

SPIRIT-FILLED WOMEN: LOUISIANA'S UNITED PENTECOSTAL
CHURCH INTERNATIONAL AND MODERN AMERICAN CULTURE

by

GLEND A BRIDGES MITCHELL

(Under the Direction of John Inscoe)

ABSTRACT

From only a handful of believers in 1901, the Pentecostal movement has become an international religious force. With over 525 million believers worldwide, Pentecostals are the largest family of Protestants in the world. This dissertation examines one of Louisiana's largest Pentecostal denominations, the United Pentecostal Church International. "Spirit-Filled Women: Louisiana's United Pentecostal Church International and Modern American Culture" explores the relationship between gender role ideology and social behavior in the Oneness Pentecostal movement and the United Pentecostal Church International. Its first section traces the history of the church's development to 1945, both on the state and national levels. Within the early stages of Pentecostalism's development, women held important leadership roles in churches and revivals. In the wake of World War II, however, women's leadership opportunities were limited and gradually they were excluded from the ministry on the basis of a biblical hierarchy of men over women. While United Pentecostal women embraced the rhetoric of the church's hierarchy, they used their spiritual authority to voice their faith and fight for an improved status within the confines of the traditional church and family. The second section of this dissertation details the ways women used their spiritual gifts, such as speaking in tongues and divine healing, to voice their faith. It also examines the ways women have worked to redefine many of the church's teachings on holiness and marriage to meet the demands of a changing society. Finally, this study explores contemporary Pentecostal women's struggles to reassert their right to speak within the church by establishing powerful women's organizations and conferences.

INDEX WORDS: Women and Religion, United Pentecostal Church
International, Oneness Pentecostalism, Divine Healing,
Holiness

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B.A., Gardner Webb University, 1995

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of
Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2003

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August 2003

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is always best to undertake a research project where the sources may easily be found. By not following this path, I have become indebted to many patient librarians and archivists. Steve and Gloria Rasco graciously assisted me in countless ways at the United Pentecostal Church International's Louisiana District Museum and Archives. The librarians at Oral Roberts University, University of California Santa Barbara, and Northwestern State University responded to my many inquiries and helped me to locate research materials.

A travel grant from the Friends of the Library at the University of California Santa Barbara and research grants from the University of Georgia's Center for Arts and Humanities and the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts' Richard G. Brown Faculty Advancement Fund provided financial support for my research.

During the course of my research and writing, I have become indebted to many individuals. My committee members, James Cobb, Chana Kai Lee, Sandy Martin, and Bryant Simon, have provided invaluable advice and insightful criticism. My advisor, John Inscoc, has been a constant source of support and guidance through all stages of this project. I also owe great thanks to the Pentecostal believers I have come to know and respect over the last few years. Steve and Gloria Rasco welcomed me to the archives, invited me to church services and

conferences, and patiently answered my questions. I am also indebted to the women who took time to tell me their stories of faith and answered endless questions to help me understand its importance in their lives. While they will not agree with all aspects of this dissertation, I hope they will sense the respect I have for them and know that I honestly tried to convey the depth of their faith to a wider audience.

I also owe much thanks to my family and my in-laws. They have never questioned my efforts and decisions. My husband, Jimmy Mitchell, has lovingly and patiently supported this project from its beginnings. He never doubted my abilities and always assured me that my research was valuable. His cooperation and encouragement have enabled the completion of this project, and I am profoundly grateful to him.

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INTRODUCTION

On New Year's Day of 1901, Agnes Ozman experienced the gift of speaking in tongues at Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas. According to J. Roswell Flowers, founding secretary of the Assemblies of God, Ozman's experience "made the Pentecostal movement of the twentieth century." While other believers had experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Ozman was one of the first to assert that speaking in tongues provided Bible evidence of this baptism. Seven years later another woman, Alice Taylor of New Orleans, Louisiana, gave the first documented account of a person experiencing the baptism of the Holy Ghost in Louisiana. Taylor wrote a letter to the *Apostolic Faith* magazine declaring that "we fasted and prayed, and Glory to His Name, He made himself known in our midst, and came and baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire." She thanked the Lord for "bringing his saints together as Jesus prayed in the seventeenth chapter of John. He is giving the gift of speaking in tongues and other gifts." In the United States and specifically Louisiana, women ushered the gifts of the Holy Spirit into the twentieth century. Was it mere coincidence that both these believers were women or was it the fulfillment of the biblical prophecy that God would pour out His Spirit on both "menservants and maidservants" and that His "sons and daughters will prophesy" and become witnesses.¹

¹First quote from Susan Hyatt, "Spirit-Filled Women," in Vinson Synan, ed. *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901-2001* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers,

Today, over 200 million believers worldwide are members of classical Pentecostal denominations, making them the largest group of Christians outside of the Roman Catholic Church. The sheer size and diversity of Pentecostalism often leads to confusion about the movement. Pentecostals come in a variety of forms and encompass an array of beliefs and practices. While it is difficult to develop a definition for this religious tradition, its adherents generally share at least two beliefs. They assert that the gifts of the Holy Spirit described in the New Testament, such as prophecy, healing, and speaking in tongues, are still available for believers. Secondly, they believe that conversion to Christ must be followed by another life-transforming event known as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Typically this experience is evidenced by the believer speaking in unknown tongues at the moment of baptism. While there are different emphases among Pentecostals even on these matters, Pentecostals agree that baptism of the Holy Spirit is the beginning of Christian life.²

The Pentecostal movement is usually dated from Ozman's experience in January 1901. For a brief period after Ozman and her classmates experienced Holy Spirit baptism, they piqued the public's curiosity and received some attention from the press. However, public interest in this new "tongues movement" faded quickly. It resurged in 1906 when an edition of the *Los Angeles Times* reported a "new sect of fanatics... breaking loose" at a ramshackle warehouse on Azusa Street.

2001), 233-234; Second quote from *Apostolic Faith*, September 1, 1907; Acts 2: 28-29.

²The gifts of the Holy Spirit are outlined in I Corinthians 12, 14; Edith Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 1-2.

The article read that “the night is made hideous... by the howlings of the worshippers” and that the “weird devotees” of the revival practiced “the most fanatical rites, preach the wildest theories, and work themselves into mad excitement.”³

The fires of the Azusa Street revival began to fade after only three years, but the flames of the Pentecostal faith had already begun to spread rapidly throughout the United States, particularly the South. The Pentecostal movement reached Louisiana through the ministry of William Seymour, founder of the interracial Azusa Street revival. Between 1906 and 1916, several small Pentecostal denominations took root in Louisiana, including the predominantly black Church of God in Christ and the largely white Pentecostal Holiness Church and the Assemblies of God.⁴

Soon, however, a theological controversy over the nature of the Trinity shook the foundations of these fledgling denominations, particularly Louisiana’s Assemblies of God. This 1916 debate created “one of the most monstrous divisions in modern Christianity.” The leaders of the new Oneness or Unitarian movement taught that the biblical, Christian doctrine of God excluded the doctrine of the Trinity. Oneness leaders asserted that God is absolutely one with no distinction of persons and that Jesus Christ is the fullness of the Godhead incarnate. Therefore, names and titles, such as God, Father, Jehovah, and Holy Spirit, refer to the same being and simply denote the roles or aspects of the ways that

³Quote from *Los Angeles Times*, April 18, 1906.

⁴T.F. Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns: A History of the Pentecostals of Louisiana* (Tioga, Louisiana: Focused Light, 2002), 35-36; Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 19.

God reveals Himself. All these designations are names for one person, Jesus.⁵

This debate had its greatest effect within Louisiana, where every Assemblies of God minister in the state except one converted to Oneness Pentecostalism. This mass conversion was due to the 1916 Elton Bible Conference held in Elton, Louisiana. At the Elton Conference, pastors and evangelists from the across the state concluded that the Bible taught the Oneness of God, and they held mass baptisms in Jesus' name. Between 1916 and 1945, the Oneness movement in Louisiana grew slowly and was plagued by denominational instability. Oneness believers formed a number of small sects that suffered endless division and reorganization. Preachers in Louisiana held revivals and planted churches under a variety of fellowships, such as the General Assembly of the Apostolic Assemblies, the Emmanuel's Church of Jesus Christ, and the Pentecostal Church, Inc.⁶

During this period of revival and growth, women maintained prominent roles in Pentecostal churches as preachers and revivalists. According to Charles Barfoot and Gerald Sheppard in their article "Prophetic vs. Priestly Religion: The Changing Role of Women Clergy in Classical Pentecostal Churches," women typically played important parts in a religious movement's early development. Early Pentecostal women received training to preach the gospel at Bible colleges and were even in

⁵Quote from J. Lee Grady, "The Other Pentecostals," *Charisma* (June 1997): 2; David Bernard, *Oneness and Trinity, A.D. 100-300: The Doctrine of God in Ancient Christian Writings* (Hazelwood, Missouri: Pentecostal Publishing House, 1991), 9-25.

⁶Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 53-65.

charge of evangelistic campaigns. Pentecostal denominations approved and supported independent female ministers, and they issued ministerial credentials to women. The Pentecostal denomination, the Assemblies of God, ordained women at its first General Conference in 1914, and clergy rolls published shortly afterward show that almost one-third of its ministers were women. By 1925, two-thirds of the Assemblies of God's foreign missionaries were women. When Aimee Semple McPherson formed her Los-Angeles based International Church of the Foursquare Gospel in 1927, single women pastored eighteen of the fifty-five branch churches. Married couples copastored another sixteen of the branches. Women in Louisiana commonly preached Pentecostal revivals and planted churches until the late 1930s.⁷

In the 1940s women's opportunities within Louisiana's Pentecostal movement began to decline. In 1945, the Pentecostal Church, Inc. merged with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ to form the nationally based United Pentecostal Church, later known as the United Pentecostal Church International. The United Pentecostal Church emerged during a period of religious revival in America. In the aftermath of World War II, two national revivals burst upon the scene: the evangelical revival led by Billy Graham and the healing revival led by men like William Branham

⁷David Reed, "Origins and Development of the Theology of Oneness Pentecostalism in the United States," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Boston University, 1978), 137-40; Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 161-166; Charles H. Barfoot and Gerald Sheppard, "Prophetic vs. Priestly Religion: The Changing Roles of Women Clergy in Classical Pentecostal Churches," *Review of Religious Research* 22: 4-5; Statistical information from David Roebuck, "Loose the Women," *Christian History* (May 1998): 38; Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 1.

and Oral Roberts. These postwar revivals brought with them new technology, innovations, and audiences.⁸

At the same time, the charismatic movement began to revitalize more traditional religious denominations, particularly the Roman Catholic and American Lutheran churches. The growth of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements broadened the scope of knowledge about ecstatic religious experiences, particularly the practice of speaking in tongues. By the mid-1950s, many Pentecostal denominations had begun to gain acceptance in popular culture and captured the attention of theologians and magazine editors. This acceptance helped to remove much of the social stigma associated with the first Pentecostal believers who were mostly from the working and lower middle classes. According to Grant Wacker, by the 1960s there were “no appreciable social or demographic differences” between Pentecostal and charismatic worshippers and the general population.⁹

The leadership and organization of the United Pentecostal Church partially began to reflect the sentiments of the general population. As Pentecostalism grew, churches, furnished with pews and pulpits, replaced tents and brush arbors. This created the first substantial division of the laity and the clergy. Society’s short-lived wartime affirmation of women’s

⁸David E. Harrell, Jr., *All Things Are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), 4-6; Joseph Howell, “The People of the Name: Oneness Pentecostalism in the United States,” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Florida State University, 1985), 234-236.

⁹Grant Wacker, “America’s Pentecostals: Who They Are,” *Christianity Today* (October 16, 1987): 20; James R. Goff, “Brother Westbrook Shouted ‘Glory’ and Mother Spoke in Tongues,” *Christianity Today* (October 16, 1987): 18.

independence gave way to an endorsement of female domesticity and subordination, and the challenges to women's ability to preach from within the church became more intense. Pentecostals increasingly began to accept the cultural stereotypes that supported males in leadership roles and limited women's participation in positions of authority in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s.¹⁰

During the early years of the Cold War, Americans embraced the traditional gender roles of breadwinner and homemaker. However, the messages that resounded from pulpits across the state reflected a fear of changes in women's roles. Preachers encouraged their congregations to resist the temptations of society and remain true to their Spirit-filled heritage and the "old-time gospel." These messages intensified throughout the social upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s, and Pentecostal women began to take some tentative steps into the political arena to fight for the upkeep of the traditional family. While these women certainly sensed that change threatened their lifestyle and their vision of the gospel, they often were willing to alter that vision, if only slightly, to meet the demands of modern culture and fight for an enhanced status within their homes and churches.¹¹

In its literature, the United Pentecostal Church defines itself as a church that has resisted the temptations of the modern era. By aligning themselves with the world and its modern culture, United Pentecostals believe that most Christian denominations have strayed from the true

¹⁰Howell, "The People of the Name," 234-236.

¹¹Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 5.

teachings of the Bible. It is unclear, however, what exactly church officials and believers mean when they criticize modernity. Part of this confusion stems from the complex and often confusing meanings of this idea. Religion scholars have developed various definitions to explain it. James Davidson Hunter defined modernity in terms of industrial capitalism and technologically-induced growth. Feminist theologian Susie Stanley described it as a mind-set embodying Enlightenment ideals of individualism, rationalism, and bureaucracy.¹²

Each of these definitions describes some elements of modern culture, but United Pentecostal believers are more likely to define it in religious terms. Modernity is an ever-changing concept, and it means different things to different people at different times. In *Fundamentalism and Gender*, John Hawley described it as “a largely meaningless construct that we invest with meaning as we go along.” However, one aspect of modernity that is constant for Pentecostals is that modern culture always confronts believers with sin and corruption. Like other evangelical Christians, the ultimate goal of Pentecostal believers is the restoration of the New Testament church. To restore the New Testament church in modern society, Pentecostals must strictly adhere to biblical teachings and work to save the lost in preparation for Jesus’ return. Any factor that

¹²See, for example, J.L. Hall, et.al. *Meet the United Pentecostal Church International* (Hazelwood, Missouri: World Aflame Press, 1989); James Davidson Hunter, *American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983), 5-6; For Susie Stanley’s definition, see, “Bumping into Modernity,” in Richard Hughes, ed. *Primitive Church in the Modern World* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 121-122.

interferes with these tasks is considered part of a sinful and modern culture.¹³

Since the beginning of the movement, Pentecostals have maintained an uneasy relationship with modern culture. They have both embraced and resisted the changes of the modern world. The ways the church has shaped its response to cultural changes, however, has had its greatest effect on women's roles in the church. The study aims to explore the United Pentecostal Church's relationship with modernity and its effects on women's roles in their churches and homes. The focus of this study is Louisiana, one of the nation's most powerful UPC districts. There are obviously limitations to using one denomination at the state level to generalize about a religious movement. For example, the UPC both in Louisiana and nationally is predominantly white. Its story virtually ignores the segments of Oneness Pentecostalism with thriving black and Hispanic membership.

Yet there are compelling reasons for studying the church's development in Louisiana. Since the beginnings of the Oneness movement, Oneness churches have garnered a large measure of their support from Louisiana. Within the United Pentecostal Church, Louisiana, along with California and Texas, has consistently ranked in the top three states in terms of membership. It is the only state where United Pentecostal churches outnumber Assemblies of God congregations. The task of this dissertation, however, is not to discuss changes in Louisiana's

¹³Quote from John Hawley, ed. *Fundamentalism and Gender* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 139.

politics and culture but to illuminate the changing roles of women within Louisiana's Pentecostal churches.¹⁴

The availability of resources is one reason this study is set in Louisiana. The Louisiana District of the UPC is rare in that its campground houses a museum with archives that are accessible to outside researchers. This is particularly important because there are several problems inherent in the study of Pentecostal culture, particularly its women. Traditionally, most Pentecostal churches give record-keeping low priority. For the early Pentecostals awaiting Christ's imminent return, membership rolls and records of church attendance had little value. Church membership rolls remain scarce and often have little relation to the number of worshippers attending services. To be considered a member in good standing, worshippers must attend church regularly and abide by the church's established standards of holiness. Rolls are rarely updated; as a result, it is difficult to evaluate changes in membership and church growth. To further complicate matters, many of the existing church records are confidential. Minutes from General Conferences and department meetings are not available to researchers. While the church publishes resolutions passed by the General Conference, it is difficult to get a sense of the debate surrounding these issues.

The problems of studying Pentecostal women are even more complex. In *Heaven Below*, Grant Wacker asserts that "the question of women's place in the revival is somewhat anachronistic." Scholars and

¹⁴See, Doug LeBlanc, "Bountiful Believers in the Bayou," *Christianity Today* 43 (July 1999): 11; Talmadge McNabb, "A Study of the Number of Churches in the USA of Some National Pentecostal Churches," one page paper, American Religions Collection, Donald C. Davidson Library, University of California, Santa Barbara.

readers outside of the revival appear to be more interested in the question of women's roles than do Pentecostal women themselves. Wacker identified two key issues scholars must contend with when studying Pentecostal women. First, based on letters and writings, female leaders in the church gave debates over positions of power low priority. Secondly, men wrote most of the texts, particularly of the early revival. While women wrote most of the letters to denominational periodicals, men edited the periodicals and wrote most of the official denominational histories. As a result they may not have always credited the role of women in the movement.¹⁵

Throughout this dissertation, I argue that women used their spiritual authority to challenge their limited leadership roles within the church and to make claims for an enhanced status for women within their churches and homes and to place greater demands upon men as husbands and fathers within the established structures of the church and family. Chapters 1 traces the history of Pentecostal movement, Oneness Pentecostalism, and the establishment of the United Pentecostal Church. Chapter 2 describes the important roles women played in the early Pentecostal movement. In the early years of Pentecostalism, the first generation of believers protested the existing cultural norms by recognizing women's rights to preach and minister to other believers. As a result, women maintained prominent positions within churches and revivals.

¹⁵Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 158.

In the wake of World War II, however, the United Pentecostal Church gained popularity and began a gradual process of adaptation to modern culture. This process of adaptation limited women's leadership opportunities and gradually they were excluded from the ministry. Chapter 3 examines the postwar decline in female leadership positions and the ways women renegotiated their roles within the boundaries of the church. It details women's involvement in educational activities, mission work, and the Ladies' Auxiliary.

Many United Pentecostal women accepted and even embraced the changes in their status produced by the Cold War consensus, but they also resisted their changing roles. Women used their spiritual authority to voice their faith and fight for an improved status within the confines of the traditional church and family. Chapter 4 explores the ways women used their spiritual gifts, particularly divine healing, to express their beliefs and care for their families by asking for and receiving healing. Chapters 5 and 6 examine women's adaptation of the church's idea of holiness and marriage to claim spiritual authority within the church. These chapters also examine how women have redefined many of the church's teachings to gain influence within the church.

Finally, this study will detail contemporary Pentecostal women's struggle to reassert their right to speak within the church. It will examine the growing numbers of women's conferences in Louisiana and the changing roles of women's organizations since the 1980s. By examining how Pentecostal women worship and practice their faith, this study provides an alternate framework for interpreting important issues, such as the interaction between religious conservatism and popular culture and the relationship between gender and faith. Exploring the roles of women

within Louisiana's United Pentecostal Church allows us to address these issues as well as the interaction of religion and modern culture.

In exploring the rich cultural past of United Pentecostal women in Louisiana, theological debates and statistical analysis are less important than descriptions of women's every day activities and how religion fits into their lives. In his essay "Everyday Miracles: The Study of Lived Religion," Robert Orsi argued that religious faith is inseparable from daily life. Religious creations, according to Orsi, are not stable institutions but are continually modified to meet the demands of believers. To understand this process, then, it is necessary to examine the "ways human beings work on the landscape." Homes, streets, and workplaces are just as essential to understanding faith as the church. This dissertation will attempt to address the issues of lived religion that I believe Pentecostal women themselves consider to be important: the role of the gifts of the Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and divine healing; family life, particularly marital roles; customs, such as restrictions on dress and hairstyles; denominational organizations, such as the Ladies' Auxiliary; and the roles of female pastors and evangelists.¹⁶

While the United Pentecostal Church has significant size and influence within Louisiana, both historians of Pentecostal history and Louisiana history largely have ignored the movement. Great attention has been given to the Catholic traditions of southern Louisiana, but the United Pentecostal Church is rarely discussed in state or southern histories. In fact, before the 1970s, it seemed that few historians outside of

¹⁶Robert Orsi, "Everyday Miracles: The Study of Lived Religion," in David Hall, ed. *Lived Religion in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 5-19.

Pentecostalism were interested in the movement. As late as 1968, William G. McLoughlin argued that Pentecostalism did not constitute a dynamic force in American religion. He saw it as a reactionary religious movement that would fade with time. One reason for this type of oversight might have been the unfamiliarity of many academics with the world of ecstatic religion. In *White Sects and Black Men*, David E. Harrell asserted that before the 1970s, scholars limited their study to religious bodies and groups that were pertinent to their own interests. But, just as likely, scholars thought that Pentecostalism, like Fundamentalism, was regressive and not worthy of their interests.¹⁷

During the 1970s, however, the rapid expansion of Pentecostalism in the United States and abroad began to draw the interest of scholars. At the same time, there were a growing number of Pentecostal historians graduating from seminaries and universities. These scholars, such as Vinson Synan, Edith Blumhofer, and Grant Wacker helped to blaze new trails in the movement's history. In *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, Vinson Synan highlighted the late nineteenth-century origins of the movement. He located the roots of Pentecostalism in the Wesleyan-holiness doctrine of sanctification or the "second blessing." For Methodists and pre-Pentecostals, sanctification perfected the believer after conversion. Synan asserted that Pentecostals made the second

¹⁷Edwin Davis, *Louisiana: The Pelican State* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 382-83; William G. McLoughlin, "Is There a Third Force in Christendom?," in William G. McLoughlin and Robert N. Bellah, eds. *Religion in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 47, 52, 56; David E. Harrell, Jr., *White Sects and Black Men* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1971), 5-6.

blessing synonymous with the Pentecost account in Acts. Thus, speaking in tongues became a sign of sanctification.¹⁸

Scholars from the Reformed wing of Pentecostalism, like Edith Waldvogel Blumhofer, argued that the Keswick-Reformed roots better address the movement's origins. These scholars asserted that Pentecostals were influenced more by Keswick theology than Wesleyan-Perfectionism. Keswickians stressed the finished work of conversion and did not believe in a second work of grace. Blumhofer's works highlight the contributions of the Reformed leaders. She argued that these leaders provided Pentecostals with an understanding of Spirit Baptism that differed from the Wesleyan view. For them, Spirit baptism empowered the believer to serve God, but it was not a morally perfecting experience. Thus, speaking in tongues was associated with spiritual power and with an anointing to serve, rather than spiritual perfection. An understanding of the Reformed roots is important to United Pentecostal history. Because the Reformed wing emphasized the central role of Christ, Pentecostal historian Allen L. Clanton argued that it gave rise to Oneness Pentecostalism. These historiographic battles demonstrate the types of antagonisms and doctrinal issues that helped to shape and transform the Pentecostal movement.¹⁹

¹⁸Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), i-xi.

¹⁹Edith Waldvogel (Blumhofer), " 'The Overcoming Life:' A Study in the Reformed Evangelical Origins of Pentecostalism," (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1977), 1-50; Allen L. Clanton, "The Significance of William Durham for Pentecostal Historiography," *Pneuma: The Journal for the Society of Pentecostal Studies* (Fall 1979): 38-39.

Other scholars have tried to understand the growth and appeal of the movement. As historians have analyzed Pentecostalism, they have developed a number of explanations for its origins and growth. A few historians have examined the movement's interracial character to assess its growth and origins. In its initial stages, Pentecostalism was multi-ethnic and often challenged racial norms. Scholars looking at the interracial aspect view the movement as a radical protest to segregation and as a dynamic force of social change.²⁰

Several sociological studies used class analysis and theories of deprivation to understand the movement's appeal. The prevailing view was that Pentecostalism succeeded because it compensated for its adherents' loss of social and political status. In *Vision of the Disinherited*, Robert Mappes Anderson followed this line of inquiry. He studied the social class origins of Pentecostalism and found that social strain among the nation's poor and dispossessed was the source of the movement. He argued that the shift from an agrarian to an industrial society fed feelings of isolation and those most at odds with this change suffered from "status anxiety" and turned to Pentecostalism. Anderson concluded that Pentecostals channeled their social protest into "the harmless backwaters of religious ideology." In "Taking Another Look at the *Vision of the Disinherited*," Grant Wacker argued that theories like Anderson's almost always reduce the believers to individuals who were

²⁰Ian MacRobert, *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988).

not fully responsible for making their own choices, thereby diminishing the dignity, faith, and accountability of Pentecostal believers.²¹

Grant Wacker noted that Anderson's study is one of the most thorough works on the Pentecostal movement. At the same time, he criticized some of Anderson's most basic arguments. Wacker contended that Anderson assumed that Pentecostals' faith was irrelevant if it did not involve social and economic protest. Moreover, Wacker criticized him for assuming that religious rewards are less satisfying than material ones. For Wacker, and other scholars, the work and beliefs of Pentecostals are best understood not as a compensation for poverty, race, or low social status, but as a burst of radical perfectionism that allowed the early Pentecostals to cope with sin and suffering by forging a new vision of the gospel.²²

Despite the growing attention of historians to Pentecostalism, few have examined the issues this dissertation explores. Oneness Pentecostalism and the United Pentecostal Church have received little attention in religious histories. While there are over ninety Oneness denominations in fifty-seven countries, scholars rarely study Oneness history. *Christian History* faced this problem in 1998 when it devoted its spring issue to the study of Pentecostalism. It contained one article on Oneness Pentecostalism, and in the "Further Readings" section the author cited only works published by the United Pentecostal Church International

²¹Robert Mappes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 26; Grant Wacker, "Taking Another Look at the *Vision of the Disinherited*," *Religious Studies Review* 8 (January 1982): 17-19.

²²Wacker, "Taking Another Look," 18.

because there are practically no scholarly works on the subject. In addition, few historical studies of Pentecostalism examine the daily lives of Pentecostal worshippers and even fewer examine Pentecostal women.²³

Analyzing the roles and contributions of Pentecostal women poses a difficult and sometimes confusing task. The standard feminist paradigms of power and oppression might be the simplest way to approach this topic, but this interpretation seems to leave out an important part of Pentecostal women's history—the women themselves. In “Women's History *Is* American Religious History,” historian Anne Braude argued that to understand religious development in America, scholars must discuss what makes each group's teachings and practices meaningful to its female members. Many feminist theologians, however, focus on the patriarchy of religion and gender oppression. Theologian Mary Daly's early writings, for example, asserted that Christianity, Islam, and Judaism are all embedded in patriarchy and that women must move beyond these religions; thus, a feminist must also be antichurch. Along the same lines, Rosemary Radford Ruether proposed a feminist principle that holds the Christian tradition accountable for its capacity to support or deny the full humanity of women. She spoke for countless women when she denied the relevance of sexist biblical texts. She and other feminists offered a doctrinal critique of Christianity that questioned whether a male savior could save women. They also have created new liturgies for naming and celebrating the divine in relation to women's experiences. The underlying assumption here is that all women, by definition, share a common

²³See, Charles Edwin Jones, *Guide to the Pentecostal Movement* (Scarecrow Press, 1983); Calvin Beisner, “*Jesus Only*” Churches (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 9.

oppression. While these scholars recognized the differences of race, class, and sexual preference, they still argued that the bonds of womanhood are strong enough to create a common theology of oppression.²⁴

In *God's Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission*, R. Marie Griffith criticized these scholars for their failure to question standard feminist models of history. According to Griffith, this historical approach reduces religion to a patriarchal tool that suppresses women and gives them false hope of a better life in heaven. In this historical scheme, however, the real losers are the conservative women who have kept their faith in traditional religions. By either neglecting these women or simply writing them off as participants in their own oppression, scholars have missed an important piece of history, the history of conservative, religious women. Religion, however, is one of the most important shapers and enforcers of women's image and role in culture; therefore, its effects should not be ignored.²⁵

This focus on individual autonomy rather than larger power structures is certainly not a unique or new idea. For decades social theorists have emphasized the importance of the individual in historical analyses formerly devoted to broader power structures. Scholars such as Antonio Gramsci, Raymond Williams, and Anthony Giddens have

²⁴Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 1-12; Anne Braude, "Women's History Is American Religious History," in Thomas Tweed, ed., *Retelling U.S. Religious History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 88-89; See, for example, the three-volume series Rosemary Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller, ed. *Women and Religion in America* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981-1986).

²⁵R. Marie Griffith, *God's Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 12-14.

attempted to describe human actions on a more personal basis that captures the workings of power and resistance. While earlier studies tended to focus on large social revolutions, more recent studies have examined “unlikely forms of resistance, subversions rather than large-scale collective insurrections, small or local resistance not tied to the overthrow of systems or even to ideologies of emancipation.” This emphasis has influenced work in religious studies and feminist history.²⁶

Developments in feminist theory and theology have led to increasingly sophisticated analyses of power within gender relations. The works of feminist historians, such as Natalie Zemon Davis and Caroline Walker Bynum, pointed out that concepts of patriarchy and oppression often get muddled in reality. Women have always carved out spaces for themselves within constraining and patriarchal structures, and they have resisted those structures in subtle ways. Ethnographers, such as Judith Stacey and Elizabeth Brusco, have argued for the subversion of gender roles within evangelical Christianity. Brusco even asserts that evangelicalism in Columbia serves as a strategic women’s movement aimed at reforming traditional sex roles. Gradually, models that emphasize religion as an oppressive force are being supplemented with more complicated frameworks for interpreting religious activity.²⁷

²⁶Quote from *Ibid.*, 14; Lila Abu-Lughod, “The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformation of Power through Bedouin Women,” *American Ethnologist* 17:1 (February 1990): 41-55.

²⁷Judith Stacey, *Brave New Families: Stories of Domestic Upheaval in Late Twentieth Century America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991); Elizabeth Brusco, *Reformation of Machismo: Evangelical Conservatives and Gender in Columbia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 137.

