

Encourage

Inspiration for IPHC Leaders

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Discovering the **POWER** of Sanctification

This month we begin a
four-month study of how God
transforms us into Christ's image.



BY DOUG
BEACHAM

DOUG BEACHAM is the presiding bishop of the IPHC. He has served in various roles in the church including Georgia Conference Superintendent, executive director of Church Education Ministries, and executive director of World Missions Ministries. You can follow Bishop Beacham on [Facebook](#) or Twitter [@DougBeacham](#).

God in Christ, and His divine presence through the Holy Spirit, is the source of holiness. For the past four months we have examined various aspects of this truth. This month we shift our emphasis to exploring the diverse ways that God is at work in us to produce holiness. Thus, the next issues of *Encourage* focus on “Illuminate,” shining light on how God is at work in us to bring us into the image of Jesus Christ.

Over the summer months in *Encourage* we will read what some of our early IPHC church fathers wrote regarding the experience of sanctification. In this issue we also include a look at the message of John Wesley, whose preaching on sanctification helped shape the Holiness and Pentecostal movements. (See the article by Jesse Heath.)

This month we feature an article by the late Joseph H. King, perhaps the most significant early theologian of the IPHC and certainly the most significant General Superintendent in our first fifty years. In the coming months you will have an opportunity to read selections from N.J. Holmes, G.F. Taylor and others.

This four-month emphasis will culminate with an opportunity for local congregations to address this theme in August. For many of you, your teenagers will have returned in late July from an exciting and inspiring Youth Quest in Daytona Beach, Florida. There, nearly 2000 IPHC teens and youth leaders will have learned about holiness, and how to walk in holiness in this spiritually and culturally dark world. As they return to their congregations, resources for children and adults will be available at iphc.org/holiness for continued attention during August.

The IPHC Articles of Faith have two specific Articles addressing sanctification. Article Nine refers to “complete cleansing” by the blood of Jesus “from all indwelling sin and from its pollution, subsequent to regeneration.” In

other words, after we are justified by faith and regenerated (born again) by faith in Christ, there still remains the sinful effects of our fallen condition as children of Adam and Eve. Sanctification is the term we use to describe how Christ brings about this “complete cleansing.”

Article Ten elaborates the IPHC view of sanctification by affirming that it “is initiated in regeneration and consummated in glorification.” In other words, the experience of being born again, of being a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) has within it the reality of living “holy to the Lord” and will conclude in our glorification with Christ (our death).

The Article affirms that there “is a definite, instantaneous work of grace achieved by faith subsequent to regeneration (Acts 26:18; 1 John 1:9).” Furthermore, “sanctification delivers from the power of and dominion of sin . . . (and) is followed by lifelong growth in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6; 2 Peter 3:18).”

The hymn “Rock of Ages” is seldom sung in contemporary worship settings. In fact, Google it without reference to ‘hymn’ and the entire first page results are about a 2012 rock and roll movie! Little wonder so few people today know about regeneration, much less sanctification!

The old hymn, written by Rev.

**“Sanctification
is a reality
provided in the
atonement and
given to us by
faith.”**

Augustus Montague Toplady in 1763 and influenced by the teachings of John Wesley, has this opening verse in many church hymnals:

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side
which flowed, Be of sin the
double cure, save from wrath
and make me pure.”

In 1776 the hymn was first published and Toplady had the closing phrase of the first verse, “Be of sin the double cure, Save me from its guilt and power.” Toplady recognized the double work necessary in our lives from guilt (forgiveness of sins) and the power of sin (our fallen humanity). The “double cure” is salvation from the wrath of God by being in Christ (Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9) and then purity for service to Christ (Matthew 5:8; 2 Corinthians 6:6; 1 Timothy 1:5; 5:22; 2 Timothy 2:22).

