

ALSOM

THE 142 - ASSEMBLIES OF GOD HISTORY, MISSIONS, and GOVERNANCE INSTRUCTOR'S NOTES - **Module 2 - American Theological Antecedents**

Revivalism and Restorationism were two direct influences / movements that helped produce Pentecostalism.

OTHER 19TH CENTURY ANTECEDENTS

There were numerous religious, social, and theological trends that prepared the way for Pentecostalism and strongly influenced the early Pentecostal Movement (and therefore the AG) ...

- (Revivalism
- Restorationism ... as seen in Module 1)
- Dispensationalism
- The Holiness Movement
- The Keswick - Higher Life Movement
- The Healing Movement
- Jesus-centered Piety
- Eschatological expectancy

DISPENSATIONALISM

Dispensationalism is a scheme of interpreting the Bible that was invented in the 1830's by cessationist British pastor John Nelson Darby.

Darby divided human history into *dispensations* of time (7 or 8), each beginning a new method of God's dealing with humanity.

His scheme created two separate plans of salvation for Israel and the Church.

Each dispensation ends badly, and God starts over in the next dispensation. **Dispensationalism is, by definition, *cessationist*: *Spiritual gifts ceased, never to return, after the death of the last Apostle.***

Almost all orthodox scholars rejected Darby's theology, but it gained a foothold among less educated clergy.

For the first time in 1,830 years of Church history, several new ideas are taught by Dispensationalism:

- The Dispensations themselves are brand new concepts, as opposed to the Covenantal Epochs (of Grace) which are seen in Scripture and always believed by the Christian Church.
- Israel and the Church as completely distinct peoples of God with separate plans.
- The complete declension of the Church at the end of the Apostolic Age (the church virtually ceased to exist).
- The complete cessation of all supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit at the end of the Apostolic Age (something very few people had ever taught before, and something the Church had never believed).
- The "Church Age" is a parenthesis in God's dealing with humanity. It's really all about Israel.
- Scripture should be interpreted in a "literalistic" way, with little regard for types or figures of speech or genre of literature.
- The Second Coming will be in two stages, a secret "rapture" of the Church, followed 7 years later by a public "revelation" of Christ at his return to earth.
- The time between the "rapture" and the "revelation" of Christ is a 7 year period of first peace and then great tribulation.
- Christians will be persecuted by a personal antichrist with absolute worldwide (global) power.
- The Jews will rebuild their temple and fully install the O.T. sacrificial system.

- The Jewish Temple and sacrificial system will be utilized by the Jewish people throughout a literal 1,000 year millennium, and their sacrifices of the blood of animals will be acceptable to God.
- Etc., etc., etc.

Darby's new system of Dispensationalism taught that all of the OT and NT prophecies and apocalyptic passages must be interpreted in a *literalistic* manner.

This was the only way that Darby's system could be imposed on Scripture: via literalistic interpretation.

However, the Christian Church had never interpreted Scripture in this manner, and Darby's interpretations often violated the literalistic standard. Some passages were still interpreted figuratively.

EARLY GROWTH of DISPENSATIONALISM

From 1830 through the 1950's, Dispensationalism grew in popularity within the American Evangelical churches. Nevertheless, Dispensationalism has always been a very small, sectarian minority within the Christian church as a whole.

It was never as popular overseas and was never believed by even a majority of American Evangelicals.

Because Pentecostalism arose among Evangelicals who happened to be mostly Dispensationalist, some of our earliest AG leaders and members were Dispensationalist. Others were Premillennial, Postmillennial, or Amillennial. Dispensationalism became dominant for a season.

Since the 1960's, Dispensationalism has been dying among its own scholars. Many evangelical scholars and pastors who grew up as dispensationalists have left that system and adopted older Christian understandings of interpretation and eschatology.

Almost all of the wild, repeated prophecy speculation and conspiracy theorizing seen on television, the internet, and other media comes from within Dispensationalism.

The following churches/movements have never become Dispensationalist: Presbyterian, Methodist, Anglican, Catholic, Orthodox, Reformed, Lutheran, and most Baptists.

