

SENIOR ESSAY

"A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE  
PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT IN THE  
SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES"

by

MARCELINO M. CASUCO  
April 15, 1970

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. Brief History of Pentecost

- (a) In the 18th and 19th centuries
- (b) Background of Modern Pentecostal Revival
- (c) Beginning of Modern Pentecost

#### II. Sect-type characteristics within Pentecost

#### III. Conditions Conducive to the rise of Pentecostal Sects

- (a) Migration and Transplantation
- (b) Social Disorganization
- (c) Social Change
- (d) Natural Conservatism of Rural people
- (e) Protest and Compensation

#### IV. Elements which attract and hold Pentecostal Adherents

- (a) Enthusiastic Worship
- (b) Faith Healing
- (c) Fellowship
- (d) Charismatic Power
- (e) Marketing Eight Hidden Needs

#### V. Weaknesses of the Pentecostal Movement

- (a) Too Individual and "Other Worldly"
- (b) Legalism Vexes and Confused the Youth
- (c) Lack of education
- (d) Powerless "Pentecostalism"
- (e) Vulnerability to Phonies
- (f) A bad historical Image

### CONCLUSION

This essay is an analysis of the Pentecostal movement in its historical and sociological perspectives; showing what it is, what kinds of people it attracts, the needs it meets, its strengths and weaknesses, and giving insights into its distinctive characteristics.

Growth statistics gathered by sociologists indicate that the Pentecostal movement is worthy of examination. In 1959, for instance, the Churches of God and Pentecostal assemblies held nationwide numerical strength rankings of eleventh and twelfth, respectively, with each reporting nine denominations totalling some 400,000 members.<sup>1</sup> From 1926 to 1952, the Pentecostal and Holiness denominations increased by 532 percent in the nation and 1,000 percent in the South; while Church of God bodies increased 260 percent in the nation and 659 percent in the Southeast.<sup>2</sup>

Although the yearbook of the National Council of Churches of Christ lists twenty-two Pentecostal denominations, only the following eight have figured prominently in the development of the movement: Assemblies of God, Pentecostal Church of God of America, International Church of the Four-

---

<sup>1</sup> David O. Moberg, The Church as a Social Institution, Englewood Cliffs, (N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Earl D.C. Brewer, The Southern Region-A Laboratory for Ecumenical Christian Mission. (Emory Univ., Atlanta, Ga., 1967), p. 5.

square Gospel, Open Bible Standard Churches, United Pentecostal Church, Pentecostal Holiness Church, Church of God, and Church of God in Christ.<sup>3</sup> Within this study, however, I will deal only with three denominations which are widely known not only in America but also in the Philippines. They are: Church of God, Assemblies of God, and the Congregational Holiness.

---

<sup>3</sup> Klaude Kendrick, The Promise Fulfilled, (Springfield, Mo., Gospel Publishing Co., 1961), p. 2.



CHAPTER I  
HISTORY OF THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

In the latter part of the seventeenth century there appeared in the southeastern part of France, the "Cevenal Prophets," former adherents of the Reformed faith who spoke in unknown tongues and underwent strange bodily contortions while in religious ecstasies. Although their opponents called them "poor madmen," they agreed that the "Cevenal<sup>4</sup> Prophets" were "without ulterior design or evil intent."

Also in France, the "Camisards" appeared in 1702. In addition to the gift of glossolalia, the "Camisards" seemed<sup>5</sup> to have the supernatural ability to discern guilty secrets.

Of all the groups before the twentieth century showing Pentecostal characteristics, none received as much notice as the "Irvingites", a sect which developed in Great Britain about 1825. Edward Irving, a popular Presbyterian minister in London, condoned outbreaks of religious enthusiasm in his church, but was thrown out when the "gift of tongues" was exercised in his services. He then formed the "Catholic Apostolic Church," known as the "Irvingites" because of his

---

<sup>4</sup> Phillip Schaff, History of the Apostolic Church, (N.Y.: Scribner's, 1953), Vol. 1, pp. 236-7.

<sup>5</sup> Kendrick, Ibid., pp. 18-19.

6  
early leadership.

