradition over Evangelicalism is seen when he writes that the Catholic Charismatics have “a much more coherent understanding of the key Pentecostal experiences of Spirit-baptism and glossolalia” than do classical Pentecostals.¹² Why? Coherent to whom? (Certainly not to someone who fundamentally rejects Catholic sacramental theology.) What was incoherent about the second (or third) experience paradigm that sufficed for Pentecostalism historical founders?

Chan may wish to reshape Pentecostalism in the image of Catholic mysticism. He recommends “Eucharist” centered worship.¹³ He even extols the doctrine of confirmation as helpful for Pentecostals in appreciating the experiential difference between conversion and Spirit-baptism.¹⁴ He believes the sacramental view of Spirit-baptism is more helpful for Pentecostals than their formerly evangelical interpretation.¹⁵ One great example of Spirit-baptism for Pentecostal traditioning, he believes, is the mystic Teresa of Avila.¹⁶ His choice of a model is telling since there are plentiful examples of evangelicals who experienced some kind of post-conversion experience of being filled (or “baptized”?) with the Holy Spirit. Someone like George Whitefield or Charles Finney would both serve as examples of having experienced the Holy Spirit, of modeling orthopathy, and still arguably be a genuine ancestor to the Pentecostal tradition. But I do not believe a strong case can be made for Catholic mysticism and sacramentalism being somehow an historical part

¹¹ According to Dennis P. McCann, “Tillich’s Religious Socialism: ‘Creative Synthesis’ or Personal Statement?” in *The Thought of Paul Tillich* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), pp. 81-101 (84), Paul Tillich believed “the myth of origin” was primary for establishing a society’s ultimate concern. In Tillich’s view, it is the “whence” (*Woher*) of existence. “The cycle of birth and death, the ties to mother and father, soil and blood, religious cult and social group” arise from the myth of origin. “Within this myth the ‘whence’ is recognized and sanctified, and human beings are thereby bound to it as to a way of life. In this way the myth of origin provides ‘the root of all conservative and romantic thought in politics.’”

¹² Chan, p. 11.

¹³ Chan, pp. 37-38.

¹⁴ Chan, p. 91.

¹⁵ Chan, p. 54.

¹⁶ Chan, pp. 58-59.

of the Pentecostal tradition. Indeed, a much better case could be made that virulent anti-Catholicism is a part of the Pentecostal heritage.

Again, whether or not there is merit within the Catholic mystical tradition is not the question here. The question is whether that tradition can somehow be interpreted to be part of the Pentecostal heritage. I believe the answer is an unequivocal "No." But can Barthianism somehow be made to be part of the Pentecostal tradition? It would be easy to dismiss this suggestion by pointing out the sheer historical fact that Barth's theology was not articulated until well after Pentecostalism was organized and defined. However, it could reasonably be countered that the outlines and spirit of his theology existed before Barth codified and championed it and that Pentecostalism was founded, at least unconsciously, on those outlines and spirit. Chan does not develop such an argument. (Once again causing me to wonder what he means, exactly, by "traditioning" if not a return to at least some elements of the historic Pentecostal tradition.) But the case could be made.

Before evaluating whether Pentecostalism consciously excluded the neo-orthodox interpretation of a divine encounter, let us see what Chan is proposing. A kind of neo-orthodox interpretation of Pentecostalism appears to underlie his redefinition of the core Pentecostal value. "Pentecostal faith has always involved a vertical encounter with Christ through the Spirit coming from beyond history."¹⁷ But Pentecostals usually set this encounter within the context of a saving and commissioning encounter with Jesus who came into history. Indeed, the Pentecostal conviction that the miracles of scripture, far from being merely spiritual stories in need of demythologization, were factual events and can be duplicated in our space and time clearly suggests that the original Pentecostals were not at all relegating the teachings of the scripture to some kind of neo-orthodox spiritual realm.

Chan correctly notes that Pentecostals usually defined Spirit-baptism as an empowerment for service. One of the most exalted services for which this new power could be put was the proclamation of the gospel, the same gospel they inherited from evangelicalism. Chan apparently prefers a more static interpretation of Spirit-baptism as a mystical

¹⁷ Chan, pp. 19-20. To be fair to Chan, he does write, in a separate publication, "The Pentecostal event cannot be divorced from history, or there would be no historical continuity of the vertical event." Simon Chan, "Mother Church: Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology," *Pneuma* 22:2 (Fall 2000), pp. 177-208 (192). But this appears to be merely a modifier to his overall call for Pentecostals to avoid rootless subjectivity by being more "ecclesial" rather than being more exegetical.

communion of the Christian with God. Teresa of Avila, again, is the model. He has every right to hold to that as a preference but he cannot legitimately suggest that such an interpretation is a significant part of the Pentecostal tradition.

Even more troubling, though, is Chan's implicit rejection of what most Pentecostals have traditionally seen as the normative authority: a propositional revelation of God found in the inerrant Bible. Chan denigrates the "naïve biblicism of the early Pentecostals."¹⁸ While no Protestant can insist that any person uncritically accept all elements of a particular tradition, one cannot reasonably reject as fundamental a doctrine to Pentecostalism as propositional biblical authority and still claim to be seeking an authentic Pentecostal traditioning. And yet it is supposedly the recovery of the tradition of the early Pentecostals that is driving his "traditioning" project.