The women of Louisiana's United Pentecostal Church provide an interesting window into the relationship between gender, religion, and modern culture. According to religion historian Martin Marty, Pentecostalism's message was once assumed to be true because it was out of step with modern times and its following was small and pure. Similarly, Edith Blumhofer said that the early members of the Assemblies of God believed that "being in step with God meant being out of step with the times." While Louisiana's United Pentecostals have gradually adapted to many of the mainstream values of America, they have also fought to retain their traditional religious values in a constantly changing modern society. This struggle has led to the development of a unique culture that upholds women's traditional gender roles, yet at the same time offers hope, fulfillment, and a sense of purpose for its Spirit-filled women.²⁸

²⁸Martin Marty, *A Nation of Behavers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); see also Wacker, "America's Pentecostals," 21; quote from Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 9.

CHAPTER 1
THE FIRE SPREADS: THE EMERGENCE OF ONENESS
PENTECOSTALISM

When in September 1907 Alice Taylor of New Orleans gave the first documented account of a person experiencing the baptism of the Holy Ghost in Louisiana, she and her fellow Louisiana believers were part of a movement that swept the United States in the early twentieth century. As word of this new religious experience traveled across the state, men and women gathered in tents and brush arbors to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit. From the small group of men and women who gathered with Taylor in New Orleans, Pentecostalism grew into an organized movement that effected believers throughout Louisiana. This chapter explores the national and statewide growth of Pentecostalism and the divisions that led to the establishment of the United Pentecostal Church.

Alice Taylor described her story in the *Apostolic Herald*, the publication of Los Angeles' Azusa Street revival, and she became part of a growing Pentecostal revival movement in the United States. One reason the Pentecostal revival succeeded in attracting people was that endless clusters of people were attracted to Pentecostalism's millenarian message. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, increasing numbers of Baptists and Methodists along with Quakers and Presbyterians separated from their churches in search of new religious experiences. Spiritual seekers went by a number of names, but they all sought religious communions more visibly filled with the supernatural wonders of the New Testament. Early groups of believers commonly maintained that the one true Christian message was

the “full” or “foursquare” gospel. The first aspect of the full gospel was individual salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, an experience that was described as a new birth. After making a public profession of their faith in Jesus, believers were baptized in water. In this symbolic death and resurrection, believers were briefly submerged into the water and then resurfaced, sputtering but born again. The second aspect of the full gospel was Holy Ghost baptism, an experience that equipped believers for witness and service. The third and fourth corners of the four-square gospel were divine healing and premillennialism or the Second Coming of Christ.¹

Evangelical believers in the four-square gospel shared their ideas through revivals, Bible camps, magazines, and a diverse array of grassroots organizations. But, many believers still longed for something more than the four-square gospel. They wanted a more intimate spiritual experience. Because these believers sought the spiritual gifts that were bestowed on the Day of Pentecost, they became known as Pentecostals. The first Pentecost happened in Jerusalem in 34 A.D. According to biblical scriptures, the Spirit that was present in Jesus descended on his followers and empowered them with gifts that enabled them to do God’s work. According to Acts 2: 1-3,

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind and it filled the house where they were sitting. And then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each of them.²

¹Christine Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 4-5.

²Quote from Acts 2: 1-3; Pentecost is a Jewish holiday that occurs fifty days after Passover, the commemoration of Israel’s deliverance from

Pentecostals argued that over time instead of using these gifts, Christians lapsed into creeds and rituals. Even though centuries passed, Pentecostals believed that God did not give up hope that His followers would return. He promised that before the climax of history, He would pour out His Spirit in a “latter rain” that would surpass Pentecost. Pentecostals asserted that these gifts were available to all believers, and this offered hope for those who sought a more personal relationship with a God that would physically touch humans.³

Among these Christians was a young Methodist named Charles Fox Parham. Parham was born in Muscatine, Iowa, in 1873. As a young man, Parham often was ill and confined to his bed for months at a time. During his childhood he received a call to the ministry and began studying the Bible. At the age of sixteen, Parham decided that he could best serve God by becoming a physician. However, soon after he began his medical studies, he fell ill with rheumatic fever. Parham came to believe that his illness was a result of his disobedience to God’s call to enter the ministry, and he abandoned his medical studies and formal education. Afterwards, he was healed completely of the effects of rheumatic fever.⁴

Egypt. Acts 2 describes how the followers of the recently crucified Jesus gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. The apostle Peter said their speaking in tongues was the fulfillment of a prophesy that the world would end and the Kingdom of God would be established on earth. See, “Pentecost: What’s That?” (Hazelwood, Missouri: Pentecostal Publishing House, n.d.), pamphlet; Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (DeCapo Press, 2001), 4-5, 47-48.

³Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, 4-5; 47-48; Because Pentecostals refer to God as masculine, I have continued this tradition throughout this work.

⁴Ibid., 42-43.

Searching for something new from his spiritual life, Parham left the Methodist church to become an independent preacher. He felt the predictable nature of the church left its members out of touch with the Holy Spirit. By 1898, Parham had settled in Topeka, Kansas, where he opened the Bethel Bible College and Healing Home. Parham believed that the missing link between modern Christians and the true church of the New Testament was the gift of speaking in unknown tongues. At his Bethel Bible College, Parham challenged his students to search the Bible for evidence that a believer had been baptized by the Holy Spirit. After three days of fasting, prayer, and biblical study, his students concluded that the one and only proof of Holy Spirit baptism was speaking in other tongues. While groups like the Waldensians, Anabaptists, Quakers, Shakers, and Mormons also spoke in tongues, Parham was the first to connect the experience with the baptism of the Holy Spirit.⁵

On New Year's Eve of 1900, Parham held an all-night service. One of his students, a thirty-year old evangelist named Agnes Ozman, asked Parham to lay hands on her and pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When Parham recorded the event, he wrote that "glory fell upon her, a halo seemed to surround her head and face, and she began speaking the Chinese language and was unable to speak English for three days." Over the next few days, about half the school's students and Parham himself began speaking in tongues. Later, Parham claimed that the students spoke in twenty-one different languages. Although none of the students had studied these languages, they spoke them fluently and sometimes were able to write in a foreign language as well. Parham concluded that the gift

⁵Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 26.

of tongues was bestowed upon believers for the purpose of global evangelism. Therefore, missionaries did not need to study foreign languages, because the Holy Spirit would give them the gift of speaking the tongue of whatever language was necessary. Although believers soon realized that the Holy Spirit very rarely bestowed this gift, called xenoglossolia, Parham maintained this conviction until his death in 1929.⁶

After Parham received the revelation of tongues, he closed the Bethel Bible College and began a tour of revivals. Initially, Parham got scathing coverage from the press. Slowly, as reports of miraculous healings at his services spread, Parham got more reputable coverage from the newspapers. In 1905, he moved from Kansas to Houston, Texas, and established another Bible college. While Parham preached his message in a segregated Houston Bible college holding about twenty-five students, a thirty-five year old black man named William Seymour sat in the hallway listening to his message.

Born in 1870 in Centerville, Louisiana, the son of former slaves, Seymour was a short black man who was blind in one eye. As a child Seymour made a profession of his faith at a Methodist meeting. In 1895, Seymour moved to Indianapolis, Indiana, where he came into contact with the Church of God and was later ordained into the ministry. In 1905, Seymour moved to Houston, Texas, to pastor a nearby independent Holiness church. While in Houston Seymour attended Parham's Bible College, and he accepted Parham's teaching that speaking in tongues was

⁶Ted Olsen, "American Pentecost," *Christianity Today* (Spring 1998): <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/58h/58h010.html>; David Daniels III, "African American Pentecostalism in the Twentieth Century," in Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 43-44.

biblical evidence of Holy Spirit baptism. A few weeks later, Seymour accepted the invitation of Nelle Terry to travel to a church in Los Angeles. Even though he had not received the gift of tongues, Seymour's first Sunday morning message was that for people to truly experience salvation, they must speak in tongues. When he returned to preach for the evening service, Seymour found the doors padlocked.⁷

When Seymour was locked out of the church, a small group of families left with him and they began to hold meetings at a house owned by Richard and Ruth Asberry on Bonnie Brea Street in Los Angeles. Initially, Seymour's success on Bonnie Brea Street was limited, partially because he still had not experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In April 1906, however, Seymour and seven other black men and women "fell to the floor in a religious ecstasy, speaking with other tongues." One of the seven was Jennie Moore, Seymour's future wife. On that night she began to play the piano and sing in what people identified as Hebrew. Before this night Moore had never played the piano, but she kept the gift for the rest of her life. When word of the events spread, crowds descended on the house. A meeting began that lasted twenty-four hours a day for at least three days, and within a week the foundation of the house collapsed and the front porch caved in from the weight of the people.⁸

Leaders of the meeting then leased an old African Methodist Zion Church at 312 Azusa Street. Although the building was littered with debris and broken windowpanes, it was an ideal location for the revival. It

⁷Robert Owens, "The Azusa Street Revival: The Pentecostal Movement Begins in America," in Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 46-47.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 47-50.

was not in a residential area so the meetings could last all night, and often, they did. The Pentecostal believers at Azusa Street tried to free themselves from the restraints and hierarchies of the traditional church. They saw themselves as a movement within the traditional church aimed at energizing its spiritless body. They rejected the hymnals, bulletins, and the orderly worship services of the more established denominations. Men and women jumped, shouted, and sang. A worshipper would stand and speak when he or she had received a spiritual anointing. After personal testimonies and messages of worshippers in attendance, letters were read from people who had sought the baptism of the Holy Spirit. These letters helped to form informal networks and communities of believers who helped sustain one another's faith.⁹

While there were periods of silence in the services, most were loud and lasted for at least twelve hours. In "Joyful Noise and Reverent Silence," anthropologist Daniel Maltz discussed the significance of noise in Pentecostal worship services. He concluded that the loudness of the service was part of the Pentecostal protest against "dead churches" or churches where the Holy Spirit was not given free reign. The noise of Pentecostal services helped believers to make public pronouncements of faith, to express their joy or sorrow, and it set an atmosphere for the Holy Spirit to express itself by taking control of the speech of individuals. The noise and less orderly worship practices also gave the service a sense of

⁹Ibid., 57-58.

spontaneity and challenged the authority of the minister; therefore, allowing the worshipper to play a more prominent role in the service.¹⁰

Observers seemed to focus on the noise and raw emotions of worship services. Newspaper accounts of services at Charles Parham's Bible College in Topeka, Kansas, described believers "racing about the room." Curious townspeople in Prarie Soileua, Louisiana, reported attending revival services to observe the worshipers rolling on the sawdust floor. Revival leaders were commonly asked to pitch their tents outside of town so that the noise would not disturb residents. In less tolerant areas, Pentecostal preachers were fined and sometimes arrested for disturbing the peace.¹¹

Other groups of Christians expressed much concern about women's roles in Pentecostal services. They charged Pentecostalism with enticing "the faithful to desert reason for dangerous emotionalism." Evangelicals charged that in their "crazed fanaticism" Pentecostals risked their life, health, and mental stability. The presence of so many "excitable females" at church services was also an object of concern, and it often led to rampant sexual fantasies. Evangelicals charged that when women lost their social restraints, their sexual modesty would follow. This sexual immodesty would lead women to abandon their families; therefore, Pentecostalism could be most dangerous for children. The city of Topeka,

¹⁰Daniel Maltz, "Joyful Noise and Reverent Silence," in Deborah Tannen and Muriel Saville-Troike, ed., *Perspectives on Silence* (Norwood: Ablex Publishing, 1985), 23-30.

¹¹Daniel T. Guillory, "History of Pentecost in Louisiana," 315 page unpublished manuscript in UPCI District Archives, 242; See, for example, the 49th Anniversary Pamphlet, Fountain of Life United Pentecostal Church International, Natchitoches, Louisiana.

Kansas, for example, attempted to ban children from attending Pentecostal services. These concerns, while extreme, did have some foundation.

Observers of the Azusa Street revival reported that children roamed the building at all hours of the day and night. Charles Parham, remembering the Holiness services of the 1880s, remarked, “the people screamed until you could hear them for three or four miles on a clear night, and until the blood vessels stood out like whip cords.”¹²

The Azusa Street revival was notable for the social equality of its worship services. At least half of the original twelve elders at the Azusa Street mission were women. Well-dressed preachers mingled with former prostitutes as blacks, whites, Hispanics, and Asians all worshipped together in the ramshackle building. The first issue of Azusa Street’s *Apostolic Faith* magazine proclaimed, “God makes no difference in nationality. Ethiopians, Chinese, Indians, Mexicans, and other nationalities all worship together.” An eyewitness of the revival reported, “no instrument that God can use is rejected on account of color or dress or lack of education.” In his history of the Church of God, Homer Tomlinson recalled that “multitudes of our first ministers could neither read nor write, came right from the fields,... the factory, and began preaching.” The Azusa Street revival merged the worship styles of Appalachian whites with the African American Christian tradition. According to Vinson Synan, “The admixture of tongues and other charisms with southern black

¹²First and second quotes from Phillip Jenkins, *Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religions in American History* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2001), 65-66; Third quote from Charles Parham, *Apostolic Faith* (April 1925): 9.

and white music and worship styles created a new and indigenous form of Pentecostalism.”¹³

Unfortunately, the racial harmony at Azusa Street was short lived. Although there was no legal segregation in Los Angeles, it was unusual in the growing city to see blacks, whites, Hispanics, and Asians worshipping under the same roof. Often worshippers viewed the interracial atmosphere as a sign of God’s presence. A November 1906 article in the *Apostolic Faith* reported that at one communion and foot washing service, “Over twenty different nationalities were present, and they were all in perfect accord and unity of the Spirit.” Frank Bartleman, a participant in the revival, proclaimed that the color line had been “washed away in the blood.”¹⁴

The most serious threat to the revival came from within the faith. The majority of Holiness churches opposed the new “tongues movement.” Bishop Alma White, leader of the Pentecostal Union Church, charged the revival with witchcraft, devil worship, and sexual immorality. When he visited in October 1906, Charles Parham was dismayed at the scenes of ecstatic praying, dancing, and shouting. As a Ku Klux Klan sympathizer, he wrote: “Men and women, whites and blacks knelt together or fell across one another; frequently, a white woman, perhaps of wealth and

¹³First quote from *Apostolic Faith*; quoted in Nancy Hardesty, “Holiness is Power: The Pentecostal Argument for Women in Ministry,” (paper delivered at the Society for Pentecostal Studies), 1; Second quote from Homer A. Tomlinson, *The Shout of a King* (Queens Village, New York: The Church of God , U.S.A. Headquarters, 1968),45; Third quote from Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 4.

¹⁴First quote from *Apostolic Faith* (November 1906): 5; Second quote from Frank Bartleman; quoted in Daniels, “African American Pentecostalism,” 277.

culture, could be seen thrown back into the arms of a ‘buck nigger’ and held tightly thus as she shivered in freak imitation of Pentecost. Horrible, awful shame.” Following Parham’s visit, the two leaders of the movement dissociated, and soon the revival itself suffered from racial differences. It was said that some whites left because blacks had a lock on leadership. Seymour reportedly asked Hispanics to leave, and later wrote by-laws that prevented anyone except African American from holding office in the mission. If the color line was “washed away in the blood,” it was only for a short time.¹⁵

After three years of daily revivals, the crowds at Azusa Street began dwindling. As the fires at Azusa Street were fading, however, the flames of the Pentecostal faith were spreading rapidly throughout the United States, particularly in the central states and the deeply segregated South. In those early years, many worshipers opposed any type of organization. Some had been forced out of their churches, and they feared that any type of church creed or government might restrict them in their following of the Holy Spirit. Organization, however, proved to be inevitable. The problems from lack of organization abounded. In *The Flame Still Burns*, United Pentecostal Superintendent T. F. Tenney wrote that on a local level unscrupulous ministers and misappropriated funds were frequent problems. False doctrines also began to circulate among the faithful, and foreign missionaries encountered problems because foreign governments required documentation of membership in a recognized

¹⁵First quote from Charles Parham; quoted in Kevin Sack, “The Pentecostal Church in America,” *New York Times*, June 4, 2000 [http://www.nytimes.com/library/national/race/060400sack-church-side.html]; Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 60-61.

denomination before they were allowed to rent or buy property. The need for joint effort became increasingly apparent to believers and they formed several denominations. Some groups, like the Church of God, formed centralized organizations in the Methodist tradition. In the south central United States, Pentecostal believers formed the Assemblies of God, which emphasized the independence of the local congregation in the Baptist tradition.¹⁶

As these new organizations were consolidating their membership, a 1913 controversy led to a division within the churches, especially the Assemblies of God. The problem began, almost unnoticed, at a large camp meeting in California. On April 15, 1913, the World Wide Apostolic Faith Camp Meeting began in Arroyo Seco near Pasadena. Between 1,500 and 2,000 Pentecostals, mainly pastors attended the meetings each night. The large gathering featured the well-known evangelist Maria Woodworth-Etter. Woodworth-Etter, an itinerant evangelist and faith healer who joined the Pentecostal movement in 1912, drew huge crowds to her revival services, sometimes as many as twenty-five thousand. Unusual signs and wonders characterized her meetings, and the advertisements of the World Wide Apostolic Faith Camp Meeting claimed divine inspiration from the beginning. R.J. Scott, a Los Angeles businessman, announced that Woodworth-Etter had already “heard from heaven that God was going to gather his saints together in one place and deal with them, giving a unity and power that we have not yet known.” From the start of the camp, crowds thronged the meeting. It was estimated that about one thousand people camped on the grounds while others rented nearby rooms.

¹⁶Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 35-36; Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 19.

Woodworth-Etter estimated that she laid hands on over two thousand people in prayer and recounted “mighty signs and miracles.”¹⁷

In a meeting where miracles and revelations were almost commonplace, one revelation apparently went unnoticed by the crowds. Inspired by Woodworth-Etter’s revelations in “the name of Jesus,” John Schaepppe spent a night in prayer. Toward morning, Schaepppe experienced what he believed to be a revelation of “the power of the NAME of Jesus.” This revelation contributed to the new emphasis on Jesus’ name among California-based Pentecostals influenced by Frank Ewart. Ewart claimed that he attended the Arroyo Seco camp meeting, and he wrote an account of the meeting. According to Ewart, the camp meeting’s promoter organized a baptismal service nearby and selected a Canadian visitor, R.E. McAlister, to preach on water baptism. Ewart reported that McAlister’s observation that “the words Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were never used by the early church in Christian baptism” was met with a shudder. McAlister observed that though Jesus had told his disciples to “baptize [disciples] in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” the New Testament invariably recorded the apostles baptizing in “the name of Jesus.” Ewart claimed that McAlister’s sermon convinced him that the titles, Lord, Jesus, and Christ were “counterparts to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost and that Jesus was, in fact, the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” Ewart later reported that, “The gun was fired from

¹⁷Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 127-35.

the platform which was destined to resound throughout all Christendom.”¹⁸

The many Pentecostals who had a fascination for new revelations met Ewart’s conviction with enthusiasm. In fact, by January 1915, the message had spread across the continent. Many of the Pentecostal faithful were rebaptized to follow the ways of the apostolic faith. They believed that this “new light” was uncovering older doctrines, long diseased by generations of unfaithfulness. For most of the new adherents, this was simply a different formula for baptism. Oneness Pentecostals continued to worship God as the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, but eventually the term “trinity” and the persons were rejected as unbiblical.¹⁹

Gradually a series of practical implications for Oneness convictions emerged. Ewart joined his efforts with evangelist Glenn Cook, and the two purchased a baptismal tank and rebaptized each other in “Jesus’ name.” Several key issues arose over the radical Jesus’ name doctrine. The most obvious centered on the baptismal formula and its significance. Ewart maintained that in spite of former baptisms, believers should be rebaptized in the name of Jesus. He taught that repentance, baptism in Jesus’ name, and baptism of the Spirit were the three elements of a

¹⁸See Frank Ewart, *The Phenomenon of Pentecost*, rev. ed. (Hazelwood, Missouri: World Aflame Press, 1975), 106-113.

¹⁹Kenneth Gill, “Dividing over Oneness,” *Christianity Today* (Spring 1998): <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/58h/58h021.html>

conversion experience. Soon, more and more people began to crowd to the tents seeking baptism in Jesus' name.²⁰

According to religion scholar Gregory Boyd in *Oeness Pentecostals and the Trinity*, Oeness Pentecostals asserted that salvation also depended upon an individual's faith and work. Moreover, they argued that believers must live "holy lives" in order to be saved. Living a holy life often meant upholding standards that others saw as extreme, such as abstaining from tobacco, cosmetics, sports, and other popular forms of entertainment.²¹

In 1916, the controversy became so intense that Oeness adherents left the Assemblies of God. This controversy created "one of the most monstrous divisions in the history of Christianity." In Louisiana, seekers and believers from across the state struggled to find the biblical answer for the Oeness controversy. The Oeness issue first drew widespread attention at an August 1915 meeting in Merryville, Louisiana. The evangelists at the meeting, Robert LaFleur and Harvey Shearer, held ministerial credentials with the Assemblies of God. People traveled to Merryville by foot and in wagons and camped out for days at a time. Women packed enough food for the families to stay for several weeks, not knowing how long the meeting might last. It was at the Merryville meeting that people began to discuss an article in the Assemblies of God periodical *The Word and the Witness* written by E.N. Bell entitled "The

²⁰Ibid.; This threefold idea of conversion comes from Acts 3:28 which reads, "Repent and be baptized... for the remission of sins, and we shall receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost."

²¹Gregory Boyd, *Oeness Pentecostals and the Trinity* (Baker Book House, 1992), 12.

Sad New Issue.” In this article Bell criticized the practice of baptizing in the name of Jesus only. Before the meeting was over, however, the camp leaders received the next edition of the periodical. In this edition Bell wrote an article entitled “Who is Jesus Christ?” in which he explained that he had been mistaken about baptism in Jesus’ name.²²

The worshippers at the Merryville camp meeting decided to hold a conference that December in Elton, Louisiana, to discuss the new issue. Prior to the Elton conference, however, Robert LaFleur travelled with a gospel band to DeQuincy, Louisiana. His widow, Maude LaFleur Herrin, recalled that at DeQuincy they preached for seven weeks about sin and the coming of the Lord. She said that it was during the DeQuincy revival “the light of truth began to shine on us. Baptism in the name of the Lord was the way to be baptized.” The workers then decided that they would baptize their new converts in Jesus’ name. Oliver Fauss, who witnessed the baptisms at the DeQuincy meeting, recalled that “Brother LaFleur led fifty-six people out into Beckwith Creeek, and baptized them, saying, ‘Upon your confession of faith, my brother (or sister), I now baptize you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins.’”²³

Although Robert LaFleur began baptizing in Jesus’ name in DeQuincy, he did not embrace the Oneness view of the trinity until the Elton conference. When believers from across Louisiana gathered at Elton on December 15, 1915, the most pressing theological issues were over the formula for baptism and the nature of the Godhead. Harvey Shearer was to

²²Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 18.

²³Transcribed testimony of Robert LaFleur, LaFleur Collection, UPCI District Archives; Transcribed Testimony of Oliver Fauss, Oral History Collection, UPCI District Archives.

be in charge of the meeting, but he was delayed in reaching Elton, and Anna Morehead Schrader took charge of the services prior to his arrival. For the first few days of the conference, the believers focused on the baptismal formula and the Oneness issue was secondary. On Sunday, December 19, Harvey Shearer announced that the morning's message would be "Baptism in Jesus' Name." Two men who had been rebaptized in Texas delivered the message on baptism in Jesus' name.²⁴

When a baptism service was announced for that afternoon, a large crowd gathered at the water's edge of an Elton lake. Oliver Fauss, who was among those baptized that day, remembered questioning his own spirituality and the Oneness doctrine as he walked the mile to the lake in Elton. He recalled, "I tried desperately to decide what course of action to take. I had been baptized once, what need was there to be baptized again? But, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ had never sounded so sweet in all my life...." On that December Sunday, Oliver Fauss and Robert LaFleur were the first two to enter the chilly water and baptize each other by immersion in Jesus' name. The baptisms continued each day of the conference until the number of those rebaptized in Jesus' name numbered in the dozens.²⁵

According to Oliver Fauss, the issue of the Godhead did not emerge until December 27, 1915. Speakers from both sides presented scriptures to support their position. Robert LaFleur initially was among those supporting the trinity. Soon, however, LaFleur admitted that "the truth of the Word of God had come to light, and the Scriptures did not teach a

²⁴Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 27.

²⁵Quoted in *Ibid.*, 23.

trinity of persons in the Godhead, or a second or a third person, but that the Lord our God was one Lord.” LaFleur made a public proclamation of his new belief with the statement, “I owe my restitution to my God, Jesus Christ, by being baptized in his name, the Lord Jesus Christ.” According to Fauss, every Assemblies of God church in northwestern Louisiana and eastern Texas held baptisms after the conference where individuals were baptized in the name of Jesus. He recalled, “So great was this truth, that seemingly it set the whole country afire.”²⁶

As evangelists traveled across the state, more and more people converted to the Oneness message. This new doctrine began to take its toll on the Assemblies of God’s membership, both in Louisiana and nationally. Assemblies of God founders Howard Goss, L.C. Hall, D.C. Opperman, and Henry Rodgers embraced the doctrine along with hundreds of other believers. Other Assemblies of God leaders became anxious about this apparent denial of orthodox doctrine and its potential for dividing the church. Under the leadership of J. Roswell Flowers and E.N. Bell, the Assemblies of God worked to keep this new teaching from further dividing its membership. On October 1, 1915, the General Council of the Assemblies of God met in St. Louis, ready for a confrontation. The issues of baptism and the Oneness of the Godhead hung over the meeting. They entirely devoted Tuesday, October 5, to the discussion of baptism. The Oneness adherents did not present an aggressive front so the council proposed a compromise. Assemblies of God presbyters issued a statement that discouraged the use of wine in communion, a practice that Oneness

²⁶Transcribed testimony of Oliver Fauss, Oral History Collection, UPCI District Archives; Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 26.

advocates believed conformed to New Testament teachings. They also denounced the view that Jesus was the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, and they denied that baptism according to Matthew 28:19 was not Christian. But, they did acknowledge baptism in Jesus' name as Christian.²⁷

Following the council meeting, Oneness advocates became increasingly vocal about their beliefs. Within a year the delegates were back in St. Louis for the 1916 General Council. The council appointed a committee to prepare a "statement of fundamental truths." The statement composed at the 1915 meeting is still a part of the basic doctrines of the Assemblies of God. The Oneness advocates rebelled against the formal organization of the General Council and questioned their authority to compose a statement of truths. Because their goal was to reestablish the New Testament church and the New Testament did not give examples of organization beyond local churches, they wanted to avoid creeds and doctrinal statements. Howard Goss, an Assemblies of God convert to the Oneness doctrine, told a friend that "you'll never get this [Oneness message] by studying it out like some other doctrine. This comes by revelation." To Oneness believers, this revelation was a gift of the Spirit that could not be understood through textual criticisms but demanded a spiritual experience.²⁸

As a result the Oneness contingent at the 1916 General Council attempted to avoid the doctrinal issues of the trinity by stressing that they

²⁷Gill, "Dividing Over Oneness,"

²⁸Quote from Robert G. Kleinhaus, "Historiography of Oneness or Jesus Name Pentecostals," unpublished paper in American Religions Collections, Special Collections, University of California Santa Barbara.

did not want to establish doctrinal statements for the Assemblies of God. The strategy was unsuccessful, and the Council adopted a “Statement of Fundamental Truths,” almost half of which was a repudiation of Oneness beliefs, as well as a separate resolution recommending ministers use the baptismal formula in Matthew 28:19. The Oneness men present at the meeting, however, wanted to stay with the church. As the committee read their report, they solidly voted in opposition. At one point exchanges between the groups became heated and men began shouting at one another. The Oneness contingent then retired to the front of the room to decide what they should do. While they were having their discussion, the council members began singing the hymn, “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, God in three persons, blessed Trinity.”²⁹

These actions forced the withdrawal of Oneness proponents, and the Assemblies of God list of ordained ministers dropped from 585 to 429. Nationally, the Assemblies of God lost more than 25 percent of its ministers, but the percentage was higher in the South, particularly Louisiana. In Louisiana, every Assemblies of God minister except one converted to Oneness Pentecostalism. The church in Hornbeck, Louisiana, remained in fellowship with the Assemblies of God. After they left the Assemblies of God, a large group of these ministers met in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. They needed to organize immediately so they could issue ministerial credentials. In January 1917 they formed the General Assembly of the Apostolic Assemblies. The first and only published list

²⁹Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 40-41.

of clergy contained 154 names, including S.L. Wise, Oliver Fauss, and Howard Goss.³⁰

American entry into World War I, however, presented an array of complex issues for the newly formed General Assembly of the Apostolic Assemblies. The war forced Pentecostal groups to take stances on issues like military participation and civil disobedience. War in Europe fueled concerns among Pentecostal believers about Armageddon, and American entry into the war only intensified these concerns. During what they believed were the end times, believers were torn over how involved they should be in earthly matters. Many argued that biblical injunctions, such as “thou shalt not kill” and “follow peace with all men,” prohibited Christians from taking human life. Others argued that Christians should also be patriots and support their country in times of war. Most Pentecostal groups, like the Assemblies of God, supported voluntary conscientious objection; a stance that both exempted believers from military service and allowed members to voluntarily take up arms. For the General Assembly of the Apostolic Assemblies, matters were even more complicated. Because the organization was so new, the government would not exempt its members or clergy from military service. In addition, its ministers did not qualify for special clergy railroad rates. As a result some of its members and clergy sought to renew their affiliations with registered religious groups, like the Assemblies of God.³¹

³⁰Kleinhaus, “Historiography of Oneness or Jesus Name Pentecostals,” ARC; Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 46; Arthur Clanton, *United We Stand* (Hazelwood, Missouri: Pentecostal Publishing House, 1970), 30.

³¹Clanton, *United We Stand*, 30; Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 142-149.