No Southern Baptist college or seminary has ever been officially dispensationalist.

The largest number of Dispensationalists were independent Baptist Fundamentalists, with a minority found among other Baptists groups, a few Presbyterians, and the Pentecostals.

Today, very few seminaries remain officially dispensational.

Almost all Evangelical and Pentecostal scholars reject Dispensationalism, with its unique doctrines.

Almost all Evangelical and Pentecostal scholars premillennial or amillennial in their eschatology.

WELL-KNOWN PROMOTERS of DISPENSATIONALISM

Two men became popularizers of Darby's Dispensationalism through "study" Bibles they created: C. I. Scofield and Finis J. Dake. This influenced a significant number of Pentecostal ministers and laity.

C. I. SCOFIELD (1843 – 1921)

- Dispensationalist Teacher (1888+)
- Scofield Reference Bible (1909)

C. I. Scofield*Finis Dake***FINIS J. DAKE (1902 – 1987)**

- Prophecy Charts / Teaching (1928)
- Dake Study Bible (1963)

CYRUS INGERSOLL SCOFIELD – (1843-1921)**A partially trained attorney with no theological education.**

- Left his first wife and two daughters, never supporting them, later remarried and fathered a son.
- Scofield was appointed a District Attorney in Kansas, then forced to resign "under a cloud of scandal" because of questionable financial transactions, that may have included accepting bribes from railroads, stealing political contributions intended for Ingalls, and forging signatures on bank notes.
- Converted in 1880's, became Dispensationalist, began writing, became known as a Dispensationalist teacher, began calling himself "Doctor."
- Became an independent Baptist pastor.
- Systematized Darby's Dispensationalism, and created a "study" Bible with simplistic Dispensationalist notes in the early 1909.
- It was Cessationist and Fundamentalist, but it became popular among many Pentecostals.
- The Scofield Study Bible has sold ever since, only beginning to decline in recent years.
- **Scofield's Bible shaped many ministers & laity with poor theological training into Dispensationalists.**
- **When the AG Executive Presbytery (EP) recognized the dangerous anti-Pentecostal notes in the Scofield Reference Bible, they banned its advertisement in the Pentecostal Evangel (PE) for two years (1924-1926). They finally relented to pressure and readmitted it to the PE.**

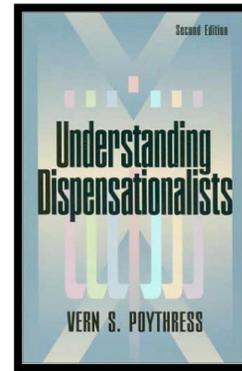
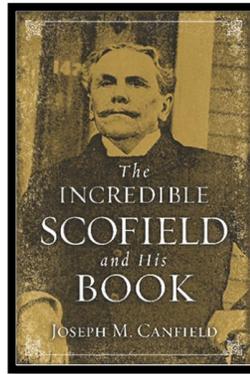
FINIS J DAKE – (1902-1987)

- Credentialed with the AG, then the COG, then independent.
- Began teaching Dispensationalist eschatology in the late 1920's, producing colorful charts.
- While pastoring in Illinois in 1937, he pled guilty to morals charges involving crossing state lines and staying in hotels with a minor girl and was imprisoned. Dake was defrocked (dismissed) by AG.
- Finis Dake created a Pentecostal Bible similar to Scofield's in 1963, with many heretical perspectives ...
 - Holy Trinity – each member has a body, soul, and spirit
 - Jesus was not fully God while incarnate
 - Jesus' resurrection body was not physical in any way
 - Grace is conditional on obeying God and doing good works
 - Sickness results from willful unbelief and disobedience / sin
 - God lives in a physical mansion on a material planet called Heaven and is invisible to us only because He is so far away that we cannot see Him
 - Humans are miniatures of God in attributes and power
 - Disease germs are related to demons
 - God wants the races to remain separate as they were originally and will be in eternity. Etc. ...

The Scofield, Dake, and Ryrie study Bibles are very poor, minority perspectives, containing only PERSONAL commentary, and should never be used.