2. Is God's Word the Word of the Church?

Instead of the simple biblicism of Pentecostalism's real heritage, Chan affirms George Lindbeck's and Barth's belief that theology, including the Bible itself, is merely a community's "talk."¹⁹ Curtis W. Freeman, a self-professed Barthian and "post-liberal," argues that the "faith community" is ultimately authoritative; the true meaning of the Bible is not found by careful exegesis but "ecclesially"—by what the church *says* it means.²⁰ It is this neo-orthodox (or "post-liberal") approach that serves Chan's anti-Evangelical purpose. Apparently he believes that rather than there being an absolute, perspicuous word of God in which believers are to seek God's will under the banner of *sola scriptura*, there are "interpretative communities." The community "recognizes the truth as it embodies or 'indwells' the Scripture."²¹ He

¹⁸ Chan, p. 42.

¹⁹ Chan, p. 19 n. 4.

²⁰ Freeman, "Toward a *Sensus Fidelium* for an Evangelical Church," p. 165 argues that God should be understood ecclesially. Hence, the objective reality and authority of an independently existing God is denied; what God does, says, and is depends on how the church subjectively interprets him. I fail to see how this approach is anything other than atheistic.

²¹ Chan, p. 44. This appears to be a frankly "post-modern" approach. Ted Cabal, professor of philosophy at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, points out that postmodernism and orthodox Christianity cannot co-exist. For starters, Cabal

suggests that Pentecostals and Evangelicals “inhabit different interpretative communities which account for their different shades of meaning given to the classic ‘Pentecostal’ texts.”²² Pentecostals should avoid the frequent criticism of being overly subjective not by taking the evangelical bait of submitting to historical-grammatical exegesis of scripture but by being more ecclesial.²³

Hence, rather than there being an objective meaning to the text which sound exegesis should be able to deliver, the meaning really depends on the “faith community” which is interpreting it. To the Pentecostal, the Bible really teaches that tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit; but to the Baptist or Presbyterian it just as really teaches that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is part of conversion and without any necessary physical evidence. In direct opposition to this, Pentecostal scholar Oss wrote, “We Pentecostals *are* evangelicals who have accepted a portion of the Biblical witness as paradigmatic that some within our evangelical family do not accept in the same way. But we are a Bible-based movement, both historically and in the present.”²⁴

Self-described “post-liberal” Curtis W. Freeman, of Houston Baptist University, makes an identical argument to Chan in his defense of the *Sensus Fidelium*. To illustrate, he argues that allegorical interpretations of the scripture can be appropriate if the community approves of it. Further, he defends the Messianic readings of the “Servant Songs” of (what he calls) “deutro-Isaiah.” For Freeman, the Servant Songs, particularly Isaiah 53, cannot be literally interpreted as referring to Christ, apparently because Jesus was not yet born and because he is assuming that the scripture is not supernaturally inspired and so incapable of predictive prophesy. Freeman wrote me, “I do want to see Jesus as the fulfillment of the servant songs. My point is that you can’t derive such a meaning grammatically or historically. It is a spiritual and theological meaning—a *sensus plenior* beyond the *sensus literalis*. My point in this example is that for Christians to read the book of Isaiah as Christian scripture, we must go *beyond* the grammatical, literal, historical

writes, postmoderns believe that the reader determines the meaning of a book. That cannot be the case with the Bible. “The meaning of the text of Scripture cannot be regarded as indeterminate and endlessly open to word play,” he writes. (Southern Seminary News Service, “Danger lies in ignorance of postmodernism, journal says,” [Louisville, KY, August 31, 2001].)

²² Chan, p. 45 n. 13.

²³ Chan, “Mother Church: Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology,” p. 193.

²⁴ Oss, *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?* p. 86. Original emphasis.

meanings.”²⁵ It is the spiritual community, then, that becomes the “connecting link between text and reader.” In other words, the literal words of the scripture do not, when objectively exegeted, bear witness to Christ. The church must read that interpretation into the scripture. Thus for Freeman the meaning of the scripture is mediated not through propositions understandable by the individual Christian but by the consensus of the “spiritual community.”²⁶ While Freeman’s confessed goal of preserving the Messianic interpretation of the Servant Songs may make this approach seem harmless, the truth is that he (and Chan) has emptied the scripture of any effective canonicity. The Bible can no longer be appealed to as the regulative word of God since every “interpretative community” relegates to itself the right to stamp whatever interpretation it wants onto the scripture.

Fully describing and critiquing this neo-orthodox approach to scripture is not our purpose here. We need only note that it is out of harmony with Pentecostalism’s historic commitment to the conviction that an objectively existing God propositionally spoke in scripture. Even when Pentecostals affirm the continuing gift of prophesy, they did not historically mean to suggest that they have abandoned the ultimate authority of scripture and have become an “existentialist sect.”²⁷ Chan may prefer the neo-orthodox approach and believe that inerrancy is “uncritical,” “wooden,” and “naïve.”²⁸ But he cannot reasonably argue that neo-orthodoxy has an historic part in Pentecostal ancestry. Douglas Oss, apparently alarmed at similar attempts to re-interpret Pentecostalism as an existentialist (rather than experiential) movement, has written, “Many have adopted a community-based, sociological view of autonomous authority that has supplanted the Pentecostal commitment to revelation-based (e.g. Scripture) authority.”²⁹ Note that for Oss this move, advocated by Chan, is not at all a genuinely Pentecostal one but a supplanting of the true tradition.