Both of the seventeenth century Quakers and their eighteenth century followers, the Quakers, employed glosolalia and other practices similar to those of modern Pentecostal sects.<sup>7</sup> The eighteenth century Methodist societies were marked by enthusiasm, crying out with groans and sobs, shouting, and uttering of unintelligible sounds.<sup>8</sup>

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commonly known as the Mormon Church, affirms belief in the "gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, and interpretation of tongues," in their seventh article of Faith.<sup>9</sup> Mormon history includes the story of a pioneer child who saved her family from massacre by speaking a message of peace to attacking Indians in their own language.

(a) Background of the Modern Pentecostal Revival

Circumstances which arose in the last years of the nineteenth century made the ground fertile for inception and growth of the Pentecostal movement. These were: the

---

<sup>6</sup> G. B. Cutten, Speaking with Tongues, Historically & Psychologically considered, (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1927), p. 38.

<sup>7</sup> The Catholic Encyclopedia, (N.Y.: Rob't Appleton Co., 1912), Vol. XV, p. 438.

<sup>8</sup> Kendrick, Op. Cit., pp. 19-20.

<sup>9</sup> Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. IX, p. 377.

moral, political, and business corruption which flourished; the worldliness and material interest which developed along with increasing national wealth; the widespread acceptance of Horace Bushnell's idea of "gradual salvation" as expressed in his book, Christian Nurture, and the social gospel which it spawned; the Darwinian theory of the origin of the species; introduction of higher criticism; the study of comparative religions; and the "Holiness" movement in opposition to the religious laxness and innovations which plagued the late nine-<sup>10</sup>teenth century churches.

The Holiness movement, an interdenominational effort to stimulate religious devotion among the members of existing churches, made two contributions which prepared the way for modern Pentecostals. First, it introduced to American religion a new interest in "spiritual experiences" subsequent to the "crisis experience" of salvation, and second, it produced another wave of bodily phenomena which included "tongues." The Holiness people also popularized the phrase, "baptism of the Holy Spirit", to identify a "second blessing" or second<sup>11</sup> crisis experience beyond salvation.

---

<sup>10</sup> Robert Dalton, Tongues Like as of Fire, (Springfield, Mo., Gospel Publishing Company, 1945), pp. 15-18.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 20-22.

(b) The Beginning of Modern Pentecost

A former Methodist minister who had claimed he had been miraculously healed of rheumatic fever is generally acknowledged as the "father of the Modern Pentecostal Movement." Charles F. Parham (1873-1929), left the Methodist Church and attempted to establish a non-sectarian, Holiness movement which emphasized experiential salvation and sanctification, faith healing and premillennialism. He was influenced by the Holiness emphasis on enthusiasm, a characteristic which was later passed on to the Pentecostals along with the tenets of salvation, sanctification and faith healing.<sup>12</sup>

Agnes Ozman, a student in Parham's Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas, became the first known person in modern times to have received the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" and spoke in tongues as result of specifically seeking these experiences through prayer. Since this event, which occurred in 1901, Pentecostal believers have been teaching that "the baptism" should be sought and that it should be received with the evidence of "tongues."<sup>13</sup> Throughout the next seven years, Parham led a highly publicized series of Pentecostal revivals

---

<sup>12</sup> Kendrick, Op. Cit., pp. 23-4.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 21-2.

in Kansas, Missouri and Texas. Other early Pentecostal  
leaders conducted spectacular revivals in California,  
Chicago, Canada and New York.<sup>14</sup>

These revivals were uniformly enthusiastic, informal  
and permeated with fervent congregational singing. Freedom  
of physical expression was encouraged, with spontaneous  
praise, shouting, weeping and personal testimonies.

---

<sup>14</sup> Kendrick, Ibid., p. 23.

## II. SECT-TYPE CHARACTERISTICS WITHIN PENTECOST

The modern Pentecostal movement has most of the earmarks of a sect, according to criteria suggested by David O. Moberg in his book, The Church as a Social Institution, although some cult characteristics are apparent, and the three denominations featured are moving perceptibly toward a church-type identification.

Ernst Troeltsch's sect typology generally applies to the assemblies of God, Church of God and Congregational Holiness, since they are comparatively small, they avoid the state and society, and are connected with the lower socio-economic and educational classes. Membership and unity are based basically upon the common experience of the "new birth." Direct, personal, mystical intercourse with God through the Holy Spirit minimizes the sacraments. The adherents, although permitted to suffer in the present life, expect to be completely redeemed upon the return of Jesus Christ. The Pentecostal movement stresses literal obedience to scriptural and primitive church ideals, emphasizes a pronounced individualism and subjective holiness.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Kendrick, Ibid., p. 24.