The plight of the clergy seemed desperate, and this contributed to the support for merger. The General Assembly of the Apostolic Assemblies simply could not serve the needs of the Oneness groups and their pastors. Oneness Pentecostals formed a number of small sects that suffered seemingly endless division and reorganization until they merged to form the United Pentecostal Church in 1945. Among these groups was the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW). PAW originally met in Los Angeles in 1906. Between the years 1913 and 1916, church membership converted to the Oneness message. This theological shift largely was due to the influence of Garfield T. Haywood, a prominent African American minister who supported the Oneness message. By 1918 the group was ready to assimilate the General Assembly of the Apostolic Assemblies, and in January the two groups held a joint conference in St. Louis, Missouri. By the end of the conference, the two groups had merged but they kept the name PAW.³²

Haywood, an advocate of racial integration, was elected the General Secretary of PAW, and the organization's black membership steadily increased. Robert Mappes Anderson in *Vision of the Disinherited* estimated that by 1920 PAW was the most fully integrated Pentecostal body. Like at Azusa Street, the period of racial integration was fleeting, and by 1924 racial divisions were taking its toll on the denomination. Because by 1920 African Americans were the majority of PAW's northern members, conventions were held in the North due to southern segregation and the lack of hotel accommodations available for African Americans.

³²Morris Golder, *History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World* (Indianapolis: By the Author, 1973), 31; 46-49.

Most southern ministers could not afford to travel to northern meetings, and this caused division because northern members of PAW dominated elections. White members complained that the church could not grow in the South as an integrated movement. By 1921 white southerners had begun to hold an annual “Southern Bible Conference.” In addition, southern ministers complained about General Secretary Haywood, an African American, signing ministerial credentials for white preachers.³³

In 1923 the church attempted to compromise by having a “division by color” in the matter of signing credentials. According to the 1923 minutes, the new policy would be that “two white Presbyters sign the credentials for the white brethren (especially in the southland) and two colored Presbyters sign the papers for the colored brethren.” In practice, however, only two men, one black and one white, were selected to sign certificates for those who requested it. Other ministerial credentials were processed normally. The following year white members of PAW proposed two racially separate administrations. When black members rejected this motion, the majority of PAW’s white members withdrew from the church. The white members who withdrew their membership argued that without the racial handicap of integration, they would “spread the glorious gospel” more effectively.³⁴

³³Ibid., 46-49.

³⁴First quote from *Minute Book of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, 1922-23*, 10. G.T. Haywood, “An Open Letter,” *Christian Outlook* 1(October 1923): 268; David Reed, “Origins and Development of the Theology of Oneness Pentecostalism,” 186; Stanley M. Burgess and Gary McGee, *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 646-47; Clanton, *United We Stand*, 33.

For the remainder of the decade, growth was slow for both groups. When white ministers withdrew from PAW, they established three organizations within a year. In February 1925 the Tennessee-based Pentecostal Ministerial Alliance was formed. In October of the same year, the south central Emmanuel's Church of Jesus Christ (ECJC) was established in Oklahoma, Texas, and Louisiana. The third organization, the Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ (ACJC), was organized in St. Louis. The ECJC merged with the ACJC in 1927. Within five years these groups and PAW were considering reunification. In September 1931 a large Unity conference of all Oneness groups was held in Columbus, Ohio, to discuss the issue. Both the Pentecostal Ministerial Alliance and the Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ approached the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World with merger proposals. Negotiations with the Alliance collapsed when it proposed racially separate administrative branches. The Apostolic Church, however, proposed an integrated central organization, and in 1931 the two groups merged into the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ (PAJC).³⁵

The South Central Council of the PAJC was formed in 1931. Composed of the five southern states of Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Oklahoma, the membership in the South Central region was greater than all other states combined. In October 1932 the Pentecostal Ministerial Alliance changed its name to the Pentecostal Church, Inc., and the PAJC and the Pentecostal Church, Inc. began to work together. Church services and camp meetings were open to the clergy and laity of the other. The PAJC continued to suffer from the racial

³⁵Ibid., 646-51.

tensions that had plagued the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. The majority of its members were in the South, and when the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ held its 1937 National Convention in Tulsa, Oklahoma, black ministers were confronted with racial segregation. The majority of these black ministers left the organization and helped to reorganize PAW.³⁶

In Oakdale, Louisiana, in 1940 the Pentecostal Church, Inc. and the PAJC held a joint camp meeting, and by 1940 the two groups were discussing a merger. For all the talk of merger, the two groups did not unify until 1945. Throughout 1944 they had joint services and camp meetings, and both denominations' periodicals, the *Pentecostal Outlook* and the *Apostolic Herald*, contained articles discussing the benefits of union. In 1945, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ merged with a number of small sects, including the Pentecostal Church, Inc., at St. Louis, Missouri, to form the United Pentecostal Church (UPC), later known as the United Pentecostal Church International.³⁷

The newly formed group was faced with doctrinal controversy from the beginning. Some groups within the church believed that for a person to experience salvation and the "new birth," they had to experience all of the events described in Acts 2:38, particularly water baptism in Jesus' name. Other believers saw Spirit baptism and speaking in tongues as the true element of salvation. A third group supported what was called the "new light" doctrine. According to this doctrine, God judged people

³⁶Ibid., 137-40; Walter Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979), 26.

³⁷Howell, "The People of the Name," 146.

according to their knowledge, thereby implying that non-Pentecostals might also be saved. The Pentecostal Church, Inc. had allowed this entire range of beliefs, but the PAJC rejected all but the most orthodox Oneness beliefs. The newly formed UPC compromised on the issues and stated that its purpose was not to “build a high-walled theological fence about its members and put them in a strait-jacket” but to “allow much elasticity to develop doctrinal views within the framework of already established revealed truths.” However, historically the church has maintained strict ideas about Oneness Pentecostalism and has followed its PAJC heritage.³⁸

The newly formed United Pentecostal Church was the largest Oneness organization with 1, 383 ministers and approximately 900 churches. It outlined its basic doctrinal positions as repentance and baptism of the Holy Ghost, water baptism in Jesus’ name, the Oneness of the Godhead, divine healing of the body, the literal second coming of Christ, the Millennium, an eternal heaven and eternal hell, and the biblical standards of Holiness outlined in II Corinthians 6:17. As a result the UPC prohibited dancing, makeup, women cutting their hair, mixed swimming, worldly amusements, and unwholesome radio programs or music. By 1970 it began to strongly discourage members from owning televisions.³⁹

The conference delegates elected Howard A. Goss, the General Superintendent of the Pentecostal Church, Inc., as the new General Superintendent of the United Pentecostal Church. W.T. Witherspoon, the

³⁸Quote from S.L. Wise Collection, UPCI District Archives; Howell, “The People of the Name,” 148.

³⁹*Pentecostal Messenger* 4 (May 1952): 3; Clanton, *United We Stand*, 143-44.

former General Superintendent of the PAJC, became the Assistant General Superintendent of the UPC. General Superintendent Goss organized the church into seventeen districts, some of which were composed of several states due to the small number of ministers and churches. Each district had a board consisting of a General Superintendent, a Secretary, and Presbyters. The Louisiana District of the UPC was organized in 1946 with seventy ministers and seventy-four churches. The district began holding special French camp meetings across the southern part of Louisiana, primarily in the area from Lake Charles to Morgan City. Church membership increased throughout the state and nationally.⁴⁰

From its original 900 churches, the UPC grew to over 2,000 churches by 1970, not including foreign missions. In 1972 the church added the word International to its name to reflect its global ministry. Over time, the number of districts increased, and currently, each state is a district of the UPCI. By 2002, the UPCI reported 3,728 American churches with over 550,000 members. In Louisiana there are 245 churches affiliated with the UPCI and dozens of others that are indirectly under the church's leadership.⁴¹

People outside of the Pentecostal movement often see it as anti-intellectual. As we have seen, church doctrine was vitally important to Pentecostals and their unwillingness to compromise led to divisions from within the church. In "America's Pentecostals," Grant Wacker argued for the important of doctrinal distinctions among Pentecostals. He asserted

⁴⁰Ibid., 158-63.

⁴¹Fred Foster, *Their Story: Twentieth Century Pentecostals* (Hazelwood, Missouri: Pentecostal Publishing House, 1981), 148; Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 46; Beisner, "Jesus Only" Churches, 8.

that “Pentecostals are deadly serious about correct doctrine. They habitually define themselves in doctrinal terms and some of the deepest wounds they have inflicted upon themselves come from brawls over technicalities of belief.”⁴²

Debates over doctrine have continued to influence the UPCI. While the United Pentecostal Church’s statement of belief stresses unity, traditionally the church has taken a strong stance against those the majority of its members believe are in error. One point of contention within the UPC began in 1948 with the latter rain movement. “Latter rain” is a biblical term from the Old Testament and in context it referred to the late rain which was necessary to bring the planting to maturity so it could be harvested. At the turn of the century, many people referred to the Pentecostal movement as the latter rain. The modern latter rain movement, however, began in 1948 at Sharon Bible School in Saskatchewan, Canada, after a group of faculty members attended the healing crusades of Oneness evangelist William Marion Branham. The movement emphasized the nine gifts of the Spirit and prophecy. In 1949, the Assemblies of God took an official stance against the Latter Rain movement, and the United Pentecostal Church followed in 1950. UPC General Superintendent Howard Goss said, “These people claim special things... but I know personally that the Lord has given the gifts of the Spirit among His people for the past fifty years.” While the UPC did not embrace the Latter Rain movement, many of its members did and as a result they left the church.⁴³

⁴²Wacker, “America’s Pentecostals,” 18.

⁴³Hyatt, “Spirit-Filled Women,” 253; Clanton, *United We Stand*, 143-44.

In its 1953 General Conference, the UPC issued a statement condemning the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. The General Conference opposed the RSV Bible because “many passages concerning the fundamentals of our Christian faith and doctrine have been changed and are very misleading, namely, the virgin birth of Christ, remission of sins as taught in the New Testament, the deity of Christ, and other truths.” Furthermore, the church denounced the translators of the RSV as “modernists and liberal scholars who do not believe or embrace the revealed truths of God’s holy Word.” Church members, it declared, should use the King James Version of the Bible, because it was the most accurate translation.⁴⁴

A little more than a decade later, the 1965 General Conference of the UPC adopted resolutions against the ecumenical movement, a movement aimed at the unification of Protestant churches and ultimately of all Christians. Historically, Oneness groups have opposed the ecumenical movement. In 1936, for example, the *Apostolic Herald* issued a statement against the Federal Council of Churches and its denominational unity. The *Herald*, stated that, “The Council of Churches is even now exercising great power. All such points to the rule of the anti-Christ when we must receive the mark of the beast and worship him or give our lives for the Gospel.” The UPC continued to reject ecumenism. In *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, Vinson Synan contended that among Pentecostals the ecumenical movement grew from their desire to become “a respected part of the religious scene.” The UPC, however, resisted

⁴⁴*United Pentecostal Church International Manual* (Hazelwood, Missouri: Pentecostal Publishing House, 1989), 146-47.

what it saw as an accommodation to mainstream religious values. When many Pentecostal churches joined forces with the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in 1948, the UPC denounced their actions. Similarly, when Pentecostals tried to overcome divisions among themselves by forming the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA) in Des Moines, Iowa, the UPC declined membership in the organization. Instead, the church adopted a resolution stating that its “hope is not in the success of the ecumenical movement, but in the second coming of Jesus and His Church.” These feelings have continued throughout the years, and when black and white Pentecostal denominations met in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1994 to form the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches of North America, the United Pentecostal Church International did not participate.⁴⁵

Although a portion of the UPC’s “Statement of Fundamental Doctrine” encouraged its “brethren not to contend for their different views to the disunity of the body,” divisions within the UPC have resulted from ministers protesting what they perceived as the increasing authority of the church’s central administration. In 1954, Pentecostal minister W.E. Kidson formed a small fellowship with twenty other ministers called the International Ministerial Alliance (IMA). Members of the IMA were dissatisfied with the growing power of the church’s central organization. As a result the Alliance provided fellowship and ministerial support for

⁴⁵Joel Carpenter, “The Fundamentalist Leaven and the Rise of the Evangelical United Front,” in Leonard Sweet, ed. *The Evangelical Tradition in America* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984), 257-288; First quote from *Apostolic Herald* II (January 1936) :10; Second quote from Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 253; Third quote from United Pentecostal Church Minutes, 1965 General Conference; quoted in, Clanton, *United We Stand*, 146; Synan, “Memphis 1994: Miracle and Mandate,” [<http://www.pctii.org/pccna/history.html>.]

its members, but it did not exert authority over its membership. Another small group of pastors left the church in 1969. Like Kidson, they were protesting the centralized authority they experienced in the UPC, and they formed the Apostolic Ministers Fellowship. Similarly, in 1986, L.H. Hardwick broke away from the church protesting the increasing control of the denomination by people he labeled as “legalists.” His 3,000-member church in Nashville, Tennessee, voted to leave the UPCI and formed Global Christian Ministries. Since then several hundred former UPCI pastors have joined this organization. Most recently, two hundred pastors left the UPCI in 1992 when the General Conference voted that pastors should pledge conformity with the church’s “Holiness Standards,” which required them to refrain from watching television, wearing immodest clothing, and participating in worldly amusements. These pastors formed the International Network of Ministers.⁴⁶

Despite this emphasis on doctrinal beliefs, Pentecostalism remained a way of life for its adherents, it was a way of seeing and experiencing reality. In practice, it was faith that shaped the ways its believers saw and experienced reality. Pentecostal beliefs in the gifts of the Spirit and believers’ faith effected the ways they formed their identities, particularly their gender identities. This had important ramifications for the ways men and women experienced religion and how this religion shaped their daily lives. The next chapters will examine the leadership roles of Pentecostal

⁴⁶Quote from Wacker, “America’s Pentecostals,” 21; Reed, “Origins and Development of the Theology of Oneness Pentecostalism,” 197; Beisner, “*Jesus Only*” Churches, introduction .

women, the daily lives of Pentecostal believers, and the ways Pentecostalism effected gender.

CHAPTER 2
“FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS”: WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP IN
EARLY PENTECOSTALISM, 1901-1945

In 1917, Sister Austin Eason of the small northwestern Louisiana town of Zwolle became the first member of her family to experience Holy Spirit baptism. Eason’s father was Baptist and her mother was Methodist, but she never accepted either church. She “often told her friends and cousins that there was more...” to faith than she experienced in these churches. Over the protest of her parents, the teenage Eason attended a Pentecostal revival at a logging camp near Noble, Louisiana. When she heard the revival message, she knew “it was what I had been waiting for.” That night Eason experienced the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and she began dancing over a large pile of lumber and singing in tongues. Eason danced so long that the pins holding her long hair fell down and her hair hung to her waist as she danced and sang in an unknown language.¹

For women like Eason, the free-flowing and spontaneous structures of Pentecostal worship services provided them an opportunity to fully participate in worship and experience the divine. In early Pentecostal revival services, women freely testified to their spiritual experiences and led church services and revivals throughout the state. The freedom and expression of Pentecostal services particularly appealed to women, who made up the majority of the first Oneness believers in Louisiana. Thus

¹Transcribed testimony of Sister Austin Eason, Oral History Collection, UPCI Archives.

Tenney, director of the UPCI's International Network of Prayer, estimated that as many as three-fourths of early Pentecostal believers in Louisiana were women. Even more impressive, historical evidence suggests that women turned to Pentecostalism first and then their children and husbands often followed.²

Pentecostal worship services appealed to women because it allowed them to equally express their spiritual gifts in worship services and provided them with opportunities for leadership. In the early years of the Pentecostal movement, women played a pivotal role in the development of the church. They sang, testified, and preached. They attended revival services in larger numbers than men, and they encouraged their families to attend. They also began new churches and traveled throughout the state spreading their faith. This chapter explores the roles of women in the early Pentecostal movement. Throughout this chapter, I argue that Pentecostals saw their willingness to accept women as preachers, church leaders, and equal participants in worship services as an important aspect of their protest against social standards and the hierarchy of mainstream churches.

It is difficult to get a sense of early Pentecostal revivals and worship services, because as historian Grant Wacker stated, "Worship was something one did, not something one theorized about." But, according to Joseph Howell in "The People of the Name," "to truly hear the voice of Oneness Pentecostalism, one should not turn to official documents or even the unwritten page, for this voice is most clearly heard in the acts of ritual worship." To understand Pentecostal worship and the roles of

²Thetus Tenney, interview by author, tape recording, Tioga, LA, October 15, 2002.

women in these services, we have to rely on the oral histories of believers, the testimonies they published in Pentecostal journals, and the observations that outsiders made about the group. By using these sources, we can form an image of the worship practices and lives of Pentecostal believers and the prominent roles of women in Louisiana's early Pentecostal revivals.³

To some extent the Pentecostal attitude toward women emerged from the Quaker and Methodist influences of early-nineteenth century society and from the Holiness and Perfection movements that dotted the religious landscape in the century's twilight. The Quakers or the Society of Friends emphasized the inner life or inner light of the individual over the rituals of the traditional church. The Quakers did not recognize a separate clerical class so the gifts of the Spirit qualified individuals for leadership positions. Because of this, Quaker women took unprecedented roles in church ministry and missions.⁴

Similarly, the Methodist movement, under the leadership of John Wesley, greatly valued the contributions of women. In his history of Methodism, Robert Wearmouth noted that "Emancipation of womanhood began with John Wesley." Like the Quakers, Wesley rejected the notion of a separate clerical class. He insisted that every believer should strive for holiness, and one element of this journey was public testimony to the experience of sanctification in the believer's heart by God. Because this was a responsibility of both men and women, it helped make public testimonies by women more acceptable. The testimonies of women

³First quote from Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 99; Second quote from Howell, "The People of the Name," 193.

⁴Hyatt, "Spirit-Filled Women," 234-35.

gradually gave way to women preaching. Wesley met challenges to this decision with the reminder that, “God owns them in the saving of souls and who am I to withstand God.”⁵

Evangelical revivals and camp meetings held throughout the country similarly credited the spirituality of women. In *Southern Cross*, Christine Heyrman pointed out that early Baptist and Methodist preachers affirmed the rights of women of all ages and races to exercise their spiritual gifts by speaking in public sexually mixed religious gatherings. This endorsed the view that female spiritual expression went beyond simply fulfilling roles as wives and mothers. Indeed, evangelicals encouraged women to use their talents in church services and religious meetings at neighboring homes.⁶

In these early evangelical gatherings, women most often spoke publicly by “prophesying” or relating their religious experiences to encourage and support the faithful. Women also delivered prayers at religious meetings held in homes, churches, and camps. Some were asked to “exhort” or give lengthy, passionate testimonies either before or after the sermon. A few ministers even hoped to win the right for women to preach, an oral performance different from “exhorting” because it involved expounding on a biblical text. While these groups went against existing social norms, women’s freedom fell short of participation in church government. Lay Methodists, regardless of their race or gender, did not have any voice in selecting church members, or before 1800, in

⁵First quote from Robert Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Common People of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Epworth, 1945), 223; Second quote from Hyatt, “Spirit-Filled Women,” 236.

⁶Heyrman, *Southern Cross*, 37.

accepting new members or expelling backslidden ones. Among lay Baptists these powers were limited to male church members, but some churches allowed women to participate in the meetings that decided the appointment of pastors and the admission and discipline of church members. But, almost all churches barred women from voting.⁷

The nineteenth century brought with it changing social, political, and cultural values, and this also influenced female roles within the Pentecostal movement. Minister A.J. Gordon, for example, argued the right and responsibility of women to preach. He criticized traditional conventions that reduced women to “church drudge(s)” whose only role was to prepare “sandwiches and coffee for church socials.” He said that it was both a relief and a surprise “to many thoughtful men” to discover “how little authority there is in the Word for repressing the witness of women in public assembly, or for forbidding her to herald the gospel to the unsaved.” As early as 1894, he argued that Joel’s prophecy, “Your sons and daughters shall prophesy,” partially realized on the day of Pentecost, served as the “Magna Carta of the Christian Church.”⁸

When the Pentecostal movement swept the country at the turn of the century, observers reported that women made up the majority of the worshippers. Opponents of Pentecostalism focused on the movement’s appeal to women. An April 6, 1906, edition of the *Los Angeles Times*, for example, described the service of the previous night. It reported that, “the

⁷Ibid., 166-68.

⁸First quote from A.J. Gordon, *Missionary Review of the World* (December 1894): 911, 916-17; Remaining quotes from A.J. Gordon; quoted in Edith Blumhofer, “A Confused Legacy: Reflections on Evangelical Attitudes toward Ministering Women in the Past Century,” *Fides et Historia* 22 (1990): 50-51.

old exhorter [Seymour] urged the ‘sisters’ to let the tongues come forth and the women gave themselves over to a riot of religious fervor.” In “The History of Women in the Pentecostal Movement,” Cheryl Sanders pointed out that women were involved in every aspect of Seymour’s spiritual development. At least half of the original twelve elders at the Azusa Street mission were women. Women were willing to follow his doctrine of speaking in tongues and experience its full effects for public witness.⁹

Outsiders saw the emotionalism of the revival services as particularly suited for women. The social and gender equality of worship services, however, was a fundamental aspect of the Pentecostal protest against traditional churches. From the beginning Pentecostals accepted the equality of men and women in the Spirit, regardless of race, age, or social class. The Pentecostal faith instilled in women a belief in the importance of their individual salvation, a confidence in their worth, and a sense of spiritual and moral autonomy.

When the General Assembly of the Apostolic Assemblies was formed in 1916, women continued to hold prominent positions in revival services. World War I fueled worshippers’ desire for revival because they believed that they were living in the last days before the return of Jesus, and they felt an urgency to spread their message. This led them to enlist almost any willing workers in the revival. The ministerial requirements for Pentecostal believers reflected this urgency. Pentecostals were

⁹*Oakland Tribune*, December 2, 1889, and *San Francisco Examiner*, January 11, 1890, quoted in Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 1; Cheryl Sanders, “History of Women in the Pentecostal Movement,” *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal and Charismatic Research* [<http://www.pctii.org/cybertab1.html>] 2 (July 1997): 5.

characterized by their openness as to who can preach, and they emphasized a person's "calling" to preach rather than their educational certification, race, class, or gender. Status was rooted in religious experience rather than educational credentials, family position, or social power. While in other denominations female believers were barred from the necessary educational institutions, female Pentecostal believers could receive and answer a call from God to preach. Assemblies of God historian Edith Blumhofer asserts that "In the early Pentecostal movement, having the 'anointing' was far more important than one's sex... A person's call—and how others viewed it—was far more important than ministerial credentials."¹⁰

Regardless of a person's gender, simply asserting that one had the call to preach was not enough. Such a calling had to be confirmed by the presence of spiritual gifts. Maude Wilkins LaFleur, for example, was one of Louisiana's most prominent evangelists. At the age of eighteen, she received the Holy Ghost and felt the call to preach. This call was confirmed at a revival meeting in DeQuincy, Louisiana. She recalled that, "If God anointed you, you preached." She said "...I got up to testify. The anointing came. The folks said my face was so aglow; they could hardly look at me. ...the power of God was so great that toward the close of the sermon, the entire congregation fell on their knees." This verified her call to preach, and she received her ministerial license. When she

¹⁰"Women," Burgess and McGee, *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 897-98; Quote from Edith Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God: A Popular History* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing), 137; Elaine J. Lawless, "Not So Different A Story After All: Pentecostal Women in the Pulpit," in Catherine Wessinger, ed. *Women's Leadership in Marginal Religions* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 42-43.

received her license in 1916, ministerial credentials were fairly flexible. Oliver Fauss, who received his license the same night as LaFleur, recalled that they were summoned to the church's Board of Elders in Elton, Louisiana. He said "the board members had been closely observing our work and our ministry...and they had decided to grant us a State License as preachers of the gospel. It was the desire of the board to lay hands on us, praying that God would place His richest blessings upon us wherever we might go to preach the Gospel."¹¹

According to historian Nancy Hardesty, the early Pentecostals "mirrored the table fellowship of Jesus, who was accused of eating with sinners and even women, because he did, who scandalized the people of his day by declaring that the first would be the last and the last the first." Indeed, Pentecostal women found justifications for their ministries in the Bible and the tradition of Pentecost. The Bible was the church's sole source of authority, and women used it to claim their right to ministry. Pentecostal women commonly cited examples of women serving as prophets in both the Old and New Testament. Miriam in Exodus 15: 20, Deborah in Judges 4: 4, Huldah in II Chronicles 34:22, and II Kings 22: 14. They also stressed that during Jesus' ministry the woman at the well in Samaria evangelized her village and Mary Magdalene spread the message of Jesus' resurrection.¹²

Women especially used the biblical account of Pentecost to support their ministry. According to historian Nancy Hardesty, they told and

¹¹Transcribed testimony of Maude Wilkins LaFleur Herring, Oral History Collection, UPCI Archives; Oliver Fauss, *What God Hath Wrought* (Hazelwood, Missouri: World Aflame Press, 1985), 80-81.

¹²Hardesty, "Holiness is Power," 3.

retold the story of Pentecost because it emphasized women's power to speak. They pointed out that on the day of Pentecost, the book of Acts described the worshippers as being "with one accord in one place." Female believers argued that this included the eleven disciples as well as women, including Mary the mother of Jesus. Acts chapter 2 continued: "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." Pentecostal women stressed that the tongues of fire descended on "each of them." Perhaps the most crucial of the verses was Acts 2: 4, "And then they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave utterance." This account supported Spirit-filled women's equal qualifications to speak.¹³

In addition, Pentecostals, like other Protestants, accepted the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer. This doctrine asserted that believers were directly responsible to God; therefore, each believer could go directly to God in prayer and be accountable to Him. On the basis of this teaching, a woman was responsible for how she responded to God. A minister, church, or family member could not determine the call of a woman, only she was responsible. Secondly, they saw the biblical prophecy, "It shall come to pass in the last days... that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy" as evidence that women should participate equally in spreading the faith. While Pentecostals could not ignore Paul's instructions to "Let all women learn in silence with subjection," they interpreted these instructions to

¹³Ibid., 2-3; Acts 1: 14; Acts 2:2-4; Hardesty, "Holiness is Power," 2-3.

apply only to the women of the church that Paul was advising, not to all women. As “Vivian” explained, “In those days men and women sat on different sides of the church. The uneducated women were consistently asking questions of their husbands on the other side of the church and disrupting the services. Paul's letter applied only to these women, not to all Christian women.” Pentecostal believers favored Paul’s observation that “There is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ.”¹⁴

During World War I, women throughout Louisiana experienced the call to preach and became ordained ministers. Revivals became an important way for Pentecostal believers to spread the faith, and they lasted weeks, even months, at a time. Women who experienced the call to preach traveled with their families or in gospel bands where evangelists and musicians would pool their resources and travel across the countryside holding meetings outdoors under brush arbors or beneath tents. Edith Blumhofer pointed out that “As evangelistic bands carried the full gospel across the country, women who were recognized as having the anointing of the Holy Spirit shared with men in the preaching ministry.” Sometimes single women were part of these gospel bands, but often women traveled alongside their husbands preaching the gospel.¹⁵

Ellen William, for example, entered the ministry with her husband Johnny. They traveled throughout the southern United States preaching the Jesus’ name message. In 1914, Ellen had a dream that revealed to her

¹⁴First quote Acts 2: 28-29; Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 242-54; Blumhofer, “A Confused Legacy,” 50-53; “Vivian,” confidential interview by author, Tioga, LA, October 15, 2002; Third quote from Galatians 3: 27-28.

¹⁵Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God*, 137.

the exact place to pitch a revival tent in Lake Charles, Louisiana. In the resulting nine-month revival, prayer services were held each morning and revivals each afternoon. When the Williams left Lake Charles, all but twelve people in the Goosport community had received Holy Ghost baptism. Lovenia Heard, a participant in the revival, recalled that nightly services began after supper and lasted until at least midnight. Heard devoted so much of her time to revivals and prayer meetings that she quit crocheting and some of her other hobbies. She said that people in the town often remarked about the unusual services with the “lady preacher” and how the worshipper would “holler, Hallelujah, but oh, how they could sing.”¹⁶

After a revival ended, it often fell to the women in the community to continue holding worship services. In fact, “Ellen,” a female leader within the UPC, estimated that as many as three-fourths of Louisiana’s churches began through the prayers and work of women. The Pentecostal church in Bear, Louisiana, was one such church. In 1916, Mary Richey became interested in Pentecostalism after meeting someone who had experienced Holy Ghost baptism. She wrote a letter to her sister-in-law, Lizzie Richey, who had attended a Pentecostal revival in LeBlanc, Louisiana. Mary instructed Lizzie to ask the evangelist, Bennie Baggett, to come and preach in Bear. Baggett agreed, but after two weeks of services in Bear, no one received the Holy Ghost. While Baggett felt certain it was time to pack up his revival tent, Mary Richey was convinced that God had plans for the community. One night she “prayed

¹⁶Transcribed testimony of Lovenia Heard, Oral History Collection, UPCI Archives.

through,” or prayed continually until she felt the Holy Spirit; within a few weeks, sixty people had experienced Holy Ghost baptism.¹⁷

Women also participated in cottage prayer meetings and held women’s prayer meetings. On weekday mornings worshippers held Bible studies and prayer meetings in believers’ homes. Typically, female worshippers dominated them. Because most female believers did not work outside the home, their more flexible schedules allowed them to attend these prayer meetings. These worship sessions provided women with opportunities for prayer, Bible study and fasting. Long after the preachers packed up their revival tents and moved to the next town, believers continued to worship at these cottage meetings.¹⁸

In addition to these cottage meetings, women often held weekly fast days and they went to the brush arbor, tent, or church and prayed from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 or 3:00 p.m., stopping only long enough to feed their children at noon. Pentecostal sisters relied on their fellow believers to affirm that women of all ages might exercise their gifts by speaking in public meetings. Louisiana believer Gertrude Locke recalled that during meetings women would gather on the ground and take communion. According to Locke, “it would be up into the wee hours of the morning before we would get through... each sister would take a towel and wash the other’s feet.” Services such as these empowered women, allowed

¹⁷Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 34; “Ellen,” confidential telephone interview by author, November 7, 2002.