While there are shades of opinion among us regarding certain particulars of sanctification in the *ordo salutis* (order of salvation), there is clear agreement that following justification and regeneration, the seat of sin dwelling in our fallen nature must be dealt with in order to live an overcoming and abundant life. Sanctification is a reality provided in the atonement and given to us by faith. It is so important that Paul in Romans 6:22 connects holiness with the fruit of righteousness leading to everlasting life. Hebrews 12:14 plainly states, “Follow peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.”

How then are we sanctified? First, by faith in the provision provided in the shed blood of Jesus (Hebrews 13:12). That faith enables us to consecrate ourselves to the Father’s truth by which He sanctifies us (John 17:17, 19). The issue of truth

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A place of hope. A people of promise.

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is essential to the sanctifying power of the Word in our lives (2 Thessalonians 2:13). We receive the truth of God’s Word because we have humbled ourselves to the perfecting of holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Indescribably relevant in our contemporary situation, holiness and abstinence from sexual immorality are directly connected (1 Thessalonians 4:3). Finally, God’s plan and commitment is to sanctify us completely in our “whole spirit, soul, and body” (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

In the intellectual and moral dark ages in which we live, God has given us life and light through truth, reverence, and sexual morality as significant ways in which He sanctifies us. Let us enter into the reality of His life-giving Word with humility, hope, and joy! 



SEX AND THE YOUNGER GENERATION: THE GREAT DISCONNECT

Most Millennials today, even in the church, think sex outside of marriage is okay. Where did we go wrong?



BY JONATHAN BLAND

JONATHAN BLAND serves as campus pastor at Mid-America Christian University. He has taught Bible and theology at the IPHC's Southwestern Christian University as well as other area universities. He graduated from Southwestern Christian University in 2010 and received his master's from Southern Nazarene University in 2012. Jonathan lives in Oklahoma City with his wife, Beccah. They love to travel and look forward to leading service-learning trips to Ecuador and Kenya this summer.

Sexual choice is a hot-button issue today. Issues of gender-identity, sexual orientation and sexual freedom have jumped to the forefront in the media. We are witnessing a growing and zealous commitment to the rights of individuals to choose who they are based on their sexuality, and this is happening inside the church as well as outside of it.

Recent research by the Barna Group indicates a growing disconnect among Millennials when it comes to sex. For Millennials, sex is an activity of enjoyment, self-expression and self-discovery. Only 32 percent of Millennials—those born between 1984–2002—agree that sex is for the purpose of uniting two people in marriage. For them, sex has become less about marriage and more about self-fulfillment and an expression of intimacy.

Now we find this same thought pattern and identity-forming idea seeping into the church. Christian teens and singles are more likely to engage in sexual activity outside of marriage. The media has begun to dictate the sexual norm: dating couples have sex.

Even among Christians, sex has become something to be saved for “someone special,” not necessarily for marriage. If two people are committed to one another for marriage, why delay the sexual encounter? Sadly, that “someone special” doesn't always end up becoming their spouse.

This issue is a serious concern for the church. The delay in the average age to marry—now 27 for women and 29 for men—has played a significant role in the development of this attitude. No longer are we only talking about teenagers staying sexually pure. Now we are talking about college graduates and working adults continuing to stay pure until marriage.

How does the church challenge this pervasive attitude in the young generation? It should happen through education, meaningful conversations and spiritual transformation through an authentic relationship with Jesus.

1. EDUCATION.

It's time we started teaching about sex in real ways with our youth. According to research done by Gail Dines of *The Washington Post*, the average American youth views pornography for the first time at age 11. Let that sink in. Yet we typically don't begin a discussion of sexual activity until the high school years.

That means our youth are getting their first exposure to sex from their peers or from pornography and other media. By the time parents or youth pastors get involved, we're having to dismantle erroneous ideas already formed.

Many have championed so-called purity movements in churches. Cards have been signed, pledges have been made, and promise rings are worn. But the reality is, we have skewed the true meaning of purity by emphasizing the denial of sex rather than the denial of self. Marriage has become a fix-it tool to satisfy our sexual desires.

Young people say: "If we can only make it to marriage, then our sexual lives will be fulfilled and satisfying." This train of thought sets teens and young adults up for failure.