In general, the Pentecostal movement also conforms with certain modifications of Troeltsch's sect-typology, as suggested by the following sociologists:

Howard Becker: "...stands in sharp contrast to the ecclesia. It is relatively small, has abandoned attempts to win the whole world over to its doctrines... Frequent persecution reinforces its separatist and semi-ascetic attitude toward the world. It generally prefers isolation from the world over compromise with it... Its fervor tends to disappear by the second or third generation."<sup>16</sup>

Joachim Wach: "...a rigid, qualitative exclusiveness distinguishes them from ecclesiastical bodies; their fellowship is based both upon sharing definite norms of faith, ritual, and order, and upon disciplined individual conduct. They trace the legitimacy of their form of Christian fellowship to the primitive church."<sup>17</sup>

The Pentecostal churches, which are oriented toward personal need rather than social integration, fit J. Milton Yinger's descriptions of the "established sect" because although they began as attempts to reduce the burdens of personal inadequacy, sin, and guilt, they are developing into denominations. Nevertheless, their opposition to basic

---

<sup>16</sup> Kendrick, Ibid., pp. 26-31.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 32-33.

patterns of society remains. The Pentecostal churches, and especially the three being considered in this study, also meet Wach's standards for classification as sects, due to the fact that they protest the social pattern through avoidance, which

involves devaluing the present life and world and projecting hopes into a future, perfect world (In my opinion this tendency has shown an encouraging decrease lately). Problems of the present life are allayed by entering or forming a communion of like-minded men. More indifferent than antagonistic to society, this type of sect is more likely to develop into a denomination than are those aggressively opposed to society. Avoidance is common among Holiness, Pentecostal, and Adventist groups.<sup>18</sup>

Liston Pope: "...they have unspecialized, non-professional, part-time ministers. Emphasizing evangelism, conversion, and voluntary confessional joining, their chief concern is with an 'adult' membership. They adhere to such strict biblical standards as tithing...Congregational participation in church administration and services is at a high level. Fervor, reliance upon spontaneous guidance of the Holy Spirit, and hymns resembling contemporary folk music are characteristic of their religious services. They emphasize religion in the home and also have a comparatively large number of special religious services, so the sect assumes hegemony over large spheres of its members' time."<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Kendrick, Ibid., pp. 37-45.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 53-54.



Russel R. Dynes, who applied Pope's findings to a study of church-sect contrasts in Columbus, Ohio, uncovered additional facts which are applicable to the Pentecostal movement. Sectarian attitudes, he found, were consistently more common in the lower socio-economic groups; and the higher the education and occupational prestige, the more emotionalism, evangelism and other sectarian characteristics were rejected and more institutionalized, liturgical religion accepted.<sup>20</sup>

Charles P. Loomis and J. Allan Beegle:  
"...they usually hold more powerful negative and positive sanctions over their members than churches do and hence tend to control more aspects of their lives. Relationships between members are generally more intimate and all-encompassing than in the church....(they) attempt to maintain distinct spatial or social boundaries between (themselves) and the world through various devices for limiting interaction with outsiders. Taboos are rigidly enforced to prevent contamination by the world and to maintain separation from it."<sup>21</sup>

Elmer T. Clark: "...Many are refuges of the poor and the disinherited. They usually stress a puritanistic type of personal morality, attract the emotionally starved. Nearly all are conservative in both theology and manner of living."<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Kendrick, Ibid., pp. 54-69.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 71-72.

<sup>22</sup> Moberg, Op. Cit., pp. 74-75.

C. S. Braden: "...members have more definite convictions concerning their faith than most church members...the recognition that beliefs really are important and the insistence that there is a 'Christian way' in life situations undergird this trait. The need to 'witness' one's faith to others, comparative indifference to public sentiments, courage to engage in unconventional behavior, maintenance of definite membership standards...a high degree of lay participation, and the provision of definite techniques for receiving the values the religion offers are other characteristics which contributed to (their) rapid growth. Some offer healing, economic security, free religious expression, and emotional release. Since conventional churches often are 'class institutions' in which lower class persons can not feel at home, (they) often are a heaven for the economically and socially dispossessed."<sup>23</sup>

In agreement with Braden's last statement above, Vance Packard, his book, The Status Seekers, quotes H. Richard Niebuhr:

Whenever Christianity has become the religion of the fortunate and cultured and has grown philosophical, abstract, and ethically harmless in the process, the lower strata of society find themselves religiously expatriated by a faith that neither meets their psychological needs nor sets forth an appealing ethical ideal. The rise of new sects of Christianity to champion the uncompromising ethics of Jesus and to preach the

---

<sup>23</sup> Moberg, Ibid., pp. 87-88.

gospel of the poor has again and again been the effective means of recalling Christendom to its mission."<sup>24</sup>

Among Clark's seven classifications of sects are two which describe some Pentecostal characteristics: "perfectionist or subjectivist" sects which seek spiritual holiness and an emotion-packed "second blessing"; and "charismatic or pentecostal" sects, "the leftwing of the subjectivist groups," who seek special blessings manifested by speaking in tongues, visions, trances, dancing before the Lord, etc.<sup>25</sup>

Peter L. Berger; "Enthusiastic sects see their religion as an experience to be lived."<sup>26</sup> Niebuhr: "The sect is always activated by the ideal of the pure church, hence it emphasizes a strict discipline which results in separatism and often semi-asceticism."<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Vance Packard, The Status Seekers, (N.Y.: Pocket Books, Inc., 1961), p. 177.

<sup>25</sup> Moberg, Op. Cit., p. 91.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>27</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism, (N.Y.: Holt and Co., 1929), pp. 19-20.

### III. CONDITIONS CONDUCTIVE TO THE RISE OF PENTECOSTAL SECTS

A religious "market" for the Pentecostal movement and other sect-type bodies, has repeatedly arisen during the history of Protestantism among:

the outcast minority, the poor who were without effective representation in the church or state and who formed their conventicles or dissent...on the democratic, associational pattern."<sup>28</sup>

This observation of Niebuhr's was pointed out in Section II, along with similar views by Clark.

Five psycho-sociological reasons seem to be the main contributing factors behind the upsurge of sectarian membership in general and this investigation has shown that all five reasons are applicable to the Pentecostal movement in particular.

#### (a) Migration and Transplantation

Rural migrants, who compose the majority of membership among Pentecostal congregations, often find the city versions of their rural denominations too large and imper-

---

<sup>28</sup>

Niebuhr, Ibid., pp. 19-20.

sonal to meet their needs, so they join a sect which has preserved rural attitudes and values. However, this applies only to persons of lower socio-economic status, according to Russel R. Dynes.<sup>29</sup>

Most urban Pentecostal churches are located either in declining, inner-city neighborhoods which consist of large homes converted into multi-family rental dwellings, or in "mill villages." Faith Memorial Assembly of God on Ponce de Leon Avenue, the Church of God on Hemphill Avenue, and the Christian Fellowship Center on Memorial Drive are three large Atlanta Pentecostal churches in transitional, bi-racial, inner-city neighborhoods. The Jacksonville Congregational Holiness Church in Jacksonville, Alabama, is an example of a mill village Pentecostal church. A large textile mill, which employs some of the church's members is about a quarter of a mile away. The First Assembly of God in Anniston, Alabama, is situated a block from the railroad tracks near a junkyard in an industrial residential, bi-racial section. Like the neighborhoods in which they are located, these Pentecostal churches serve predominantly working class people, those who are categorized in "Class IV" in Packard's

---

<sup>29</sup> Moberg, Op. Cit., pp. 107-108.

The Status Seekers.

(b) Social Disorganization

Anton T. Boisen noted that economic and social maladjustments result in "religious quickening" as people seek new, stabilizing and organizing influences. The economically distressed, he said share similar experiences and face the same problems. Trying to understand these problems, they are drawn into groups "with a sense of earnestness and urgency that makes their religion supreme reality and all-important source of power."<sup>30</sup> A common social condition produces a common philosophy of life among these people and their religious life meets needs that arise from disorganization, providing opportunities for reorientation within a new religious system. "In their new-found groups, as pointed out by W. Seward Salisbury in Moberg's The Church as a Social Institution, members are likely to have an intensity of religious feeling and belongingness that leads to a much higher degree of loyalty and more giving of time, service, and money than is found in older religious bodies."<sup>31</sup> Among inner-city Pentecostals, these aspects described by

---

<sup>30</sup> Moberg, Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

Boisen and Salisbury in The Church as a Social Institution are the rule, rather than the exception.

