

THE CROSS IN ECLIPSE: REFRAMING THE QUESTION “IS ONENESS PENTECOSTALISM REALLY CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT A CROSS?” PART 5

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Main Critique: Addressing the Two Chief Arguments

Norris makes two chief arguments against Thomas Fudge’s book: 1) “the soteriological presentation of Oneness Pentecostalism was consonant with the earliest Pentecostal expression of soteriology” and, 2) “we will demonstrate the groups that formed the UPC had more in common soteriologically than Fudge will admit.”¹ I will now address each of these arguments in order.

Incongruity Between Oneness and Early Pentecostal Soteriology

I believe Norris fails in the first argument because his paper lacks supporting evidence. Norris bases his assertion that the presentation of Oneness soteriological is “consonant” with the earliest Pentecostal expression on the fact that they both share a common eschatology and ecclesiology. His reasoning appears to be this: 1) because the early Pentecostals were

¹ Norris, p. 40.

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restorationist, seeking to restore the Church to her original, first-century character and practice; and 2) Oneness Pentecostals are also restorationist, fulfilling the next stage of restoring the Church to pristine glory, and 3) and because they both share a dispensational view of this restoration – truth and practice would be restored in progressive stages, the Pentecostal being one stage and the Oneness stage a further progression in truth – therefore, 4) *Oneness and early Pentecostal soteriology are consonant*. The mistake is assuming that merely sharing the same historical, ecclesiological, impetus and hermeneutic (restorationism), and working from a similar eschatological model (dispensationalism), is necessarily equal to sharing the same soteriology. The early Oneness conclusions about salvation (by obeying Acts 2:38) were not consonant with most earliest Pentecostals’ belief in salvation by faith in Christ alone (I will make a case for this below).

Norris’s only historical support for illustrating consonance is an attempt to claim that the teaching of Charles Parham, the first leader of early Pentecostalism, is more in harmony with the Oneness view:

The United Pentecostal Church is often labeled as judgmental for teaching that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is both normative and necessary. But such a claim is not recent, nor did it originate with Oneness Pentecostals. If the UPC is judgmental, then the same charge could well be brought against Pentecostalism in general in the first decades of the twentieth century. Charles Parham . . . taught that tongues are the exclusive evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit “and should be seen as part of every Christian’s experience.”²

² Ibid.

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I think when he says, “the baptism of the Holy Ghost³ is both normative⁴ and necessary,” Norris is working *against* the doctrinal position of the Assemblies of God, other non-Oneness Pentecostals and most Charismatics. Their position is that the “baptism of the Spirit” is typically a *separate* and *subsequent*⁵ experience to conversion. Historically, nearly all Christian groups held that Spirit-baptism is normative and essential to Christian initiation and life. This is not a unique doctrine; rather it is the classic historical position (and I believe it is the biblical position). Pentecostals, under the influence of Holiness teaching, deviated from the normative view and adopted the Holiness position, that Spirit-baptism is *separate* from and *subsequence* to conversion. The UPCI doctrine attempts to return to the earlier, historic position, while retaining

³ This phrase, “baptism of the Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit or Spirit)” cannot be found in the New Testament. The New Testament, especially the Book of Acts, speaks of being baptized with the Holy Spirit.

⁴ The word “normative” can mean a number of things. Historically or sociologically it can be used to describe the way people have behaved historically or as a culture. Or, in ethics, it can refer to the behavior or practices that a group or culture expects of an individual - what one should do. When we use the word normative with reference to a particular text of the Bible, we must make clear whether we mean that something was normative in the descriptive sense or normative in the ethical sense. In the former (historical or descriptive), normative means “this is the pattern we find in a particular time in history.” In the latter (ethical), normative means “this is what God expects of a person or a people.” Every reader of the Bible must be aware of this very important distinction. When we read a command or a rule in Scripture, does the plain over-all sense of the Bible teach that this command or rule is normative (an “ought” that must be obeyed) for just those people to which the author of Scripture first spoke, or does Scripture intend the command or rule as normative in the sense that all people of all places (all future audiences of the biblical writer) must obey it (universally normative). For example, it appears God commanded Israel to not wear clothing of mixed fabrics. This practice is normative in one sense; but it is normative in the universal sense? Is this a universal principle for all people in all times and places, or is it expected only of Israel under the law of Moses? This is the type of question we must ask to determine what is normative in the universal sense. In his book *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991, pp. 37-51), Gordon D. Fee addresses the issues of determining normativeness in an excellent chapter, “Normativeness and Authorial Intent: A Proposal regarding New Testament Imperatives.” His insights are germane to this paper because they refer particularly to determining normativeness in the Book of Acts. He states: “What I am urging is not that we do our exegesis differently, nor that we get around texts that we don’t like; rather, I am urging that we learn to think of biblical texts not as *rules to follow*, but as expressions and *illustrations of God’s redemption*, and therefore as *guidelines for our living redemptively* in a fallen world.” (p. 47)

⁵ “These two beliefs – “separability” and “evidential value” of speaking in tongues – are the two distinctive tenets of classical Pentecostalism.” [Gary B. McGee, ed., *Initial Evidence*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), p. 145.] Gordon Fee lists two Pentecostal distinctives: “(1) the doctrine of subsequence, i. e., that there is for Christians a baptism in the Spirit distinct from and subsequent to the experience of salvation and (2) the doctrine of tongues as the initial physical evidence of baptism in the Spirit.” [Gordon D. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1991), p. 84., first in: Gordon D. Fee, “Hermeneutics and Historical Precedent—a Major Problem in Pentecostal Hermeneutics,” in Russell P. Spittler, ed., *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), 120.]

the “initial evidence” doctrine, thus making Spirit-baptism *as evidenced by speaking with tongues* essential to conversion and salvation in their soteriology.⁶

When he says the baptism of the Holy Ghost is “normative and necessary” he means that it is necessary for salvation and normative for all in the Church to be baptized in the Spirit with the evidence of tongues speech. Not clarifying this distinction muddles the discussion. Norris feels it is not fair to single out the UPCI as judgmental in their teaching about Spirit-baptism, while letting other Pentecostals off for their teaching. But, what Norris and Oneness Pentecostals mean by “normative and necessary” is not the same as other classical Pentecostals believe. It is the UPCI who teaches that Spirit-baptism evidenced by tongues is necessary for salvation. Historically, the majority of Pentecostals do not.