¹⁸Transcribed testimony of Lovenia Heard, Oral History Collection, UPCI Archives.

them to minister to one another, and offered fulfillment. Often churches grew from these women's prayer meetings.¹⁹

Southern Louisiana's Prairie Soileua Apostolic Church, for example, grew from ladies' prayer meetings. Only a few miles away from Elton, Louisiana, Prairie Soileua was a small French farming community. Following the 1915 Elton revival, Adrase Fuselier and his family traveled to Prairie Soileua preaching the Oneness message. While the Fuseliers only remained in Prairie Soileua a short time, ladies' prayer meetings continued to thrive after they left the area. According to local historian Lou Shuff Dupree, these prayer meetings continued for years after the Fuseliers left the area. Carrying with them their lunches of *pain de mayi* and *cero* (cornbread and syrup), female believers and their children would walk to the meetings each morning. Once there, they sang hymns, usually in French, read the Bible, prayed and talked about the Holy Ghost.²⁰

These meetings continued in Prairie Soileua until 1927 when two young women experienced the baptism of the Holy Ghost and felt the need to establish a permanent church. Both Leona Sonnier Fontenot and Ava Fontenot received the Holy Ghost at two separate Pentecostal ladies' prayer meetings in Prairie Soileua. The two women joined forces and called for a new Pentecostal revival. The Fuseliers returned for the revival, and after the evangelists left the area, the town's worshippers built the small Prairie Soileua Apostolic Church. Several husband and wife teams pastored the church until it was eventually torn down, and its

¹⁹Transcribed testimony of Gertrude Locke, Oral History Collection, UPCI Archives.

²⁰Lou Shuff Dupree, "Prairie Soileua Apostolic Church," in Guillory, "History of Pentecost in Louisiana," 240-241.

worshippers joined with the Oneness Pentecostal Church in Elton, Louisiana.²¹

Similarly, in Hodge, Louisiana, female worshippers thrived in cottage prayer meetings and worked to build a Pentecostal church. Hodge had a Union church, or a church that was shared by all of the town's denominations. Two women, Alice Bowman and Faye Smith, experienced Holy Spirit baptism and invited a Pentecostal preacher to the Union church. During his services five more women experienced Holy Spirit baptism. Not everyone was open to the Jesus' name message, however, and eventually they asked the women not to hold services in the Union church. The women then began holding cottage prayer meetings every Thursday. For four years the women prayed for a church and a pastor. Finally, in 1927 their prayers were answered when a Pentecostal evangelist pitched his revival tent in Hodge. At the revival enough residents converted to Pentecostalism for the believers to buy land and erect a sawdust-floor church. After the worshippers in Hodge organized a traditional church, however, the ladies' prayer meetings gradually faded.²²

Participation in ladies' prayer meetings and Pentecostal worship services reconfigured family life for believers. Most accounts of Pentecostalism depicted wives or mothers as being baptized in the Holy Spirit and then winning over family members. Regardless of whether the entire family converted, Pentecostal worship services changed patterns of family life. Worship services were frequent, and they were held at all hours of the day and night. Services commonly lasted until the early

²¹Ibid., 242-43.

²²Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 228-29.

hours of the morning because worshippers stayed as long as the Holy Spirit moved. Many devout Pentecostals met for prayer almost every weeknight and spent most of the day on Sundays in worship. This demanding schedule left little time for family activities or hobbies. In many ways church life replaced family life. Pentecostals, like some other groups of Christians, called each other “Brother” and “Sister, but these familial expressions held a special meaning for Pentecostals. Because they maintained their separation from worldly society and devoted so much time and energy to church activities, many members of Pentecostal churches literally felt like they were a family.²³

Of course, not all family members welcomed Spirit-filled ideas into their homes. In her study of early-nineteenth century southern evangelicals, historian Christine Heyrman astutely observed that published memoirs of evangelicals typically focused on family members’ conversions and left out the resistance that many believers faced. The same could certainly be said for many of the early Pentecostal women who felt ostracized by their families. Gertrude Locke, a pioneer in Louisiana Pentecostal history, recalled persecution from her family when she became a Spirit-filled woman, because they opposed her involvement in this new ecstatic religion. Locke recalled, “The persecution at home was sometimes pretty rough. I hate to say it, but my daddy passed from this life without the Holy Ghost, but thank God I’ve got it today.”²⁴

²³Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 111; Elaine Lawless *God’s Peculiar People: Women’s Voices and Folk Tradition in a Pentecostal Church* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 49.

²⁴Heyrman, *Southern Cross*, 37; Transcribed testimony of Gertrude Locke, Oral History Collection, UPCI Archives.

The experiences of these women not only help to illuminate patterns of family conversion but also the conflicting allegiance believers faced between God and family. A person's call to God was the believer's first responsibility, even if it meant disobeying a husband or a father. Louisiana's Lovenia Fuselier, for example, postponed her wedding to preach a revival service. When some women joined churches over the protest of their husbands or fathers, their fellow believers often colluded in their defiance. Women prayed for the salvation of their unconverted loved ones, and even believed that God would intervene on their behalf. Maude LaFleur Wilkins, for example, helped her aunt to receive the Holy Ghost in spite of her uncle's protests. Her uncle was ashamed of the new "tongues" movement, and he responded to his wife's conversion by violently kicking her. But, according to Maude, the Holy Ghost interfered, and he became completely paralyzed. The paralysis only left after the family prayed for him.²⁵

Pentecostal worship services, however, attracted many different types of people, sometimes outsiders who were simply there to observe and mock. These early Pentecostals often suffered from persecution, but the Pentecostal oral tradition celebrated stories of triumph over persecution. Maude LaFleur Wilkins recalled that during a 1915 camp meeting in DeQuincy, seven or eight strange men stood outside the tent with their hands on the tent poles. During the service she pointed her finger at them and said, "If you do anything to harm us, you'll fall dead right where you stand." The men immediately fell to their knees in prayer.

²⁵Mary Wallace, *Pioneer Pentecostal Women* (Hazelwood, Missouri: World Aflame Press, 236-240).

Later, they confessed that they planned to “put Sister Maude over a log and whip her for preaching the new doctrine.”²⁶

In the spring of 1917, Frank and Alice Haley were invited by relatives to preach in the Methodist church in Provencal, Louisiana. Many church members were disturbed by their emotional style of preaching and the Jesus’ name message. After four nights the Haleys found the doors locked, and a note which said, “You are no longer welcome to hold services in our church.” When two men pitched a tent for a revival in Provencal the next year, some men cut the tent ropes and slashed the canvas. When believers repaired the tent and later built a brush arbor, the people of Provencal signed a petition to force the preachers to get jobs. After they ignored the petition, they were arrested and the congregation held revival services around the jail. The loud services of the worshippers forced the police to drop the charges against the ministers.²⁷

Beginning in the 1920s, gender issues began to plague Louisiana’s Pentecostals. Like many evangelical groups, Pentecostals met the changes of the 1920s with disfavor. Suspicions about women’s moral influence deepened in the 1920s as flappers came to symbolize the new woman of the post World War I era. Women’s suffrage was seen as a violation of God’s will and a sign of female lust for power. Opponents began to emphasize women’s roles as wives and mothers and charged that female preachers were ignoring their God-given domestic roles. According to Letha Scanzoni and Susan Setta, this dissatisfaction stemmed from the career and economic threats that plagued men in the 1920s. As more

²⁶Ibid., 236-38.

²⁷Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 59-61; Guillory, “History of Pentecost in Louisiana,” 20-21.

educational and career opportunities opened to women, men felt their options dwindling. In addition, men charged that women competed unfairly financially. Because most women's salaries merely supplemented their husbands' incomes, men feared that women would pastor churches and perform other religious work for less money. As a result they increased their opposition to women in ministry.²⁸

Religion scholars Charles Barfoot and Gerald Sheppard also argued that resistance to women's ministries increased in the 1920s. They asserted that in the 1920s Pentecostalism changed from a "prophetic" to a more established "priestly" religion. As a result women's leadership roles declined because certain priestly functions were reserved for males only. Established Pentecostal organizations, such as the Assemblies of God, began to limit women's authority and to increase qualification requirements for women in ministry. For the Oneness believers in Louisiana who were struggling to consolidate their membership, this transformation occurred much later. Women continued to play important roles in Pentecostal worship services by leading the music, playing instruments, such as symbols and tambourines, testifying, preaching, and even administering communion.²⁹

Women's roles in Louisiana's Pentecostal revivals, however, did begin a process of gradual decline. Believers often viewed unmarried women who entered the ministry with suspicion. Emma Fuselier and Emma Lou Johnson, for example, were an evangelical team that traveled

²⁸Letha Scanzoni and Susan Setta, "Women in Evangelical, Holiness, and Pentecostal Traditions," in Ruether and Keller, eds. *Women and Religion in America*, 227-231.

²⁹Barfoot and Sheppard. "Prophetic vs. Priestly Religion," 2-10.

throughout Louisiana preaching the Pentecostal message in the 1920s. During one of their first revivals, a man threatened to kill the two women if they continued to preach. Fuselier was frightened, but she decided to continue to preach her revival message. She claimed that she received a message from Jesus to wrap herself in an American flag for that night's revival service. When she entered the revival tent, she announced, "I have been threatened tonight, but the Lord told me to preach anyway. If anyone shoots, it will be through this American flag and the Holy Bible in my hand. You will be in trouble with both God and America." The man who threatened her left the service, and they continued to hold revivals.³⁰

Soon Emma Fuselier, like many other Spirit-filled women, turned to the foreign mission field for fulfillment. Louisiana's first missionaries to foreign fields were women, many of them single. One Pentecostal woman observed that, "The Pentecostal church's first work in foreign missions was done almost entirely by women." Fuselier traveled to Japan in 1924, and the next year Mona and Vera Jackson of Lake Charles, Louisiana, joined her. Lottie Hatcher of New Orleans served as a missionary to Iraq from 1929 to 1933.³¹

For married women, the problems of the ministry could be even more confusing. Post World War I marriage casualty figures for some of the most nationally prominent women in the Pentecostal movement tell the story of the tensions their work often created. Aimee Semple McPherson, founder of the Pentecostal denomination the International Church of the

³⁰Transcribed testimony of Emma Fuselier, Oral History Collection, UPCI Archives.

³¹Quote from "Vivian," confidential interview by author, October 15, 2002; Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 173-174.

Foursquare Gospel, was one of the most well-known Pentecostal evangelists, male or female. Her personal life, however, was filled with marital troubles. Her first husband died on the mission field, her second husband divorced her for desertion and the third for mental cruelty. Florence Crawford, the founder of the Apostolic Faith Church, permanently separated from her husband of sixteen years following her baptismal experience and entry into the ministry. Grant Wacker pointed out in *Heaven Below* that virtually all the male leaders of the Pentecostal movement were married and married one woman for life. It seems, then, that leadership roles presented different marital problems and options for Pentecostal women than men.³²

Throughout the 1930s, many established Protestant denominations experienced a religious depression that coincided with the economic depression. Oneness Pentecostals, however, prospered during the depression years of the 1930s. They offered their believers a simple message that promised immediate results, and its membership began to grow. Throughout the depression years, Pentecostal women continued to preach the gospel throughout the state. Louisiana native Johnnie Ruth Caughron, for example, traveled through the state and country preaching the Jesus' name message with her husband E.W. In the early 1930s, the Caughrons moved to Texas hoping that E.W. could find work at an oil refinery. At that point the Caughrons seldom attended church with their three children. One day, however, a neighbor invited them to a tent revival led by a female preacher, Grace Singleton Holt. During the first night of services, Mrs. Caughron knelt at the altar and received the

³²Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 175.

baptism of the Holy Spirit. The following Saturday E.W. Caughron was baptized, and he emerged from the baptismal tank speaking in tongues. Soon both Johnnie Ruth and her husband felt the call to preach, and they traveled throughout the countryside of Texas and Louisiana preaching revivals. Later the couple's three daughters continued their tradition and became ordained ministers in the United Pentecostal Church.³³

During the depression, the Caughrons suffered from economic hardships. While money was typically scarce for traveling evangelists, it was almost nonexistent during the depression. Food and supplies often were sparse. Gertrude Locke recalled that ministers and their families “just lived on the things we (church members) could afford. Not much offering, not much good house to live in....” For example, while preaching a revival in Singer, Louisiana, the Caughrons lived in a vacant house furnished with only a mattress on the floor. The furnishings were sparse, but the community kept the family well supplied with food. When Johnnie Ruth preached a sermon on tobacco, which she called “the filthiness of the flesh,” attendance dwindled at revival meetings. As a result their steady food supply virtually stopped, and the Caughrons began to suffer from hunger until people returned to the revival. The Caughrons, however, interpreted this suffering as something they endured for the Lord.³⁴

³³Thetus Tenney, daughter of Johnnie Ruth Caughron, interview by author, October 15, 2002; Thetus Tenney, “The Ministry of Women in the Oneness Movement,” (paper presented at Symposium on Oneness, St. Louis, Missouri, January 6-9, 1988), 2-3.

³⁴Gertrude Locke, Oral History Collection, UPCI Archives, Tioga, LA; Wallace, *Pioneer Pentecostal Women*, 25-34.

Maude LaFleur also recalled hardships during the depression years. She reminisced that "...if you wanted anything, you had to pray for it. If I wanted a stamp to write back home, I had to pray for it." Evangelist Clyde Yocum recalled that he and his family had "gone to bed hungry at night and didn't have bread for breakfast the next morning." Church members often combined their food supplies in order for everyone to have meals. This practice of leaning on others for help in providing food, clothing, and shelter demanded that men give up some of their authority as providers for the family. Yocum recalled, "Sometimes we would see an old sinner bringing a large sack of flour to us at the old gospel tent so that we could have bread." Yocum asserted that hardships did not dissuade evangelists who were truly called from God. He argued that "if a person was sincerely called from his heart, people couldn't starve him out or run him off because one who is called will suffer for God."³⁵

In spite of these hardships, diaries and oral histories of Pentecostal believers indicated that numerous women continued to preach throughout the state in the 1930s. A diary kept by Louisiana Pentecostal Minnie Wise illustrated the continued presence of women in ministry in the 1930s. Wise, who recorded the activities of a 1934 revival in Oakland, Louisiana, noted the prominent role of women in the revival. She wrote, "Sister Carpenter gave a good message on 'Pray Again' from James 4: 18." She noted that later in the day Sister Fuselier led the singing and delivered the message. Brother Murphy's sermon followed her message, and then Sister Ransom followed him with a message on divine healing.

³⁵First quote from Maude LaFleur, Oral History Collection, UPCI Archives, Tioga, LA; Remaining quotes from Yocum, Oral History Collection, UPCI Archives, Tioga, LA.

She noted that on the second day of the revival, “Sister Bowman preached a five minute message... Sister Matthews preached...Sister Williams from Oakdale preached.” At a subsequent entry on the revival, Wise noted, “Sister Parker is preaching. I mean she is telling it like it is. She is setting the record straight.” Another entry from the revival revealed that “The power is falling... the preachers’ wives preached the afternoon services.”³⁶

Wise’s account, sent some conflicting messages. By simply listing these women’s names along with the male pastors, she revealed an unconscious acceptance of their activities. Sister Parker, for example, was “telling it like it is,” that was all that needed to be explained. However, Wise recorded that the “preachers’ wives preached the afternoon services,” these women were wives, not simply preachers. Other oral histories and journals, however, randomly revealed the names of various female evangelists, such as Sister Lee and Sister Reeves, alongside those of male preachers without any distinction. During the 1930s and early 1940s, there were various women travelling throughout the state that we know virtually nothing about their backgrounds, marital status, or education. However, we know so little about these women because no one saw their activities as unusual or in need of justification.

The women in Wise’s diary were part of a group that was slowly fading into the background of Louisiana’s Oneness movement. As described in Chapter 1, Oneness Pentecostal denominations underwent major structural changes in the 1940s. These changes, along with the social and political circumstances surrounding World War II, contributed

³⁶All quotes from Minnie Wise’s diary; quoted in Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 161-162.

to a decline in women's ministry in the 1940s. For its first decades, however, Louisiana's Pentecostal women answered their calls to preach the gospel and challenged existing social standards and the hierarchy of mainstream churches by spreading their message throughout the state.

CHAPTER 3
“WE DID ALL WE COULD”: THE CHANGING ROLES OF WOMEN’S
LEADERSHIP, 1945-1970

When the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ and the Pentecostal Church, Inc. merged in 1945, it created the world’s largest Oneness Pentecostal organization. The newly formed United Pentecostal Church encompassed 1, 383 ministers and over 900 churches. The creation of the UPC brought great change to its female members, their leadership opportunities slowly began to decline. This chapter will explore the establishment of the UPC and its effects on women’s leadership opportunities in Louisiana Pentecostalism. World War II and its aftermath began a gradual process of accommodation to modern culture within the United Pentecostal Church. This cultural adaptation led to a decline in women’s leadership roles. Throughout this chapter, I argue that when faced with growing opposition from within the church, women formed organizations that allowed them to minister in traditionally accepted ways and spread their gospel message through women’s organizations and educational and missionary activities.¹

American entry into World War II fueled doctrinal controversy within the UPC. The social upheaval of the war forced the church to make some important decisions about pacifism and women’s roles in the church and society. Like its Oneness predecessors, the UPC declared pacifism in its Articles of Faith and encouraged its members to support their

¹Howell, “The People of the Name,” 146.

government through prayer. This stance was not unusual for early Pentecostal believers, but by World War II most churches had begun “a clear pattern of accommodation to the nation’s policies.” Pentecostal churches, such as the Assemblies of God, avowed that there was no sin in killing if it was necessary to rescue the oppressed or if it was done on behalf of a duly constituted authority. The UPC, however, declared in its Articles of Faith that Christians should not take human life, but it allowed members to fulfill their obligations to the government in noncombatant positions. While in many churches the war left church pews empty of young men, it seemed to have little impact on the number of men attending United Pentecostal churches. As a result few leadership positions opened to women.²

The merger of the UPC also worked to limit women’s opportunities. Conference delegates elected Howard A. Goss, the General Superintendent of the Pentecostal Church, Inc. as the new General Superintendent of the UPC. W.T. Witherspoon, the former General Superintendent of the PAJC, became the Assistant General Superintendent of the UPC. General Superintendent Goss organized the church into seventeen districts, some of which were composed of several states due to the small number of ministers and churches. Each district had a board consisting of a General Superintendent, a Secretary, and Presbyters. As the new church struggled to combine the administrative positions of its predecessors, women were virtually excluded from leadership roles.³

²Quote from Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 240; “Conscientious Scruples,” UPC “Articles of Faith and Constitution,” (Hazelwood, Missouri: Pentecostal Publishing House, 1946).

³Clanton, *United We Stand*.

The social changes of the war years helped to create a conservative reaction from within the Pentecostal church that further limited women's leadership opportunities. During the depression female workers were often accused of taking a husband's or father's job, but women were welcomed to the work force during World War II. Women, often married with children, entered the work force in unprecedented numbers during World War II. In the southern states, the war greatly increased employment opportunities for men and women. The federal government invested large amounts of money building military bases and industrial plants in the region.⁴

In Louisiana, government investments in shipyards, shipbuilding, and oil pipelines opened new employment opportunities for men and women. Women in Louisiana took advantage of wartime labor shortages to move into nontraditional employment, especially in the state's urban areas. For example, in New Orleans and Shreveport women worked as stock board markers, managed parking lots, welded and repaired airplanes, and drove trucks. Women also moved closer to full participation in state government during the war years. Lucille May Grace became Louisiana's first woman elected to office when she won the election for state registrar of lands.⁵

⁴William J. Cooper and Thomas E. Terrill, *The American South: A History*, Second edition (New York: McGraw Hill Companies, Inc., 1996), 667-669.

⁵*Ibid.*, 667-669; Jerry Sanson, *Louisiana During World War II: Politics and Society, 1939-1945* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 270-273.

The increasing mobility of the war and the growing numbers of women entering the work force troubled church leaders. In *Fundamentalism and Gender, 1875 to the Present*, historian Margaret Bendroth argued that the war led fundamentalists to shift their focus from apostolic revelations to moral conduct. Pentecostal periodicals blamed the country's "moral setbacks" on World War II and the growing numbers of women working in defense industries. Church leaders complained that people had gained the "tendency for one to get all he can in any way and justify the deed by saying all are doing it." The social mobility of the war also created new problems for Pentecostal women. When believers moved with their husbands to take jobs in the defense industry, they often felt alienated without the support of their church families. Pentecostal teenager Edgar Morrison criticized people for "leaving their churches to follow defense jobs, not considering whether there is a church in the place where they are going to work." He warned that when the war ended, these people were "really going to be in a fix spiritually speaking." Louisiana Pentecostal J.B. Thomas discussed the number of "displaced Pentecostals" in the state. He said that people who move from their home churches without becoming active in another have taken "the cruel iron-draped scourge and cut anew the purple-jelled wounds in His [Jesus'] back."⁶

⁶Margaret Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender, 1875 to the Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 98-99; First quote from "Common Honesty," *Voice of the Young People of Louisiana* (October-December 1945): 6; Second quote from Edgar Morrison, *Voice of the Young People of Louisiana* (December 1948): 7; Third quote from J.B. Thomas, "Pentecostal Displaced Persons," *Pentecostal Sunday School and Conquerors' Herald* XI (January 1953): 1, 4.

Pentecostals echoed other groups of Christians when they denounced the national decay in morals. Believers often blamed women's wartime independence for the rise of sexual permissiveness. Fears about female sexuality increased, and many conservative Christians began to equate female leadership with female sensuality. They argued that both were results of rebellion against a divinely ordained social order. Alluring clothing, short hairstyles, cigarettes, and alcohol received repeated condemnations in United Pentecostal literature—which suggests, of course, that the problems would not go away. In his article “Psalms 9: 17,” Pentecostal teenager Cecil Harris warned that, “there has never been more sin, and I will say public sin, sin which is open to our young ladies today.”⁷

The war and the social changes it produced convinced many believers that the end was near. Faced with the horrors of war, many Americans yearned for revival and the assurances of a higher power. This wartime anxiety was reflected in the sermons of Pentecostals that applied biblical prophecy to contemporary society. In her dissertation “Redeeming the Dial: Evangelical Radio and Religious Culture, 1920-1960,” Tona Hagen found that many popular radio preachers watched for signs of the end times. Well known preachers such as Baptist minister John Rice,

⁷Margaret Bendroth, “The Search for ‘Women’s Roles’ in American Evangelicalism, 1930-1980,” in George Marsden, ed. *Evangelicalism and Modern America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 123-124; May, *Homeward Bound*, 58-59, 70-72; Quote from Cecil Harris, “Psalms 9: 17,” *Pentecostal Sunday School and Conquerors’ Herald* (February 1952): 2.

Pentecostal preacher Gordon Lindsay, and in his early crusades Baptist evangelist Billy Graham all espoused end-time prophecies.⁸

Pentecostal ministers in Louisiana also watched for the return of Christ. At the Oneness Pentecostal church's South Central Convention in Shreveport, Louisiana, several preachers compared the rise of Adolf Hitler in Germany and Benito Mussolini in Italy to biblical prophecies in Daniel, Chapter 8. In this biblical text, Daniel had a vision of a powerful ram with two horns. The ram battled animals in the west, north, and south, and he defeated all of them. Then, however, a goat with one long horn appeared from the west and attacked the ram. The goat defeated the ram, but his horn was shattered. In its place appeared four horns that grew upwards toward heaven. Eventually, the goat's power became so great that he trampled God's sanctuaries. It was revealed to Daniel, however, that the sanctuary would ultimately be reconsecrated. Many preachers saw Hitler and Mussolini as the horns of the powerful goat, and the war as the fulfillment of the prophecy.

Similarly, Louisiana minister Nathaniel Beskin predicted that Mussolini was the anti-Christ. Beskin saw the wartime rationing of food, gasoline, and tires as an educational system aimed at preparing people for the Age of the Beast. Other preachers pointed to New Deal agencies that organized workers, like the Civilian Conservation Corp and Public Works Administration, as an effort by the anti-Christ to organize the world into

⁸Tona Hagen, "Redeeming the Dial: Evangelical Radio and Religious Culture, 1920-1960," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Brandeis University, 1999), 206.

one power. Still others predicted that Social Security numbers were the mark of the Beast.⁹

Pentecostals used the imagery of the war to encourage believers to spread the revival. The cover of a 1945 issue of the *Voice of the Young People of Louisiana*, for example, featured a sketch of the Christian flag waving as smoke bellowed in the background. The caption encouraged every “man, woman, boy and girl... to enlist under the banner of the church.” The objective was “the winning of new souls for the kingdom.” Similarly, B.E. Echols warned readers of the *Pentecostal Faith* to “get on the move for God as never before” and to see the importance of God’s power in the “endtime age.” Later, he asserted that, “Many scriptural signs of the coming of the Lord have already been fulfilled and the preparation for the anti-Christ to take charge of world affairs are almost completed.”¹⁰

This anxiety did not end with World War II. In 1948 the Latter Rain movement swept churches throughout the United States and Canada. “Latter Rain” is a biblical term from the Old Testament and in context it referred to the late rain which was necessary to bring the planting to maturity so it could be harvested. At the turn of the century, many people referred to the Pentecostal movement as the latter rain. The modern latter rain, however, began in 1948 at Sharon Bible School in Saskatchewan,

⁹Guillory, *History of Pentecost*, 34-37; Daniel 8: 1-14.

¹⁰First and second quotes from *Voice of the Young People of Louisiana* (October-December 1945): frontcover; Third and fourth quotes from E.B. Echols, “Further Exhortations by Rev. E.B. Echols,” *Pentecostal Faith* (March 1951): 4; Fifth quote from E.B. Echols, “Behold I Come Quickly,” *Pentecostal Faith* (September 1951): 3.

Canada, after a group of faculty members attended the healing crusades of Oneness evangelist William Marion Branham. This movement emphasized the nine gifts of the Spirit and prophecy. In 1949, the Assemblies of God took an official stance against the Latter Rain movement, and the UPC followed in 1950. While the UPC did not embrace the Latter Rain movement, many of its members did and as a result they left the church.¹¹

Religious awakenings, like the Latter Rain, were common in the postwar era and church attendance increased throughout the United States. According to historian Elaine Tyler May, church membership rose from 64.5 million in 1940 to 114.5 million in 1960—from 50 percent to 63 percent of the population. United Pentecostal churches across Louisiana also experienced dramatic growth. Because there are no records of church attendance, the only way to trace growth is the monthly Sunday School reports that were published in the *Louisiana Challenger* throughout the 1950s. These records indicate that churches throughout the state grew following World War II, but urban churches in northern and central Louisiana experienced the most rapid growth. The UPC of Shreveport, for example, reported 131 persons attending Sunday School in 1951. By 1955, the church regularly reported over 425 persons attending Sunday School. The UPC of Alexandria's Sunday School attendance also grew from 117 in 1950 to 306 by 1955.¹²

As Pentecostalism gained popularity in Louisiana, the number of organized churches grew and revivals waned. The socio-economic status

¹¹Hyatt, "Spirit-Filled Women," 253; Clanton, *United We Stand*, 143-144.

¹²May, *Homeward Bound*, 158; "Church Thermometer," *Pentecostal Sunday School and Conquerors' Herald* VI (November 1950): 9; "Church Thermometer," *Louisiana Challenger* XV (January 1955): 8.

of Pentecostal believers gradually began to change. The United Pentecostal Church attracted different types of believers than its Oneness predecessors. While the early Oneness movement was interracial, during the 1930s it divided into segregated denominations. From its beginnings, then, the UPC was almost exclusively white. As new middle-class members flooded the doors of United Pentecostal churches across Louisiana, they brought with them their own ideas about faith, worship, and women's roles in the church.

In this new setting, worship services became more structured and settled into loose patterns of singing, testimonies, prayer, sermon, and the call for salvation. For the early Pentecostal believers, the rejection of modern culture was at the heart of their worship practices. Early believers argued that they did not conform to mainstream practices, because they worshipped all the time. Most churches had multiple Sunday services, enthusiasts gathered nightly for prayer, and many women met for prayer during the day. Believers rejected the hymnals, bulletins, and orderly worship services of traditional churches in favor of an atmosphere where the Holy Spirit reigned. Spontaneous eruptions of spiritual gifts characterized these services, and singing and testimonies often were considered more important than preaching. Even when preaching occurred, the minister remained open to the "redirection" of the sermon by the Holy Spirit's leading in the congregation.¹³

When revival meetings grew into more prominent churches, new questions arose concerning women's leadership positions. As Pentecostalism grew and churches, furnished with pews and pulpits,

¹³Howell, "The People of the Name," 197-200.

replaced tents and brush arbors, the first substantial division of the clergy and the laity began to grow. Public worship services were scheduled on certain days and times, and the content of the services settled into loose patterns of prayer, singing, special music presentations, the sermon, and the altar call. The demonstration of spiritual gifts gradually was relegated to certain times within the service, especially during the song service and altar call. In these services preaching gained new prominence. It came to equal and eventually replace the gifts of the Spirit as a means of divine communication.¹⁴

As preaching gained new significance, the challenges to women's ability to preach became more intense. The ways the early Pentecostals formulated their defense of the ministries of women left them open to certain types of arguments against women in ministry. The early Pentecostals used the Bible to affirm women's ability to speak, but they accepted traditional interpretations of biblical passages on women's roles in the family and society. As a result they were vulnerable to arguments that because women were under the authority of the husband in the home, they should be under male authority in church government. E.N. Bell, one of the first Assemblies of God ministers to accept Oneness theology, argued that while women were empowered to minister, they should not have the authority of ministerial office because there were no biblical records of women having the authority to rule in church. While he believed that women could "fill in" in the absence of men, he argued that they were God's "second best." The Bible was clear, he said, that "the

¹⁴Ibid., 234-236.

squabbles in the church, the disputing and the disorder, men should handle it.”¹⁵

In addition, as Pentecostal churches began to emulate mainstream denominations, they encouraged pastors to receive seminary training. Most Pentecostal denominations did not have their own seminaries and other seminaries denied admission to women. While women’s ability to speak and evangelize was generally accepted, a female pastor was somehow different. A pastor was responsible for leading the congregation and making decisions concerning a whole range of issues, such as the church budget. In addition, the new members that flooded Pentecostal churches interpreted Holy Spirit baptism within the context of traditional Protestant and Catholic theology. As a result they viewed speaking in tongues as an experience that revitalized their spiritual lives rather than an empowerment to ministry. Drawing from their past religious experiences, these believers argued that women could not take authoritative positions in the church because it contradicted the biblical passages that placed women under the authority of men. Increasingly, male and female believers began to emphasize biblical passages that discussed female submission, especially passages that explicitly deny women authority. For instance, biblical scripture in I Timothy proclaimed, “I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over a man, but be in silence.”¹⁶

¹⁵E.N. Bell, “Questions and Answers,”; quoted in Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 174.