(c) Social Change

The rapid social change a rural person undergoes when he moves to the inner-city produces a disorientation and loss of personal identity, making him susceptible to nostalgic appeals from "old time religion" sects. William E. Mann explains how sectarian preachers, reiterating "old fashioned" beliefs, strengthen traditional symbols and encourage listeners to endure the crises associated with change.<sup>32</sup> A repetitive theme of testimony meetings in Pentecostal churches is a yearning for "the good old days when the children slept on pallets while their parents shouted, laughed, wept and danced in the Spirit." According to many such testimonials, the Church had more "anointing", less "modern worldliness", and uniform religious zeal among the members.

Mann adds that the emotional fervor of certain sects is often a reaction to personal strains and social crises induced by economic distress and other problems associated with change.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Moberg, Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

(d) Natural Conservatism of Rural People

Persons from a rural background are close to nature and are constantly reminded of the Creator as his world moves through the seasons with unremitting regularity. They live in close association with the family and neighborhood. They are traditionally conservative and they treasure "old things", custom and tradition. "To divorce a people from their culture when many traits in that culture have been basically sound in the development of normal, harmonious, and happy living, can spell disaster," Marvin T. Judy emphasizes.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, it is understandable how such people would gravitate toward the conservative Pentecostal movement.

(e) Protest and Compensation

The increasing membership within the Pentecostal and Holiness sects during the past quarter-century represents, on the one hand, Pope says, "a protest (couched in religious form) against social exclusiveness; and, on the other, a compensatory method (also in religious form) for regaining status, and redefining class lines in religious terms."<sup>35</sup>

Other studies have shown, Packard says, that a dom-

---

<sup>34</sup> Marvin T. Judy, The Larger Parish and Group Ministry, (N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1959), pp. 35-36.

<sup>35</sup> Listen Pope, "Religion & the Class Structure," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, March 1948.



inant theme in some of the new lower-class revivalist and fundamentalist religions is that faith and righteousness make their adherents "holier-than-thou:" and will entitle them, when they get to Heaven, to sit in the high places.<sup>36</sup> (Writer's note: This aspect of the Pentecostal attitude toward non-Pentecostals is, in my opinion, more of a dormant, "below the surface" attitude than outwardly-expressed policy). Its significance is diminishing and one is more likely to hear "anti-modernist" polemics from fundamentalists than Pentecostals.

---

<sup>36</sup>  
Packard, p. 176.

#### IV. ELEMENTS WHICH ATTRACT AND HOLD PENTECOSTAL ADHERENTS

##### (a) Enthusiastic Worship

As was mentioned in Section I, Parham, the "father of modern Pentecost," learned to value enthusiasm. He felt that emotions as well as the will are affected by religious experience. John Wesley, in answering critics of enthusiasm, stated that it was

"no other than heart-religion; in other words, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. These must be felt, or they have no being. All therefore who condemn inward feelings in the gross, leave no place either for joy or peace or love in religion, and consequently reduce it to a dry, dead carcase."<sup>37</sup>

Modern Pentecostal worship may be accurately described as a "complete 'meal' for the whole man." At its greatest intensity, it brings mystical communion with God through the Holy Spirit; status, fellowship, and healing for egos which have been damaged by lack of occupational, social and educational success; release through laughter, crying, shouting and singing for those whose emotional outlets have been suppressed by behavior taboos of their church; and sensual pleas-

---

<sup>37</sup> Kendrick, p. 44.

ure through dancing, singing, clapping hands and stomping feet to the beat of frenetic folk-style hymns. Dramatic pulpit oratory testimonials, and congregational singing may evoke the entire range of human emotions, climaxed as the worshippers exhaust themselves in fervent prayer at the altar.

The four Pentecostal ministers and members of the "Pentecostal Collegians Choir" of Jacksonville (Ala.) State University who were interviewed in this study voiced approval of the emotionality of their worship. The consensus was that joy is the prevailing emotion in their services and that it has performed a valid function in Old and New Testament worship and in the worship of today. "Man is an emotional being," commented the Reverend O. M. Dykes, pastor of the First Assembly of God in Anniston, Alabama, in an interview. He further said that "emotions of human beings should be given religious expression. When the austerity of a church service inhibits the expression of love, joy or sorrow, then the worshippers are denied fulfillment. They are then driven to seek fulfillment in non-religious ways, such as in sports, 'rock-and-roll' music, or violence. We believe that man's emotional nature also belongs to God and should be employed to His honor."