²⁵ Curtis Freeman, electronic correspondence, May 12-14, 1997. All emphases are original.

²⁶ Freeman, “Toward a *Sensus Fidelium* for an Evangelical Church,” p. 170.

²⁷ Oss, *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?*, p. 283.

²⁸ Chan uses these terms both in his book and in his recent article “Mother Church: Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology,” p. 190.

²⁹ Oss, *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?*, p. 87.

3. Barth or Warfield?

Chan correctly notes the need of Pentecostal scholars to do more integrative work between Lukan pneumatology and Pauline soteriology.³⁰ The attempts by recent Pentecostal scholars, like William and Robert Menzies, to do just that are rejected, however, because their hermeneutical assumptions are apparently the same as other evangelicals.³¹ But Chan makes no case for these Pentecostal scholars not acting in harmony with their historical heritage. Chan claims the Pentecostal view is “more akin to Barth than to Warfield”.³² Interestingly, he provides no data to support such a conclusion from the genuine Pentecostal tradition. His own citation of Pentecostalism’s early embrace of inerrancy would suggest the opposite.

If inerrancy is really as foreign to Pentecostalism as Chan suggests, it has withstood the dissonance and remained in Pentecostalism throughout its development to the present. Donald Dayton has recorded that in 1948 the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America accepted America’s National Association of Evangelicals’ “Statement of Truth” almost unaltered, except for an addition of article five on holiness, healing, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.³³ This would include their statement on the infallibility of scripture. More recently, John R. Higgins, writing in an officially published Assemblies of God book with Pentecostal scholar Stanley M. Horton as editor, emphatically affirmed inerrancy, favorably quoting both Luther and Calvin and citing the Chicago Statement (1978) as the definition. Higgins, Vice President at Southeastern College of the Assemblies of God, specifically rejects “the Barthian distinction between God’s Word as divine and its record in Scripture as human.” In the very next sentence, Higgins favorably quotes B. B. Warfield rejecting the

³⁰ Chan, pp. 11-19.

³¹ “The problem of the Pentecostal doctrine of subsequence arises precisely because they share a faulty doctrine of conversion with their fellow evangelicals” (Chan, p. 87.) This is one of the few instances in his book in which he clearly identifies Pentecostals with evangelicals; more frequently he contrasts the two.

³² Chan, p. 21.

³³ Donald W. Dayton, “The Limits of Evangelicalism: The Pentecostal Tradition,” in *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*, ed. Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston (Downer’s Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1991), pp. 36-56.

Barthian view.³⁴ Therefore, while Chan may wish that Pentecostalism was not so closely tied up with evangelicalism and its “naïve biblicism,” one cannot, in the name of historically valid “traditioning,” formulate a myth of origin for Pentecostalism that lacks such biblicism.

Perhaps legitimately, Chan seems to be assuming that Pentecostalism had an experiential (or existential?) commitment that was deeper than its sometimes misleading confessions of faith. (I am granting this for the sake of argument, not affirming it.) For example, Chan claims that Barth is “Spirit-Word” in a way that resembles the true Pentecostal heart. However, it appears that Barth and neo-orthodoxy is spirit vs. word. Hence his emphatic “*Nein*” to the idea of natural revelation; for Barth the realm of spirit and the realm of facts are incompatible. B. B. Warfield’s theology may have, in practice, been excessively focused on the Word only but at least (in theory) he allows the Spirit to speak through the Word. Pentecostalism’s hearty advocacy of the historicity of Biblical miracles clearly identifies the movement more with Warfield than Barth. Indeed, Pentecostals believe the miracles in the Bible were so historical that they can happen again today.

Chan correctly notes the similarity to neo-orthodoxy of the teaching, popular in some Pentecostal circles, that there is a dichotomy between *logos* (word) and *rhema* (word).³⁵ (Such a dichotomy, by the way, is not sustained by a study of the Greek.) Certainly, if the thrust of this teaching is to underline the importance of fully experiencing the import of the living Word of God, then it can be an authentic part of the Pentecostal heritage. However, if there is a hint (as there is in the neo-orthodox interpretation) of denigrating the written Word of God, then it is utterly foreign to Pentecostalism and attempts to smuggle it in to the Pentecostal myth of origin must be resisted. A genuinely Pentecostal traditioning can only be done by drawing on Pentecostalism’s true tradition: the repristinization impulse with its cry of “*sola scriptura*” at the heart of the evangelicalism from which Pentecostalism sprang.

The Pentecostal movement began with a claim that it was restoring the pristine church of Acts. Hence it is a “primitivist” movement, a term in no way derogatory.³⁶ It is largely because Pentecostalism is a

³⁴ John R. Higgins, “God’s Inspired Word,” in *Systematic Theology: A Pentecostal Perspective*, ed. Stanley M. Horton (Springfield, MO: Logion, 1994), pp. 61-115.

³⁵ Chan, p. 22.

³⁶ Probably the most highly respected analysis of Protestant “primitivism” is Theodore Dwight Bozeman’s *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension*

primitivist movement that it has not yet developed a full-blown “tradition.” Chan believes we should “ground Word and Spirit in ecclesiology.”³⁷ But this lack of a tradition should not be used as an opportunity to sever Pentecostalism from its roots. Protestant primitivists, from the Anabaptists to the Puritans and onward, have been so not (usually) because they are enthusiasts with little regard for the words of scripture but precisely because they have such an exalted regard for scripture. Biblical primitivists do not want any tradition or creed competing with scripture for authority within the life of the church.