¹⁶Janet Everts Powers, “Recovering a Woman’s Head With Prophetic Authority: A Pentecostal Interpretation of I Corinthians 11: 3-16,” (paper

This growing opposition to women's ministry pervaded Pentecostal churches in the postwar era. Historian Cheryl Sanders noted that throughout the twentieth century, women's leadership positions have declined in both the Holiness and Pentecostal churches. Sanders used the Holiness denomination the Church of the Nazarene and the Pentecostal denomination the Church of God to support her point. In 1908, for example, women constituted 25 percent of the Church of the Nazarene's clergy. This figure has steadily declined, and currently approximately 1 percent of the church's clergy are women. In the Church of God, the number of women clergy dropped from 32 percent in 1925 to its current 15 percent. Similarly, in the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the church's first pastor was a woman. Currently, however, the church forbids the ministry of women.¹⁷

Scholar Roberta Hestenes observed that "even though the Pentecostal and Holiness movements had affirmed full partnership of women in ministry from the 1880s onward, after World War II the movement largely affirmed traditional roles for women in the church." While there are no raw numbers to calculate the number of female pastors in the early years of the UPC, it certainly seems that it has followed a similar pattern. Female evangelists were prominent until the 1940s, but by 1951 only one church in Louisiana was pastored by a woman. Of the 691 ministers currently licensed in the state of Louisiana only twenty-four are women, none of whom pastor churches. This was partially due to the

delivered at the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Kirkland, Washington, March 16-18, 2000), 5-7.

¹⁷Cheryl Sanders, "History of Women in the Pentecostal Movement."

church's postwar effort to embrace mainstream culture, and it was also a part of growing American conservatism during the Cold War.¹⁸

In the early years of the Cold War, the short-lived wartime affirmation of women's independence was replaced with a widespread endorsement of female subordination and domesticity. According to historian Elaine Tyler May, during the Great Depression and World War II, both policy makers and the creators of popular culture encouraged Americans to believe that traditional gender roles provided their best hope for happiness and security. After World War II, however, May argued that "a unique domestic ideology fully emerged." Women's wartime duty to help produce goods for victory was replaced with a postwar obligation to withdraw from the labor force. Women were instructed that the kitchen should be their postwar goal and that they should quit their jobs for the sake of their homes and the labor situation. Overwhelmingly, women and men were told that a domestic life based on traditional gender roles would make both the family and the nation strong.¹⁹

Pentecostals, both male and female, joined other Americans in their affirmation of traditional gender roles. The way they supported this gender role ideology, however, had important consequences for women in ministry. According to Thetus Tenney, director of the UPCI's International Network of Prayer, a "double-backlash" against women in the ministry occurred in the 1950s. Tenney argued that both male and

¹⁸Quote from Roberta Hestenes, "Women in Leadership: Finding Ways to Serve the Church," *Christianity Today*, 27; see, *Louisiana Challenger* (March 1951): 3; Thetus Tenney, interview by author, October 15, 2002; Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 166.

¹⁹May, *Homeward Bound*, 90-91.

female resistance to women preachers increased in the 1950s. She asserted that women within Louisiana's UPC criticized many female preachers for being "too aggressive" and "unfeminine." Increasingly, men and women began to emphasize that God created man first; therefore, women would always be second and submissive in the "divine order of creation."²⁰

Because women should be submissive, growing numbers of women ministers began to preach under the authority of their husbands. This was most common in the revival setting where women preached outside of the traditional church structure. From the beginning the UPC recognized the autonomy of the local churches, but its manual and Articles of Faith provided for some degree of control over affiliated churches. Local churches had to adopt the Articles of Faith and apply to their District Board for membership. They could only disaffiliate from the UPC through a formal process that required the approval of the church. The pastor of any United Pentecostal church had to complete a licensing process that was signed by the General Superintendent. Pastors could receive one of three ministerial licenses: the local license, the general license, or the ministerial credential.²¹

In the revival setting, however, women could answer the call to preach without receiving a ministerial license. As a result they were particularly active in the postwar healing revival that swept Louisiana and the nation in the late 1940s and 1950s. It is difficult to estimate the number of women who held healing services. The *Pentecostal Faith*, a healing magazine published in Minden, Louisiana, commonly advertised

²⁰Thetus Tenney, author interview, October 15, 2002.

²¹*Ibid.*, 160-63, 140.

healing campaigns that featured husband and wife evangelical teams. For example, the magazine advertised revivals led by Reverend and Mrs. S.B. Baker and Brother and Sister Leones Rich. While the magazine advertised Brother and Sister Rich as an evangelical team, the announcement read that Sister Rich, “an outstanding evangelist,” would conduct the services each night. Similarly, the magazine announced the revival schedule of Reverend and Sister Overville Overton, Brother and Sister B.F. Lee, and Brother and Sister South. Absent from these healing revivals, however, were the single women who traveled in gospel bands during the early years of Pentecostalism. In the postwar healing revivals, women increasingly became dependent upon preaching under the authority of their husbands.²²

According to Thetus Tenney, “as the role of women in the workplace and traditional churches has become more prominent, their visible role in the Oneness movement seemingly has diminished.” Indeed, as Pentecostalism grew, women’s roles within the church gradually changed from church leaders to “quiet supporters, working behind the scenes as enablers of the men who filled their visible and formal leadership positions.” One sign of this shift was the exclusion of female evangelists from the popular medium of the radio. In Louisiana and throughout the country, evangelists adopted the use of radio to spread their message of old-time religion and healing. Their broadcasts intertwined religion and media irrevocably, and it contributed to Pentecostalism’s immersion in modern culture. T.W. Barnes’ “Pentecostal Faith Program” was broadcast twice weekly from Minden,

²²See, for example, *Pentecostal Faith* 1 (January 1950): 3.

Louisiana. In Shreveport, Jack Moore hosted the “Life Tabernacle Program,” and, in Ruston, O.W. Williams and W.E. Yocum broadcast their sermons over the radio. In addition, G.A. Mangun in Alexandria, J.B. Thomas in New Orleans, and George Glass in Baton Rouge aired their messages over the airwaves. By 1953, virtually every United Pentecostal church in Louisiana sponsored its own radio program. Because local churches funded these programs, they typically featured the church’s pastor and women were seldom on the radio. In fact, none of the preachers featured in the *Pentecostal Faith*’s schedule of Louisiana radio programs were women. When women were on the air, it was typically to participate in music.²³

In spite of this decreasing visibility, women in Louisiana and other states managed to carve out spaces for themselves within the church. Despite rhetoric about women’s roles and submission, countless numbers of United Pentecostal women continued to serve the church and find fulfillment through their work. Men might have assumed the responsibility of conducting church business, but women answered their calls to do God’s work in a variety of ways. Most commonly, they implemented their calls in traditionally acceptable ways, such as women’s auxiliaries, youth education, and mission activities. As Edith Blumhofer noted, “Women enjoyed extensive cultural authority, and much grass-roots Pentecostal activity depended on their prodigious efforts.”²⁴

²³Guillory, “History of Pentecost in Louisiana,” 34; See, *Pentecostal Faith*, 1950-1956.

²⁴Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 166; Quote from Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 175.

One important way women served the church was through their mission work. As churches consolidated their local memberships, they turned to other countries for expansion. In the early years of Louisiana's Oneness movement, women filled the lists of the church's foreign missionaries. Louisiana's first Pentecostal missionaries to a foreign field were women, many of them single. One Pentecostal woman observed that "The Pentecostal church's first work in foreign missions was done almost entirely by women." During the Cold War, however, foreign missions gained a new significance. Many believers saw communism, the Korean War, and the threat of nuclear warfare as signs that the end was drawing near. This provided a renewed impetus for believers to spread their gospel message and prepare the world for the return of Christ.²⁵

In 1946, the Louisiana District of the UPC organized its first Foreign Missions Department. While in previous years women had assumed a large share of the burden of evangelizing the world, men dominated the administrative positions in the Foreign Missions Department. Its executives became increasingly concerned about the safety of single women living in foreign countries, and it began encouraging married couples to enter the mission field. In 1948, E.L. and Nona Freeman of Rosepine, Louisiana, embarked on their first missionary journey to Africa, and they continued to serve there for over forty years. Similarly, A.D. and Bessie Varnado and Glen and Rachel Smith of Monroe were missionaries to Jamaica in the 1950s. E.W. and Johnnie Ruth Caughron served the church as missionaries in Alaska and Elton Bernard

²⁵Quote from "Vivian," confidential interview by author, October 15, 2002.

traveled with his family to Korea. After 1950, however, no single women from Louisiana and very few single men entered the foreign mission field.²⁶

Even though the number of female missionaries declined, women remained active in foreign missions. Increasingly, women assumed the responsibility for financially supporting missions, a duty commonly shared by evangelical women's groups. Typically, offerings were taken once or twice a year, and church members were expected to pledge significant amounts of money to foreign missions. Women, who often had no source of income, could not make large semi-annual or annual contributions so they began collecting regular offerings. Many women could only give nickels or dimes, but surprisingly, they added up and often their offerings exceeded the men. While the men appointed missionaries and controlled the foreign missions department, women were the basis of financial support for foreign missions. In 1952, Louisiana women formalized this support with the creation of the Ladies' Pentecostal Auxiliary, later simply the Ladies' Auxiliary.²⁷

According to scholar Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, the churches that survived and flourished were those with strong women's departments. In the 1940s Pentecostal women began organizations to provide financial support for home and foreign missions. Initially, women formed

²⁶Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 173-74.

²⁷Ibid., 170-72; Women's support of missions developed similarly in the Baptist church. See, for example, Carolyn DeArmond Blevins, "Women and the Baptist Experience," in Catherine Wessinger, ed. *Religious Institutions and Women's Leadership: New Roles Inside the Mainstream* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 164-65.

organizations in their local churches; but in 1950, the church organized a national Ladies' Auxiliary. The General Conference passed a resolution that, "Inasmuch as many of our churches have a women's auxiliary... helping in mission work and other needs, Be it resolved, That we have a (national) Ladies' Auxiliary." Not much was done to organize the auxiliary, however, until 1953. In 1953, the General Conference appointed a committee to plan for the national administration of the Ladies' Auxiliary, including its government, district organization, and financial plans. It is difficult to examine the establishment of the Ladies' Auxiliary, however, because its records, like the records of the General Conference, are confidential.²⁸

The General Conference organized the Ladies' Auxiliary at both the district and national levels, and its executive organization was replicated at each of these levels. The Executive Board, which consisted of the church's General Superintendent, the General Secretary, the Director of Foreign Missions and the Director of Home Missions, appointed the secretary and president of the Ladies' Auxiliary. The appointment process gave women virtually no voice in choosing their district and national leadership. Members of the UPC's Executive Board appointed auxiliary leaders, and the Executive Board was elected annually by the church's General Conference. Because the General Conference was composed of church pastors, men made the major leadership decisions for the auxiliary.²⁹

²⁸Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, " 'Together and In Harness': Women's Traditions in the Sanctified Church," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 10 (1985): 685; Clanton, *United We Stand*, 168-69.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 168-170.

The Executive Board appointed women to serve the auxiliary for two years, but often they served much longer. In Louisiana, Mary Maricelli was president from 1952 to 1955 when Bessie Varnado replaced her. Varnado did not serve long, however, because she entered the foreign mission field with her husband. When she left for Jamaica, Vida Clark became president and she served the organization until 1990. In 1990, Joann Glass, daughter of Mary Maricelli, was appointed president and she served until 1996. Delisa Cox was appointed president in 1996 and she continues to serve the church.³⁰

In Louisiana, Pentecostal women organized at the local and state level before the General Conference adopted its 1953 policy. In 1952, the Shreveport, Louisiana, UPC hosted the state's first Ladies' Auxiliary rally. The purpose of the rally, like most Ladies' Auxiliary activities, was fundraising. Because women were the majority of worshippers in Louisiana, their economic contributions were important for the church. Through the Ladies' Auxiliary, women were able to maintain control over how their financial gifts were spent. The women who gathered in Shreveport in 1952 raised money by selling baked goods and handmade crafts to support missions, local churches, and the Louisiana District's new campground built on seventy-five acres in Tioga, Louisiana. The Ladies' Auxiliary supplied dishtowels, aprons, and kitchen appliances for the campground.³¹

³⁰Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 182-83.

³¹Clanton, *United We Stand*, 168-69; Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 182; *Louisiana Challenger* (March 1954): 4.

In 1955 the Ladies' Auxiliary created an annual fundraising program for foreign missions, the Mother's Memorial. The Mother's Memorial fund began when George Glass visited his sister Bessie Varnado in the Jamaican mission fields. When he returned home he purchased kitchen appliances for his sister, and then asked the Ladies' Auxiliary president to help him pay for them. The following fundraising effort began the Mother's Memorial offering, which was collected on Mother's Day. Each woman was asked to give a penny for each year of her mother's age. The following year Mother's Memorial became a national fundraising effort for missions. A large portion of the fund supported foreign missions, and the Ladies' Auxiliary continued the tradition of purchasing home furnishings and appliances for missionary families. Each missionary family received a stove, a refrigerator, a washer and a dryer from Mother's Memorial funds. In 1958, the Ladies' Auxiliary began publishing its *Missionary Cookbook* to support Mother's Memorial. It featured recipes from missionaries throughout the world, and the proceeds from its sale were given to the Mother's Memorial fund. In addition, the Ladies' Auxiliary voted to "adopt" Pentecostal missionary families by sending each missionary family money at Christmas and each missionary child a card and money on their birthday. The Mother's Memorial fund grew quickly from its first offering of \$4,930 to over 1.5 million dollars in 2002.³²

The Ladies' Auxiliary also contributed to home missions. In 1952, the Louisiana District created its Home Missions Department. Its first efforts were aimed at the Assemblies of God church in Hornbeck,

³²Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 182.

Louisiana, the one Pentecostal church that had not converted to Oneness Pentecostalism in 1916. In 1962, the Home Missions Department created its Black Department, later known as the Ethnic Outreach Department, that targeted African American communities. Most likely the UPC's decision to create the Black Department was influenced by the civil rights movement. Oneness Pentecostal denominations, like other Pentecostals groups, began as interracial organizations. In the 1930s, however, Oneness Pentecostals divided into segregated denominations. There was virtually no response in United Pentecostal literature to the civil rights movement and desegregation. If the UPC did address these issues, this information is most likely in the confidential minutes of General Conference meetings. In her study of the Assemblies of God, Edith Blumhofer found that the General Conference repeatedly discussed integration but was willing to await cultural accommodation to the concept before bringing it to the Assemblies of God. Similarly, United Pentecostals were vague in their response to the civil rights movement. While it never issued a public stance on the issue, the creation of the Black Department demonstrated that they opted to bring the gospel message to African Americans in segregated settings. The Black Department held revivals in African American communities throughout the state and worked to establish non-denominational black churches in the Oneness tradition. While these churches could use the Louisiana District's campground, they were never incorporated into the United Pentecostal Church.³³

³³Clanton, *United We Stand*, 162-163; Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 246-250.

Through fundraising efforts, such as the Christmas for Christ program, Pentecostal women supported the Black Department and other home mission activities. The Christmas for Christ program began in 1966. The purpose of this plan was to build new churches in unchurched areas. Participants in this program contributed the money they would have spent on “Christmas cards, presents, decorations, and gifts, to the evangelizing of new cities with the true message of Christmas—peace to the troubled hearts of mankind.” While family members could give gifts to small children, the Auxiliary requested that they reduce the amount spent on the gift and then allow the child to give the remainder as “their own personal gifts to Christ.” The offering was collected at a special service near Christmas. From this fund, home missionaries received living expenses, money to rent or buy church facilities, and advertising expenses. The goal of the Christmas for Christ program was to allow home missions ministers to devote their full time to evangelism, thus allowing their churches to grow and becoming self-supporting.³⁴

Ladies’ Auxiliary branches were organized in individual churches, but there were no records to indicate participation at the local level. Participation must have been widespread, however, because the Louisiana Ladies’ Auxiliary consistently led the nation in its support of the Mother’s Memorial. The California Ladies’ Auxiliary, for example, often advertised for its fundraising efforts with the slogan “Let’s Beat Louisiana.”³⁵

³⁴Ibid., 162-163; *Ladies’ Auxiliary Cookbook* (Hazelwood, Missouri: Pentecostal Publishing House, 1992), 4-5.

³⁵Guillory, *History of Pentecostal in Louisiana*, 186.

At the local church level, women's auxiliaries participated in spiritual endeavors like prayer and Bible study. They also provided services that contributed to the general welfare of the church and community, such as distributing baskets of food to the poor or bereaved and visiting the sick. The Louisiana District Ladies' Auxiliary encouraged women to serve their churches and communities. In the national Auxiliary's 1958 *Missionary Cookbook*, the Louisiana district published a full-page display proclaiming in boldface letters "Faith Without Work is Dead." The display encouraged women to serve their churches, to attend all Ladies' Auxiliary rallies, and to help support home and foreign missions.³⁶

In the late 1950s and 1960s, United Pentecostals, like all denominations, were struggling to operate within the context of bewildering changes. The Cold War, anti-communist hysteria, the civil rights movement, feminism, the alienation of the young from churches, and the general cultural disarray of the era led believers to fear a breakdown in basic Christian values. The Ladies' Auxiliary responded by increasing the time and energy they spent educating the church's youth. In "Take This Child," then current Louisiana Auxiliary Secretary Thetus Tenney stressed that women should use their gifts by educating the church's children. Indeed, teaching was perhaps the most common church ministry of women. United Pentecostal women felt the responsibility to help rear children in the Pentecostal tradition, and they responded by organizing a variety of activities for children and teens. Revival and

³⁶Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 163-64; *Missionary Cookbook* (Hazelwood: Missouri: Pentecostal Publishing House, 1958), 8.

camp meeting organizers allotted time for children's activities, such as songs, poetry, and youth speeches. Women typically directed these activities, and Sunday School teachers were predominantly women. In many cases men were in decision-making positions and women conducted the work.³⁷

One exception to this was Loda Ford Bell of Mansfield, Louisiana. Bell organized Louisiana's first Pentecostal Youth Department in 1941. As a teenager Bell experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Over the next few years her faith grew and matured, and she felt the call to preach. In 1936 she answered the call, and Bell, along with her two friends Claudie and Maxine (last names unknown), traveled throughout Louisiana preaching revivals. Bell soon began to feel the call to minister to the church's youth, and she served as the youth president for both the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ and the United Pentecostal Church. Since her resignation in 1950, however, the church has not appointed any women to serve as president of its statewide youth organizations.³⁸

Beginning in the late 1960s, women increasingly found professional teaching opportunities in UPC institutions. In 1968, the UPC created its Department of Education to supervise all aspects of its endorsed schools and Bible colleges. In the late 1960s, Louisiana experienced an explosion of church-related schools. Even relatively small churches with less than one hundred worshippers, such as the Fountain of Life UPC in

³⁷Thetus Tenney, "Take This Child," *Louisiana Challenger* XIV (May 1954): 5.

³⁸Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 163-64.

Natchitoches, began their own schools. These schools brought with them opportunities for women to teach, to earn respectable incomes, and to experience a sense of ministry. Pentecostal women were involved in all levels of education: Sunday Schools, coeducational primary and secondary schools, and Bible colleges.³⁹

United Pentecostal attitudes towards women's leadership positions are seemingly filled with contradictions. In the early years of the church, Pentecostals accepted women as preachers and evangelists. As the church became more popular and adapted toward modern culture, however, church officials began to resist women in ministry. In the aftermath of World War II, the church gradually adapted to the traditional gender ideology of its members and society. As the church grew and attracted believers from mainstream churches, women's visible roles within the United Pentecostal Church decreased. Virtually excluded from ministerial offices, women sought other ways to use their spiritual gifts. They marshaled their talents into traditionally acceptable female outlets, and they answered their religious calls through activities that allowed them to minister to children and other women. In addition, their offerings and fundraising activities were important for churches as they struggled to expand both domestically and internationally. While women's roles in the United Pentecostal Church declined after World War II, they continued to influence the church's future.

³⁹Clanton, *United We Stand*, 176-78; "Dan," confidential telephone interview by author, January 21, 2003.

CHAPTER 4
“I HAD TO TELL MY STORY”: WOMEN’S NARRATIVES OF
HEALING, 1945-1960

In *Heaven Below*, historian Grant Wacker asserted that if Pentecostals “explicit reflections on worship” constituted a discussion topic, there would not be much to discuss. Worship, it seemed, was “something one did, not something one theorized about.” It was, however, the basis of the Pentecostal faith and provided believers the opportunity to confront the overwhelming power of God’s presence. While by the mid-1950s women were rarely behind pulpits in worship services, they continued to fill pews in churches throughout the state. Women continued to find ways to express their faith in worship services; and, sometimes they dominated the services. According to folklorist Elaine Lawless,

Newcomers to a Pentecostal religious service would report that women dominate the services: they are there in greater numbers; they sing more; they march and dance around the church with tambourines; they are more likely to go into trances, jerk, fall down, speak in tongues; and it is they who go forward for special healing.¹

For its adherents, Pentecostalism is a way of life, a way of seeing and experiencing reality. In examining this way of life, theological debates and statistical analysis are less important than descriptions of

¹First and second quote from Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 99; Third quote from Elaine Lawless, “ ‘Shouting for the Lord’: The Power of Women’s Speech in Pentecostal Revival Services,” *Journal of American Folklore* 96 (1983): 434.

Pentecostal women's daily activities and how religion fits into their lives. The next three chapters examine Pentecostalism as a way of life. Historian Tona Hagen described this as "folk religion" or the application of religious faith to everyday realities. Similarly, in his essay "Everyday Miracles: The Study of Lived Religion," religion professor Robert Orsi stressed the importance of religious faith in daily life. To understand religion, it is necessary to examine the "ways humans beings work on the landscape." Homes, streets, and workplaces, then, are just as essential to understanding faith as the church. The ways Pentecostals live their religion shapes the ways its believers form their identities, particularly their gender identities.²

This chapter examines women's testimonies of healing from 1945-1960, the height of the postwar healing revival. As described in Chapter 2, the United Pentecostal Church's growing cultural conformity during the early Cold War influenced the decline in women's leadership positions during this period. In this chapter, I argue that when faced with declining influence in churches throughout the state, women carved important spaces for themselves within the postwar healing revival. In the aftermath of World War II, the country experienced a surging interest in miracles and the gifts of the Spirit. Thousands of unnamed believers prayed for the healing of themselves and their loved ones. Women expressed their faith through written narratives in church magazines and newsletters and through public testimonies of healing in worship services. These stories provide a way to understand how Pentecostal practices of healing have

²Orsi, "Everyday Miracles," 5-19; Hagen, "Redeeming the Dial," 177-78.

adapted to changing culture and the ways women continued to assert their influence within a church that increasingly was silencing their voices.

Commonly called faith healing, the faith cure, or divine healing, this spiritual gift provided believers with a cure for physical disease through supernatural intervention. While shunned by many denominations, few Christian rituals have a more legitimate ancestry than prayer for the sick. Evidence of healing can be found in both the Old and New Testaments, and nearly one-fifth of the Gospels were devoted to accounts of healing. Believers attributed these occurrences to the power of God to hear individual prayers and intervene in people's everyday lives to cure them of sickness, whether physical, emotional, or psychological. When the prayers and faith of individuals were joined with the faith of a minister or other persons of faith, it invoked God's power to heal bodies and souls.³

Divine healing in America has been practiced by a variety of groups, such as the Quakers, Mormons, and Christian Scientists. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, however, believers across the globe

³Pentecostal believers typically prefer the term "divine healing" above other designations of healing, such as faith healing or the faith cure, because it indicates the source of the healing. Also, Pentecostals shun the use of the word "healer" except when referring to Jesus because all healing power comes solely from Him. I have tried to respect this preference and use the term "healing evangelist" instead of "faith healer." Also, I refer to all accounts of healing and miracles from the perspective of the believers; therefore, I have omitted words such as "alleged" or "claimed" when describing their stories. Jacques Theron, "Towards a Practical Theology for the Healing Ministry in Pentecostal Churches," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 14 (1999): 49; Margaret Poloma, "An Empirical Study of Perceptions of Healing Among Assemblies of God Members" *Pneuma: Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* (Spring 1987): 62-64.

expressed a resurgent interest in divine healing. Catholic shrines at Lourdes in France and Knock Chapel in Ireland drew believers in search of healing. Between 1880 and 1907, the doctrine of divine healing was accepted by thousands of Holiness sects in America.⁴

The Holiness movement's emphasis on the Holy Spirit and its power in individual lives seemed particularly suited for healing. Its doctrine of sanctification emphasized characteristics that were essential to divine healing. For instance, Holiness believers saw both sanctification and healing as forms of supernatural intervention that occurred instantaneously. Christ's atonement on the cross had provided for the spiritual and physical sickness of His children. Therefore, the sanctified believer through God held the power over sin, Satan, and sickness written about in the biblical book of Acts. Because Jesus did not want His children to be sick, believers could achieve physical health through prayer.⁵

In the early twentieth century, the practice of healing found widespread acceptance in American culture. In some Christian groups,

⁴Vinson Synan, "A Healer in the House? A Historical Perspective on Healing in the Pentecostal/ Charismatic Tradition," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3/2 (2000): 189-90; Raymond Cunningham, "From Holiness to Healing: The Faith Cure in America, 1872-1892," *Church History* 43 (December 1974): 500-501.

⁵Paul G. Chappell, "The Divine Healing Movement in America," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Drew University, 1983), 74-79; Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1987), 125-27; Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 522-24; Jonathan Baer, "Redeemed Bodies: The Functions of Divine Healing in Incipient Pentecostalism," *Church History* 70 (December 2001): 735. For more information on turn -of-the-century healing practices, see Ronald L. Numbers and Darrell W. Amundsen, eds., *Caring and Curing: Health and Medicine in the Western Religious Traditions* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986).

divine healing was restored to a similar position to that of the New Testament church. This occurred largely through the worship of the early Pentecostals who did not specifically seek healing, but found believers experiencing it as they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. Worshippers attributed these occurrences to the power of God to hear individual prayers and intervene in people's everyday lives to cure them of sickness. Holiness adherents believed that if individuals were not healed, it was due to a lack of faith by the sick person. While most believers probably practiced a combination of divine healing and professional medical help, historical evidence suggests that hundreds of early believers died rather than seeking medical attention. In rare instances they practiced extreme forms of healing, such as refusal to wash wounds, wear eyeglasses, or go to the dentist. As a result they emphasized the importance of spiritual preparation on the part of the sick before healing.⁶

This theology of divine healing was at the core of faith for Oneness Pentecostal believers and accounts of healing appeared throughout its history. Healing provided a source of spiritual reassurance and physical evidence of the supernatural power of God. Grant Wacker asserted that Pentecostals' emphasis on divine healing offered believers "certitude that the supernatural claims of the gospel were really true." Throughout the 1930s, Oneness believers in Louisiana sometimes reported accounts of divine healing in church magazines. In 1936, for example, the *Apostolic Herald* published a letter from a woman in Merryville, Louisiana, who had witnessed a young boy's death and resurrection. While the two women

⁶Chappell, "The Divine Healing Movement in America," 74-79; Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 125-27; Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 522-24.

visited with each other inside a house, their young sons played outdoors. Suddenly, the women “heard an awful report and a flash of fire was seen around the room.” They rushed outside to find that an electric wire had burned one of the boys, and he was “lying on the ground, dead, and afire.” The women immediately “tore his clothes off and began rebuking death in the name of Lord Jesus.” After some minutes of prayer, the boy returned to life and began to pray with the women.⁷

While accounts of resurrections were relatively rare, there were other believers who reported this miracle. In 1935, Marie Weeks was struck by lightning in Urania, Louisiana. When her husband rushed to check on her condition, he found her “lying lifeless on the floor with her clothes missing and her shoes exploded from her foot.” Weeks knelt over his wife’s body and prayed until “God miraculously raised her from the dead.” Another account of a miraculous resurrection centered on an incident in Walnut Hill, Louisiana, in the early 1940s. Ida Wisby recalled that her daughter Pauline “fell dead” during a church service. Wisby reported that, “There was no life in Polly’s body whatsoever. The saints gathered around to pray...until the Lord raised her from the dead.” While divine healings occurred in Louisiana’s Oneness churches, evidence indicates that they were reported less often prior to World War II; and, when they were reported, they typically focused on great miracles, like

⁷First quote from Wacker, “America’s Pentecostals,” 15; Remaining quotes *Apostolic Herald* (January 1936): 15.

resurrections, rather than the curing of common ailments, such as headaches or colds.⁸

Within many Pentecostal churches, divine healing had almost disappeared by World War II. Schisms over the use of medicine and the significance of failed healing caused the practice to decline in many churches. The United Pentecostal Church, however, embraced a theology of divine healing from its beginnings. Its 1946 Articles of Faith affirmed that “the first covenant the Lord (Jehovah) made with the children of Israel after they were brought out of Egypt was a covenant of healing.” The church based this theology on a broad sampling of Old and New Testament biblical texts that were painstakingly included in the Articles of Faith. The following scriptural references were considered important evidence of divine healing:

Exodus 15:26—The Lord said, “if thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord (Jehovah—Rapha, the Lord that healeth) thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, ..., I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee.”

Isaiah 53:5—“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

Matthew 4:23—“For I am Jehovah, thy physician”

James 5:14-16—Jesus said of believers, “...they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

⁸Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 187; First quote from Tenney, *The Flame Still Burns*, 68; Second quote from the transcribed testimony of Ida Wisby, Oral History Collection, UPCI Archives.