Norris quotes Parham as chief evidence the early Pentecostals “taught that tongues are the exclusive evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”⁷ His quote is not directly from a writing of Parham. His source is Vinson Synan, who does not quote nor cite any of Parham’s writings.⁸ However when you *read Parham himself* you find such statements as this:

There are many phases of the Holy Spirit’s operation, but none of them will permit you to claim the Baptism of the Holy Spirit; it does not follow, however, that no one has the Holy Spirit unless he speaks in tongues. We have reached a fanatical state where we make the speaking in tongues a basis, or test, of fellowship, or of spiritual activity.⁹

Norris refers to Parham to prove the present UPCI position on Spirit-baptism. But, Parham rejected the practice of making “speaking in tongues a basis, or test, of fellowship.” This

⁶ “The baptism of the Holy Ghost is always evidenced by the newly Spirit-filled believer speaking in other tongues as the Spirit of God gives utterance. Anyone who has never spoken in tongues has never been baptized with the Holy Ghost.” [Ralph Vincent Reynolds, *Truth Shall Triumph*, (St. Louis, MO: Pentecostal Publishing House, 1965), p. 54.]

⁷ Norris, Op. Cit., p. 40.

⁸ Norris, p. 41, Vinson (sic*) Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc. 2001), pp. 42-43. *David called the author “Vincent.” Vinson, the Dean of the School of Divinity at Regent University, is considered the new “Mr. Pentecost” because he is a pro-Pentecostal ambassador to Christianity at large.

⁹ Charles F. Parham, *The Everlasting Gospel*, Baxter Springs, KS, [1911], p. 63.

undercuts Norris’s claim that Parham, as an early Pentecostal, held the UPCI position. It also leaves him with little support for his claim that early Pentecostal and UPCI soteriology are consonant.

Next, Norris cites William Faupel’s¹⁰ quote of George Taylor, claiming that Pentecostals will be the ‘Bride of Christ.’ This, Norris says, proves the, “Azusa street revival from the beginning taught that it was only those that were baptized in the Spirit that were in the Bride of Christ.”¹¹ Does Taylor’s statement prove this? And if so, does it mean what Norris claims for it?

Historically, the phrase “Bride of Christ” was a Holiness designation for those in the Church who were “entirely sanctified.” Pentecostal progenitor, Charles Parham, picked up this notion and applied it to the 144,000 of the Book of Revelation: “Adam’s bride was a rib taken out of his side; the second Adam Christ’s Bride will be a small company, One Hundred and Forty-four Thousand, taken out of His Body (the Church).”¹² For both Holiness and Pentecostal advocates, the “justified” were still considered Christians and were regarded as Heaven-bound (as servants or some such), but only the entirely sanctified (Holiness) *or* Spirit-baptized as evidenced by tongues (Pentecostal), would be the “true Bride.” Pentecostals adopted this language, with its conception, and applied the concept of the Bride to themselves.

When Taylor says the Pentecostals - those who are ‘Baptized with the Spirit’ (evidenced by tongues) - are the Bride, it does not mean that early Pentecostals considered the “merely” justified (justified by faith alone in Christ alone) as unsaved. Taylor counts them as less preferred, favored or blessed; they hold an inferior place. Nevertheless, he still views them as

¹⁰ D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought*, (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), p. 26. Professor Faupel is the newly appointed Director of Library and Professor of Theological Research at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C.

¹¹ Norris, p. 41.

¹² Charles F. Parham, *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*, (Baxter Springs, KS: The Apostolic Faith Bible College, n.d.), p. 86.

saved. Conversely, the UPCI majority does not view them as “saved”. All the UPCI literature, which I have read, holds to the position that one is not saved unless one obeys Acts 2:38 (as the UPCI interprets it). Research of twenty-five years of the World Aflame Adult Sunday School teacher’s manual and *The Pentecostal Herald*,¹³ of the same time period, will confirm this conclusion.

Norris does not clarify this important distinction. This is partly because the UPCI redefines the classic view of justification by faith.¹⁴ Understanding the root of the “Bride of Christ” terminology, as used by pre-Pentecostal Holiness teachers, helps clarify what Taylor was saying what he was *not* saying. Rather than clarify the difference between how the UPCI presently thinks and how the Holiness proponents and early Pentecostals thought, Norris confounds the issue. He insinuates that the UPCI holds a more tolerant view of all those who: a) have not received the Spirit or, b) have not been baptized in Jesus’ name. The impression is given that the UPCI may regard these as, in some sense, saved (or at least “not lost,” whatever difference that may make). This appears misleading to me. Norris claims that early Oneness Pentecostals “made room” for those who did not followed their Acts 2:38 teaching:

Whereas for the early adherents of Azusa street, to be filled with the Holy Ghost was synonymous to being in the bride of Christ, for Oneness Pentecostals, it was just as important to be baptized in Jesus’ name. This is not to say that other Christians were necessarily lost. Just as Parham and Seymour could argue that one could be justified and sanctified and still not filled, so Oneness Pentecostals, in the same sort of variety of ways, made room for those who did not believe the message while at the same time insisting that this message must be believed.¹⁵

Looking at Ewart, Cook, Haywood and Urshan, we see them grappling with the issue of salvation, while trying to fit, to differing degrees, the non-Acts 2:38-is-the- “New Birth” believer

¹³ These are official publications of the UPCI.

¹⁴ Cp. my book [Will the Real Justification by Faith, Please Stand Up](http://www.inchristalone.org/Books.html), (Findlay, OH: In Christ Alone! Publishing, 2003. Available Online @ <http://www.inchristalone.org/Books.html>. Also view a chart that is a summary of this book online @ <http://www.inchristalone.org/CompareBernardJust.html>

¹⁵ Norris, Op. Cit., p. 45.

into God’s plan. I would agree that the very early Oneness teachers did make more room in comparison with later and present day Oneness leaders. Albeit, this does not change the reality that the latter have a more exclusive, intolerant position today. First, the UPCI sees their understanding of the experience of Spirit-baptism (as evidenced by tongues) as necessary for conversion and salvation. Parham and Seymour did not. Secondly, a large volume of quotations from past and present UPCI ministers states that those who do not follow the Acts 2:38-is-the-“New Birth” teaching are not saved.¹⁶

While I was in the UPCI it was commonly expressed, that there is little, or no, salvation outside the UPCI. Whatever the early views of Oneness people were, most current Oneness Pentecostals do not “make room” for other groups.¹⁷ Finally, that early Oneness people “made room,” does not in itself substantiate Norris’s claim that Oneness’ soteriology was consonant with early Pentecostal soteriology.