In the seventeenth century, the Puritans (from whom most Baptists arose) encountered epistemological theories similar to that assumed by neo-orthodoxy. They saw them clearly for what they were. Puritans’ holistic worldview would not allow a dichotomy between the world of facts and religious meaning. When Edward Johnson (1599-1672), in his *Wonder Working Providence*, described the kinds of errors into which Satan had tempted the New England Puritans, he described them in terms of separations: 1) dividing between the word and the word (pitting scripture against scripture), 2) separating Christ and his grace, 3) separating the Word of God from the Spirit of God, and 4) dividing Christ from his ordinances.³⁸ Perry Miller and Thomas Johnson wrote, “[The Puritans] still believed that all knowledge was one, that life was unified, that science, economics, political theory, aesthetic standards, rhetoric and art, all were organized in a hierarchical scale of values that tended upward to the end-all and be-all of creation, the glory of God.”³⁹ Through the New Light Baptists, these elements of Puritanism became part of the Pentecostal inheritance.

in *Puritanism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988). As the sub-title shows, it especially focuses on Puritanism. If both Puritanism and Pentecostalism are primitivist movements, this is further ground for exploring similarities.

³⁷ Chan, “Mother Church: Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology,” p. 182.

³⁸ Edward Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence of Sion’s Saviour in New England* (Delmar, NY: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1654, 1974), pp. 94-97 (quote on p. 96). Johnson is so certain that the reader will recognize the error in such a division of propositional word from Spirit that he does not feel the need to analyze it to show where the error lay. In today’s theology, such Word-Spirit dichotomies are common, from Pentecostal “Word of Faith” teaching about the difference between *rhema* and *logos* to the Barthian “*Nien*” to natural revelation.

³⁹ Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, *The Puritans* (New York: American Book, 1938), p. 10.

One of the problems with the tracing of Pentecostal roots is the tendency to do so through one single, linear ancestry. Usually it is the Wesleyan branch of the family that is followed leaving the “Baptistic” line ignored. For example, a recent summary of Pentecostal history reads: “through nineteenth-century holiness movements, back to early Methodists and John Wesley, further back to Pietists and Dissenters, and through many other stops on the way to the early church.”⁴⁰ However, like an individual’s family tree, Pentecostalism’s history branches in several directions. In the remainder of this essay, I would like to point toward how Pentecostal traditioning can explore new directions that are true to the actual roots of the movement.

4. A Genuine Pentecostal Traditioning

While Chan’s proposal is not satisfactory for a genuinely historical traditioning, he makes some intriguing proposals, including the over all proposal that Pentecostalism needs to recover its tradition. Part of the cause of the failure of Pentecostal traditioning is the evolutionary lenses through which some Pentecostals have viewed church history leading up to their movement. Although many Pentecostals are in perfect harmony with the evangelical and fundamentalist choir against Darwinism as a philosophy, they apply a similar developmental paradigm to traditions preceding Pentecostalism.⁴¹ The assumption appears to be that everything good about a previous movement, like Puritanism, was retained by the following movements which then advanced to a higher level. Finally, the Holiness movement, having successfully passed on all its spiritual inheritance and added its own contributions, was followed by Pentecostalism that advanced that next evolutionary step, improving on all the accumulated inheritance of Protestantism. (Certainly, it is a “theistic evolution” that is assumed!) Such assumptions immediately preclude any sustained examination of church history because one already believes that whatever good there was in the past has been preserved and been improved upon today. Such assumptions also do great violence to church history, ignoring the sad facts of spiritual declension and apostasies when the church has regressed. Indeed, one of

⁴⁰ Coffman, “Explaining the Ineffable.”

⁴¹ Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), pp. 82-83 quotes H. S. Maltby, *The Reasonableness of Hell* on Pentecostalism’s evolutionary historiography.

the lessons of church history is that progress is both a mysterious gift of God's Spirit (as Pentecostals should be ready to confess) and a product of intentional, vigorous change.

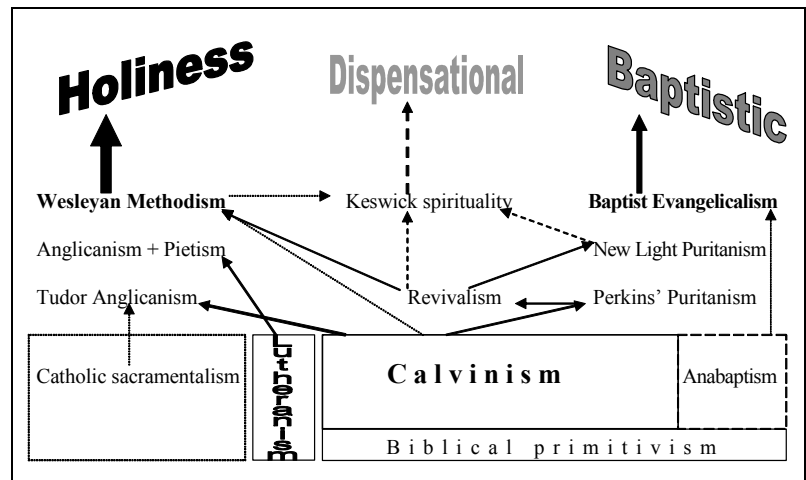
So if there is to be a genuine Pentecostal traditioning, it should start with a new Pentecostal historiography. This new historiography must be rooted in the core values of the evangelicalism of which Pentecostalism is a part; it should also be ready to admit that movements and leaders previous to Pentecostalism frequently experienced what it has labeled "the Baptism in the Holy Spirit" even if they formulated it differently (or developed no theology from the experience at all). This means that Pentecostals would have to surrender some of their exaggerated claims to uniqueness, both in further identifying themselves with the heart of evangelicalism and in showing that their experience has been shared with believers throughout church history and especially among evangelicals who cultivated piety.⁴²