From these texts the UPC concluded, “divine healing for the body is in the atonement” and is a privilege “of all who believe.” Not only was healing available for believers, it was the church’s mission to heal. They based this on the apostolic commission Jesus gave to his twelve disciples when He gave them the authority to “drive out unclean spirits and to cure every disease and every sickness.” He commanded them to preach, “heal the sick and raise the dead.”⁹

The church’s emphasis on divine healing was evident through a sermon by Louisiana minister David Gray. Gray believed that healing was not just a gift but the “duty of all Christians. ” He criticized believers who contributed money to doctors, hospitals, and nurses, because “atheists contribute to them, the Jews, too, and the unbelievers.” He reminded his “brothers and sisters in Christ” that “the only true Christians are those who believe, obey, and preach Jesus’ words. Because the church was founded upon Jesus’ healing ministry, Gray believed that whenever “you find a live Pentecostal church, you find the preaching and practice of healing.”¹⁰

Indeed, in the aftermath of World War II, growing numbers of Pentecostal churches began preaching and practicing healing. Faced with the horrors of war, the psychology of many religious groups began to change and Americans yearned for revival. Americans emerged victorious from World War II only to face the threat of nuclear warfare, the Korean conflict, and the Cold War. In “The Latter Rain,” Pentecostal scholar

⁹“Articles of Faith,” United Pentecostal Church, 1946.

¹⁰David Gray, “Modern Miracles of Faith,” *Apostolic Herald* (February 1942): 9-10.

Richard Riis argued that the success of the postwar evangelical and Pentecostal awakenings depended upon “mounting public anxiety which reached a peak during the Korean conflict and the Red hunt of the McCarthy era.” It was an era when believers needed miracles and the assurances of a higher power.¹¹

As describe in Chapter 2, evangelical preachers commonly described the war as a sign of the end times. Healing evangelists, such as William Branham, also used the anxiety of the Cold War and an endtime language to promote their ministry. Branham, often called “the father of the modern healing movement,” asserted that his ministry was a sign of the end of time. Branham, who claimed to have received revelations from an angel, kept his audiences enthralled with stories of constant communication with God and the angels. Night after night he used his gift of discernment to detect illnesses and heal believers. This gift allowed him to identify the names, addresses, and illnesses of apparent strangers. At a revival in Jonesboro, Arkansas, an estimated audience of 25,000 witnessed Branham raise a man from the dead. He interpreted his gifts and revelations as signs of Jesus’ imminent return.¹²

During the postwar era, Pentecostal women particularly were drawn to the practice of healing. While historically women have carried the responsibility of caring for their sick loved ones, it seemed that there was something more to their attraction to the healing revival. When faced with declining leadership opportunities and influence within the church,

¹¹Quote from Richard Riis, “The Latter Rain,” five-page typed manuscript in American Religions Collection.

¹²Harrell, *All Things Are Possible*, 30-31.

women found an outlet of expression in the healing revival. Behind the pulpit women were often seen as a threat to male pastors, but they could transform worship services from behind the pews. They seized this opportunity to gain powerful spaces and authority within the church. Because they did not use notes when testifying, women used their hands and bodies and this allowed them to turn testimonies into oral performances.

Women also shared their written testimonies in healing magazines and periodicals, particularly their testimonies of divine healing. While every believer had the power to ask for healing, certain individuals were seen as having special gifts. They transmitted these spiritual gifts by laying hands on another person or anointing them with oil. These individuals held church services and healing revivals throughout the state. In Louisiana, T.W. Barnes, pastor of the First UPC of Minden, was seen as a man with special gifts of prayer for healing. Barnes and his wife came to Minden, Louisiana, in September 1947. The church quickly grew from 40 members to almost 250 members when Barnes began holding weekly healing sessions. Barnes followed the tradition of other healing evangelists when he began hosting radio programs and publishing the *Pentecostal Faith*, a magazine that highlighted his ministry and provided space for believers to ask for prayer as well as to testify about God's intervention in their lives. The success of Barnes' radio program shows the influence of modern culture on Pentecostal religious traditions. Radio listeners testified that Jesus' power could and did come through the radio.

Evangelists commonly asked believers to lay their hands on the radio to receive healing.¹³

Barnes also traveled across the state holding healing revivals. The work for evangelists, like Barnes, was exhausting. They spent hours praying and shouting for the blind to see, the lame to walk, the sick to heal, and for the dead to rise from the grave. Barnes' revival advertisements reflected the physically and spiritually exhausting nature of this work. He said that he spent "83 hours of praying each day and 88 days of fasting each week." Eventually, this work took its toll on Barnes' health. He lost weight and suffered from "spiritual burn out." Through the prayers of others, particularly Vesta Mangun, his physical and emotional strength was restored, and he returned to his revival tent.¹⁴

Magazines sponsored by men like Barnes gave believers an outlet to assert their faith and provided a source of hope and reassurance for its readers. These periodicals helped women to maintain a sense of belonging and community, which was particularly important in the postwar years. Throughout the war and the following decade, families across the state migrated to find work in wartime factories and moved into suburban neighborhoods. Believers were often unable to worship at local churches—they were elderly, confined to bed, or perhaps lived too far from a United Pentecostal church. Wherever they might go, believers could rely on radio programs and periodicals to keep them tethered to

¹³Hagen, "Redeeming the Dial," 199; See *Pentecostal Faith* 1 (January 1950).

¹⁴See, for example, *Pentecostal Faith* 1 (January 1950): 3; T.W. Barnes, "Getting Rid of Things That Make You Sick," sermon preached at UPCI Campground Tioga, LA, July 2002.

their faith. These believers created networks, formal and informal, to help spread the Pentecostal message of healing. By sharing their testimonies of healing, women found outlets of expression within the church and assured others of the power of their faith.¹⁵

The letters that appeared in Pentecostal magazines indicate that women took the initiative in seeking healing for themselves and their family members. Historian R. Marie Griffith found “probably about a two to one ratio” of women to men who wrote to periodicals asking for healing. From the ratio of male to female letters, it would be easy to conclude that women were more receptive to healing than men and experienced it more often.¹⁶

However, women may have simply felt the need to share their stories of healing more than men. There are countless numbers of believers throughout the state who never shared their experiences in healing magazines. For example, a 1950 report of a revival in Gibsland, Louisiana, proclaimed that sixty souls “came forward looking for salvation,” eighteen people experienced Holy Ghost baptism, and “countless numbers testified to having received instant healing.” Only three believers from the Gibsland revival shared their stories of healing in the magazine. Even if we allow some room for exaggeration in the numbers published in *Pentecostal Faith*, it seems obvious that most

¹⁵Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject*, 175.

¹⁶Quote from Interview with R. Marie Griffith, Material History of American Religion Project, <http://www.materialreligion.org/handkerchief.html>; Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 66-67.

people did not write their testimonies of healing. Of the ones who did, the overwhelmingly majority were women.¹⁷

The testimonies of these women reveal several characteristics of the healing experience. Stories of personal experience with God are an important part of the Pentecostal religious tradition. Women not only testified to the power of God in their lives; they also testified to His power to heal their husbands and family members. While Pentecostal women avowed that the husband was the head of the home, they took charge of sharing the family's spiritual experiences. They testified to God's work in the lives of family members, and often they described marriage and family life as better because of Him.

Several scholars have examined the function of these testimonies and healing narratives in religious faith. Grant Wacker found that testimonies typically involved a three-step process: an explanation of the problem that drove the believer to a transforming spiritual experience, a description of the experience, and a discussion of the benefits they received from their experience. Wacker argued that believers cast their lives in the context of before and after conversion, and their testimonies always portrayed life as better after conversion. Elaine Lawless and R. Marie Griffith also found that women's testimonies were structured with the end result of telling about God's care and guidance. Their narratives, then, were not pure reflections of their experiences, but were changed and rearranged according to the speaker's context. While these authors did not

¹⁷Quotes from "Message of Deliverance," *Pentecostal Faith* 1 (August 1950): 1-2; Information on the numbers of letters written in response to the Gibsland revival may be found in *Pentecostal Faith* 1 (August 1950).

suggest that testimonies were not true, they saw a desire to arrange testimonies so that “things come out right.”¹⁸

Historian Tona Hagen argued that these narratives were an important part of a two-part healing process. Initially, healing occurred on a physical or spiritual level apparent to the believer at the time of healing. Secondly, the person reframed the experience as a narrative meant to be shared with the public. It was in this stage that believers were empowered by sharing the story of their faith. Many of their stories testified to the healing of colds, headaches, or other relatively minor ailments, which revealed that God cared about even the slightest concerns of His children.¹⁹

Religion professor Robert Orsi drew similar conclusions in his study of the cult of St. Jude. The cult, which flourished in the 1940s and 1950s, centered on St. Jude, the Catholic patron saint of hopeless causes. Orsi examined “narratives of petition” where women named their afflictions and “narratives of grace” which were testimonies of gratitude. While men also expressed suffering and healing, Orsi concluded that “suffering is always gender specific, emergent out of different sources, and holding different meanings for men and women.”²⁰

Indeed, the healing experience and women’s testimonies of it were gender specific. Women’s testimonies of healing were typically tear-filled

¹⁸Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 58-59; Elaine Lawless, “Shouting for the Lord,” 441; Griffith, *God’s Daughters*, 202.

¹⁹Hagen, “Redeeming the Dial,” 204.

²⁰Robert A. Orsi, *Thank You St. Jude: Women’s Devotions to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 68-69.

stories of pain and suffering that were punctuated with prayers and phrases that were spoken in tongues. Pentecostals described speaking in tongues as an experience where the Holy Spirit physically enters the bodies of worshipers and fills them with joy and power. Speaking in tongues were interpreted as a spiritual language known only to God. Once baptized in the Spirit, however, believers could pray aloud in this spiritual language, and it became part of their worship and testimony. “Vivian,” a Pentecostal woman, described it as “a personal language of love between the believer and God.” This language contained a love so divine that human words could not express it, and women often used it as part of their public witness. The emotional nature of these testimonies held a particular appeal for women, because it was more socially acceptable for them to cry and express their feelings in public settings. Speaking in tongues and divine healing both required complete surrender and submission from believers, a requirement that was also more acceptable for female believers to fill.²¹

For example, evangelist Vesta Mangun’s testimony of her mother’s experience with healing was an emotional narrative filled with periods when she spoke in tongues. Mangun, who worked with her husband to build the successful Pentecostals of Alexandria in the 1950s, described her mother’s miraculous experiences during childbirth. Mangun said, “I’m a little bit spastic. I’m spastic for the Lord, but I’ve got good reason. My mother was under the power of the Holy Ghost when she gave birth.” Mangun testified that during the height of her labor pains, her mother was

²¹“Vivian,” confidential interview by author, October 15, 2002; Griffith, *God’s Daughters*, 60-62.

filled with the Holy Ghost and began speaking in tongues. Soon afterwards, she got out of the bed and began dancing. When she finally gave birth, she was dancing and singing in an unknown language. As she told her story, Mangun jumped and clapped excitedly and her testimony was supplemented by periods when she spoke in her own personal language with God.²²

“Ellen,” a Pentecostal woman, recalled that “When the Spirit moved, I could not keep silent.” After being healed of chronic headaches, she felt that she “just had to tell my story.” While men typically led the services, women seized opportunities after the sermon and during times of group prayer to share their experiences with their fellow believers. Ellen pointed out that preaching was only one part of worship services. “We didn’t care who the preacher was,” she said, “as long as he was a man of God. We were just there to worship, and we shared our love of God in worship services. I never had the education or the calling to be a preacher, but God spoke through me just the same as if I was.” Indeed, God spoke to many Pentecostal women and they commonly testified to it during church services.²³

The healing narratives written by Louisiana women reveal several characteristics of the healing experience. First, faith was essential to all successful healing and was absent from unanswered prayers. Revivalists stressed that people had to make “their hearts right with God” to receive healing. Evangelists stressed, however, that all healing came from God

²²Vesta Mangun, “Miracle Stories,” (testimony delivered at Louisiana District of the UPCI’s camp meeting, Tioga, LA, July 7, 2000), tape-recording available through the Louisiana District Tape Ministry.

²³“Ellen,” confidential telephone interview by author, October 7, 2002.

and depended on the faith of the individual. Evangelist Kenneth Hagin warned, “You can lay your hands on folks like that [the faithless] until you’ve wore every hair off the top of their head and all they’re going to get out of it will be a bald head.” T.W. Barnes requested that people carefully read the book of Mark and to “confess your sins to God, forgive everyone who has wronged you, then come believing and you shall receive.” O.W. Williams, a United Pentecostal minister from Kilgore, Texas, wrote that to receive healing, believers must “Open your minds to truth, open your heart to Jesus...; then, Jesus will come walking in... when you believe AND ACT ON HIS WORD.” Sister A.W. Buie also shared her concerns about forgiveness and faith in the *Apostolic Herald*. She worried that, “Many People are calling on God for the healing of some disease, but if their own heart is out of time with God, I am afraid that their prayers are unanswered.”²⁴

Titus White, a Texas minister who held revivals throughout Louisiana, also admonished believers to refuse to doubt their healing. He said “refuse to doubt because doubt is inspired from hell.... Doubt is the reason you haven’t been healed before now.” He warned his listeners that those who “believe not shall be damned; shall stay sick, afflicted, cast down, moved about by demons of fear and doubt.”²⁵

²⁴First quote from Kenneth Hagin; quoted in Harrell, *All Things are Possible*, 85-86; Second and third quotes from a notice published by T.W. Barnes in *Pentecostal Faith* (February 1951): 2; Fourth quote from O.W. Williams, *The Healing Faith* 1(June 1957): 2; Fifth quote from A.W. Buie, *Apostolic Herald* (June 1943): 6; John Gayner Banks, *Healing Everywhere: A Book of Healing Mission Talks* (San Diego: St. Luke’s Press, 1961), 25.

²⁵Quotes from Titus White, “Let Us Reason Together,” *Pentecostal Faith* (January 1952): 1 & 5.

Narratives also reveal that women often turned to divine healing as their last hope of health and restoration. A woman wrote to the *Evangelistic Beacon* that when she first heard about healing, “it sounded fantastic to me because I did not believe such things could be done.” She suffered from a condition that paralyzed the left side of her face. When medical doctors could not help her, she turned to the power of faith and received her healing. Mrs. Ida Garby of Goldonna, Louisiana, also turned to healing when “the doctor couldn’t help me” with heart trouble. In T.W. Barnes’ healing line, Jesus touched and healed her. Similarly, Lizzie Wilson had suffered from high blood pressure for over twenty years. While she faithfully took her medication, her condition did not improve. When she received healing and Holy Ghost baptism in 1952, she was able to discontinue her use of medicine.²⁶

Mrs. C.B. Collins of Springhill, Louisiana, turned to healing after repeated efforts by doctors to heal her son. For almost all of his two and a half years, his legs had been covered in sores and he suffered from almost constant burning and itching. Collins had placed her faith in doctors, but they continually failed her and her son. Finally, she turned to Jesus, and she took him to Brother and Sister B.F. Lee’s healing service in Springhill. Afterwards, her son’s skin was healed miraculously, and Collins praised God for “His wonderful healing power.”²⁷

Testimonies often described a feeling of joy and physical invigoration accompanying healing. Healing was a transforming

²⁶Quote from *The Evangelistic Beacon* (January 1944): 3; Remaining evidence from *Pentecostal Faith* 3 (January 1952): 6.

²⁷*Pentecostal Faith* (August 1951): 8.

experience for believers, and women commonly described physical sensations, such as warmth, light, love, or other sensory experiences. For example, Marie Williams, a believer from Mississippi, was diagnosed with leukemia in 1951. For over a year, she sought medical treatment, but she increasingly became frail and eventually she was unable to stand. Finally, she sought miraculous healing and attended one of T.W. Barnes' revival services in Louisiana. She wrote to Barnes, "when your hand touched my head, I felt the power of God surge through me like lightning, so much until I went off what it seemed from this world like hours." Williams knew that she had been healed, because it felt like "she had been filled with some heavenly feeling that humans cannot explain. I was new." Like Williams, Lucille Bozeman recalled a physical sensation she associated with her healing. For Bozeman, however, it was not associated with the touch of a revivalist. She confessed in a letter to T.W. Barnes that when she went through the prayer line, "it seemed that I didn't get my healing." Later, when Bozeman laid her own hands on her afflicted stomach, she "felt the healing power of God flow through my body and praise God I know I was healed." Her experience renewed her faith, and Bozeman proclaimed, "I mean to go all the way with Him." Mrs. C.W. Favors, who prayed for healing of her "fallen womb and mouth ulcers," described feeling the touch of God assuring her that she was healed. For these women their transformations were real, and partially, they knew they were real because they felt the tangible sense of a supernatural power.²⁸

²⁸First and second quotes from Marie Williams, *Pentecostal Faith* (January 1952): 5; Third quote from Lucille Bozeman, *Pentecostal Faith* (September 1951): 7; Fourth quote from Mrs. C.W. Favors, *Pentecostal*

Just as Jesus and healing were real to Pentecostals, so were a host of angels, demons, and other supernatural beings. Not only did they believe they were real, they argued that they were responsible for sickness and evil. There were demons of every type that corresponded to emotions, actions, or mental states, such as drunkenness and idleness, and they sometimes caused sickness, depression or addiction. Healing, then, was not only the deliverance of the body from physical sickness, but it was also a purification of the body from sin and demonic forces. In September 1951, for example, Beulah Long testified in the *Pentecostal Faith* that she had been cured from the spirit of cigarette addiction after eighteen years. This type healing often involved exorcism of the demon by “naming and claiming” the sickness or placing the hand on the afflicted part and commanding the demon to depart.²⁹

In cases such as Long’s, the spirit was thought to actually cause the sickness, but in others the demon simply caused the sick person to doubt the validity of their healing. The trouble that these demons could cause the believer was revealed in stories such as Eliza York’s. York, a native of Grant, Alabama, attended a prayer service for the sick while visiting her sister in Springhill, Louisiana. York, who suffered from “rheumatism of the nerves and blood veins,” testified that at the service “God heard and healed me.” After she left the service, however, “the Devil began to work” and she “began to doubt and look for pain.” As she doubted her healing, her pain returned. She finally overcame the demon when she

Faith (December 1950): 3; *Pentecostal Faith* contains numerous examples of women describing a physical sensation accompanied by healing.

²⁹Beulah Long, *Pentecostal Faith* (September 1951): 5; Griffith, *God’s Daughters*, 97-109.

understood that “God had all the power” and she “began to pray and ask the Lord to give me faith to heal.” Through faith and prayer, York was able to overcome her demon of doubt and she received complete physical healing.³⁰

Women’s testimonies also revealed the significance of sacred objects in healing, such as anointed prayer clothes. The scriptural justification for these prayer clothes came from Acts 19: 11-12: “And God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul so that handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick and diseases left him and evil spirits came out of him.” It also was supported by the biblical story of the woman who touched Jesus’ garments to receive healing. The banner of Barnes’ *Pentecostal Faith* magazine featured this with a drawing of a woman trying to touch Jesus’ robes with the scriptural quotation, “For she said within herself, if I may but touch his garment, I shall be made whole.” For healing evangelists, anointed clothes were a way of passing their spiritual gifts through the mail. Women wrote to periodicals explaining how they took the cloth, put in on the afflicted part of the body, and felt the healing take place. Mrs. Henry Walker, for example, testified to the healing power of prayer clothes. She wrote that she suffered from severe chest pains until she placed Barnes’ anointed handkerchief on her body. After placing the cloth on her body, Walker felt “the Lord heal and I can sleep all night and wake up all day.”³¹

³⁰Eliza York, “God Heard and Healed Me,” *Pentecostal Faith* 2 (January 1952): 6.

³¹First quote from Acts 19: 11-12; Second quote appeared on the banner of each issue of *Pentecostal Faith*; Third quote from *Pentecostal Faith* (May 1951): 7.

In her study of prayer clothes, religion professor R. Marie Griffith found accounts of people using other objects such as denominational newspapers or periodicals for healing. For men and women living in rural areas, who did not have transportation or were too ill to leave home, these prayer clothes were an important source of faith and the “mail sustained the devotion.” Sacred objects were seen as effective channels of healing power or objects to release their faith. Evangelists and believers, however, always stressed that people were healed by faith, not by the things they touched.³²

Just as Pentecostals believed God could deliver His children from sickness, they also asserted that He had the power to afflict with illness and disease. Mrs. I.D. Nobles of Baker, Louisiana, asserted that when her infant became ill, she received a message from God that He would take her child’s life if she “didn’t begin living right.” Nobles testified that she changed her life and her child recovered. Nobles’ husband protested this change in her lifestyle, and he “pointed his finger at me and said that if I went to the altar, he would quit me.” In spite of his protests, she went to the altar and prayed for spiritual healing for herself and physical healing for her child. Nobles’ prayers were answered, and she changed her lifestyle and began “living for Him.”³³

Not all prayers for healing worked, sometimes sickness lingered and sometimes a person who had been prayed for died. Pentecostal historian

³²Quote from Griffith, Material History of American Religion Project; Meredith McGuire, “Ritual Symbolism and Healing,” *Social Compass* XXXIV (1987): 368-72; Harrell, *All Things are Possible*, 86.

³³First and second quotes from “Mathematical Christian,” *Pentecostal Faith* (August 1951): 4 and 8.

John Nichol wrote: “One of the dilemmas that periodically confronts the Pentecostals is that some people who desire healing are not healed... the doctrine of divine healing in the work of the Atonement must leave a place for permitted sickness as an expression of divine wisdom.” Among the early Pentecostals, failure in healing was seen as a lack of faith. Evangelists continued this theme in the 1950s. When asked why Jesus and the apostles did not experience failure in healing, Oral Roberts asserted that they did have some failures. He argued that Jesus could not heal some because of their unbelief. William Branham warned that weak Christians could lose their healing because victory was “based altogether on faith.” Other evangelists asserted that Jesus healed people, but they refused to accept it. In his 1952 sermon “I Am the Lord that Healeth Thee,” Louisiana minister Westley Busbee described a woman who suffered from a stomach tumor. The woman said she had trusted in God to heal her for two years. Busbee argued that the woman had been healed but was still experiencing sickness because she doubted her healing.³⁴

The narratives in T.W. Barnes’ *Pentecostal Faith*, however, never addressed the issue of failed healing. While some narratives described the return of illness, they all claimed ultimate victory over sickness. Mrs. W.A. Browler, for example, described her daughter Ealene’s attack of appendicitis. Ealene attended church in spite of her pain and there “she became so ill she had to have prayer and God wonderfully touched her body and all the pain left her immediately.” When they returned home, however, the pain returned. Feeling desperate the Browsers called the

³⁴David E. Harrell, *Oral Roberts: An American Life* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 202; Westley Busbee, “I Am the Lord that Healeth Thee,” *Pentecostal Faith* 3 (April 1952): 4.

minister Titus White to come to pray for Ealene and God instantly healed her. Browler concluded, “God always heals us.”³⁵

Of course, God did not always heal. The failures of divine healing posed an ever-present problem for many Pentecostal assemblies and it contributed to the decline of the healing revival. In fact, David E. Harrell argued that by 1956 the postwar healing revival was over. He attributed this to the declining ecumenical spirit among believers and the emergence of old doctrinal divisions. In addition, tensions began to develop between evangelists and churches. Some argued that the evangelists began to depend more on miracles than on God. Others worried that miraculous healing was taking place alongside fraudulent ones. Organized Pentecostal churches sometimes resented the work of the evangelists and the financial support they took away from local churches.³⁶

As Pentecostal churches grew and prospered, they minimized the miraculous and attempted to separate themselves from evangelists. Periodicals increasingly emphasized the availability of healing at local churches. After 1953, the Assemblies of God’s *Pentecostal Evangel* refused to print the reports of healing evangelists. While the UPC did not take an official stance toward healing evangelists, their roles similarly declined within the church. By 1956, T.W. Barnes had stopped publishing his *Pentecostal Faith*. While he continued to pray for the sick during church services, his healing revivals ended. As healing revivals and

³⁵W.A. Browler, “Delivered from Attack of Appendicitis,” *Pentecostal Faith* 2(December 1951): 7.

³⁶Harrell, *All Things Are Possible*, 90, 138-40

periodicals waned, so did women's opportunities to express themselves within the healing movement.³⁷

The activities of Pentecostal women themselves also contributed to the decline of the healing revival. By the mid-1960s, the tradition of healing began to change among United Pentecostals. Increasingly, believers began to mix other remedies for illness with prayers for healing. They sought medical attention for themselves and their family members. Doctors, hospitals and modern medicine were typically accepted as complementary to the healing process. "Pearl," a Pentecostal believer, recalled that in the 1960s Pentecostals began to realize that there was no shame in seeking medical attention. While "some people rely totally on God for healing, not everyone chooses or is able to do so." Other believers, however, "choose to seek medical attention, particularly when it comes to their children." "Ellen," another Pentecostal believer, declared that she based her own physical healing on faith, but she took her children to doctors until she felt they were old enough to make their own decisions.³⁸

The extent to which faith and medicine had become entwined was evident in Reverend James Hinkle's 1972 article on divine healing. Hinkle, who encouraged believers to return to divine healing, asserted that doctors were just as common as ministers in many Pentecostal homes. He encouraged believers to limit the roles of doctors within their homes. While he acknowledged the skills of doctors, he argued that "Pentecostal

³⁷Ibid., 138-40.

³⁸"Pearl," confidential interview by author, Tioga, LA, October 7, 2002; "Ellen," confidential interview by author, Tioga, LA, October 15, 2002.

people ...should stand on the promises of God's word and trust Him to deliver. Children will learn to have faith in God early in life if Jesus is the family doctor and counselor in the home." The church, however, gradually modified its stance toward divine healing. It retained its faith in divine healing, but it also recognized the importance of medical care. The church stated that, "The good that medical doctors and medicine do is appreciated, for God gives doctors' skill and intelligence." By the 1970s most believers asserted that it was acceptable to mix faith and medicine. T.W. Barnes, for example, said that while he had never been in a hospital, he would not condemn anyone for seeking medical attention. According to Barnes "the Lord was the first surgeon. He took a rib out of Adam, made a woman, and sewed him back up," and believers should not condemn others for seeking treatment. Gradually, a pattern of healing emerged where believers would ask for prayer first and then seek medical care. If they got well, whether through prayer or medicine, they claimed that their healing came from God.³⁹

While these ideas about doctors and medicine may present contradictions to outsiders, for believers they were simply a part of the healing process. This allowed believers to accept modern ideas about culture but maintain their traditional beliefs about faith and the power of God. Pentecostal women in Louisiana embraced this approach to modern medicine and healing; and, while the decline of the healing revival and the number of church magazines associated with healing decreased

³⁹First quote from James Hinkle, "What Role Does an M.D. Have in a Christian Home?" *Pentecostal Homelife* (Summer 1972): 12; Second quote from T.W. Barnes, "Getting Rid of Things That Make Us Sick.," "Divine Healing," UPCI Tract, http://www.upci.org/doctrine_healing.asp

opportunities for women to give written testimonies of healing, they continued to tell their stories in church services and revival meetings throughout the state.

CHAPTER 5
“IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF IT”: HOLINESS AND GENDER, 1945-
1980

In her 1948 poem “Ole Demon, No Harm,” Pentecostal teenager Ruth Trumbo warned young girls about the modern world and its dangers. She cautioned girls about yielding to the temptations of dancing, cigarettes, and alcohol and the demons who would try to lure them into these worldly pleasures. She warned them about the demon who asked, “Young lady, I would like to know why you think, there could be any harm in one little drink?” If the girl yielded, however, “her virtue is gone” and she was left wanting to “right that one little wrong.”¹

Trumbo’s account demonstrates the importance Pentecostal worshippers placed on the purity and protection of believers. If a believer succumbed to the slightest temptation, his or her reputation could be irrevocably damaged. Trumbo’s fears were part of a larger postwar concern with the purity of believers and the stability of family life. This chapter examines Pentecostal attitudes toward holiness and its effects on gender from 1945 to 1980. Throughout this chapter I argue that Pentecostals saw themselves and their values as under attack from the outside world and its ever-changing modern culture. Pentecostal leaders feared that this attack from the outside world would undermine the morality of Pentecostal youth and challenge the biblically based hierarchy

¹Quotes from Ruth Trumbo, “Ole Demon, No Harm,” *Voice of the Young People of Louisiana* (December 1948): 6.

of men over women. To examine these issues, however, we have to rely on articles, sermons, and editorials printed in church magazines and statements issued by the General Conference. Because many of the preachers and writers were male, it is difficult to get a sense of how the women themselves felt about these issues.

Since Agnes Ozman experienced Holy Spirit baptism in 1901, Pentecostal believers have wrestled with how to relate to modern culture. Early Pentecostal believers professed little interest in contemporary society. Modern society, they argued, was only important if its events pointed to the imminent return of the Lord. According to historian Edith Blumhofer, “they had not yet glimpsed a broader world or had consciously turned from it.” Pentecostal believers, however, eventually had to leave the heavenly bounds of revival tents and enter the realm of daily affairs. Worshippers’ conduct in their daily lives was an object of concern for the early believers. They encouraged one another to live as “pilgrims and strangers on earth” and to live “in the world but not of it.”²

In the first decade of Pentecostalism, its earliest converts most likely accepted secular style clothing. Howard Goss, future General Superintendent of the UPC, described female believers as being “smartly turned out” in silks and satins. Between 1910 and 1915, however, Pentecostals began to use a language that promoted cultural insularity. For them, life was understood in terms of “us” against “them.” This

²Quote from Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 142; The phrases “pilgrims and strangers on earth” and “in the world but not of it” are common sayings among Pentecostal believers and other conservative Christians. The latter phrase comes from biblical scripture in John 17: 14: “I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”

attitude was part of a class-based protest within Pentecostalism. Believers charged that immodest clothing and frivolous adornments, such as watches, rings, and neckties, were symbols of wealth and were incompatible with their purpose of being ready for Christ's return. Similarly, wearing jewelry or cosmetics and attending theaters or ball games were forbidden. Pentecostal standards of holiness, then, dictated behavior at both work and play. These customs were more than lifestyle choices, they were matters of sin and salvation.³

In the 1920s and 1930s, attention to women's attire increased. As flappers came to symbolize the new woman of the postwar era, suspicions about women's moral influence increased. In contrast to their free-flowing and emotional nature of worship, believers were encouraged to wear modest clothing in subdued colors. The subject of alluring clothing drew great attention from Pentecostal preachers and worshippers, and the regulation of women's dress sometimes was extreme. For example, in the 1920s Louisiana believer Gertrude Locke wore her new short sleeve dress to a revival service, and her pastor chastised her and instructed her never to wear one like it again. Ribbons, bows, and flounces were just as dangerous as short sleeves.⁴

However, standards of dress and holiness did not have as great a social significance for the first generation of female believers, particularly those living in Louisiana's rural areas and small towns. For

³Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 128-130; For a more through discussion of holiness among early believers, see Wacker, *Heaven Below*, Chapter 8 and Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 98.