A typical Pentecostal order of worship follows this pattern: about five congregational hymns are sung, often to the accompaniment of organ, electric guitar and accordion (occasionally, drums, saxophones, trombones, and tambourines); two or three "special" numbers are sung by individuals, quartets or family groups; testimonies; an offertory prayer; another "special" song during the collection; the pastor's invitation for the people to make their prayer request known; corporate prayer "in concert" by all members of the congregation simultaneously, standing, with arms upraised; another corporate prayer; sermon; altar call.

When the pastor extends an altar call, the male and female respondents separate and kneel at two "mourner's benches" on either side of the pulpit, where they pray for themselves and others. The pastor and "spirit-filled" elders or women lay hands upon and anoint with oil those who are seeking divine healing or the "baptism of the Holy Ghost."

Apparently, such worship experiences are so intensely fulfilling that Pentecostal people feel little compulsion to seek the secular entertainment condemned by their churches. The Pentecostal Collegians Choir is made up of fifteen to twenty attractive young people who would rather meet on Saturday nights for singing, prayer, testimonies, fellowship and a sermon in the home of U. S. Army Sergeant Edward Smith,

a part-time Congregational Holiness minister, than to attend dances, parties or movies.

(b) Faith Healing

Faith healing is one of the major elements in the Pentecostal movement. Each testimony meeting abounds with affirmations of divine healing of all kinds of injuries and disorders. Without analyzing statistical or medical evidence for or against divine healing, it is adequate to state at this point that the Pentecostals firmly believe in healing. While miraculous healings do indeed occur, the Pentecostals candidly admit that prayer does not seem to avail for others, and some people "lose" their healing.

In spite of apparent failures, most Pentecostals especially the ministers have adopted the attitude that if they are to follow the example and commission of Jesus Christ, they must minister to all the sick whom they encounter and ask God to heal them completely and immediately. "Jesus never had any failures," the Reverend James Martin, Congregational Holiness minister in Jacksonville, Alabama said. He further stated that "I never try to predict whether a person has a good chance of being healed in advance, I just obey Christ and pray for all who ask me to, and I leave the outcome to

Him."<sup>38</sup>

(c) Fellowship

When Pentecostal women meet each other in church or at camp meetings, they exchange hugs, and men do the same. They call each other "brother" and "sister." Some of the matriarchs are called "mother" or "Mama." The reason behind their preference for this family-oriented terminology has already been shown by Judy's observations of rural attitudes in Section III(e). Such an atmosphere of warmth and acceptance is in itself a strong motivation to attend church frequently, or even to leave a less affectionate denomination in order to enjoy it.

With so many normal and socially-acceptable forms of entertainment condemned by Pentecostal policies, church functions are about the only social activities they sanction. Therefore, they have frequent dinners, singings, youth meetings and prayer services. The combined "old-fashioned dinner-on-the-grounds and all-day singing" is perhaps the most popular rural Pentecostal social event, and it is practiced by many urban congregation.

(d) Charismatic Power

Displays of charismatic power in the fashion of the

---

<sup>38</sup>Rev. James Martin's comment as cited in the Yearbook of the Alabama District, p. 21.

primitive Christian church are sought in the Pentecostal churches. Experience of "baptism in the Holy Spirit (Ghost)" is a prerequisite for all ministerial candidates in the Congregational Holiness Church, the Assemblies of God and the Church of God. Moreover, this experience is required of many candidates for positions of lay leadership.<sup>39</sup>

The "baptism in the Holy Ghost" carries with it nine charismatic gifts which are expected to be operative with varying degrees of proficiency: (1) gifts of revelation: the word of wisdom, supernatural revelation of purpose; word of knowledge, supernatural revelation of facts in the divine mind; discerning of spirits, supernatural insight into the realms of spirit, supernatural insight into the realms of the holy spirit; (2) gifts of power, faith, supernatural trust (passive) in God for the miraculous; working of miracles, supernatural intervention (active) in the ordinary course of nature; gifts of inspiration (vocal gifts); prophecy, supernatural utterance in a known tongue; diverse kinds of tongues, supernatural utterance in an unknown tongue; interpretation of tongues, supernatural showing forth of the meaning of other tongues.<sup>40</sup> Each time one of these gifts is demonstrated in

---

<sup>39</sup> Discipline of the Congregational Holiness Church (1966), p. 17; Yearbook of the Alabama District Council of the Assemblies of God, (1966), p. 23; Minutes of the 50th General Assembly of the Church of God, (1964), p. 70.