Further, Pentecostals should recognize that their (sometimes) evolutionary view of church history contradicts their core-value of Biblical primitivism. A dismissively evolutionary approach to church history sees all of the past as the infancy of the present. Nearly everything about the church today is better than in yesteryear. Put like that, clearly Pentecostals, as biblical primitivists, should rethink that view. The primitivist believes that the church degenerated after the book of Acts. The quest is to undo that degeneration and recapture the apostolic ideal. Primitivists, Pentecostals especially, then approach church history warily, not as the necessarily authoritative accumulated wisdom of the saints but with a biblical standard, searching for models of how others have recaptured the New Testament zenith. But neither should they dismiss church history on the assumption that whatever good is in it has been faithfully handed over to them. Primitivists understand that the church can decline and lose past blessings.⁴³

⁴² Chan, p. 40 correctly notes that pre-modern outbreaks of prophetic gifts, including tongues, may not have any significance for Pentecostalism. This would especially be so when those manifestations were among movements that did not directly contribute to Pentecostalism. Chan's point here further reinforces my earlier point that the Catholic mystical tradition cannot responsibly be used as a source of Pentecostal traditioning.

⁴³ Although being ahistorical is commonly regarded as a fault of anti-intellectuals, it seems to me that Neo-Orthodoxy would encourage a dismissive approach to history. I once heard the dean of graduate studies at a respected American seminary say that we should not be bound by the propositions of the early creeds even while claiming we are orthodox in light of them; the dean

I believe that a genuine Pentecostal tradition will rest on three pillars: Wesleyan Holiness movement, dispensationalism, and Baptist evangelism. (One could subsume dispensationalism under the Baptist stream contributing to Pentecostalism.) The last of these is perhaps the most neglected yet probably also the most promising, as Chan's citation of Jonathan Edwards as a model of orthopathy suggests. Rediscovering the historical connections that exist between Pentecostals and Baptists and thus further back to Puritans could be the way forward to a genuine Pentecostal traditioning while avoiding the theological slough that Chan's neo-orthodox proposal would take Pentecostalism.



reasoned that we can accept the spirit of the creeds while rejecting the literal meaning of them because we now know, according to him, that we can divorce real “spiritual” meaning of a text from its grammatical-historical meaning. In addition, Curtis Freeman, who I mentioned earlier, and the postliberals insists that those who remain bound to exegetical textual authority are slaves of the defunct “enlightenment project”. They believe the whole category of thought that termed “history” or “reality” is not an objective entity but a product of enlightenment brainwashing. If I counter that when Paul stated that “If Christ has not been raised your faith is in vain” (1 Cor 15:14) he must have been insisting on faith in an historical event, they will insist that I am interpreting that passage through naïve enlightenment categories. Since the historicity of scripture is not considered important, I do not see how history can be taken seriously. Hence despite the apparently sophisticated nature of such theology, it can be just as dismissive of history as some anti-intellectuals.

Two main pillars to Pentecostalism, Holiness and Baptistic, with dispensationalism as a minor pillar. The traditions listed underneath them are the roots of the two main pillars, with the shallower dispensational tradition in the middle. The thicker the line, the stronger the influence; broken lines indicate interfered influence.

The New Light Baptist ancestors of Pentecostalism have their roots in Puritanism. A comparison of these ancestors to Pentecostalism with the other experiential religious expression during the Puritan era, Quakerism (George Fox's Society of Friends) shows them to be thoroughly and intentionally distinct from the kind of neo-orthodox/sacramental identity Chan wants to create for Pentecostalism. Although Geoffrey Nuttall labels Quakerism "the left wing of Puritanism," Puritans were severe in their denunciation of Quakerism and never accorded that movement the recognition they eventually gave to Baptists.⁴⁴ At the heart of what divided mainstream Puritans from Quakers was an assumption of the relationship of the Spirit to the Word. "The Spirit speaks in, by, or through the Word. Dissociation of the two is condemned."⁴⁵ There can be no "spirit of the Word" which contradicts the clear interpretation of that Word; there need be no Kierkegaardian leap of faith in the Puritan mind because there was no division between reason and faith. The faith simply was true; any assertion to the contrary was not only heretical but essentially unreasonable. Since the Quakers pushed a wedge between Word and Spirit they could override the Word when they believed the Spirit was leading them beyond it. The Puritans condemned this very move and it is they, not the Quakers who, through the New Light Baptists, became ancestors to Pentecostalism.