These study Bibles are never recommended by any of our AG schools or scholars.

RESOURCES ON DISPENSATIONALISM:



(Antecedents and Influences that helped form the AG: Revivalism, Restorationism, Dispensationalism, ...)

THE HOLINESS MOVEMENT

The Holiness Movement began in the mid to late 1800's largely with Methodists who believed John Wesley's emphasis on "Christian perfection" was waning in Methodism. They wanted a return to the Wesleyan emphasis on heart holiness, a fervent continuing experience with the Holy Spirit that continually sanctified (set apart, make holy) one's heart and life.

- Leaders formed networks for the promotion of a revival of Wesleyan "holiness."
- Some left Methodism to form new churches.
- This became the Holiness Movement.
- It eventually produced such churches as the Nazarenes, Wesleyan Methodist, Free Methodist, Congregational Holiness, Salvation Army, etc.
- Wesleyan "perfectionism" in Britain was focused more on character conformation to Christ's image in love of God and fellow man
- Perfectionism in America retained some of that but became more individualistic, personal, experiential ... "sanctification"
- **Sanctification** - came to be defined as a second definite instantaneous work of the Spirit, by which the sin nature is completely eradicated "root and branch"
- Their emphasis was on the "baptism in the Spirit" as a cleansing, character related work rather than an empowering for service.
- This was a "baptism of love."
- The holiness movements initially were concerned for the practical social aspects of the gospel and Christian living ...
 - Anti-slavery, education for freed blacks
 - Temperance movement (anti-alcohol)
 - Women's rights in education, voting
 - Child-labor laws
- Eventually became focused on external signs of separation from the world ... clothes, hair, jewelry, activities, music, entertainment, etc. Legalistic.

The Holiness Movement began with high ideals and a valid point.

Most of the movement became legalistic regarding lifestyles and works-based regarding salvation.

The second generation of Holiness ministers were less well educated ... misinterpreted Scripture on practical lifestyle (dress, etc.)

Many equated the most conservative religious dress of their particular origin as holy, and refused to change over time (fashion, hair, makeup, jewelry, etc.).

Theologically, most devolved into "Eternal insecurity" – extreme Arminianism / Pelagian.

(Revivalism, Restorationism, Dispensationalism, Holiness Movement, ...)

THE KESWICK / HIGHER LIFE MOVEMENT

- Did not necessarily believe in second definite work entire sanctification
- Emphasized the continuing, deepening work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life
- **A progressive work of the Spirit continually leading to a higher life - This was one of the influences that later resulted in the AG adopting a "progressive" sanctification position.**
- There was some teaching on the possibility of a "baptism" in the Holy Spirit that empowered one for service
- No specific "sign" necessarily accompanied such Spirit-baptism experience

THE HEALING MOVEMENT

- An emphasis among some evangelicals on physical healing as an important part of the gospel
- In the Holiness Movement, the Keswick - Higher Life Movement, and beyond
- Notable personalities before 1901: John Alexander Dowie, Phoebe Palmer, Maria Woodworth-Etter, A. B. Simpson, and others
- Leaders in the Healing Movement eventually began to locate healing in the atonement in the same way as salvation
- **When some of these people later became Pentecostals, they carried this belief in "healing in the atonement" with them into Pentecostalism. This was the original source of the AG position that defines healing as "in the atonement."**

JESUS-CENTERED PIETY

- Among many evangelicals, the in-depth worship and study of the Holy Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – had declined along with the education of the ministers and the influence of the Great Tradition.
- **The Son, Jesus Christ, had become the focus of worship, devotion, and piety, even among orthodox Trinitarian evangelicals.**
- There was great interest in the person and work of the Son.
- There was comparatively less study of, and reflection on, the person and work of the Father and of the Holy Spirit, except in relation to the Son.
- This culminated in the four-fold gospel which immediately preceded the Pentecostal outpouring: Jesus Saves, Jesus Heals, Jesus Sanctifies, and Jesus is Coming Again.
- **This carried forward into the AG and was a major factor in the "revelation" of Oneness Pentecostalism.**

ESCHATOLOGICAL EXPECTANCY



Beginning in the early to mid 1800's various kinds of eschatological schemes began to be promoted in American evangelicalism. One of the more prominent was the Millerite movement.