First of all, it emphasizes the wrong focus of our denial. Secondly, it emphasizes waiting without giving a foundation for understanding the "why?" of waiting. Thirdly, we create such a culture of sexual taboo that many participants, even after marriage, consistently remark that they feel shame and confusion when having sex while married.

2. CONVERSATION.

We need to not only educate students on the purpose and value of sex but we also need to start having conversations with them. I think of

"Our goal should not be to emphasize only the effects of sin. It should be to emphasize why choosing Christ is better than choosing sin."

education as being mono-directional: transferring truth and values to our students. Conversation is different in that it represents *multi-directional* communication: we talk to the students, the students talk to us and the students talk to one another in healthy truth.

We have shrouded sex in so much mystery (and sometimes stigmatized it) that our students have not been able to fully engage in the subject with us. Instead, they have conversations at school, they watch television and movies, and they are forced to self-discover a framework for understanding sexuality that the church should be providing.

I talked with a college senior recently. He was raised in a Christian home and is devoted to his faith. Yet this student just had sex for the first time with his girlfriend, and it took multiple conversations before he could begin to understand what he had done was wrong. Why?

He finally told me he had never been given a good description of the role of sex in relationships, nor why it is necessary that Christians wait for marriage to take part in it. This individual is a top student, and he doesn't even understand basic Christian morality. This is due to a severe lack of good education and quality conversations with leaders.

3. SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION.

Here's the true objective of our work: Students need a greater encounter with Jesus, not a greater encounter with rules or expectations. We have to begin moving students beyond merely an emotional connection with Jesus—beyond youth camp highs that don't last—and into true discipleship.

True discipleship will include sound biblical teaching, regular public and private prayer time, and learning to live our faith out in service. To have true discipleship there must be mentors who model what an authentic relationship with Christ looks like. We have been calling for students to live holy lives without equipping them with the power to do so.

All sin, including sexual sin, comes down to a question of lordship. Is Jesus Lord of our lives, or are we lord of our lives? When we choose to indulge the desires of our flesh, we reject the desires of Christ.

We don't choose on our own to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit; that is the work of the Holy Spirit transforming our desires to reflect the image of Christ. This is the way to form a holy sexual ethic, not only amongst teens but among college students and single adults as well.

Our goal should not be to create more devotion to abstinence. It should be to create more devotion to Jesus. Our goal should not be to emphasize only the effects of sin. It should be to emphasize why choosing Christ is better than choosing sin. Our goal should not be to suppress our sexual desires and urges. It should be to have our desires sanctified entirely. □



Sanctification Is NOT a Bad Word

John Wesley preached often about the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. So should we.



BY JESSE
HEATH

JESSE HEATH is an ordained IPHC minister who serves as an assistant to Dr. Harold Hunter, Director of the IPHC Archives and Research Center. Jesse is also an Adjunct Professor of Church History at Southwestern Christian University. He is graduating from Liberty University's Baptist Theological Seminary in May with a Master of Divinity in Church History. Jesse graduated from Southwestern Christian University in 2012 with a Bachelor of Science in Biblical Leadership and from Liberty University's Baptist Theological Seminary with a Master of Arts in Theological Studies in 2014. Jesse and his wife, Roberta, pastor Connect Church in Yukon, Oklahoma.

In 2009, I was admitted to the hospital with aseptic meningitis. Upon undergoing treatment, I developed a near fatal reaction to the medication. During my recovery, I sensed there was something the Lord wanted to do within me. So for two weeks, I prayed and asked for the Lord to speak.

While in prayer one evening, I felt God speak to my heart and ask, "Jesse, what is sin?" I immediately began listing things I knew to be sinful.

Then the Lord asked a second question. "What is holiness?" I mentally began working through a list of dos and don'ts. Then God stopped me and said, "Sin is anything that hinders your relationship with me or others. Holiness is the attitude of your heart in response to your relationship with me and with people."