“Progressive Revelation” and Doctrinal Formation

Norris may mean by “make room,” without explication, that those who have not followed the Oneness Acts 2:38 doctrine may be folks who “walk in all the light” they have, until the Acts 2:38-is-the-“New Birth” doctrine is “revealed” to them. This was (and is) a prevalent explanation used by Oneness Pentecostal to account for those who trust in Christ, display genuine fruit of the Spirit, and many of the other signs of spiritual life (faith and hunger for Scripture, fervency in

¹⁶ I need to point out here that some would equivocate and say the correct phrase is “fully saved.” Some would reject my assertion that they believe one is not saved without Acts 2:38. They would say there is a third option: not sent to Hell but somewhere else. They are not saved in the ultimate sense, as in going to Heaven or being in the Bride of Christ, but in a partial sense. They are not “saved” but they are also not “lost.” As illogical as this may seem, it is the position of some. Their argument is that “lost” means going to Hell. If people go somewhere besides Hell, then they are not “lost.” Some, drawing from the Holiness/early Pentecostal view of the Bride will say that those who do not follow the UPCI interpretation of Acts 2:38 may be saved, but they will not be in the “Bride.” Others say they will not go to Heaven but be sent to the “righteous earth.” Therefore, under these eschatological views, a person is not sent to Hell, they are not lost.

¹⁷ Cp. the statements from UPCI ministers addressing the “Progressive light” doctrine, elsewhere in this paper.

prayer, desire to worship the biblical God, bold witnessing of Christ, moral godliness), which the UPCI respects, yet who have not followed the UPCI Acts 2:38-is-the-“New Birth” doctrine.¹⁸

The “walking in the light” or “progressive revelation” teaching is a modified dispensational view. It holds that God reveals the truth of salvation in stages throughout the “Church Age.” This conclusion flows out of the original Pentecostal restorationist impulse, which finds its logical acme in Oneness Pentecostalism. That Norris assumes some version of this view can be inferred from his statements throughout the paper. He appears to adopt this view as an operating framework for how doctrinal formation occurs in the history of the Church:

Because Pentecostalism was birthed in the context of an eschatological expectation that the Pentecostal outpouring was the advent of God’s final work before Jesus returned, there was a belief that God was restoring to the church that which was lost from the time of the apostles. Thus, Pentecostals not only assumed that God would pour out His Spirit, but they also believed that other pieces of restoration would be supplied as the Bride was being prepared.¹⁹

Norris takes not only a restorationist position on Christian history, more significantly, he holds a radicalized dispensational view of salvation. To better know what this means, it is important to understand the influence of dispensationalism on the Oneness view of salvation.

The Influence of Dispensationalism on the Oneness View of Salvation

Most past and present Pentecostals are avid Dispensationalist. Ironically, this is true, even though Scofield ‘s original scheme held that speaking with tongues, and other such gifts, ceased in the Church Age when the canon of Scripture was completed. The distinction between Israel and the Church and the belief in dispensational ages was modified by Pentecostals who divided the Church Age up into various stages of progressive revelation - a sort of dispensationalism-

¹⁸ It appears that a good many are now rethinking and rejecting this view.

¹⁹ Norris, *Op. Cit.*, p. 42.

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within-dispensationalism.²⁰ Therefore since some had only an increment of the full truth “available” to them, *they were responsible for only that truth or “light” revealed by God in their era.* One was saved according to how much they walked in the “light available to them.” This progression happens within the Church age, after the New Testament was formed and accepted.

For example, Luther is considered a great man of God who received more light as expressed by his teaching of justification by faith. But, the truth of the Pentecostal experience, which came after Luther, which was a more “full” revelation than Luther knew. Most Pentecostals would say Luther should not be judged for not speaking in tongues because it was not “revealed,” or was not “available” in his day. However, we today, in the present dispensation, as walking in “more light,” are responsible for the greater “light” of the Pentecostal experience. We cannot merely rely on justification by faith alone, or the truth of the forgiveness of sins through faith in the Cross of Christ, since *greater truth has been revealed.*²¹

Those truths, according to Oneness people, are the necessity of speaking with tongues, as proof of Spirit-baptism, and forgiveness that comes by water-baptism by using the name of Jesus only in the baptismal formula. Since we have *more light*, we must walk in that light²² or *lose* what we already have. This is the rationale proposed by many Oneness Pentecostals.

²⁰ This idea was propagated by Aimee Semple McPherson in her book *Lost and Restored*. Many Pentecostals have interpreted church history as a sequence of restorative steps back to the pristine or Apostolic era of the Church. Aimee claimed that she received this understanding by direct revelation without a pre-meditative thought about it, as mentioned earlier. This almost exact view of Church restoration, with Aimee’s modified chart, is found in S. C. McClain’s *Highlights in Church History*.

²¹ I do not know of any greater truth expressed in Scripture, or any where else, than that I can trust in Christ alone, by faith alone, for my salvation.

²² This concept of “walking in all the light revealed” is a well-traveled concept, going back to at least the earliest pietistic groups in America. This notion is based on a complex of biblical passages coupled with a dispensational view of salvation. One passage is John 12:35, where Jesus warns, “Walk while ye have the light.” Another parallel verse is 1 John 1:7, where John tells us to “walk in the light even as he is in the light.” Hebrews 6:4 is used by some, because it speaks of “being enlightened” as though it were a stage, from which a Christian is to go on to perfection. Others, like Phoebe Palmer, refer to Jesus’ words in John 16:12, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now,” to support the idea that there are different levels or stages of “light” that a Christian moves through. For Phoebe Palmer, this passage explained why she could remain justified while lacking entire sanctification.

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Phoebe Palmer used this idea to explain her experience of sanctification, possibly drawing from Charles Finney’s use of this language:

Could I stand still at this point, and remain in a state of justification while refusing to comply with what I knew to be the demand of God and in fulfilment of covenant engagements long since made? I saw I could not; I must either make the necessary sacrifices, or I must sin, and, by my disobedience, forfeit a state of justification. And it is here justification would have ended with me had I refused to be holy. Do you ask, How did you retain a state of justification before, when all was not given up? Perhaps I cannot answer your question better than by referring you to what the Saviour said to His disciples, “I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.” I had, for some time previous to this, been answerable to the light as I had received it. The holy Spirit had led me onward, revealing higher and yet higher duties, as I was able to bear them, till I was brought up to the point described, and was unable to be answerable to my covenant engagements, and yield my self up entirely and irrevocably to God;²³

A primer on holiness written in 1918 states that the proper candidates for entire sanctification are, “All who have been clearly converted, and are still walking in all the light.”²⁴

Current holiness teachers still use this concept in their teaching on Christian perfection and holiness:

A Christian can make a lot of mistakes in ignorance and still have a perfect heart. He (or she) might blunder where he doesn't know better. But where he has the light, there he walks. . . . Doretta was as determined to follow Christ as any teenage convert I had ever seen. And just as full of mistakes. But Doretta was walking in all the light she had. She had a perfect heart. That is why she matured spiritually. As light increased, so did her Christian growth.²⁵

At the 1997 General Conference of the Church of God (Cleveland Tennessee), Paul S. Jernigan stated: “There are yet things to be brought to light and revealed to the Church.” He exhorted the conference: “Our cry in The Church of God is, “Lord, shine your light of truth upon us now.” He criticized those who did not “walk in all the light:”

²³ Phoebe Palmer, *Full Salvation; Its Doctrine and Duties*, (Salem, OH: Schmull Publishers, 1979), p. 27.