<sup>40</sup> Dalton, pp. 81-82.

a Pentecostal congregation, it evokes great joy and confidence, and is generally interpreted as evidence of God's continuing stamp of approval upon the Church.

(e) Marketing Eight Hidden Needs

Packard's analysis of modern advertising techniques in the Hidden Persuaders is strikingly applicable to the success story of the Pentecostal movement. The comparison of Madison Avenue's marketing approach with the religious appeal of Pentecostal reveals astonishing similarity, although it cannot be charged honestly that the Pentecostal churches are deliberately copying the techniques of the advertising men.

Packard said that in searching for extra psychological values that they could add to products to give them a more potent appeal, the "depth merchandisers" came upon

"many gratifying clues by studying our subconscious needs, yearnings and cravings. Once the need was identified, and certified to be compelling, they began building the promise of its fulfillment into their sales presentations."<sup>41</sup>

Packard's "eight hidden needs," as they appear to have been adapted to religion by the Pentecostals are: sell-

---

<sup>41</sup>

Vance Packard, The Hidden Persuaders, (N.Y.: Pocket Books, Inc., 1958), pp. 60-70.



ing emotional security, bringing persons into a mystical, experiential relationship with God and likeminded persons; selling reassurance of worth through Scriptural promises that Christians are "the light of the world", "the salt of the earth", "covenant people of God", "the body of Christ", "more than conquerors", "joint heirs with Christ", selling ego gratification, closely allied with the previous one; selling creative outlets, through numerous opportunities for lay participation, letting church members "work for Jesus", selling love objects, the loving Father, the Lamb of God who came to seek and to save that which was lost, the Good shepherd of the sheep; selling sense of power, through the charismatic gifts listed in Part (d), and Scripture which says, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you", and "I give you all power over all the power of the enemy"; selling a sense of roots, "being rooted and grounded in the faith"; "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day"; and finally, selling immortality. The Pentecostals are most proficient at pointing the faith to "a land that is fairer than day." Their hymns reflect this concern for immortality, and the life to come. For instance, a very popular one says, "Some glad morning when this life is o'er I'll fly away!"

## V. WEAKNESSES OF THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

(a) The kinship between the Pentecostal movement and revivalism has created a strong emphasis upon the emotional, ecstatic, mystical and personal in religion. As Charles H. Maxson said of sects in general, some Pentecostal churches have become so concerned with saving souls that they have failed to see the relationships of those souls to society as a whole and the need to influence civic and economic affairs in order to help individuals.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, there are encouraging trends developing toward a Pentecostal outreach into foreign missions and social involvement.

(b) One of the movement's most serious problems is its inability to meet the needs of young people, the second and third generation Pentecostals who do not wish to be saddled with the joyless, legalistic restrictions imposed upon them by the disciplines of their denominations.

Among the legalistic restrictions which vex the young people are: The Congregational Holiness position, "we consider wearing shorts and bathing suits immodest. Worldly entertainments, such as theaters, ballrooms, circuses, public

---

<sup>42</sup>  
Moberg, pp. 441.

swimming pools, public ball games, and like places... shall not be indulged in by our members." <sup>43</sup> Also, the Church of God has decreed that,

...members...who go into public bathing places with the opposite sex be warned and after sufficient warning, if they continue to frequent visit such places, they should be disfellowshipped. That the bobbing of hair of our female members be discontinued...if after sufficient warning they disregard the advice given, they should be dealt with...that the wearing of unnecessary jewelry for ornament or decoration be made a test for membership. <sup>44</sup>

(c) An improving but still poorly-educated laity and clergy have hindered the Pentecostals, as was pointed out by one minister. Some of their anti-intellectualism is due to the revivalistic influences in their origin. Furthermore, mystically-inclined people are more prone to look inward for revelation and "leadings of the Spirit." In such cases, there is too much subjectivism woven into the faith and a lack of ability to read and comprehend the Bible diminishes its usefulness as a standard of doctrine.

(d) Some Pentecostals turn to outward "Pentecostalism",

---

<sup>43</sup> Congregational Holiness Discipline, p. 7.

<sup>44</sup> Church of God Minutes, p. 56.

which simply means the adoption of the peculiar styles of female dress and hairdo prescribed in the church rule books and adherence to their traditional forms of worship.