⁴Transcribed testimony of Gertrude Locke, Oral History Collection, UPCI Archives; Gilkes, " 'Together and In Harness,'" 685.

the early believers whose lives were centered on the community where they grew up, went to church, got married, and set up housekeeping, their modest clothing and long hairstyles were common. As a result, these styles were not particularly burdensome for Pentecostal women.

During World War II and the postwar era, holiness and purity gained new social significance for Pentecostal women. The mobility of the postwar period, the rise of the suburbs, and the growing numbers of married women entering the work force increased female believers contact with women outside of the church. As more and more women entered the work force, many longed to “update their styles.” Beginning in the late 1940s, alluring clothing, short hairstyles, cigarettes, and alcohol received repeated condemnations in church literature—which suggests, of course, that the problems would not go away. In his article “Psalms 9: 17,” Pentecostal teenager Cecil Harris warned, “there has never been more sin, and I will say public sin, sin which is open to our young ladies today.”⁵

Church leaders and officials expressed similar concerns about these issues and their effects on believers. From its beginnings, the United Pentecostal Church expressed its belief that its adherents must lead “Godly” lives. This was based on a variety of biblical texts. The New Testament book of Titus, for example, instructed Christian believers to live “soberly, righteously, and Godly in the present world.” The book of Hebrews also directed believers to “Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” In its Articles of Faith, the church defined activities that it considered unChristian. Dances,

⁵Quote from Cecil Harris, “Psalms 9:17,” *Pentecostal Sunday School and Conquerors’ Herald* (February 1952): 2.

mixed bathing, and theatres, as well as women cutting their hair, wearing make-up or immodest apparel were included in its list of forbidden activities. The UPC concluded that its opposition to these activities was in “the interest of spiritual progress and the soon coming of the Lord for His church.”⁶

This concern with the influences of the modern world was common among Pentecostals and other conservative Christians. In *Fundamentalism and Gender, 1875 to the Present*, historian Margaret Bendroth argued that the war led fundamentalists to shift their focus from apostolic revelations to moral conduct. These concerns about moral conduct were most heavily focused on Pentecostal youth. In October 1945, Louisiana’s youth movement gained an outlet of expression when Clyde Self of Shreveport, Louisiana, began a periodical entitled *Voice of the Young People of Louisiana*. Pentecostal teenagers who had experienced the baptism of the Holy Ghost wrote the magazine’s articles. The publication included poems, testimonies, articles, Bible games, quizzes, and reports on youth rallies. Most of the articles in the *Voice of the Young People of Louisiana*, however, discussed the temptations of the modern world and its dangers for young girls. The United Pentecostal Church particularly was concerned with the appearance and social customs of its female members, and in the 1950s cigarettes and alcohol were particular concerns.⁷

A poem entitled the “Devil’s Twenty-third Psalm” reflected the church’s concerns by warning readers to abstain from alcohol. For those

⁶Scriptural references are from Titus 2: 11-12 and Hebrews 12: 14; All other references are from “Articles of Faith,” United Pentecostal Church.

⁷Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender*, 98-99; Guillory, “History of Pentecost in Louisiana,” 180-186.

believers who fell prey to “King Alcohol,” a lifetime of “demons and devils in hell forever” followed. Another article warned teenagers that ultimately they would have to account for their actions on earth. “The things you do in this life,” it said, “are the things you are going to give an account of before God.” Believers could either “win eternal life or ... indulge in the vanities of the world with its dances, card parties, moving pictures, drinking, gambling, lust of the flesh, and such ungodly things as smoking, drinking, and murderers.”⁸

In 1948, teenager Margaret Buxton also cautioned young people about temptation and the desire for popularity. She warned that participation in immoral activities, such as dancing, would become habit. After dancing became a habit, “it becomes easier to smoke the first cigarette and then another until tobacco is a habit.” If she succumbed to temptation of the modern world, the “girl who was very nice and very much respected” would become “degraded, health broken, with a shameful life to be faced.” Another article in the *Louisiana Challenger* criticized those youths that, out of a desire for “approval of non-Pentecostal classmates, teachers, and friends,” conformed to their standards. Pentecostals, the letter maintained, “must be careful that we do not walk too close to the world lest we become contaminated by their sin and worldly practices.”⁹

⁸First quote from “Devil’s Twenty-third Psalm,” *Pentecostal Sunday School and Conquerors’ Herald* IX (February 1952): 7; Second quote from *Voice of the Young People of Louisiana* (March 1948): 6.

⁹First and second quotes from Margaret Buxton, “Guide for Youth,” *Voice of the Young People of Louisiana* (December 1948): 3; third quote from Roy Lawrence, Jr., “A Letter to Youth,” *Louisiana Challenger* (December 1954): 3, 11.

This letter reflected a common burden shared by Pentecostal girls—their choices about social activities, cosmetics, and hairstyles were religious choices. They could choose between God and family or friends and popularity. A play performed at a 1950 Louisiana youth rally, for example, highlighted this concern. The play, entitled “A Path to True Happiness,” portrayed the moral dilemma of Evelyn, a Pentecostal schoolgirl. When Evelyn was invited to attend a school dance and basketball game, she had to choose between her faith and popularity. Evelyn, however, made the right choice and refused to attend the events, explaining to her friend that real Christians did not participate in worldly activities.¹⁰

Several editorials in the 1950s placed the Pentecostal concern about outside influences on women’s clothing and hairstyle within the context of the Cold War. In a 1950 poem entitled “People That are Christian and People That are Just Plain Mean,” the author argued that the devil had blinded women to the truth of Christianity. If they “would let their hair grow and throw away their lipstick and paint,” they could be saved from hell. Short hair, painted faces, and career women were signs of impending disaster for the nation. Similarly, a 1952 editorial by J.B. Thomas described short hair on women as a threat to the peace and security of the nation. Thomas discussed the threat of communism and compared the growing popularity of short hair on women to the encroachment of North Korean Communist forces on South Korea. He said that like the North Korean army, short hair on women was a “force... bent on overthrowing

¹⁰“A Path to True Happiness,” *Pentecostal Sunday School and Conquerors’ Herald* VI (December 1950): 5.

all rule and order.” If Pentecostal believers allowed “the world to come into our churches,” they would “surrender the power of the gospel and become a puppet to the forces of evil.” For Thomas and many other believers, the only way to halt the nation’s moral decline was for women to “confess to all they believe in God’s divine order by wearing long hair.” Long hair on women became a symbol of their submission to both God and man.¹¹

Louisiana General Superintendent T.F. Tenney echoed these sentiments in his 1963 article “What’s Wrong with the Painted Face Woman?” Tenney condemned the growing popularity of cosmetics among women. He criticized women who justified their activities with the logic that “everyone is doing it.” While short hair and cosmetics had become commonplace in modern society, Tenney argued that the Old Testament prophets condemned “painted women” because they used cosmetics to attract men to immorality. He based this on scriptural references in II Kings, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. II Kings described the infamous Jezebel painting her face and Ezekiel depicted whores painting their faces. In addition, Jeremiah 4:30 said: “Though thy clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt they make thyself fair.”¹²

¹¹“People that Are Christian and People that are Just Plain Mean,” *Pentecostal Sunday School and Conquerors’ Herald* (December 1950): 5; J.B. Thomas, “If a Woman Have Long Hair,” *Pentecostal Sunday School and Conquerors’ Herald* X (July 1952): 2.

¹²T.F. Tenney, “What’s Wrong With the Painted-Face Woman?” *Pentecostal Herald* (March 1963): 10; Scriptural references from II Kings 9:30, Ezekiel 23: 40-44, and Jeremiah 4: 30.

For Pentecostals, then, cosmetic use was linked to immoral behavior. Girls were instructed to “never paint your face or stain it, or your lips with colors...; since this is the mark of vile and unchaste women. Paints and colors are the things bad women use.” Women were warned that pride in physical appearance had led to Satan’s downfall and could also lead to theirs. T. F. Tenney maintained that women who wore cosmetics committed “an atrocity to God’s sure intention for womanhood.” He praised those women who followed the UPC’s holiness guidelines, and he commended the church for its firm stance for holiness. While many churches “once frowned upon and even preached against the use of cosmetics,” Tenney argued that they had succumbed to the pressure of the modern world. He encouraged UPC women to “stand alone today, as church after church falls to the peril of the painted face.”¹³

Pentecostal opposition to cosmetics and short hair was part of a larger social strategy for Pentecostal believers that was enmeshed in biblical scriptures and Cold War ideas of domestic containment. In her essay “‘Your Hair is Your Glory’: Public and Private Symbology of Long Hair for Pentecostal Women,” folklorist Elaine Lawless noted that long hair was part of a social strategy that supported a biblically based hierarchy of men over women. Church leaders pointed to chapter 11 of I Corinthians to support their contention that women should have long hair. In this chapter, Paul outlined the symbolic importance of hair in

¹³First quote from “For Girls Only,” *Pentecostal Conqueror* (January 1978): 13; “Beware of Good Looks,” *Pentecostal Conqueror* (August 1979): 5; Remaining references from Tenney, “What’s Wrong with the Painted-Face Woman?” 10, 12.

relationship to the hierarchical ordering of man to God and woman to man. In I Corinthians 11: 5-7, Paul said:

But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shaven or shorn, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.¹⁴

Paul's verses clearly described long hair as a symbol of dominance and submission. Because the "head of the woman is the man," when a woman with her head "uncovered dishonoureth her head," head referred to man. Believers, like J.B. Thomas, used these verses to condemn women who cut their hair. When a woman cut her hair, according to Thomas, "she ignores God's fixed plan and makes herself mannish."¹⁵

In the 1960s Pentecostals became increasingly concerned about the threat to the social order, and church leaders increased their focus on moral conduct. The cultural revolution of the 1960s struck a fatal blow to the post World War II consensus about American life and values. Members of the baby boom generation often rebelled and attacked the values their parents embraced: authority, the work ethic, religion, conformity, marital fidelity, and patriotism. This rejection of the postwar consensus was evident in civil rights demonstrations, student radicalism,

¹⁴ Scriptural references are from I Corinthians 11: 5-7; Elaine Lawless, " 'Your Hair is Your Glory': Public and Private Symbology of Long Hair for Pentecostal Women," *New York Folklore* XII (Spring 1986): 44-45.

¹⁵ Scriptural references are from I Corinthians 11: 3; Thomas, "If a Woman Have Long Hair," 2.

feminist demands, the protests over Americans fighting in Southeast Asia, and the general rejection of mainstream values.¹⁶

The UPC responded to these changes in its literature and Articles of Faith. In its Articles of Faith, the UPC added a section to its statement on “Conscientious Scruples.” While it maintained its opposition to its members participating in combat, it reaffirmed its support for America and its leaders. The church attempted to distance itself from “cowards and so-called pacifists” by encouraging its members to serve their country in non-combatant positions.¹⁷

The UPC also attempted to distance itself from the counterculture and protect its members from what it perceived as the moral debauchery of feminism and the youth rebellion. The 1960s witnessed growing numbers of young people who were distressed with the conformity of American life and challenged mainstream values. UPC leaders tried to caution church members about the negative effects of these cultural changes. In addition to short hair and cosmetics, UPC officials were concerned with the growing popularity of pants for women. In 1965, the church published a tract outlining its position on modesty. The tract, written by national General Superintendent Nathaniel Urshan, explained that United Pentecostals adhered to the Bible as closely as possible in matters of salvation and Christian practicalities, such as clothing. Urshan explained the UPC’s position on modesty and women’s clothing, and he based his position on a variety of Old and New Testament texts. Because

¹⁶John C. McWilliams, *The 1960s Cultural Revolution* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000), 1, 83.

¹⁷United Pentecostal Church, “Articles of Faith.”

the book of Deuteronomy said that it was an abomination for women to “wear that which pertaineth unto a man,” the church restricted its female members from wearing pants or any manly attire. According to Timothy and Peter, women should only wear modest apparel. In I Timothy Chapter 2, women were instructed to adorn themselves in modest apparel with “shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but with good works.”¹⁸

Like long hair, modest clothing was seen as a symbol of a woman’s submission to God and man. Chapter 3 of I Peter directed women to be submissive to their husbands and not to adorn themselves “with outward adorning or plaiting their hair, and of wearing gold, or putting on of apparel.” A woman’s only ornament should be a “meek and quiet spirit,” because it showed subjection to God and man. The United Pentecostal Church interpreted modest clothing to be inexpensive attire that avoided outward decoration and did not unduly expose the body to public stares. While Urshan’s tract also encouraged men to dress modestly, he claimed that male attire did not have the biblical “significance or the importance of that pertaining to women.” He simply encouraged men to wear comfortable and modest clothing.¹⁹

For some Pentecostal pastors, men’s physical appearance was an important issue. As secular styles became less conservative in the 1960s and 1970s, pastors throughout Louisiana condemned men for wearing long hair, mustaches, and beards. They based this on Paul’s statement in I

¹⁸Biblical references from Deuteronomy 22:5 and I Timothy 2: 8-10; Nathaniel Urshan, “Scriptures Decree Modesty in Dress,” (Hazelwood, Missouri: Pentecostal Publishing House, 1965), tract.

¹⁹I Peter 3: 1-5; Ibid.

Corinthians that “Doth not even nature itself teach you that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?” Pastors argued that because long hair and facial hair were associated with hippies and rebellion, Pentecostal men should remain clean-shaven. For example, a cartoon in the *Louisiana Challenger* entitled “Chris Christian” depicted a Pentecostal teenager who stood for his beliefs when faced with peer pressure. In a 1978 issue, two teenage boys with sideburns questioned him about why his hair was so short. Chris replied, “I guess you could call it one of my ‘short cuts’ to heaven.”²⁰

As reflected in this cartoon, church leaders in the 1960s and 1970s perceived that its youth were the most susceptible to outside influence and immorality. Increasingly, church officials voiced their concern about immodesty and its effects on Pentecostal children. In 1963, the General Conference drew from the church’s holiness standards to assert its opposition to certain public school activities. It added a clause to the “Articles of Faith” stating the church’s disapproval of “school students attending shows, dances, theatres, engaging in school activities against their religious scruples, and wearing gymnasium clothing that immodestly exposes the body.” Pentecostals in Baton Rouge immediately used the new regulation to protest physical education classes that required dancing. Previously, several Pentecostal girls had failed physical education because they refused to dance. The pastor of the First United Pentecostal Church of Baton Rouge filed a formal protest with the parish school

²⁰“Chris Christian,” *Pentecostal Conqueror* (February 1978): 115.

board, and the board unanimously decided that Pentecostal students should be allowed to substitute other activities for dancing.²¹

The activities of schoolgirls continued to cause great concern. *Teen Times*, a national quarterly publication, focused on Pentecostal youths' relationship with modern society. For example, a 1975 *Teen Times* featured the story of Kay, a young Pentecostal girl who spent too much time with her non-Pentecostal classmates. As a result she began wearing pants and neglecting church services in favor of ball games and other immoral events. As she spent more time with her school friends, Kay's conscience "didn't bother her much anymore. The cares of the world filled her heart." After dating a young non-Pentecostal who drank alcohol, however, Kay realized her sins and returned to her faith.²²

The church's concern for its youth was also reflected in *Pentecostal Homelife*, a national magazine aimed at parents. It devoted a great deal of space to the issue of raising children in Pentecostal homes. Most of the advice given was aimed at parents trying to raise their daughters in the church's tradition. In 1971, Elton Benard, a United Pentecostal minister and father of two children, advised parents to maintain authority and discipline in the home. He reminded parents that a "cardinal principle in the up-bringing of our children is to TEACH THEM PENTECOSTAL WAYS." He warned mothers not to cut their daughters' bangs or dress them in shorts or pants. Short skirts for young girls also were forbidden. Bernard said the minimum length of young girls' skirts should be the top

²¹"Articles of Faith," United Pentecostal Church, 1963; *Pentecostal Herald* (April 1963): 19.

²²"A Dream in the World," *Teen Times* (October 26, 1975): 1-2.

of the knee. He warned mothers that if they “shorten them today,” they would “weep and lament over them tomorrow.”²³

While in his “History of Pentecost in Louisiana” church historian Daniel Guillory argued that Pentecostal hemlines in the state were not effected by modern fashions, the fact that Bernard and others felt compelled to caution mothers about these issues reveals a loosening of holiness standards in the 1970s. As shorter skirts became more acceptable among the general population, it increasingly influenced mothers who thought their young daughters might be more comfortable in short skirts, particularly in the sweltering Louisiana heat. The church struggled to convince women that traditional clothing was necessary and that changing times should not influence them. Repeatedly women were instructed to focus on their “spiritual clothing” rather than the latest fashions. While God wanted women “to look pretty and feminine,” they were encouraged to spend more time on their inner qualities than their outward appearance.²⁴

Concerns about mainstream culture led the church to increase its regulation of holiness standards in the 1970s. Women were encouraged not to conform to pressure from the outside world, and the church advised them that changing fashions did not effect the biblical standards of holiness. For example, Louisiana Pentecostal Thetus Tenney criticized a popular song that condemned hypocrisy. Tenney asserted that the song “Harper Valley P.T.A.” attempted to justify immoral activities with the

²³Elton Bernard, “Rearing Children in a Pentecostal Home,” *Pentecostal Homelife* (April-June 1971): 6-7.

²⁴Guillory, “History of Pentecost in Louisiana,”; See, for example, Miriam Levengood, “Be a Lady,” *Pentecostal Conqueror* 10 (July 1982): 3.

logic that everyone was doing it. Tenney, however, argued that everyone's activities should be condemned because they were all immoral. She urged Pentecostal women to use the Bible, not society, as their moral compass. While she said that Pentecostal women may not be "attending P.T.A. meetings in a mini-skirt," they should be careful not to allow social standards to dictate their actions. She encouraged Spirit-filled women to "compare themselves to God, not the public."²⁵

Church officials agreed that the public's acceptance of immoral behavior had a dangerous influence on its believers in schools and at home. In 1972, the General Conference adopted statements against sex education and television in the "Articles of Faith." Because the public schools emphasized only the biological and physical aspects of sex, the church opposed sex education programs. The United Pentecostal Church encouraged its members to become involved in Parent-Teacher Associations so they could exert a wholesome influence on the school system. In addition, the General Conference advised ministers and parents to provide alternative programs of Family Life and Sex Education that emphasized scriptural teachings.²⁶

Potentially, television was the most corrupt of the outside forces. The General Conference adopted a statement against television in the "Articles of Faith." Because evils such as immodest apparel, sports, and worldly amusements were frequently displayed on television, the church disapproved "of any of our people having television sets in their own

²⁵Thetus Tenney, "Harper Valley P.T.A.," *Conquerors' Tread* (July 1968): 3, 4.

²⁶"Statement on Sex Education," *Pentecostal Homelife* (January-March 1972): 12.

homes.” The General Conference denounced “television as an instrument of Satan to defile the church with worldliness through the viewing of movies and other programs which are contrary to holiness and separation unto the Lord.” Some believers, however, felt the same standards that applied to radio should apply to television. As televisions began to appear in many Pentecostal homes, believers informally challenged the church’s standards by simply monitoring the content of the programs their families watched. In “Will Television Ever Become Acceptable to Holiness-Minded People?”, Pentecostal author Murray Burr addressed this problem. He warned church members that while watching television had become an integral part of American culture, it was a sin incompatible with the church’s holiness ideals. Pentecostal believers, he argued, should not “wallow in its filth.” Burr praised the UPC for remaining firm in its opposition to television, and he condemned those “Protestants who call themselves Fundamentalists” for approving of it. Although there were religious programs on television, most Pentecostals argued that the dangers of television outweighed the benefits. The UPC, he said, stood alone in its efforts to “hold back the flood-tides of worldliness and carnality that would otherwise submerge our entire fellowship.”²⁷

Indeed, many Pentecostal pastors and writers depicted the church as being under attack from the outside world. Changes within the public school system encouraged the General Conference to add an additional statement on school activities to the “Articles of Faith.” In 1978, the General Conference voiced its disapproval “of school students being

²⁷Murray E. Burr, “Will Television Ever Become Acceptable for Holiness-Minded People?” ten page typed manuscript in “UPC” folder, Holy Spirit Research Center, Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

forced to take co-educational classes which involves boys and girls being mixed together in swimming, calisthenics, ... and other mixed athletics while clothed in ungodly attire which immorally exposes the body.”

United States District Court judge Waldo Ackerman ruled in 1979 that forcing United Pentecostal church members to attend coeducational gym classes violated their constitutional rights. Because the UPC instructed its members to wear modest apparel, he ruled that compulsory gym attendance “forces interaction with members of the opposite sex who are wearing what the church considers immodest apparel.”²⁸

At the 1983 General Conference, representatives passed a resolution against organized sports. The church decreed that “organized sports as the world knows it has an attitude and appearance that opposes Pentecostal principles, teachings, and standards.” Church members’ participation in organized sports, it warned, could adversely effect the church’s doctrine of separation and destroy the “beautiful things of holiness and dedication given to us by prayerful, godly men who sacrificed and suffered for the great cause we represent.”²⁹

Pentecostal worshippers continue to take great pride in their adherence to “old-time religion” both in worship services and daily life. The ways modern Pentecostals live their religion, however, would probably shock the early believers. By the mid-1980s, believers began to reinterpret the church’s holiness standards in ways that allowed them to adapt to modern culture yet retain their beliefs. As Edith Blumhofer

²⁸*Birmingham News*, August 16, 1979, in “UPC” folder, Holy Spirit Research Center.

²⁹“Public School Activities,” in “Articles of Faith,” 1983; *United Pentecostal Church International Manual*, 146.

pointed out in *Restoring the Faith*, Pentecostals continue to formally protest secular popular culture, but they have enthusiastically participated in a parallel culture that offers religious versions of everything from bands to exercise videos. United Pentecostal believers, for example, usually refrain from buying televisions, but they commonly purchase VCRs and monitors that they use to watch religious programs and other videos they considered to be appropriate. In fact, this practice became so common that the General Conference addressed the issue in 1983. Unrestricted use of video, it argued, would “destroy the holiness standards of separation from the world which the United Pentecostal Church International has consistently upheld for many years relative to television and motion pictures.” As a result, the conference resolved that the use of video should be limited to the areas in which motion picture cameras and projectors are traditionally permitted, such as “taking pictures of family, friends, and church activities, and the viewing of educational, religious, or inspirational films which are consistent with wholesome Christian principles.” When church members did purchase video equipment, they were instructed to alter them so they would not be able to receive television channels.³⁰

Because “holiness as a spiritual experience and way of life is not an option for Christians but a biblical injunction,” the General Conference expanded its condemnation of videos to include a wide range of technology in 1988. The conference asserted that media often sent

³⁰See, Robert Purvis, “Pentecostals Sport that ‘Old-Style’ Religion,” *The Daily Mississippian*, March 20, 1997; <http://www.pctii.org/woods.html>; *United Pentecostal Church International Manual*, 148-49; Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 6-7

messages that were contrary to the biblical standards of holiness. While it recognized that media and technology were not evil, the church encouraged its members to reject the use of any technology that displays worldliness and ungodliness. It stressed that holiness was “incumbent upon each Christian;” and, as new media appeared in the marketplace, church members were instructed to evaluate its effect on their spiritual walks.³¹

Pentecostal ideas of gender and modern culture have played vital roles in shaping this cultural adaptation. As more women sought higher education and careers outside the home in the 1980s, they reinterpreted the meaning of the church’s guidelines concerning hair length and cosmetics. Some women began to stress that long hair was not a mark of submission but a way of worship. While church leaders emphasized scripture that taught long hair was a sign of submission, women were more likely to quote from I Corinthians, “If a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her.” According to Elaine Lawless, long hair on women communicated the message they were virtuous, holy, God-fearing, and willing to live up to the expectations of their faith. For Pentecostal women, hair became a personal symbol of spiritual power and salvation, to both other believers and the outside world.³²

³¹*United Pentecostal Church International Manual*, 146-47.

³²While there are no raw data to determine the increase in the number of women working outside the home, Pentecostals certainly perceived that these figures were on the rise. Church magazines, such as the *Louisiana Challenger* and *Pentecostal Homelife*, increasingly addressed this issue in the 1980s. Lawless, “Your Hair is Your Glory,” 39. This idea that women reinterpreted the meanings of the church’s holiness guidelines differs from Shaunna Scott’s findings that women challenged patriarchal authority by rebelling against holiness standards. See, Shaunna Scott, “

Many Pentecostal women also began to argue that long hair provided sufficient covering for their heads; they did not necessarily need uncut hair. Some women began to periodically trim their hair to maintain its length. Most married Pentecostal believers still bind their hair in buns or other styles that conceal its length, but women often describe their hair as reaching the middle of the back. This differs from descriptions of women's hair as being mid-hip or knee-length in the 1960s and 1970s. One woman even confided that her hair only reached her shoulders, but she pinned it in a bun to disguise its length.³³

Similarly, women began quietly to adapt the church's guidelines on cosmetic use. Some women did it "for health reasons" and others simply wanted "to look their best." While the changes were subtle, they are important ways that women have reinterpreted the church's acceptable guidelines of holiness. Most women continued to insist that the God did not want His children to paint their faces, but they began to use cosmetic products that did not alter their appearance. Skin preparations, such as moisturizers and sun block, were commonly used. Pentecostal believer Annette Elms argued, "There's nothing wrong with that. It's the same color as your skin." Some women have applied this same logic to the use

'They don't have to live by the old traditions': Sainly Men, Sinner Women, and an Appalachian Pentecostal Revival," *American Ethnologist* 21 (1994): 227-244.

³³See, "Uncut Tresses Attract Man's Favor, God's Attention," *Amarillo Globe-News*, July 16, 1998, http://www.amarillonet.com/stories/071698/bel_tresses.shtml; "Pearl," confidential interview by author, December 15, 2002.

of clear mascara and foundation, because they simply enhance eyelashes and the skin's natural tones.³⁴

In *Meet the United Pentecostal Church International*, church historian and archivist J.L. Hall asserted that “the same spirit of holiness that was in the early church is in the UPCI. In an age of pleasure, compromise, and promiscuity, UPCI members are endeavoring to keep themselves unspotted from the world.” While Pentecostal believers try to separate themselves from the world and modern culture, they are also hopelessly bound to it. UPC ideas of holiness are intertwined with changing cultural trends and events. The church's adherence to holiness standards reflected a concern for changes in gender relations. Church officials expressed concerns that movements, like the youth rebellion and feminism, might challenge the church's and the family's biblically based hierarchy of men over women, and they encouraged women to adhere to holiness standards and demonstrate their support of the church and family. Over time, however, women have blurred the boundaries of acceptable behavior and adapted these ideals to fit the demands of the modern era. They have reinterpreted them to serve as expressions of spiritual empowerment rather than submission. Cosmetic use, technology, and even women's haircuts became acceptable within certain contexts. While this “old-time religion” might be unrecognizable to the early Pentecostal believers, as Grant Wacker pointed out, they, like modern Pentecostals,

³⁴See, “Keeping Up Appearances,” *Amarillo Globe-News*, July 16, 1998; http://www.amarillonet.com/stories/071698/bel_keeping.shtml.

recognized that even though the Lord demanded a separate life, “He appreciated good common sense.”³⁵

³⁵First quote from J.L. Hall, *Meet the United Pentecostal Church International*, 4; Second quote from Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 140.

CHAPTER 6
“I SURRENDER ALL”: MARRIAGE, FEMINISM, AND SUBMISSION,
1960-1990

In July 2001 more than 1,200 women gathered in Tioga, Louisiana, for the UPCI’s annual Women’s Conference. On the stage a young woman in her late twenties testified to her conversion to Pentecostalism. Raised in an Episcopalian family, she found herself searching for something more from her religion. Trying to fill the spiritual void in her life, she experimented with drugs, alcohol, and sex. None of these things helped her find happiness. Finally, she testified that she contemplated suicide. When she was at the brink of utter despair, she cried out to God. She asked Him to prove that He was real and help give her a purpose for life. At that point God brought Anthony and Mickey Mangun, pastors at the Pentecostals of Alexandria, into her life. She experienced Jesus at their church and surrendered her life to Him. It was only after she completely submitted herself to Him that she truly experienced happiness. Only then was she able also to truly submit and find happiness with a man.¹

Testimonies such as this one are a common part of Pentecostal revivals and worship services. They are filled with imagery about surrender and submission and the ultimate peace that comes with sacrifice. The turning point in these stories is when the woman “gives it all to Jesus” and abandons control of her life in favor of obedience and acceptance. These narratives counsel their female audiences to submit

¹Testimony, United Pentecostal Church International Women’s Conference, Tioga, LA, July 2, 2001.

themselves to Jesus and his earthly representatives, particularly their husbands. Together with writings by Pentecostal men and women, these narratives allow us to glimpse Pentecostals' ideas of "home," "family," and "submission" and to examine the ways modern culture has influenced these concepts. In the 1970s, Pentecostal leader T.F. Tenney labeled female submission "one of the most controversial and talked about topics in the book of God." This chapter will explore the influence of modern culture on Pentecostal ideas of submission and gender roles within the home. In the postwar era, Pentecostal women, like many Americans, embraced the domestic ideal and the doctrine of female submission. Throughout this chapter I argue that Pentecostal women have successfully shaped these ideals to meet their needs. Pentecostal women drew upon their domestic authority as wives and mothers to fight for the preservation of the traditional family and its values.