Also, Puritanism claimed to be a movement of restoration just as Pentecostalism does. Both Puritans and Pentecostals, inheritors of the

⁴⁴ Geoffrey Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 14. Third generation New England Puritan leader Cotton Mather, *The Great Works of Christ in America* (Edinburg: Banner of Truth Trust, 1979), vol. 2, pp. 532-33 defended the Baptists he knew from confusion with the much despised radical "Anabaptists" who were so condemned by the Reformers. Mather insisted that the Baptists he knew were "most worthy Christians, and as holy, watchful, fruitful, and heavenly people as perhaps any in the world." He even claimed that some Baptists were "among the planters of New England from the beginning, and have been welcome to the communion of our churches, which they have enjoyed, reserving their particular opinion unto themselves." He claims that he asked members who held to believer's baptism to remain in his church.

⁴⁵ Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, p. 33.

primitivist impulse, hold that the New Testament provides a workable blueprint for Christianity in the modern world, complete just as it stands, with a minimum of adaptation, interpretation, or contextualization into the forms of contemporary culture.⁴⁶ Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen note the attitude shared by both Puritanism and Pentecostalism, “To proclaim one’s own sect a reproduction of the ancient, apostolic order was to anoint one’s sect the one, true church while all others were merely historic, tradition laden, and therefore false.”⁴⁷ This repristinization impulse is not an attempt to escape history but to return to the pristine faith of the Bible; therefore, if the meaning of scripture becomes simply the consensus of an “interpretative community,” as Chan suggests, a core value of Pentecostalism is threatened.

5. Wesleyanism and Calvinisms

Although Puritanism declined, it never really disappeared. It sparked off an uninterrupted chain of some of the most effective religious leaders in the English-speaking world. Some of its influence shaped the man who established the most commonly recognized ancestor to Pentecostalism: John Wesley. Wesley’s theology shows that there is even a Reformed strain within the Holiness pillar underlying Pentecostalism, the pillar often regarded as thoroughly Arminian. Packer writes that Wesley was not a true Arminian, only an inconsistent Calvinist.⁴⁸ Methodist scholar Robert C. Monk has recorded the degree to which John Wesley himself was profoundly shaped by his Puritan heritage – both ancestral and intellectual.⁴⁹ Ernst Troeltsch goes so far as to call Methodism “Calvinistic Puritan Pietism.”⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Grant Wacker, “Playing for Keeps: The Primitivist Impulse in Early Pentecostalism,” in *The American Quest for the Primitive Church* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), p. 199.

⁴⁷ Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen, *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630-1875* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 21-22.

⁴⁸ J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1990), p. 46.

⁴⁹ See Robert C. Monk, *John Wesley: His Puritan Heritage* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966).

⁵⁰ According to Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, trans. Olive Wyon (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), vol. 2, p. 681, Puritanism “reappeared as early as the eighteenth century—this time,

Methodism is a mutt, not a pure breed. It cannot be claim to be just a descendant of Anglicanism or Puritanism. "Methodism...stands in a remarkable way at a point of confluence of" Anglicanism, Puritanism, and Pietism.⁵¹ Through Anglicanism flow remnants of Catholic practice; it is not at all clear whether the disciplines John Wesley and his colleagues in the "Holy Club" put themselves through were not in the spirit of Catholic monasticism. (Here, perhaps, is an avenue for Chan to argue that these elements were handed down to Pentecostalism but I think they were transformed and over-whelmed by Protestantism.) However, Elizabethan Anglicanism was profoundly shaped by Reformed Theology, retaining the thirty-nine (originally forty-two) that have strong Calvinistic influences on them.⁵²

By Wesley's time, English Puritanism was largely a lifeless shell of its former self. Therefore, it was through Pietism—a Lutheran evangelicalism—that Wesley really entered into the realm of experiencing his faith. Although Pietism may be credited with bringing Wesley and the Methodists into experiential religion his movement soon began to take on many of the characteristics of what Troeltsch calls "Calvinistic Puritan Pietism." In addition, it would be in America where some elements of Methodism formed the Holiness movement and encountered the still revived Puritanism of the "New Lights." New England's Awakening, unlike that of the Wesleys, thrived on the preaching of Calvinism.⁵³ All the leading Awakening revivalists—Edwards, Whitefield, the Tennents and their "log college" disciples, most Separatists and Baptists—reasserted the "Calvinist" doctrines of divine

however, in the shape of Methodism, which was indeed in the line of the old Puritan tradition, though it also contained some new elements."

⁵¹ Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, p. 147.

⁵² While for the Puritans Calvinism came to separate them from the Arminian Anglican mainstream, this was a latter development. During the late sixteenth century debate between Archbishop John Whitgift and Puritan Thomas Cartwright, Whitgift would cite Calvin and other Reformed theologians as authorities. The debate was over polity between Calvinists. See John Whitgift, *Works of Whitgift*, John Ayre, editor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1851).

⁵³ Alan Heimert, *The Great Awakening* (Alan Heimert and Perry Miller, editors; New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1967), p. xxvi.

sovereignty and human dependence. These doctrines they believed they had learned not so much from Calvin as Christ.⁵⁴