William Miller

(1782-1849)

Farmer, Baptist Preacher

Millerite Chart, 1843



("Eschaton" - end or goal. Eschatology - the study of the end or issues having to do with the end.)

Many aberrant movements began in the "burned over district" of western New York and Pennsylvania. The emotionalism of the Second Awakening, camp meetings, and Finney-ist Revivalism had waned and disappeared.

Residents of the region were left suspicious of evangelical-type Christianity. Church attendance had once again declined.

Aberrant movements included: Spiritualism, Mormonism, Adventist sects.

William Miller was highly intelligent and well-read, but had no formal higher education, and no formal theological education.

1822 – Miller completed years of study, especially on Daniel and Revelation, calculating the Christ would return in 1843 or 1844.

1831 – Miller begins publicly teaching his doctrines. Millerism grows into large movement via publishing, teaching.

1844 – Thousands of Millerites gathered on Miller's large New York farm. The original date passed, successive recalculations yielded three new dates. The passing of the final date, October 22, 1844, became known as the Great Disappointment.

Many abandoned the movement, many stayed.

Numerous sects evolved from Millerism, including the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

MANY Eschatologically oriented sects continued to appear throughout the 19th century.



Ellen G. White (1827-1915)

Founder, Seventh-Day Adventism.

Was seriously injured when struck in the head by a rock as a child.

Was a Millerite, present at the 1844 Great Disappointment.

Began going into trances and having visions shortly thereafter.

She had many strange visions, many failed prophecies.

One focus remained eschatological visions, prophecies, and teaching.

Adventist - Focus on the Second Advent of Christ. Advent means "coming."

White had over 2,000 visions yielding many prophecies / teachings which are clearly wrong:

- Sabbath-keeping is required by God, a mark of the true church
- Sunday-keeping is a mark of the Beast, the Roman Catholic Church
- Jerusalem's Future: Mrs. White will be alive when Jesus returns
- England will attack the United States (1862)
- The Civil War is a sign Jesus is about to return
- In 1850's Mrs. White said Jesus will return "in a few months"
- Adventists living in 1856 will be alive when Jesus returns
- Mrs. White saw Enoch on Jupiter or Saturn. Jupiter was populated by very tall people.
- **Earth is only 6,000 years old**
- **Noah's flood was global – humans and animals had sex and produced some of the lesser races**
- **Ellen White was repeatedly wrong, but Adventist teaching on Creation and Eschatology found its way into some parts of Evangelicalism (including the AG).**

ESCHATOLOGICAL EXPECTANCY (continued) ...

- Eschatological expectancy intensified through the 19th century
- 1900 - this date saw a lot of typical turn-of-the-century hype

- This was a reaction that had repeatedly happened in history in reaction to times of rapid, seemingly threatening societal change, great wars, or at the turn of centuries.
- This time it was a reaction to modernity, industrialization, scientific advancement, societal change, population dislocation to cities
- Various wars: Mexican, Civil, Spanish-American, etc. (“wars and rumors of wars”)
- Dispensationalism made it worse - it was simplistic, made-to-order for ministers and laity with poorer educations, suspicion of educated elites, susceptibility to conspiracy theories, etc.
- Dispensationalism pushed even non-supporters toward speculation
- Dispensationalists were always searching for current events that could be tied to their particular readings of biblical prophecy
- *Eschatological expectancy(ies) of various kinds became permanent threads in fabric of American evangelicalism. “Last-Days Madness” periodically afflicts many evangelicals.*