²⁴ Harmon A. Baldwin, *Lessons for Seekers of Holiness*, (Chicago, W. B. Rose, Agent, 1918), Online, Accessed: 24 July 2001, Available at: <http://home.earthlink.net/~adamsfm/mac/Chptr04.html>

²⁵ J. W. Jepson, *If You Want To Be Perfect, Start Now*, copyright © 1998 by J. W. Jepson, Online, Accessed: 24 July 2001, Available at: <http://www.christcenter.net/Perfect.htm>

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We were confounded by the people that seemed to be well satisfied to just be in the shadow of the truth. . . . It seems to me some people are only happy with half-truths, or just enough light that doesn't bring them to that place of change.²⁶

It is easy to discern the logical end of the “walking in the light” doctrine: 1) Since God reveals truth in stages, 2) and one is right with God by following that light, 3) then those who don't walk in all the light are walking in increasing darkness; 4) therefore, those who were right with God previously, when they were faithful to all the truth that was available, now cease to have fellowship with God because they subsequently fail to accept the new light; 5) Hence, to keep from the negative influence of those who don't “go on,” those presently walking in all the light are to reject fellowship with the “lesser lights:”

So God's people are to fellowship together with only those who walk in the light as Christ is in the light. And since in Christ there is no darkness or error or false doctrine at all, then this Biblical test for fellowship would prevent God's people from worshipping with any groups or churches who were not following, walking, or living in all the truth, but who had a mixture of truth and error within.²⁷

All of this illustrates how many Pentecostals have applied the dispensational logic to the Church Age. While Scofield and others saw salvation as a progressive revelation in biblical history, Pentecostals took “progressive light” to extremes. That is, they taught that there is progressive salvation in the Church dispensation. This was not acceptable for most dispensationalists, but it was strangely logical and consistent to the method of dispensationalism. For certain Pentecostals the logic was: “Since one could arbitrarily divide the history of salvation in the Bible into different economies of salvation, why couldn't one do the same with the Church

²⁶ “It's Not Dark Where I'm Standing,” Paul S. Jernigan, General Sunday School Coordinator, 92nd Annual General Assembly of The Church of God, August 29, 1997, Chattanooga, Tennessee, Online, Accessed 24 July 2001, Available at: <http://www.thechurchofgod.org/97assembly/messages/pjernigan.htm>

²⁷ “Let There Be Light” Ministries,” January - February, 2001, Online, Accessed 24 July 2001, Online at: <http://www.lightministries.com/webdoc241.htm>. Now at: <http://www.lightministries.com/id6.htm> under the title, “The True Church of God.”

Age?” If one accepts the former, there is little to prevent the latter. This was, originally, an essential element of Oneness Pentecostalism’s unique soteriology.

I would challenge the *unfounded* concept that the “Church Age,” or the Church under the Gospel, contains several different eras revealing various means of salvation. [covenant theology]

Difference stages or levels of “light” do not exist in the age of the Gospel. Jesus is the only door (John 10). The Father draws all men through Jesus (John 6:44). We trust only Him. Jesus is the Light (John 9:5). We only need walk in the Light (a figurative expression for living by faith in Christ) to be saved. The notion of difference levels of “light” fails to be supported by the plain teaching of Scripture. There is only one Gospel (Galatians 1:8,9). There is only one faith (Ephesians 4:5; Jude 3). Christ is the only way to God (John 14:6). We trust in only one Savior (1 Timothy 4:10; Jude 26). Any complication and confusion of these facts is created by a foreign system seeking to reconstruct God’s plan in order to validate itself. The mistake initiated by the dispensational scheme (different means of salvation in different dispensations) eventually bore the unbiblical fruit of distorting the Gospel in the “Church Age” (“dispensation”).

This problem has afflicted Pentecostals as much as, or maybe more than, other Christian groups. Many Pentecostals, rooted in the restorationist tradition, have interpreted Church history as a sequence of restorative steps back to the “pristine” apostolic era of the Church. In some radical forms of dispensationalism a new order or economy of God’s working in salvation was taught. This included the expectation by some of a better or “full” salvation – greater light which God requires of people – which was not known previously in Church history. This understanding led to the “full gospel” movement, which radically shaped the Protestant Church in America.²⁸

²⁸ I am presently working on a book entitled: *Can the Gospel be Fractured?* It addresses this subject, in which I ask,

That this is central to the Oneness Pentecostal hermeneutic is seen in the revealing questions posed to the respondent panel at the UGST symposium. They were asked whether the pioneers of Oneness Pentecostalism, such as G. T. Haywood, were saved before they became Apostolic Pentecostals (which I interpret to mean believed the Oneness doctrine and that Acts 2:38 is the New Birth). David Bernard took up the question and said several things that show his use of the dispensational hermeneutic. He said that these men, such as Andrew D. Urshan saw their experience as being on a journey to the fulness of truth. Bernard hedged on the original question by saying these men did not speculate so much about their state while coming to the fulness of truth. Instead, he said, these men looked at what happened to them as a *process* of moving toward truth. He concluded that they did not believe they were born again until they received “the fulness of this experience”²⁹ (the Acts 2:38 doctrine). This is the language of restorationist dispensationalism.

Radical³⁰ Dispensationalism and the Status of the “Unborn”

The view expressed by David Bernard, while functional, is not accurate. It reflects what present advocates of the Acts 2:38-is-th-New Birth may wish to believe. However, the early Oneness Pentecostal leaders *did speculate* about the status of the person who had not followed the Acts 2:38-is-the-“New Birth.” Their writings reveal, not only the seeds of personal wrestling with these salvation questions, but also the fruit of the conflicted theology present in the UPCI today.