"Singings" are perfect examples of "Pentecostalism." These events, revered by many rural and inner-city Pentecostals are often devoid of true worship value and amount to little more than entertainment. In a typical "singing" church members and guests assemble for an afternoon of hymn singing and dinner-on-the-grounds, led by various amateur trios, quartets or soloists; with one well-paid professional group featured as the main "drawing card" for the event. Many pastors complain that some of their church members skip worship services to follow the "gospel singers" from church-to-church each Sunday. However, most Pentecostal preachers seem to favor Christ-centered singings.

(e) There are many dishonest radio evangelists, itinerant preachers and "phony" faith healers who exploit the simplicity and naivete of Pentecostal people, bleeding them of thousands of dollars each year. These men employ the Pentecostal vocabulary, claim miraculous powers and appeal for the audience's money.

Perhaps the most fantastic money-making scheme was perpetuated by radio preacher whose pre-recorded program was broadcast over and over. He instructed his audience

to trace the outline of one of their hands on a piece of paper, write a description of their problem underneath, enclose the largest bill of currency in their possession and mail it all to the preacher. Upon receiving the sheet of paper, the "Pentecostal" confidence man promised to lay his hand on the outline of the listener's hand, read the description of the problem, and pray for its solution. The money, of course, would remain in the radio preacher's pocket. Well, this is the trick sometimes.

Despite the sincerity of their efforts, such Pentecostals are doing more harm than good for their cause. Educated Christians, who could be of great value to the movement are repelled both by the radio broadcast racketeers and also the inept efforts of genuine Pentecostals. Each time they hear a locally-sponsored broadcast, they become more certain that the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" is simply an hysterical emotional experience for poor, ignorant people.

One of the greatest weaknesses of the Pentecostal movement, then, is its ineffectiveness in combatting its poor public image. The Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship, an organization of Pentecostal laymen of all denominations, is spreading the doctrines of the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" and primitive Christianity to persons in the higher socio-economic and educational levels. This is one

of the few organizations which provide non-Pentecostals with opportunities for dialogue with their people. Methodist, Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Baptists have shown particular interest in the fellowship of brotherhood.

## CONCLUSION

This has been a frank analysis of the good and bad points of a significant national religious force. While there are many things within Pentecostalism which the major denominations will not accept, the fact remains that some have joined new religious denominations since the turn of the century, and an appreciable number of those became Pentecostals. This trend indicates a deep religious impulse not altogether satisfied by the older orthodox bodies. Furthermore, the influx of people from the country into the inner-city has caused social and economic changes that have produced demands for which the older city churches have experience or aptitude to handle. The Pentecostal churches, on the other hand, have achieved rapid growth by directing their programs to such new city residents.<sup>45</sup>

It seems obvious that the success of the Pentecostals has a message for other denominations which are attempting to deal with rural and inner-city problems. Yet, while the membership rolls in many liturgically-orientated churches

---

<sup>45</sup>  
Kendrick, pp. 215-16.

decline and the Pentecostals increase, the "higher" churches reject Pentecostal methodology and continue their 'upward ecumenicity", courting even higher liturgical denominations which have the same problems. If these Pentecostal people, who are well-adjusted in the face of so many social, economic, educational and occupational deprivations, put so much stock in a definite salvation experience, a second work of grace leading to more zealous discipleship through the power of the Holy Spirit, speaking in unknown tongues and divine healing by faith; then it would seem worthwhile for all denominations to investigate these doctrines with an open mind and be willing to see them operative in their own churches.



## B I B L I O G R A P H Y

- Assemblies of God. Alabama District Council Yearbook, 1966.
- Brewer, Earl D.C. The Southern Region--A Laboratory Ecumenical Christian Mission.
- Church of God. Minutes of the Fiftieth General Assembly, 1966.
- Congregational Holiness Church. Discipline, 1966.
- Dalton, Robert C. Tongues Like as of Fire. (Springfield, Mo., Gospel Publishing House, 1945).
- Judy, Marvin T. The Larger Parish and Group Ministry. N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1959.
- Kendrick, Klaude. The Promise Fulfilled. Springfield, Mo., Gospel Publishing House, 1961.
- Moberg, David O. The Church as a Social Institution. N.J.: Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962.
- Packard, Vance. The Hidden Persuaders. N.Y.: Pocket Books, Inc., 1958.
- Packard, Vance. The Status Seekers. N.Y.: Pocket Books, Inc., 1961.