The IPHC values holiness as part of its historical identity and theology. According to our Articles of Faith, we believe sanctification is "a definite, instantaneous work of grace, obtainable by faith on the part of the justified believer."

As a Wesleyan-Holiness church, the teachings of John Wesley on sanctification are a central part of our identity. In 1763, John Wesley wrote *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* in an attempt to present his collective teaching on holiness and sanctification. There are three key takeaways in this book that directly impact the IPHC's understanding of holiness today.

First, Wesley referred to sanctification as "Christian perfection." He believed this meant "loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength." Wesley wrote: "This implies, that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions, are governed by pure love." Wesley understood sanctification to be instilling a

“pure love” for God and our neighbor in the believer through the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.

Throughout his works, Wesley repeatedly used the term *perfection* to describe this work of sanctification. In his book, *A Perfect Love: Understanding John Wesley's A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Steven W.

Manskar suggests that Wesley understood the sense of the word *perfection* as it appears in the Greek τέλειός (*teleios*) and τελειώσις (*teleiosis*) to mean “whole, complete, mature, grown-up, perfect.”

When Wesley used the word “perfect” he said he was “not now speaking of babes in Christ, but adult Christians.”

However, Wesley is quick to point out that “even babes in Christ are so far perfect as not to commit sin.” It was his understanding that the individual Christian's perfection was whole at that particular moment in their walk with Christ.

Second, Wesley believed sanctification occurred as a second work of grace. When asked when inward sanctification began, he responded, “In the moment a man is justified.” Wesley continued, “Yet sin remains in him, yea, the seed of all sin, till he is sanctified throughout. From that time a believer gradually dies to sin, and grows in grace.”

Wesley continued to clarify sanctification as both occurring in an instant and continuously throughout the life of the believer. “Neither dare we affirm, as some have done, that all this salvation is given at once. There is, indeed, an instantaneous, as well as a gradual, work of God in His children.”

Earlier, Wesley described sanctification as “the habitual disposition of soul which, in the sacred writings, is termed holiness; and which directly implies the being cleansed from sin.”

Wesley refuted those who said he was contending for absolute perfection, or a completely sinless Christian. Although he stated that “salvation from sin” was possible, he also believed that Christian perfection was “improvable,” stating, “one perfected in love may *grow in grace* far swifter than he did before.”

Finally, Wesley believed sanctification was a heart issue. He describes sanctification as just that, a “circumcision of the heart.” He explained, “Here is the sum of the perfect law, the circumcision of the heart . . . let [the heart] be continually offered up to God through Christ, in flames of holy love.”

Wesley equated this change of heart as a dynamic process that pervades the believer *entirely*. He said, “This

it is to be a perfect man, to be *sanctified throughout*: even ‘to have a heart so all flaming with the love of God’ (to use Archbishop Usher's words), ‘as continually to offer up every thought, word and work, as a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God through Christ.’”

Those who have been sanctified, and are being

sanctified, have a transformation in their heart. While the flesh may have its sinful desires, the sanctified believer's heart no longer is bent towards sin, but rather drawn to the things that please God.

Regarding the sanctified life of the believer, the IPHC provides the following affirmation in the

“In the moment a man is justified. Yet sin remains in him, yea, the seed of all sin, till he is sanctified throughout.” —John Wesley

Amplification section of the church Manual:

It is not absolute perfection, not angelic perfection; not “sinless perfection,” if the term is used to imply the impossibility of a sanctified person's falling into sin. We do not believe it is impossible for the sanctified to commit sin; but we do believe it is possible for a sanctified person not to commit sin (Luke 1:73-75; Titus 2:11, 12; 1 John 1:7; 2:1, 6; 3:5-10; 5:18).

Wesley would have agreed. Furthermore, he would have argued that Paul made the same case:

“[Mature Christians] can say with St. Paul, ‘I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;’—words that manifestly describe a deliverance from inward as well as from outward sin. This is expressed both negatively, ‘I live not,’ my evil nature, the body of sin, is destroyed; and positively, ‘Christ liveth in me,’ and therefore all that is holy, and just, and good.”