“A good number of well-meaning Christians think that God apportions the Gospel in various installments. According to this thinking, the Gospel can be divided or fractionalized so that one can believe and receive one part of the Gospel, while lacking the other parts of it through ignorance or lack of response. Is this possible? Is this true, or, is it rather that God gives us one irreducible Gospel, which by believing, we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, into every aspect of the Christian life?”

²⁹ David K. Bernard, audio tape of panel discussion following the presentation by David S. Norris, “Is Oneness Pentecostalism Really Christianity without a Cross?,” Presented paper at the Urshan Graduate School of Theology Third Annual Symposium “Exalting the Name,” Hazelwood, MO, March 25-26, 2004.

³⁰ The term “radical” is not used to be inflammatory, but descriptive. It means “departing markedly from the usual or customary; extreme.” *The American Heritage Dictionary*.

Students of early Oneness Pentecostal history should know how the earliest New Birth advocates struggled in defining the status of those who did not accept or follow the Acts 2:38 plan. Frank J. Ewart, Garfield T. Haywood, Andrew D. Urshan, et. al. provide evidence, through their writings, of conflicted statements as to the destination of those who fail to hear or follow the Oneness Pentecostal, Acts 2:38-is-the-“New Birth” message.

Garfield Thomas Haywood (1880-1931) was a seminal leader of the Oneness movement. Because of his influence on subsequent generations of Oneness Pentecostals, a fundamental understanding of Haywood’s life and teaching is important. Before he taught the Acts 2:38-is-the-“New Birth” doctrine, he believed that one was saved by faith in Christ alone.³¹ This changed after his conversion to the Oneness doctrine, which was brought to him by Glenn A. Cook.³² He struggled with the implications of this New Issue. He attempted to work out an answer to this problem by saying that the Bible makes a difference between “begettal” and “birth:”

³¹ In *The Good Report*, March 1914, page 4, which was published in Los Angeles, CA by Frank Ewart and R. E. McAlister, Haywood wrote an article entitled: “The Simple Gospel.” In it he said that “the gospel has been corrupted from its primitive simplicity,” and then he quoted these verses: “But God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Repent ye and believe the gospel!” These verses are standard Baptist “believe only” texts. They were used by Durham, who was a Baptist. Durham had a direct effect on Haywood’s “Finished Work” theology. The following is a telling paragraph in this article: “In face of these fundamental truths what more are we to do than to go forth and tell the story of Jesus how He came and dwelt among us, sharing our sorrows, our burdens, our cares, and last of all how the Lord laid upon Him the iniquities of us all, and he bore them away to Calvary and suffered and died in our stead. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, and chastisement that we should have received fell upon Him. Though He had done no violence, yet for our sake He suffered, and it pleased the Father to bruise Him. So that He could be just and yet free every man from under the sentence that was passed upon him through the fall of Adam. And now though our sins be as scarlet, as soon as we believe, they become as white as snow.” This quote indicates that he did not yet look to Acts 2:38 or to the radical New Birth for salvation, but that he was still a “Finished Work” Pentecostal.

³² Frank J. Ewart & W. E. Kidson, *The Phenomenon of Pentecost (a history of “The Latter Rain”)*, (Herald Publishing House, 1947), p. 53; Arthur L. Clanton & Charles E. Clanton, *United We Stand Jubilee Edition*, (Hazelwood, MO: Pentecostal Publishing House, 1995), p. 19; James L. Tyson, *Before I Sleep*, (Indianapolis, IN, Pentecostal Publications, 1976). p. 36.

**THE CROSS IN ECLIPSE: REFRAMING THE QUESTION “IS ONENESS PENTECOSTALISM
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Everyone with ordinary understanding knows that there is a difference between “begettal” and “birth.” The begettal is from the father side while conception and birth is from the mother side. (Matt. 1:1-16, also not verses 16, 20, 35.) In those scriptures it will be seen that the father “begat” the child, while the mother “conceive” and “born” (sic). A child of God is first “begotten” by the Word (I Cor. 4:15) of the Gospel before he can be born of the Spirit. The disciples were “begotten” unto a lively hope by the resurrection, but they were “born of the Spirit” on the day of Pentecost (I Pet. 1:3.) No child can ever be born until it is first begotten, but there are many who have been begotten, but were never born into the world. So it is in the Spirit. Many may have been begotten by the word but have never been born of the Spirit. There are multitudes who are in that state today. They have been begotten, but the church has had no “strength” to bring them forth. (Isa. 37:3; 52:1.)³³

Here Haywood seeks to solve a theological problem by redefining biblical words and adopting unbiblical concepts to his established Pentecostal beliefs. He says that one can be begotten but still not born, or that one can be “conceived” by the Word but not “born again” or “born of the Spirit.” It must be pointed out that this teaching has no basis in any biblical text, fact or doctrine. The word “beget” and the word “born” are the same word in Scripture.³⁴ The Bible makes no difference between them. Also, when speaking about the doctrine of the New Birth, the writers of the New Testament never speak of conception or “begettal” as a metaphor for one aspect of the Christian life and “birth” as another. This idea is foreign to Scripture.

When Peter says God has “begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:3) other translations use the word “birth.” That is because it is the same Greek word. Haywood says we are begotten by the Word, but James say were are given “birth through the word of truth” (NIV). There is no concept of “conceived by the Word” as one class of Christians, and “birth by the Spirit” as another. *All who are begotten by the word are begotten by the Spirit.* The New Testament speaks of both as simultaneous occurrences.

³³ G. T. Haywood, *The Birth of the Spirit in the Days of the Apostles*, (Indianapolis, IN: Christ Temple Book Store, n. d.), p. 10f.

³⁴ There is a different Greek word for “only begotten” (μονογενής *monogenes*) but it is only used with reference to Christ and never of a Christian.

Haywood’s students often asked him about the status of those who do not follow the Oneness view of salvation:

The one question that is so often asked is, ‘are all those people who thought they were born of the Spirit, and were not, lost?’ No, not by any means. They shall be given eternal life in the resurrection if they walked in all the light that was given them while they lived. God is a just Judge, and there is not unrighteousness in Him. But those who refuse to walk in the light shall be overtaken with darkness. (John 13:35, 36; see also John 15:22-24).³⁵

This quotation shows Haywood’s assumption that those who are not born of the Spirit will still be saved if they walk in the light they have. He is speaking about salvation in the Church Age as dispensations-within-the-dispensation of the Church. *This is a radical new step in the dispensational view.* Pentecostals adopted the “walking-in-all-the-light-available” idea to explain the relationship between non-Pentecostals, who were justified, and Pentecostals who had received the “full blessing of Pentecost,” – a subsequent Spirit baptism evidenced by speaking with tongues. The former were considered saved in the manner that all are saved in the Church dispensation - by faith in Christ. However, the latter were viewed as having appropriated more of the blessing of their salvation. Haywood appears to subscribe to a unique form of this view.