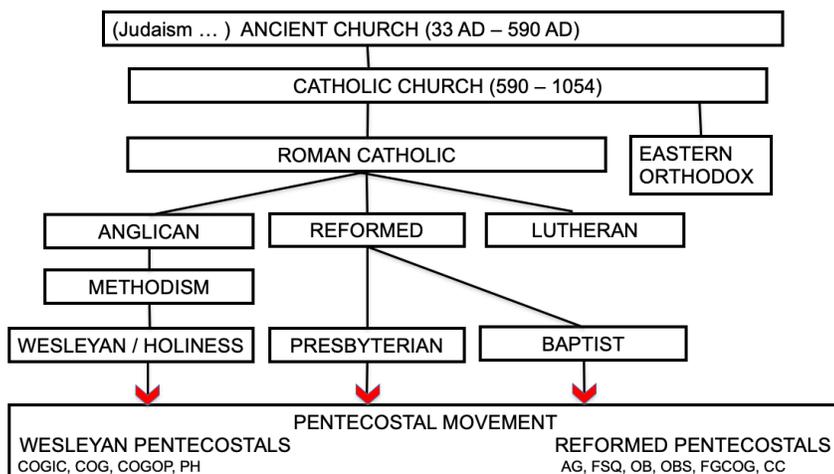
GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION of INFLUENCES

- Publishing and mail distributed all influences around the U.S.
- Healing and Restorationist emphases were universal
- Eschatological expectancy was widespread
- Dispensationalist influence was widespread, *heaviest in South and Southwest*
- Keswick / Higher Life influence strongest in Northeast, upper Midwest, West Coast
- Holiness Movement influence *strongest in the South*
- Theological tradition from which people came heavily influenced their doctrine and practice ...
 - Methodist – holiness, heirarchical,
 - Baptist, Presbyterian – Keswick, progressive, congregational
 - CMA – Keswick, Presbyterial, healing, missions

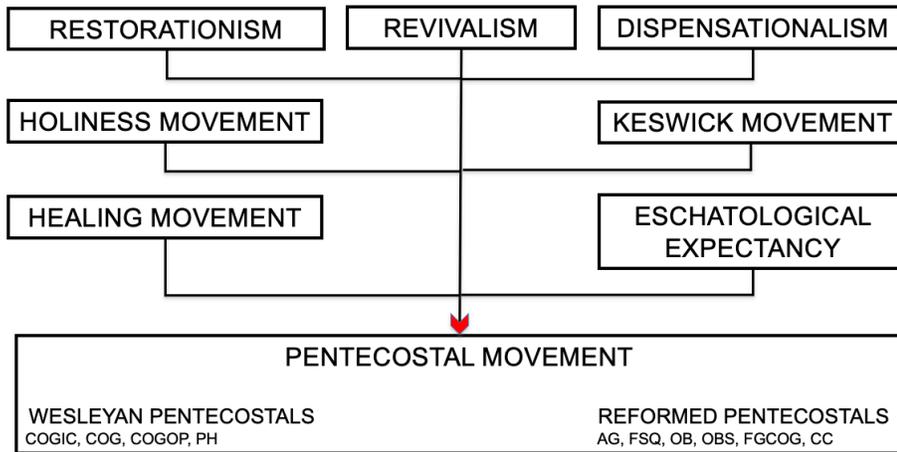
(Antecedent Influences / Movements that produced Pentecostalism: Restorationism, Revivalism, Dispensationalism, Holiness Movement, Keswick Movement, Healing Movement, Jesus-centered Piety, Eschatological Expectancy. There were also influences from antecedent beliefs about Spirit-baptism. ...)

In order to understand “why” the P/c movement and the AG have the doctrines and practices that we have, we **must** remember the theological and cultural movements that directly influenced our origin and development, and enabled us to emerge ...

HISTORICAL / THEOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS



THEOLOGICAL INFLUENCES ...



COGIC - Church of God in Christ
 COG - Church of God
 COGOP - Church of God of Prophecy
 IPHC or PH - Pentecostal Holiness Church

AG - Assemblies of God
 FSQ - Foursquare Church
 OB - Open Bible Church
 OBS - Open Bible Standard Church
 FGCOG - Full Gospel Church of God
 CC - Christian Church (Italian-American P/c churches)

END OF MODULE 2

PROCEED TO MODULE 3 (Azusa Street)