The Holy Spirit used a near-fatal illness to teach me an integral part of the Christian faith. Like sanctification itself, what I learned was both immediate and ongoing, and has greatly impacted my own faith.

Holiness is a much-needed foundational truth in today's society. Many shy away from this doctrine as controversial. We in the IPHC should echo Wesley's exhortation: “Therefore, all our preachers should make a point of preaching perfection to believers, constantly, strongly and explicitly; and all believers should mind this one thing, and continually agonize for it.” □

How Christ Has **FREED US** From Sin's Power

An excerpt from
Pentecostal pioneer
J. H. King's writings
helps us understand
the doctrine of
sanctification.



BY JOSEPH
H. KING

JOSEPH H. KING served as General Superintendent of the Pentecostal Holiness Church from 1917 to his death in 1946. He was well educated and had a deep understanding of the Bible. He helped lay the foundations of IPHC theology.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *As part of our Holiness emphasis, "Illuminate," we are reprinting the views of some of the early leaders of the IPHC. This excerpt is from Chapter IV of the late Bishop Joseph H. King's 1914 book From Passover to Pentecost. This article was originally titled, "The Manner of Sin's Existence in the Unsaved." King served as General Superintendent from 1917 to his death in 1946. He was well educated and had a deep understanding of the Bible. He helped lay the foundations of IPHC theology. In this selection King describes our fallen nature and sanctification as the grace-filled provision.*

In every unsaved heart, sin exists in a twofold manner. There are sins and sin. The former refers to acts; the latter, to condition. Sins are actual; sin is original. Sin is inherited; sins are committed. The former descends to us by transmission from Adam's fall; the latter are acts of disobedience against God's law.

Sin separated us from God; sins bring His condemnation upon us. Sin is a principle; sins are practical. Both are intimately related. Sin is the root; sins are the fruit. Sin is the fountain; sins, the stream flowing from it. Sin is the lawless seed; sins are the lawless deeds. Sin is the parent; sins are the offspring. Sin is adamic; sins are individual and personal. Sin is called the Old Man; sins are designated as transgressions.

We affirm that all who are born after the fall are born in sin, or with the principle of sin within them: We sinned in Adam in the Garden of Eden.

We were in him potentially when he disobeyed. Every soul was in the first man germinally when he was made. God breathed a part of Himself into the body of clay, creating the man, and in that divine inbreathing, the human race was germinally given birth. We being potentially in Adam, the head of the race, we participated in his sin of disobedience. God views the whole race in Adam when he sinned and looked upon that act as the act of the whole human family.

This seed of sin inherited from the fall is the source of all sinning in our life. It is lawless in essence, and produces lawlessness in conduct. Sinning is the outward manifestation of the lawless principle in the heart. Somewhere in childhood we yield to the movings of the unholy principle within and openly sin against the law, and then we are sinners, rebels in God's sight. We are now under condemnation. Our conscience reproves us, and we feel guilty.

But do we immediately return to God? Nay, Satan prevents such by lying and deceiving us. Through much sinning, the sin principle has grown rapidly in us in lust and deceit, so that our whole nature is depraved and sold under sin. Thus sin in its twofold manner exists

in us, and we are filled with its pollution.

From the foregoing, it will be seen that sin is to be dealt with in

a twofold manner,

or in a way corresponding to its existence within us. Sin in nature precedes sin in action, but the latter is first that is dealt with by the Lord in His dealings with us. The Spirit convicts us of our sins and shows us that we are guilty. He deals altogether with our sins and their consequences.

Original sin is

not in view. The sinner is not made to see original sin imbedded deep in his consciousness, but all that is seen and shown up in the light of his own acts and doings. This department of sin is dealt with alone until it is removed. Being saved from our sins through grace is what we call conversion, with all its accomplishments.