Oneness Pentecostal Radicalized Dispensationalism

Haywood created an extreme form of Pentecostal modified dispensationalism by adding progressive stages of salvation. There was not only more than one way to be saved in the history of the world (*a la* dispensationalism), but there were progressive stages of salvation possible since the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There was a further qualification. Those who had not heard the Oneness message, e.g. Luther, Wesley, etc., were saved by the “light” they followed. But, those being saved after Luther or Wesley’s manner, who later hear the Acts 2:38

³⁵ G. T. Haywood, *The Birth of the Spirit in the Days of the Apostles*, (Indianapolis, IN: Christ Temple Book Store, n. d.), p. 12.

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message, can no longer be saved by the former way. They must go on into the newer light. If not, they will fall into darkness, as Haywood states. Since, in the Church Age the truth of salvation was progressive, those who progressed with the truth were the only ones saved. Therefore, the message of the gospel was a moving target and changed as the newer revelations or “insights” were given by God. *Under this view of salvation history, there is no one timeless Gospel given to all generations of Christians. There is only an evolving Gospel.*

In contrast, the Bible says Abraham believed God and it was imputed to him for righteousness (Gen 15:6; Rom. 4: 3). Paul announces that we are the children of Abraham by faith (Gal. 3:6,7) and have received the blessing of Abraham. The same Gospel is preached in the Gospels by Jesus (Lk. 20:1) preached in Acts (Acts 8:25; 14:7) and taught in the epistles (Rom 15:9; Gal. 4:13; 1 Pet. 1:12) by the Apostles. There is one salvation, one Savior in all of Scripture. There is one Gospel in the Old and New Testament. Dispensationalism fails to teach this. The biblical material opposes multiple plans of salvation.

The eccentric and unorthodox nature of modified dispensational teaching *must be understood clearly*. This is a unique alteration of dispensational and Pentecostal thought. *It is constructed to account for the Oneness New Birth doctrine*. The general Pentecostal view of dispensationalism did not deny the salvation of non-Pentecostals. It might have questioned their piety, spirituality, and understanding of Scripture, but, it did not outright reject their salvation. However, the Oneness position, while leaving room for “saints” of the past, prior to the Oneness revelation, nevertheless, denies the salvation of those who do not presently accept the Oneness Pentecostal (more particularly the UPCI’s) Acts 2:38 interpretation of salvation.

A. D. Urshan’s Struggle to Define the ‘Saved’

Andrew David Urshan (1884-1967) conscientiously wrestled with the same issue. In his book *Apostolic Faith Doctrine of the New Birth*,³⁶ he included a set of questions (at the end) that addressed the same basic issues with which Haywood wrestled. He presents his questions and then follows them with the following answers:

Q. What is the position of those who have believed in Christ but have never been immersed in Jesus name, and have not received the Holy Ghost with the sign of tongues?

A. These belong to the kingdom of heaven; these are the good seed in that kingdom; these can go on and be born of water and of the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God. Nicodemus and Cornelius once were of that type of men, also the Ephesians that Paul baptized. See Acts 19:1-16.

Q. Would these folks be lost if they had not gone on to the water and Spirit birth?

A. No, for when they continued to walk in the light they had, they consequently entered into the deeper and higher divine experiences. 1 John 1:4-7. Also John 8:31-36.³⁷

One of the key distinctions of dispensationalism is its assumption that God has two plans: one for Israel and one for the Church. Because of this, dispensationalists make a distinction between Jesus’ statements, “the kingdom of God,” and “the kingdom of heaven.” They assert

³⁶ Evangelist Andrew D. Urshan, *Apostolic Faith Doctrine of the New Birth*, (Cochrane, WI, self-published, 1941), pp. 13-15. There are several books or editions by Andrew Urshan on the New Birth. In 1921 he published *The Doctrine of the New Birth or The Perfect Way to Eternal Life*, (Cochrane, WI: Witness of God Publishers, 1921). The next was *Apostolic Faith Doctrine of the New Birth*, (Cochrane, WI, self-published, 1941). This edition was reprinted in its original format by Apostolic Book Publishers, Florissant, MO (with no date), except, with some of the questions and the corresponding answers edited out. This edition was later reformatted and republished by Apostolic Book Publishers, Portland, OR, with no copyright date again. The significance of this publication history is that there were editorial changes made from the original which do not appear to be made by the author. These changes effectively excised controversial statements by A. D. Urshan which would not be very popular with the leaders and members of the UPCI today. The comments of Urshan would cause the present and future generations to ask questions that present leaders would be hard pressed to answer. It also would cause those who read them to wonder why one of the earliest Oneness leaders, thinkers and writers would make such statements as contrary to the present UPCI position. What is disconcerting is that this redaction is another example of the historiographical methodology of UPCI historians. It reveals a pattern of doctrinal “course corrections” made by nameless editors to the effect of making the past views of important Oneness writers line-up with the current UPCI theology. This ought to be very disconcerting to those who sympathize with the Oneness movement. The facts of history are truth. If one modifies the record of history to fit the current regime’s interpretations, then truth is sacrificed, no matter how noble the motivation. This is more than a legal or ethical question. It goes to the heart of the fundamental integrity of those called by God to guard the truth.

³⁷ Evangelist Andrew D. Urshan, *Apostolic Faith Doctrine of the New Birth*, (Cochrane, WI, self-published, 1941), p. 13.

that one refers to Israel while the other refers to the Church. This is a significant error of biblical interpretation.³⁸ Urshan, working from this misunderstanding, modified the dispensational interpretation, saying that the two phrases apply to groups *within* the Church Age. One group - those of the “kingdom of heaven” - were those who believed in God or Christ, but did not follow the Oneness view of the New Birth. The second group was the “kingdom of God,” who followed Acts 2:38 and were born of water and Spirit. Thus, under this view, one can have two ways to be saved in the same “Gospel dispensation”:

Q. Can one be called a child of God before he is born of the Spirit?

A. Yes, just as a baby is a child of the parents before birth when conceived, likewise those who have a real conversion or conception of the word in their life. Of these it is said, ‘Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His son into your heart, crying, Abba Father.’ This is the Holy Ghost language. See Gal. 4:6,7.³⁹

Here Urshan is trying to answer the same problem, in a similar manner, as did Haywood above. *The relationship between salvation and the New Birth are confused.* Urshan believes that the New Birth can take place after “real conversion.” One can be truly converted, or have some “conception of the word in their life” without being born again. This seems to fly in the face of what Jesus taught. He said that one could not even see the kingdom of God without being born again (John 3:3). New Birth occurs when one receives the knowledge of the Gospel (1 Peter 1:23).