The later revivals that began under Calvinists Lyman Beecher and Asahel Nettleton were intentional in seeking to follow the model of Edwards' Great Awakening; Nettleton rejected Charles Finney's "new measures" and denounced his doctrinal deviations from a typically Reformed standpoint.⁵⁵ Although not a Methodist, Charles C. Finney would be catapulted, after a dramatic conversion and a powerful sense of being filled with the Spirit, into leadership of a series of revivals in New England and New York. His "new methods" continued the pragmatic logic of the use of means tentatively advanced by George Whitefield, John Wesley and the Methodists. His fearless preaching against sin, both individual and social, was based on a Wesleyan-like doctrine of "entire sanctification" that "meant perfect trust and consecration that expressed itself in social activism."⁵⁶ In Finney's doctrine, revivalism combined with holiness and reform to form a single, indivisible entity.⁵⁷ Through nineteenth century revivalists like Lyman Beecher, Charles Finney, and Dwight Moody, elements of the two revivalisms became so mixed together as to be indiscernible. Out of this mix, Pentecostalism would arise.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century several significant figures arose from outside the Wesleyan Holiness movement to emphasize more Calvinistic forms of experiential religion. One of those, which actually began much earlier in England, was the Plymouth Brethren. If the Plymouth Brethren were born today instead of the mid-nineteenth century, they would certainly be labeled "charismatic." Their free worship was designed to promote spiritual gifts, including prophesying. They eventually rejected speaking in tongues and grew more conservative as a reaction to the Catholic Apostolic Church (Irvingite) movement. John Nelson Darby "was an Irish Anglican priest

⁵⁴ Henry F. May, *The Enlightenment in America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 54. "The typical sermon of the Great Awakening was a careful disquisition on such points of theology as man's total depravity or the unconditional election of the saints." Also Heimert, *The Great Awakening*, p. xxvi.

⁵⁵ Asahel Nettleton, *Nettleton and His Labors* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1854, 1975), pp. 449-50.

⁵⁶ Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 28.

⁵⁷ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, p. 29.

who left that church in 1829 to lead a movement which he patterned after his conception of New Testament Christianity.”⁵⁸ Hence he was, like both the Puritans before him and the Pentecostals after, a primitivist. However, the contribution of the Plymouth Brethren that left the greatest impact on America and Pentecostalism was its unique dispensationalist theology and the consequent emphasis on premillennialism. Dispensationalism is essentially an alteration of Reformed theology. It popularized premillennialism among low church Calvinists, like Moody, and exercised something of a Calvinizing effect on Pentecostals who would later adopt dispensationalism.⁵⁹

Among the many American Christian leaders who became convinced of premillennial eschatology and began to shape their worldviews in light of it were D. L. Moody, Reuben Archer Torrey, Adoniram Judson Gordon, and Albert Benjamin Simpson.⁶⁰ Gordon and Simpson, especially Simpson, would have powerful effects on the shaping of early Pentecostalism. But first it would be the non-theologian, Moody, who would be “the most prominent contemporary advocate of a ‘walk in the Spirit’ and an experience of ‘endowment with power for service’.”⁶¹ “Moody himself claimed an intense second religious experience with the Holy Spirit in 1871 although it is doubtful if he held holiness or perfectionist sentiments. Ever practical and down to earth, Moody thought of the Holy Spirit as providing ‘power for service’.”⁶² This is exactly the paradigm of the baptism in the Holy Spirit that early Pentecostals adopted and which Chan believes is insufficient.

Instead of embracing a Wesleyan doctrine of a second experience, Moody became an advocate of what was known in America as the “Higher Christian Life” and in Britain as the “Keswick Movement.” Instead of holiness being achieved by ascetic disciplines that look like they came right out of medieval monasticism, “the believer needed only

⁵⁸ Edith Lydia Waldvogel, “The ‘Overcoming Life’: A Study in the Reformed Evangelical Origins of Pentecostalism” (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1977), p. 14.

⁵⁹ Waldvogel, “The ‘Overcoming Life’,” p. 14: “During the nineteenth century, the premillennial understanding of Christ’s second advent had become increasingly important within the Reformed tradition.”

⁶⁰ Waldvogel, “The ‘Overcoming Life’,” p. 15.

⁶¹ Waldvogel, “The ‘Overcoming Life’,” p. 17.

⁶² C. Allyn Russell, “Adoniram Judson Gordon: Nineteenth-Century Fundamentalist,” *American Baptist Quarterly* 4:1 (March 1985), p. 68.

to claim by faith the presence and reign of Christ within his soul to enter a fuller spiritual experience.”⁶³ The Keswick movement resisted the Wesleyan definition of the baptism of the Spirit because of the Calvinist heritage of its proponents.⁶⁴

The Keswick movement...was absolutely crucial to the development of Pentecostalism.... That wing of the Pentecostal movement which had earlier connections with Wesleyanism became Pentecostal by accepting Keswick (i.e., Calvinist) teachings on dispensationalism, premillennialism and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.... The Pentecostal movement was as much a departure from the Wesleyan tradition as a development from it.⁶⁵

Meanwhile a theological divide between those who would later be called “evangelicals” and “modernists” was beginning to be obvious. Torrey had “gone to Europe in 1882 as a sympathetic student of higher criticism and had returned to the United States in 1883 firmly committed to conservative evangelical theology.”⁶⁶ Gordon saw biblical criticism as a new, wearisome scholasticism that undermined experiential religion. He believed it was far removed from the original method of Jesus that he was trying to restore.⁶⁷ Both these men are grandfathers of Pentecostalism.

Hence, a commitment to Biblical inerrancy was part of the theological tradition into which Pentecostalism was born. Chan then is technically correct to write that Pentecostals accepted this doctrine “uncritically.” But the grandfathers of Pentecostalism had considered the question carefully and come to a decisively inerrantist conclusion. In addition, Chan is mistaken to suggest that somehow Pentecostalism’s core-value of Biblical primitivism, expressed by Gordon, is tenable in an

⁶³ Waldvogel, “The ‘Overcoming Life’,” p. 81.