Original sin is dealt with separately in God's economy. It is a distinct department of sin, as related to us, and its destruction demands a separate, distinct act on God's part. It is not removed in regeneration. It remains in us after grace is received. It remains, but does not reign in the converted heart. It is held in check by the grace of regeneration. It disturbs, but does not control us. It exists in the saved, but its dominion is destroyed.

There may be outbreaks at times, but not the recapturing of the soul by such momentary manifestations. Its removal is

by a distinct act of grace. This is subsequent to regeneration. It is that which completes our justification from sin. The Old Man's death and removal is a distinct experience, different from conversion and subsequent to it. It is death within its own character. Its removal must be by an apprehension of the provisions in the atonement for this purpose.

This removal is called by many the sanctification of the believer; by others, full salvation; and by still others, the second work of grace. We prefer the latter designation, and to our mind, it is just as Scriptural as the others. Purity or purification is more appropriate than either, but we shall not confine ourselves to any single designation of this great work or experience. □

"The Spirit convicts us of our sins and shows us that we are guilty. He deals altogether with our sins and their consequences."

You have counted the cost,
now it's time to
COUNT ON US.

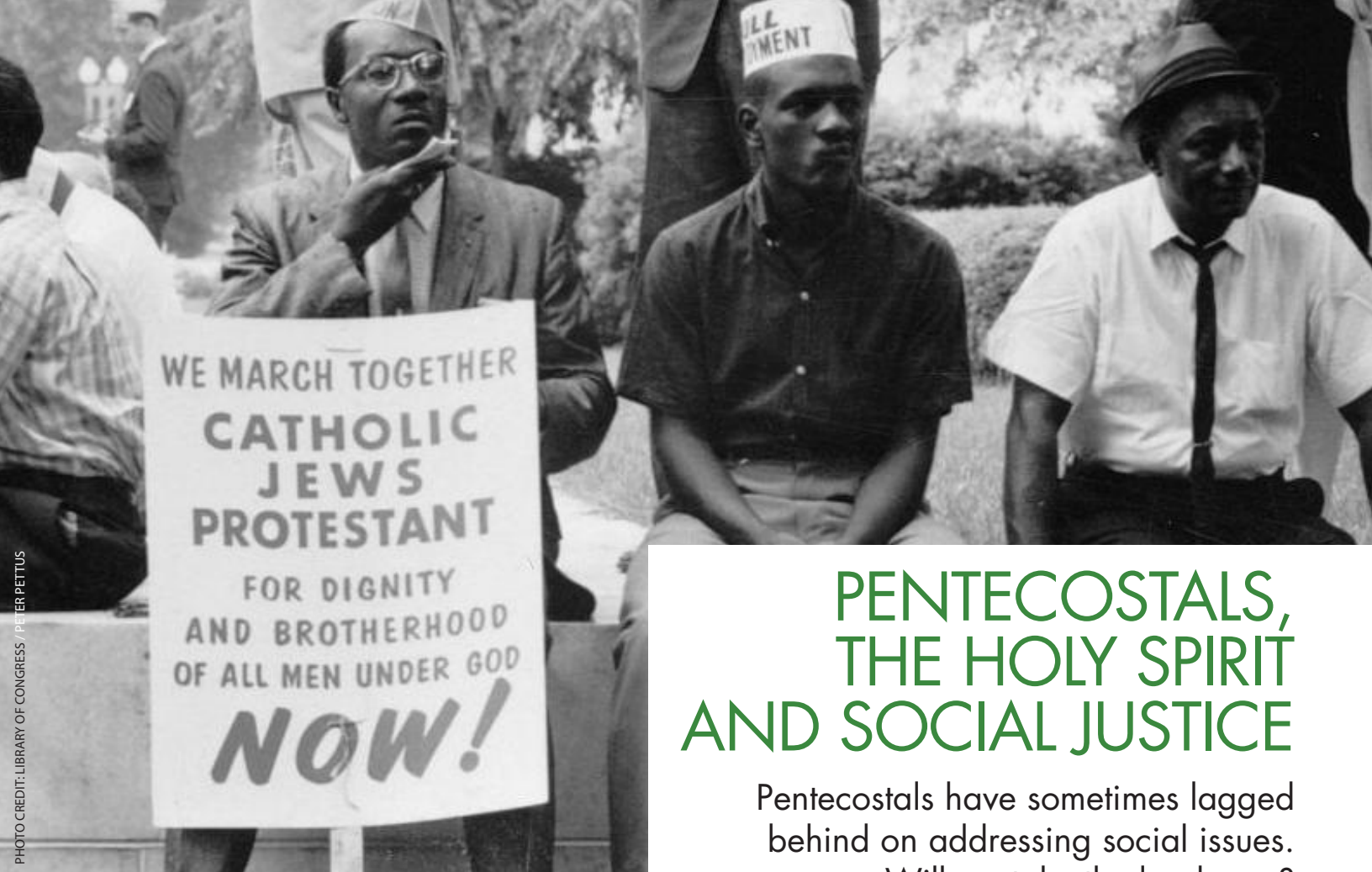
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While African-American Christians protested racial segregation in the 1960s, white Pentecostals were mostly silent.