Urshan appears to be making an attempt to explain his position by saying the levels of salvation are like the physical birth process. That is, one who has not followed Acts 2:38, but has had “a real conversion,” is saved, just as a child conceived in the mother’s womb is still a child.

³⁸ Dispensationalists did this without sound biblical exegesis. Both these phrases refer to the same thing. Matthew uses “kingdom of heaven” because, being Jewish and writing to a Jewish audience, he could not use the sacred name “God.” Therefore, he did as all Jewish teachers did: he substituted a euphemism for God which was the word “heaven.” Heaven is the place where God dwells. Thus, Matthew refers to God’s kingdom by speaking of the place where He dwells. This is a common Jewish practice of showing pious reverence for the name of God.

³⁹ Urshan, *Apostolic Faith* . . . p. 13.

But, the child still needs to be born. Those who are saved by faith prior to the “revelation” of the Acts 2:38 message are children of God only when they accept the Oneness Acts 2:38 message. If the childbirth analogy holds true, those who do not “go on” to follow the Acts 2:38 steps will be still-born. But, if this is so, are they the true “Spirit born” children at all?:

Q. The folks that believe on Christ’s name and repent but are not baptized by water and the Spirit, where do they stand?

A. They stand on the same ground that the saints of the Old Testament stood; they were saved by faith not receiving the promise of the Spirit. They are not the real Spirit born children of God and adopted children. See Heb. 11:30, and 1 Sam. 12:20-22, etc.⁴⁰

This answer by Urshan confounds his answer given in the previous question. Here he states that those in the Church Age who have not followed the Oneness interpretation of Acts 2:38 are saved like the Old Testament believers. But, then he states they are not, “real Spirit born children.” This view counts people as being saved, “by faith not receiving the promise of the Spirit,” without being the “real Spirit born children of God.”

This confusion grows out of his failure to harmonize his understanding of Acts 2:38 with the concept of salvation in the Old Testament. The Bible indicates that the Old Testament believers are saved by faith in the promise of the Savior to come (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:18-25). Those who believe after Christ’s coming are saved by faith that looks back to the work of Christ (Rom. 3:25f.). The Scriptures teach that there is one Gospel (Gal. 1:6-9). That Good News is that Jesus is the Savior (Matt. 1:21). Some believed “forward” in the Savior to come and others believed “back” to the Savior who died in the past (Heb. 11:39f.). All are saved by the same perfect sacrifice of the perfect Lamb (Heb. 10:14).

The thing that complicates this issue is that those who believe *after* Christ’s incarnation are baptized with the Spirit *after* his Ascension. This is problematic for all Bible readers,

⁴⁰ Urshan, *Apostolic Faith* . . . p. 14.

especially Pentecostals. They don't see the Book of Acts as a transitional missiological record - reporting how the Old Testament believers were incorporated into the New Testament Church. They interpret specific (but not all) occurrences in Acts as universal obligations or privileges for all future Christians. The problem is cleared up when it is explained that those on the Day of Pentecost, in the upper room, were Old Testament believers. They needed to be baptized with the Spirit after believing, because they could not be so baptized with the Spirit until after Christ's Ascension:

Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. (John 7:39, 39 NIV)

After Christ's ascension, all believers were baptized with the Spirit at the time of their faith in Christ, and not at a moment subsequent to it. Cornelius in Acts chapter ten is a perfect example of those who are baptized with the Spirit upon hearing and believing the Gospel.⁴¹ One does not need the more complicated restorationist notions to understand exactly what happened at Caesarea.

What is remarkable about Urshan's claims is that those not born of the Spirit could still, 1) have a “real conversion”; 2) experience a “conception of the word”; 3) be a “child of God”; 4) belong to the “kingdom of heaven”; and 5) be “saved through faith.” Yet, those not born of the Spirit are like Old Testament saints. They are “saved by faith not receiving the promise of the Spirit.” Because of this, they are not “real Spirit born children of God and adopted children.” The contradictory statements in these few quotes illustrate Urshan's *conflicted interpretation of Acts 2:38* with respect to orthodox Christian teaching. Urshan further remarks:

⁴¹ One might ask “What about Acts 8 and Samaria?” I hope to address this further in my book, “*What Does It Mean to be ‘Born Again’?*” Part one is now available at <http://www.inchristolone.org/OnlineBookstore.html>

Q. Can one be saved and not be born again?

A. The word “saved” conveys a greater meaning than generally known. It implies deliverance from sin and also God Himself coming into our life. See Isa. 12:1. Yes, some can be delivered from hell though not being born of God, just like the Old Testament saints were saved through faith though not being born again. The thief on the cross may represent this class of saved ones who had not knowledge of the doctrine of the full salvation neither had a chance to perform it, his recognition of Christ and faith in Him saved him.⁴²

Again, Urshan applies what is *only* pertinent to the Old Testament believers – to those who are believers after Christ’s death, resurrection and ascension. He believes that those who are saved through trusting in the work of the Cross of Christ are saved only from hell, but are not necessarily born of God. The thief on the Cross is not an example of anyone today or those “who had not knowledge of the full salvation,” because he died in the period *before* the resurrection and ascension of Christ. He was an Old Testament believer. His problem was not a lack of full salvation. His problem was he died before the work of Christ was *finished*. Therefore, he was saved by trusting in the promise of what Christ *would* do. This cannot apply to anyone today.

This special modification of dispensationalism was necessary for the Oneness writers because there was no other way to resolve the problem of the non-Acts 2:38-is-the-New Birth Christian. They had only two options: 1) the New Birth is the only way to be saved and all other Christians including Augustine, Luther, Wesley, Charles Spurgeon, as well as Charles Parham, William Seymour, and William Durham are not saved, and, literally, *are not going to Heaven* but rather are going to Hell; or 2) they could be saved by obeying *differing degrees of revelation* within the Church Age. Many early Oneness writers opted for the latter, even though it introduced a peculiar form of biblical interpretation (an unbiblical interpretation) to Christian history:

⁴² Urshan, *Apostolic Faith* . . . p. 14.