⁶⁴ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, p. 41. To Benjamin B. Warfield, however, the distinctions between the Keswick approach to sanctification and the Wesleyan were merely semantical. “The separation of the higher life from justification and conversion was, Warfield charged, essentially the Wesleyan error expressed in different terms.” (Waldvogel, “The ‘Overcoming Life’,” p. 110.)

⁶⁵ Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, p. 43.

⁶⁶ Waldvogel, “The ‘Overcoming Life’,” p. 66.

⁶⁷ Russell, “Adoniram Judson Gordon,” p. 83.

environment that uncritically accepts Biblical errancy as a presupposition (as do both liberalism and neo-orthodoxy.)

Because these proto-Pentecostals were repelled by theological liberalism and disenchanted with the state of even conservative seminaries, they often established their own Bible schools. Adoniram Judson Gordon, an early exponent of healing in the atonement, founded the Boston Missionary Training School (1889), later to become Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, because he believed that the traditional theological schools “had surrendered their evangelical passion.”⁶⁸ The three-year Bible institute innovated by Moody and Simpson, “in which the atmosphere of the school was geared more to spiritual development than the academic performance, became the dominant strategy for the preparation of Pentecostal leadership.”⁶⁹ This goes a long way, I believe, to explaining why Pentecostalism was insulated from the fundamentalist-modernist debate. They were “uncritical” of inerrancy because they were not forced, by controversy to think the issue through. Biblical inerrancy was taken for granted in early Pentecostalism because it grew up in an evangelical environment.⁷⁰ “Pentecostals and fundamentalists share several common beliefs including the verbal inspiration of the bible; biblical literalism; the necessity of the conversion experience; the imminent, premillennial return of Christ; and a highly moralist way of life.”⁷¹ If they do not beat the inerrancy drum as often or as loudly as the fundamentalists it is only because they were spared that battle by the insulation that Moody, Gordon, and Simpson had put up. Had they been exposed to errantists and other forms of liberalism, there is no reason to suppose they would have changed their stance on Biblical authority and infallibility in any way.

William H. Durham (1873-1912) was instrumental for bringing Baptist elements just one small step over the threshold into Pentecostalism. Durham pastored the nondenominational North Avenue Mission in Chicago. After visiting the Asuza Street revival, in 1907, he became a champion for interpreting Spirit-baptism as a second

⁶⁸ Russell, “Adoniram Judson Gordon,” p. 67.

⁶⁹ Charles Nienkirchen, “Christian and Missionary Alliance,” *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 164.

⁷⁰ “The Pentecostal movement should be regarded as a part of the Fundamentalist movement.” (Russell, “Adoniram Judson Gordon,” p. 6.)

⁷¹ Russell, “Adoniram Judson Gordon,” p. 84.

experience of empowerment for service and an opponent of the Holiness doctrine of a subsequent experience of entire sanctification.⁷² His influence was profound, even though he only lived five years after his visit to Los Angeles. He advocated the “finished work of Christ on Calvary,” an essentially Reformed interpretation of soteriology which sees Spirit-baptism as empowerment for service. “Durham, in effect, reiterated the essence of Torrey’s understanding of salvation and sanctification from the perspective of Pentecostal definition of Spirit baptism.”⁷³ Followers of Durham would predominate among the founders of the Assemblies of God eventually bringing elements of Reformed revivalism into the heart of Pentecostalism.

6. Conclusion

There has been in the history of the Christian movement a waxing and waning of expressions of experiential religion. Few would doubt that early Pentecostalism was one of those expressions. In those places of its greatest contemporary expansion, South America, Africa, and Asia, it is still such a movement. If it has lost some of that dynamism in its American birthplace, it is probably not because of a too close identification with a broader evangelicalism. It was, after all, that environment that gave birth to and nourished early Pentecostalism.

Simon Chan’s warnings about the “routinization of charisma” deserve to be heeded but his neo-orthodox and Catholic cure would be worse than the disease. Douglas Oss has warned that the “departure from Pentecostalism’s evangelical roots” is “the single, most significant threat to the future of the Pentecostal movement.”⁷⁴ Rather than trying to develop a new myth of origin for Pentecostalism that has no roots in actual history, it would be better for Pentecostals to uncover treasures in their genuine heritage. Chief among those neglected treasures, I believe is Puritanism, which was, like Pentecostalism another expression of Biblical primitivism and experiential faith. It also has a rightful place in the Pentecostal family tree.

We have seen that there is a strong Reformed element within Pentecostalism, filtered through the New Light Baptists. The Pentecostal

⁷² Waldvogel, “The ‘Overcoming Life’,” pp. 184-85.

⁷³ Waldvogel, “The ‘Overcoming Life’,” p. 187.

⁷⁴ Oss, *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?*, p. 87.

fountainhead is in the evangelicalism of the decades preceding the 1906-08 Asuza Street revival. Both Wesleyan and Reformed springs are at the source.⁷⁵ The Reformed contribution is even more pronounced when one remembers that Wesleyanism itself is partly Puritan. If an historically responsible traditioning of Pentecostalism is to be carried out, I believe it is the recovery of this much neglected but genuine ancestor to Pentecostalism which holds the most promise.

⁷⁵ Waldvogel, "The 'Overcoming Life'," p. 13.