PENTECOSTALS, THE HOLY SPIRIT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Pentecostals have sometimes lagged behind on addressing social issues. Will we take the lead now?



BY DR.
VINSON
SYNAN

DR. VINSON SYNAN earned his B.A. degree at the University of Richmond in 1958 and an M.A. degree and Ph. D. degree at the University of Georgia. For four years he served on the faculty of Oral Roberts University. He now serves as Dean Emeritus in the School of Divinity of Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia. An authority on Pentecostal history, he has written and edited more than 20 books in his lifetime, including *The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in the United States*, *The Old-Time Power*, and his most recent major work, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*. In 2010 he released his memoir, *An Eyewitness Remembers the Century of the Holy Spirit*.

Historically, Pentecostals have been more interested in spirituality than in questions of social justice. With an emphasis on the rapture of the church, Pentecostals felt that society was hopelessly corrupt and that all efforts should be made to send missionaries to convert the world before the Second Coming of Christ. According to Walter Hollenweger, Pentecostals “can understand the issues of social justice, but they usually come late, when the battle is already over.”

Pentecostals led the way on some issues but lagged behind on others. They had an early interest in building orphanages, helping the poor and also led the other American churches in race relations for a brief time. William J. Seymour, an African-American pastor, led the unsegregated revival at Azusa Street. Frank Bartleman reported that “the color line was washed away in the blood.” The Fire-Baptized part of the Pentecostal Holiness Church named black preacher William E. Fuller as a “ruling elder” in 1898.

Regarding women’s rights, Pentecostals also led the way in the tradition of the great Methodist preacher and teacher Phoebe Palmer. From day one, the church ordained women to the ministry and appointed some as pastors and evangelists, as well as “ruling elders.”

The Fire-Baptized people led by B. H. Irwin were early leaders. The first *Constitution and General Rules* of the church contained the most pointed statement on women in ministry ever written. It said: “In view of the increasing number and efficiency of women who are evidently called of God into the evangelistic, missionary, and rescue, provision is hereby made for the appointing, ordaining, and sending forth of women thus called of God, exactly the same as men, thus placing fire-baptized women, called of God, upon the same footing with our brethren of the stronger sex.” In the list of “ruling elders,” seven of the nineteen were women.

During the depression, Pentecostals generally opposed strikers and sided with the owners of businesses. In the Gastonia strike of 1939, Pentecostals refused to support

the strikers. The Schoolfield Pentecostal Holiness Church in Danville, Virginia, was dynamited in 1930–31 by strikers when pastor F.A. Dail opposed them.

When asked about the social views of the church, one Pentecostal Holiness pastor in Gastonia replied that: “his denomination engages in, and enjoys Sunday School picnics, and young peoples’ ‘sociables’ but does not permit oyster suppers to raise income for the church.” So much for social justice!