We should note that most of the Oneness pioneers, including Ewart, Haywood, Goss, and Urshan, also believed that there could be some type of salvation from the lake of fire⁴³ for people outside the New Testament church, similar to that of Old Testament saints, particularly for people who walked in all the “light” they had received.⁴⁴

“Progressive Light” Rejected

Today, many Oneness teachers share this position, but there are significant numbers who say that there is only one way to be saved in the Church Age, that is, by “obeying Acts 2:38”. In a recent forum of UPCI ministers nearly every contributor rejected the “progressive light” doctrine.⁴⁵ Here are statements from this article:

The New Testament salvation plan of course is, repentance, water baptism by immersion in Jesus name and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. . . . If one does not fulfill the requirements to go to heaven, the only alternative would be for them to spend eternity in hell. (Floyd Odom, Hattiesburg, MS)

Some may have received the Holy Ghost and didn’t know what it was. However, the New Birth and Oneness is clearly spelled out in the Word and it’s our responsibility to preach it. I would not want to try to make it into heaven any other way. (Kerry Davis, Evansville, IN)

I think that the Bible is very clear about the plan of salvation and anyone that does not obey it has not other recourse, regardless of when they lived. While we do live in the dispensation of grace, this refers to the atoning blood of Jesus Christ on the Cross. For that salvation to be applied to our lives we must obey the Gospel, which is Acts 2:38. (Jesse Mathis, Denham Springs, LA)

I used to believe the ‘Progressive Light’ view, but I no longer do. I firmly believe that Acts 2:38 is the only plan of salvation. But I hesitate to judge people who came before us like Martin Luther and others. They walked in the only light they knew. Nevertheless, they had the same Bible as we have today. But I think God is sovereign and we need to leave their souls in God’s hands. However, I do know what he has commissioned me to do and that is to preach the Gospel and the full born-again experience. (Andrew Coiner, Fort Worth, TX)

⁴³ Notice that Bernard nuances the concept of salvation as from the “lake of fire.” This is not the language of A.D. Urshan, but is supplied by Bernard in an attempt to reconcile what Urshan could not fully reconcile himself.

⁴⁴ David K. Bernard, “The Acts 2:38 Message in Early Oneness Pentecostalism,” *Forward Magazine*, July-August, 2004, p. 18.

⁴⁵ “The Doctrine of Progressive Light,” Opinions Column, *Indiana Bible College Perspectives*, p. 2.

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I do not believe this doctrine [Progressive Light] whatsoever. But I don't like to get into debates as to who is saved or lost. I deal strictly with the scriptures and the Bible clearly teaches that anyone that has not obeyed full Bible salvation is lost. (Gerald Morris, Livingston, TX)

I don't believe this view [Progressive Light]. I feel that regardless of when you were born or what religion you were raised in, if you do not obey Acts 2:38, you are lost. Nor has this truth ever been lost. (Chancy Gore, Wylie, TX)

The 'Progressive Light' doctrine does not appear to be a widely held view in UPCI - but nevertheless, it does exist. As we understand it, the teaching states that soon after the first century, the world fell into apostasy and darkness. The truth of the New Birth and Oneness was lost. But beginning with the Reformation, God slowly began to reveal truth once again and 'full truth' was not completely revealed until early in the 20th century. Those who believe this often speculate that those in church history (Martin Luther, Charles Wesley, etc.) were not lost because they walked in the light that was revealed to them at the time. This doctrine is both insidious and dangerous. It is contrary to what Jesus taught in John 3:5 and the teaching of the Apostles throughout the book of Acts (specifically, Acts 2:38). If God would allow special provision for the salvation of those in church history, He would do so today, because He is a just judge. Also, Jesus said, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (the church)," which we feel means the church could not have ceased to exist at any time. ("Our View": which is the official view of the Indiana Bible College)

The percentage of UPCI ministers who agree with these statements would be hard to ascertain. But it is representative of a segment of the UPCI that rejects the view of both the early Oneness leaders, and such leaders as David Norris and David K. Bernard. It appears that Indiana Bible College, the largest UPCI Bible college, speaks for a more conservative segment of the UPCI, while Norris, Bernard and the faculty at UGST represent a more moderate voice. It is interesting to see the voices of the moderate position taking up the early Oneness leaders concern in "making room" for those who have not followed the Acts 2:38-is-the-"New Birth" teaching. Yet, the more conservative side of the UPCI appears to have followed the logical trajectory of this doctrine, and concluded that those who have not followed the Acts 2:38-is-the-"New Birth" "plan of salvation" are lost, and going to hell. Thus, the attempt to account for "non-Acts 2:38" or non-New Birth Christians is resolved by excluding them from the Church altogether. The

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contrast of these two positions in apparent. It will be interesting to see how these two voices within the UPCI⁴⁶ shape and influence the rest of the movement in the coming years.

I have given so much space to dispensationalism because Norris rest much of his argument of soteriological consonance upon the idea that Oneness Pentecostalism is merely one of the “other pieces of restoration” that “would be supplied as the Bride was being formed.”⁴⁷ In other words, early Pentecostals saw themselves as a “piece” of the restoration of the church and expected that God would add more pieces after them. Oneness Pentecostals saw themselves as the final piece. Therefore, as Norris argues, this makes Oneness Pentecostal soteriology consonant with early Pentecostal soteriology because they shared the same ecclesiological and eschatological vision.

All of these ideas are rooted in dispensationalism, which is a system, brought to the Bible, rather than found within it. As a scheme extrinsic to the Bible, it creates a restrictive grid, that directs the reader to attempt to harmonize certain biblical texts with dispensational theology. This is a all-important problem, because the Gospel is either obscured, lost, or some other agenda (even one’s doctrine of salvation) supplants the biblical one. I believe this has happened in the case of the movement, which produced the United Pentecostal Church. Their view of salvation and interpretation of Acts 2:38, in its original conception, and now as it is perpetuated, is deeply conformed to and restrained by the dispensationalist view. I have yet to read any of their authors address this issue in depth. Obviously, this is because the dispensational system is natural to their theology. Being assumed, it would not come under question from someone within their belief

⁴⁶ Since I wrote these words, the UPCI has split. A group of UPCI ministers (49 elders some claim) met in Tulsa, OK, January 24-25 to form the Worldwide Pentecostal Fellowship (now headquartered in Tulsa, OK; a source at the meeting was told that 225 ministers had signed up.) From their statement of faith it appears they follow the most conservative voices of the UPCI. While they left the UPCI over holiness issues, they hold to the same fundamental doctrine.

⁴⁷ Norris, Op. Cit., p. 42.

system. Nevertheless, there is a critical need within Oneness Pentecostalism for biblical, historical and theological reflection on the impact of dispensational theology on Oneness Pentecostal theology.