When it came to the question of socialism or communism versus capitalism, Pentecostals most definitely sided with capitalists. In Chile, when the legally elected Socialist president Salvador Allende was overthrown by General Augusto Pinochet in 1973, Pentecostal Methodists leaders supported Pinochet and the ouster of Allende.

As a rule, Pentecostals have supported conservative candidates around the world, although some members voted for socialists. The position of Pentecostals on social policies was given classical expression at a meeting of the World Council of Churches when a mainline church leader asked a Brazilian Pentecostal, “And what is your policy towards the poor?” The humble Brazilian answered, “Sir, we are the poor.”

When Liberation Theology of the 1970s led the aristocratic Roman Catholic Church to adopt the “option for the poor.” The Pentecostals in Latin America strongly rejected liberation theology even though it claimed to speak against the conditions of poverty that plagued many Pentecostals. The famous answer came back: “The Roman Catholic Church chose the option for the poor, but the poor chose Pentecostalism.”

During the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, American Pentecostals did not play a part in the demonstrations that sharply divided the nation, including the major black denominations—the National Baptist Church and the Church of God in Christ. Such Pentecostal Churches as the Assemblies of God, the Church of God, and the Pentecostal Holiness Church were conspicuous for

their lack of support for the movement.

Pentecostals stood strongly in favor of prohibition of alcohol, and against the teaching of evolution in the schools. Although some accused the “Holy Rollers on Shinbone Ridge” as leading fundamentalists in the famous Scopes monkey trial of 1925, it was the Baptists, Presbyterians and Methodists in the courthouse that led the battle against Scopes.

In general, Pentecostals stood on the sidelines in many of the social justice battles of the 20th Century.

However, by the end of the century, Pentecostals entered the fray as leaders in the conservative causes that were symbolized by President Ronald Reagan. Multitudes of white Pentecostals joined the Republican Party, while most of the black Pentecostals supported the Democrats.

In 1996 a “Solemn Assembly” of the Pentecostal Holiness Church met in Fayetteville, North Carolina, to confess and repent of the sins of the past. Led by Bishop Bernard Underwood, the church repented of various forms of pride. Among some of the sins named were racism, male domination, and greed. This was an amazing event for a church that

has proclaimed holiness and Christian perfection over the years.

Another significant event was the racial reconciliation that took place in 1994 known as “the Memphis Miracle.” At the time the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA) had excluded black Pentecostals from membership since its beginning in 1948. When B.E. Underwood of the IPHC became head of the organization, he determined to bring whites and blacks together in one

organization. This came as a result of decades of criticism of white Pentecostals who sent missionaries to Africa but who had no fellowship with American black Pentecostals.



The Azusa Street revival meetings were led by a black man, William Seymour.

In that historic meeting in Memphis, IPHC leaders took a leading role. The old PFNA was disbanded in a session that I led, followed by the creation of a new colorblind organization called the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches of North America, or PCCNA. A spontaneous foot-washing service followed, during which black and white leaders washed each others’ feet while asking forgiveness for the racism of the past. This made national news as some saw this meeting as a return to the glorious days of Azusa Street where people of all races worshipped in perfect harmony under a black pastor.

The most recent controversial movement in America concerns sexuality and marriage. Pentecostals have always supported strong family life and fidelity in marriage between a man and a woman. For decades, most American Pentecostal denominations refused ministerial credentials to anyone who had been divorced and remarried, whatever the cause. This has been moderated in recent years by some churches.

On questions of homosexuality, Pentecostals have been steadfast in opposing the gay lifestyle although all feel the call to take Christ’s love and healing to the gay community. The Church of God has the strictest rules of all. Any minister found to indulge in homosexual acts is banned from Church of God ministry for life. All Pentecostal churches have strongly opposed same-sex marriage even though the U.S. Supreme Court approved the practice in 2015.

Now, as the Pentecostals and Charismatics have grown to over 650 million adherents throughout the world, Pentecostals of all varieties should take a leading part in solving the pressing social inequalities of the times. We have been called to the kingdom for such a time as this. ■

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