The General Conference of the United Pentecostal Church defined the biblical idea of family as "one man and one woman, married by law in accordance with all biblical injunctions and all offspring of such a couple, biological or adopted." Within this family the church espoused a biblically-based order calling for the submission of wives to husbands and children to parents. Men maintained the dominant role in the family, known as male headship. They were expected to fulfill their biblically-mandated responsibilities as leaders of their households, including providing for the safety, happiness and physical well-being of each member of the family.²

²United Pentecostal Church, "Articles of Faith and Constitution, 1946."

Women were expected to follow the standard for wives set in the biblical epistle of Ephesians. It compared the husband-wife relationship to the relationship between Christ and his body of followers. The epistle taught that just as any man loves his own body, Christ loves His body the church, and since a man and woman are one body in marriage, the husband should care for his wife the way he would care for his own body. Just as the human body obeyed its head, the church obeyed its Lord, and since the husband was the head of the family, the wife should be submissive to him. Paul preached to the Ephesians that just “as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.” (5: 24) Similarly, he commanded wives to “submit your selves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord.” (Ephesians 5: 22) While the church maintains its strict adherence to these teachings, the practical or lived meanings of these ideas have changed over time.³

Pentecostals, like other religious groups, highly value marriage and family. When the UPC was formed in 1946, issues of marriage and family were becoming increasingly problematic for many Christians. In *Restoring the Faith*, Assemblies of God historian Edith Blumhofer argued that in the years following World War II, a woman’s role as a homemaker seemed to lose its moral significance. Conservative Christians, like other Americans, saw marriage and divorce as having great social importance and consequences. In the changing values of the postwar era, personal fulfillment replaced social utility as the main purpose for marriage, and

³Ephesians Chapters 5 and 6; See, Joseph Martos, “The Evolving Ideal of the Family in the Catholic Tradition,” in Robert Carter and Sheldon Isenberg, ed. *The Ideal in the World’s Religions: Essays on the Person, Family, Society and Environment* (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1997): 233-52.

the traditional family order advocated by evangelicals seemed out of touch with reality.⁴

While many groups were lamenting the problems of family life, the UPC was struggling to establish itself. The Assemblies of God and other evangelical groups issued a “spate of marriage advice literature,” but the UPC only briefly addressed these issues in its “Articles of Faith.” First adopted in 1946, the UPC’s “Articles of Faith” proclaimed that:

‘Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.’ When this sin has been committed, the innocent party may be free to remarry only in the Lord. Our desire being to raise a higher standard for the ministry, we recommend that ministers do not marry again.

However, our stand on marriage and divorce is that judgment begins at the House of God; but since the complications of individual cases are so many and so varied that no blanket rule can be made to apply to every case, we feel to leave the individual cases to the prayerful judgment of those having jurisdiction over them.⁵

While the church recognized that its members might experience family problems, it was not its most pressing issue.

In both the popular and evangelical presses, however, an abundance of literature on this topic emerged. Women’s employment dropped rapidly between 1945 and 1947, but by 1950 married women were entering the work force in unprecedented numbers. The entrance of married women into the work force coexisted with an ideology that supported traditional family life and gender roles. This placed an extraordinary burden on women during the postwar era. Middle-class and working-class women

⁴Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 176-77.

⁵United Pentecostal Church, “Articles of Faith and Constitution.”

appeared to be suffering from a sense of dissatisfaction with their lives. Women's magazines and romance novels discussed this dissatisfaction and offered their solutions for it. In *Homeward Bound*, Elaine May described this as "a pervasive endorsement of female subordination and domesticity" that extended throughout the 1950s. Images of family life were displayed as the cure-all for female unhappiness.⁶

Similarly, psychologists, physicians, and other clinical experts pointed to women's rejection of their biological roles as wives and mothers as the real problem of the modern woman. For example, Ferdinand Lundberg's and Marynia Farnham's work, *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex*, discussed this problem and offered a solution for it. Lundberg and Farnham claimed that "being a woman today is in many ways more of an ordeal than ever." They argued that the price of modern woman's attempts to succeed in the male world was the sacrifice of their "most fundamental instinctual strivings." For Lundberg and Farnham, women could only find true fulfillment through motherhood.⁷

While this logic was nothing new, its proponents had to fight an ever-growing enemy, the feminist movement. In 1963, Betty Friedan gave voice to the "problem with no name" in her best selling *The Feminine Mystique*. Friedan, a wife and mother of three children who occasionally did some freelance writing, conducted a survey of her Smith College alumni in 1957. She tried to ascertain if they were content with their lives or if they felt discrepancies and dissatisfaction. From her

⁶Quote from May, *Homeward Bound*, 89.

⁷Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia Farnham, *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1947).

observations and her classmates' responses, she concluded that women had actually lost ground in the years following World War II when they returned to the home and settled down in the suburbs. Advertisers, educators, and women's magazines all encouraged women to seek fulfillment in serving others through marriage and childrearing. The ideal woman kept a spotless kitchen, cooked creative meals, and provided her husband with emotional and sexual satisfaction. The media encouraged women to settle down in a "world of bedroom, kitchen, sex, babies, and home." In *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan observed that there was "a strange discrepancy between the reality of our lives as women and the image to which we are trying to conform." This image, she asserted, was the "feminine mystique." For Friedan, the solution to the problem was for women to stop conforming to the conventional picture of domesticity and start enjoying being women.⁸

According to Elaine Tyler May, *The Feminine Mystique* "enabled discontented women across the country to find their voices." In the 1960s feminists gained some ground in the legal system with the Civil Rights Act of 1964's ban against sex discrimination and the extension of affirmative action to women. However, the government was slow to enforce laws against sex discrimination. In 1966, feminists organized the National Organization for Women (NOW) to serve as "a civil rights organization for women."⁹

⁸Griffith, *God's Daughters*, 43; Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Laurel, 1983), 11.

⁹May, *Homeward Bound*, 209; James Roark, et al. *American Promise: A History of the United States, Volume II* (Bedford Books, 2001), 1052-1053.

The press and news media increasingly attacked the so-called “women’s libbers,” and they were joined by a network of conservative Christian women who consciously rejected the feminist label. In her 1975 work *The Total Woman*, evangelical Christian Marabel Morgan provided a how-to guide for women to keep their husbands happy. Morgan described her marriage as hopeless and unhappy before she discovered God’s will for marriage. She asserted that, “It is only when a woman surrenders her life to her husband, reveres and worships him and is willing to serve him, that she becomes really beautiful to him. “ A total woman, she said, “caters to her man’s special quirks, whether it be in sex, salad, or sports.” Morgan asserted that if women would only follow their biblically mandated role of submission to their husbands, both they and their husbands would be more happy and fulfilled. According to Thetus Tenney, wife of Louisiana General Superintendent T.F. Tenney, this sentiment was popular in the UPC, and it experienced a statewide backlash against women in leadership positions outside of the home.¹⁰

The key to happiness, then, was submission. In 1970, the UPC joined its voice with other conservatives when it began publishing an eight-page quarterly magazine entitled *Pentecostal Homelife*. While Pentecostals maintained that the meaning of female submission was based directly on the Bible, the changes in its practical meaning were derived from shifting cultural norms. The purpose of the magazine was to “inform, inspire, and motivate in the preservation of Christian homes.” The church’s desire to publish *Pentecostal Homelife* partially grew from its

¹⁰Marabel Morgan, *The Total Woman* (New York: Pocket Books, 1975): 8, 60, 96; Interview with Thetus Tenney, October 15, 2002.

concern over the rising national divorce rate. The divorce rate began increasing in the 1940s and it accelerated rapidly throughout the 1960s. The church was concerned about the preservation of Pentecostal homes, and this translated into a great deal of emphasis on the proper relationship between husbands and wives. Writers argued that true freedom came through submission to God's will and as a result submission to husbands. Men and women writers in *Pentecostal Homelife* assured women that they could find satisfaction in fulfilling their God-ordained roles in life.¹¹

In *God's Daughters*, religion professor R. Marie Griffith argued that the meanings of the doctrines of male authority and female submission were rooted in ideals of home and family and the security these ideals promised believers. Similarly, in her anthropological study *Praying for Justice: Faith, Order, and Community in an American Town*, Carol Greenhouse described the ways that a community viewed the family as a "set of interlocking roles, or identities." As a result, Greenhouse observed that people who have this view of family life constantly work to perfect the familial roles expected of them. A successful family depended on each of its members to properly perform his or her God-given role. When problems and conflicts arose, the solution was the proper restoration of family roles.¹²

Writers in *Pentecostal Homelife* supported this view of family life. As they lamented the decline of the modern family, they overwhelmingly

¹¹The quoted statement of purpose appears on the bottom of the first page of each issue of *Pentecostal Homelife*.

¹²Griffith, *God's Daughters*, 176-77; Carol Greenhouse, *Praying for Justice: Faith, Order, and Community in an American Town* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 48-49

encouraged women to choose careers as homemakers. They blamed mothers, who had forgotten their duty of submission and homemaking, for the protests and turmoil of the 1960s. In “Keepers at Home,” Pentecostal Beth Reynolds reminded women of their biblical duty to work as homemakers. She observed that the mandate the apostle Paul gave to Titus was that women should be “keepers AT home,” not simply keepers of home. The Bible, she argued, confirmed that “being a housemaker lifts a woman to the highest peak making her price far above the most valuable jewels.”¹³

Nathaniel A. Urshan, General Superintendent of the UPC, also encouraged women to remain at home. He blamed mothers who had “left the home” for the decline of the modern family. He said that while the military was fighting in Vietnam, “all hell has attacked the citadel of our nation, the American home and family.” While America was not bombed, “something more dreadful than bombs struck our homes. MORAL DECAY!” The best way to fight the moral decay was the restoration of the Christian home. To restore this home, he asked his readers to go back to “grandmother’s day.” Because in this day, “women were keepers of the home. Industry had not enticed them out of the home into the marts of men. Fathers were the breadwinners; mothers were the homemakers; children had a haven.” Urshan warned families that if they did not return to this way of life, they were “selling their children’s welfare for luxuries.”¹⁴

¹³Mary Reynolds, “Keepers at Home,” *Pentecostal Homelife* (Spring 1972): 7.

¹⁴Nathaniel A. Urshan, “Home... The Citadel of Sanctity,” *Pentecostal Homelife* (April-June, 1971): 9.

In encouraging women to work at home, Pentecostal writers used a language of biblical submission and surrender. In “Lost in the Home,” Pentecostal believer Nettie Kepler asked: “Where did this generation of hippie, yippie, rebellious youth come from? Where did this insidious cancer of Woman’s Liberation Front originate?” Kepler argued that the young adults of the 1940s “who faced a war-torn world and forgot God” had created the current generation of rebels. She criticized mothers who during World War II, left the home, never to return. She said, “How easily American women forgot that a woman is not a mother merely by bearing children. She is a mother when she loses her identity in service to another. As God ordained, she should be a help-mate to her husband, creating an atmosphere... of rest from the pressures he meets outside the home.”¹⁵

In the 1970s, Pentecostal women began to use their authority as wives and mothers to enter the conservative political mainstream. During the period the country began a widespread shift toward political conservatism. This conservatism had ties to the economic trends of the decade. Recession, inflation, and decline dealt dramatic blows to individual families. Historian Paul Boyer pointed out that in 1973 the median income for the average American family fell for the first time since World War II. Economic concerns fueled a backlash against programs aimed at improving the status of the disadvantaged. Hostility

¹⁵Nettie Kepler, “Lost in the Home,” (April-June 1971): 4-5; Nettie Kepler, “The Power to Become,” *Pentecostal Homelife* (Fall 1973): 4.

against welfare recipients and groups demanding special attention intensified.¹⁶

The women's movement and its political issues were prime targets for this conservative backlash. While public opinion polls showed the majority was in favor of most feminist goals, feminism faced a strong counter movement in the 1970s. Feminists successfully opposed laws that treated men and women differently in Social Security, military benefits programs, and workmen's compensation. The public, however, equated feminism with the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and the fight for the legalization of abortion.¹⁷

Pentecostal women joined other conservatives in the fight to block the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. An Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution would outlaw differential treatment of men and women under all state and federal laws. In 1972, the ERA passed through Congress and many states rushed to ratify it. By 1973, however, conservative women and politicians began to organize massive resistance to the ERA. Typically, they saw it as an attack on femininity and the biblical institution of marriage. They worried that the ERA, which aimed at assuring equality of the law could not be denied on the basis of sex, would " 'desexigarate' everything" and women would lose their special privileges and protections. Jean Urshan, wife of UPC General Superintendent Nathaniel Urshan, advised wives that they held "such a lofty place in the Lord's plan that it would be tragic to drag into it

¹⁶Paul Boyer, *Promises to Keep: The United States Since World War II* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1994): 426-427.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 427; Roark, *The American Promise*, 1102.

anything such as the women's equal rights amendment suggests." Urshan echoed the sentiments of antifeminist activist Phyllis Schlafly when she argued that the ERA would lead women to throw their God-given "feminine disposition... into the unbecoming masculinity of wearing jeans and other attire that pertains to a man." Thetus Tenney, wife of Louisiana General Superintendent T.F. Tenney, asserted that she "was never against equal rights," but she was opposed to the Equal Rights Amendment because it attempted to deny the differences in the sexes.¹⁸

The UPCI's Ladies' Auxiliary used the ERA to take steps into the political arena. Pentecostal women asserted that the origins of the ERA were found in Secular Humanism. Secular Humanism, the Ladies' Auxiliary declared, affirmed the right to abortion, sexual freedom, and divorce. Pentecostal women argued that if the ERA passed, women would not only be subject to the military draft, but they would also share barracks with men. They worried that the amendment would revoke the tax-exempt status of churches, church-related colleges, and seminaries that refused certain roles within their organizations to women and homosexuals. In fact, the Ladies' Auxiliary warned that the larger goal of the feminist movement was the "abolition of the institution of marriage."¹⁹

To combat the passage of the ERA, women were encouraged to write their state representatives and voice their opposition to the amendment. In this effort UPCI women aligned themselves with

¹⁸Jean Urshan, "A Message to Wives," *Pentecostal Herald* (May 1983): 6-7; Thetus Tenney, interview by author, October 15, 2002.

¹⁹Ladies' Auxiliary, "Everything You've Wanted to Know About the Equal Rights Amendment," in "United Pentecostal Church" folder, Holy Spirit Research Center, Oral Roberts University.

conservative women's organizations, such as Phyllis Schlafly's political Eagle Forum and Beverly LaHaye's religious and political Concerned Women for America. Pentecostals became part of a larger group of cultural fundamentalists. As defined by historians of the ERA, Donald Matthews and Jane Sherron DeHart, cultural fundamentalism involved absolute commitment to traditional social and cultural forms as "sacred templates of reality" or fixed patterns that transcend ordinary historical change.²⁰

Within the state of Louisiana, opponents of the ERA were successful in their attempts to block ratification of the ERA. Louisiana was one of fifteen states that did not ratify the amendment. However, at the state level, the UPCI seemingly took little notice of Democratic governor Edwin Edwards' efforts to adopt a new state constitution in 1974. The new constitution contained a strong provision maintaining sexual equality. It ensured individuals "freedom from discrimination based on race, religion, or national ancestry and from arbitrary, capricious, or unreasonable discrimination based on age, sex, or physical condition." The legislature also passed amendments abolishing remnants of the male-controlled past, such as the "Head and Master" law, that gave men the control of property in marriages. This law, along with the new constitution, helped to improve the legal status of women in the state dramatically.²¹

²⁰Ibid.; Donald G. Matthews and Jane Sharon DeHart, *Sex, Gender, and the Politics of the ERA: A State and a Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 175-80.

²¹Article 12, Declaration of Rights, Louisiana State Constitution; Henry Dethloff, *Louisiana: A Study in Diversity* (Austin, Texas: Steck-Vaughn, 1999), 260.

One reason that women opposed the Equal Rights Amendment was that they believed the ERA would protect a woman's right to abortion. In *The Power of the Positive Woman*, Phyllis Schlafly asserted that: "Since the mandate of the ERA is for sex equality, abortion is essential to relieve women of the unwanted burden of being forced to bear an unwanted baby." In 1973, the Supreme Court issued its ruling in the landmark *Roe vs. Wade* decision, in which it struck down state laws forbidding abortion during the first three months of pregnancy. The UPCI, along with other conservatives, quickly voiced its opposition to this decision. The General Conference of the UPCI adopted a resolution condemning abortion in 1974 stating that the church wanted to "go on record as being opposed to legalized abortion."²²

While Pentecostal women fought for conservative political goals, labeling them as antifeminist would be an oversimplification of their beliefs. Pentecostal women wanted many of the same goals as feminists, such as freedom and fulfillment. However, they believed that women could only achieve these goals by submitting to God and their husbands. Writers in Pentecostal magazines stressed that true Christian women found happiness by devoting their time to pleasing their families, not through feminism. Mary Reynolds, a writer in *Pentecostal Homelife*, criticized "modern philosophy" that taught "a woman's capabilities, talents, and contributions to the world are lost if she is burdened down with the responsibility of homemaking." Similarly, Nettie Kepler reminded women that the virtuous woman did not have "room for women's

²²Quote from *United Pentecostal Church International Manual*, 138; Phyllis Schlafly, *The Power of the Positive Woman* (New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1977), 54-55.

liberation.” She was “too busy giving willingly of herself to feel left-out or cheated, mistreated and abused.” True fulfillment came “by total involvement in the willing surrender of her time and energies to the greatest goal, pleasing God, her husband, and her family.”²³

In her article “At Last! Liberation!”, Pentecostal believer Elaine Haymon added a humorous note to the voices of anti-feminism while assuring women that happiness resides at home. She said that it was not until she was in her “middle motherhood” years that someone brought it to her attention that “I was not supposed to be enjoying all that mothering and housewifing.” While all the latest sources of feminist literature informed her that she could, “without a doubt, loose myself from all my encumbrances—such as being a wife and mother—and think totally of myself for a change,” she said the Bible’s teachings kept resurfacing when she tried to be a liberated feminist. She reminded women of the scripture in Titus 2: 4-5 that instructed them to be “keeper(s) at home” and of Paul’s epistle that wives should be in “subjection to your husbands.”²⁴

However, the questions of authority and submission were more difficult for women whose husbands were “unbelievers.” Pentecostal advice literature warned believers of the problems of being “unequally yoked.” Young people were encouraged to only date members of the UPCI or other Oneness Pentecostal churches. The youth magazine the *Conquerors’ Tread* encouraged believers to date only other Christians because “because dating between a Christian and an unsaved person has

²³Nettie Kepler, “The Power to Become,” *Pentecostal Homelife* 3 (Fall 1973): 5.

²⁴Elaine Haymon, “At Last! Liberation!” *Pentecostal Homelife* (August 1985): 3.

no place in the will of the Lord.” Young people were told that Jesus “would bless the young person who refrains from union with the world.” A 1980 article in *Pentecostal Conqueror* cautioned girls that dating unbelievers could lead to a lifetime of unhappiness. The author, whose sister married an unbeliever, argued that true loneliness was “feeling the urgency of Christ’s coming and knowing the one you love most on earth is not ready, and shows no sign of caring.” Girls who dated and eventually married unbelievers were building their lives “upon disobedience to God’s word.” Similarly, Pentecostal youth Florence Zuckero warned that, “The person who disregards the law of God is open to disaster and heartache.”²⁵

For those women who had married unbelievers, the church offered a variety of advice literature and support groups. In 1976, *Pentecostal Homelife* ran a special two-part series on this subject. The series targeted Pentecostal women whose husbands had strayed from or never found the church. They were instructed to submit to their husbands and to provide a Christian example for them. Women should “honor rather than merely tolerate” their unbelieving husbands, and any shortcomings in their duties as wives translated to “stumbling blocks” for them. The woman who kept an “untidy house and is sloppy about her personal appearance” might become a hindrance on her husband’s path to Christ. Wives could,

²⁵First and second quotes from “Date a Non-Christian... Should I?” *Conquerors’ Tread* (July 1970): 2-3; Third quote from an untitled article in the *Pentecostal Conqueror* (February 1980): 15; Fourth quote from Florence Zuckero, “Choosing to Date Right,” *Pentecostal Conqueror* (August 1979): 6.

however, predispose their husbands to accept the Gospel by responding to their “little whims and desires that he may mention at times.”²⁶

The Christian woman must also be available intimately to her husband. She must avoid the fate of “Ethel,” the Christian woman who devoted herself to church activities and spent time with everyone except her unsaved husband. After Ethel repeatedly refused her husband’s sexual advances, he eventually gave up and began to seek out solitude and time with his dog. As he lost interest in his wife, he also became indifferent toward religion and the church. Ethel remained blind to her responsibilities as a Christian mate, and her husband remained disinterested in anything related to church and Christianity. The lesson, then, was that women could help “save” their husbands through physical submission. True marriage, they were reminded, made “no provision for such coldness.” It was the woman’s duty to “satisfy your husband rather than resist, rebuff, and avoid him. Woman was not made for herself but to complete the man.”²⁷

Submitting to a non-Christian husband in hopes that he would eventually be saved through the good example of his wife provided a lesson on surrendering to God’s will for readers. It was not only important for the husband’s future salvation but also for the woman’s spirituality. Submission to an unsaved husband could teach women “humility and patience and lead to complete dependence on God.” A woman’s responsibility to her husband, however, did have its limits.

²⁶“Married to an Unbeliever,” *Pentecostal Homelife* (September-October 1976): 18.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 29-30.

Submission to God clearly took precedence over obedience to husbands. In “Married to an Unbeliever,” women were instructed to “put God first.” While a woman must keep her obligations to husband and family, they should not occupy first place in her life. There was a line “beyond which a Christian woman cannot go in serving husband and family. She must serve her Lord.” If a woman had to make a choice between her husband and God, she was instructed to always “obey God rather than man.” A husband should serve as Christ’s earthly representative, and if his demands were not in accord with the will of God, it forced the woman to disobey her husband. In many areas of married life a woman could obey God’s will and the will of her husband, however, “when it touches her Christian stand there is no room for compromise.”²⁸

These teachings differ from the findings of R. Marie Griffith in *God’s Daughters*. Griffith examined Women’s Aglow, a charismatic female prayer and mission association, and its teachings on submission to unbelieving husbands. She found that Women’s Aglow instructed its members that when the will of God and the will of the husband conflict, the wife must trust that her obedience to her husband would enable God to deal with him. She quoted a male fundamentalist minister as saying, “Submission is the wife learning to duck, so God can hit the husband on the head.” UPCI women felt an obligation to pray for unsaved husbands, but submission to God clearly took precedence over obedience to husbands.²⁹

²⁸Ibid., 14-16.

²⁹Griffith, *God’s Daughters*, 176.

For both Pentecostals and charismatic believers, a spouse's unbelief was not grounds for divorce. In "Marriage or Mirage," Pentecostal Joni Owens maintained that "divorce" is one of the worst words in the English language for Pentecostal believers. She encouraged church members to acknowledge the problems in their marriages and seek help. She argued that many married believers feared that acknowledging problems in their marriage was a sign of failure. According to Owens, married couples should feel free to admit when they need marital help so they could seek counseling. Even today the UPCI seldom recognizes its members' right to divorce. However, the church does recognize that some problems require separation or divorce, and it provides exceptions for believers suffering from emotional or physical abuse. Under certain circumstances believers can obtain divorces with the church's approval. The UPC only sanctions remarriage, however, if the believers' spouse dies.³⁰

Despite the protests of Pentecostal women against feminism, the women's movement had tremendous influence within Pentecostal homes and churches. "Vivian," a Pentecostal woman, argued that the feminist movement brought an intense examination of women's roles within the UPCI. She said that women began reading about feminism in newspapers and heard people talking about it, and many of the ideas began to make sense, particularly ideas about equal pay. As Pentecostal women began to support equal rights within the workplace, it carried over into their homes and churches. This compelled women and men to begin to examine what the Bible meant by female submission, and "if nothing else, the women's

³⁰Joni Owens, "Marriage or Mirage?" *Pentecostal Homelife* (August 1985): 14-15; "Dan," interview by author.

movement forced the church to talk about what submission means.”

Women increasingly began to assert themselves, and more Pentecostal women began to “quietly let their pastors and their husbands know that they would not be looked down upon or treated as servants anymore.”³¹

Indeed, women’s rights and submission were hotly debated topics in the UPCI. Feminist ideas slowly permeated the thoughts of Pentecostal believers, often in ways they did not realize. While claiming to be anti-feminist, the women I interviewed overwhelmingly supported feminist reforms such as equal pay for equal work, equal education, and more recognition of women’s roles within the church. Feminism also began to creep into Pentecostal marriages, sometimes in ways that people took for granted. “Laura,” a college freshman, who was raised in a Louisiana Pentecostal home, compared the differences between her parents’ and grandparents’ marriages. When asked about submission, she responded, “It’s not what people think it is or like it used to be. If my grandfather said, ‘Woman, go get me some coffee,’ she did it. It didn’t matter who was closer to the kitchen. With my parents, it isn’t that my mom wouldn’t get my dad coffee, it’s just that he wouldn’t ask unless she was already in the kitchen.”³²

Other members also emphasized cooperation between husbands and wives. Gretchen, a lifetime member of the UPCI and pastor’s wife, described female submission as God’s intended plan for women. However, when she described her relationship with her husband, she described joint

³¹“Vivian,” confidential interview by author, October 15, 2002.

³²“Laura,” confidential interview by author, Natchitoches, LA, November 1, 2002.

decision-making and mutual cooperation. She said: “Typically, we have our own areas and we make decisions about those things.” When a joint decision needs to be made, however, “we try to work it out together. If we can’t work it out, then I am usually the one to give in and let him make the decision. You just have to decide what the issue is worth to you, and then decide whether to give in or stand your ground.” While, according to “Vivian,” “the buck still stops with the husband,” the church increasingly stressed the man’s responsibility to his wife.³³

While Pentecostals upheld their belief in female submission, some of its preachers and writers began to emphasize that the biblical way to fulfill male headship was for husbands to love their wives. As Vivian stated: “After all, when you really think about it, most of the problems that led to the women’s movement were caused by men not loving their wives.” A 1972 article on how to treat your wife in public warned Pentecostal husbands that “The standard of the church on divorce may keep you away from the court chambers, but it will not always keep LOVE prevailing in your home. This is your responsibility.” While the author observed that the church’s teachings on “marriage and divorce, man-head of the house” normally were enough to keep families together, husbands should not “forget everything they know about being gentleman after they are married.” Men were advised to remember the small things to “help bring out the best in your wife—in the home and in public.”³⁴

³³“Gretchen,” confidential interviews by author, Tioga, LA, September 19, 2002; “Vivian,” confidential interview, October 15, 2002.

³⁴First quote from *Ibid.*; Remaining quotes from “How to Treat Your Wife in Public,” *Pentecostal Homelife* (July-August 1977): 4-5; Earl Paulk, *Your Pentecostal Neighbor* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1958), 23;

By 1976, the tone of marital advice for husbands reflected believers' more equitable and cooperative attitudes toward marriage. *Pentecostal Homelife* began to devote more space to teaching men how to lead their families according to God's plan. An article providing marital advice on money problems and communication encouraged both men and women to share these responsibilities. Another article entitled "Husbands, Please Lead Us" attempted to supply a "few words for men" in the "avalanche of writing about women, their rights and their roles." The author began the article by clarifying that she was a married woman committed to the biblical statement on marriage roles in Ephesians and that she believed that "submission and servanthood are the Christlike stance." In fact, she said that wives should accept "male headship voluntarily and gladly." She argued, however, that "the frustration of various Christian wives today is based more on the lack of leadership qualities in their husbands than on unfulfilled desires to be 'equal' with their husbands." Husbands, then, must be prepared to "carry out their headship in biblical ways."³⁵

"Biblical ways" meant that husbands should love, respect, and support their wives. A multitude of articles advised men that submissive did not mean inferior. Authors reminded men that "their wives were partners, not property," that the Bible did not "teach that women are some type of second-rate economy citizens," and that the Bible did not instruct men to "Get your wives to submit to you," but instead counseled husbands

Brenda Brasher, *Godly Women: Fundamentalism and Female Power* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), 130-31.

³⁵"How to Handle Money Problems and Communications," *Pentecostal Homelife* (Nov.- Dec. 1976): 24-25; Quotes from "Husbands, Please Lead Us," *Pentecostal Homelife* (Nov.-Dec. 1976): 8-9.

to love their wives. Pentecostal missionary John Klemin also wrote that the “Bible exhorts husbands to honor their wives, not to make slaves of them.” His advice to the Pentecostal husband was to love “his wife as he should, and she will not find it difficult to submit to his position as head of the home.”³⁶

One aspect of love and leadership was for husbands to help their wives. In “Husbands, Please Lead Us,” the writer criticized men who believed their wives are “good only for scrubbing floors and cooking meals.” She accused the man “who barks orders and reminds his wife to submit and refuses to change a diaper” of trying to prove to himself “that he is someone who he fears he is not.” Klemin also reminded men to help their wives with household responsibilities. He says that the man “has an equal responsibility and for him to demand that she always keep the home neat and clean [without offering any help]... may mean driving her to an early grave.” Satan was at the center of this type of a husband’s “disregard to the interests and happiness of the wife and the planting of one’s self in the center of everything and absorbing every good thing for his own satisfaction.” The church called upon men to fulfill their God-ordained roles of love and respect.³⁷

For a man to fulfill his responsibilities of headship, he should love his wife and contribute to her fulfillment. In “Husbands, Please Lead Us,” the author asserted that men should become “enablers of their wives.” By

³⁶“Husbands, Please Lead Us,” 8-9; John Klemin, “Keeping the Romance in Marriage,” *Pentecostal Homelife* (Jan.-March 1977): 6; “10 Commandments for Husbands,” *Pentecostal Homelife* (January 1987): backcover.

³⁷First and second quotes from “Husbands Please Lead Us,” 9; Remaining quotes from Klemin, “Keeping the Romance in Marriage,” 6.

enabling their wives, men would help them develop their talents to serve the Lord. The author maintained that women were not “given gifts to use only when they are unmarried, as if to say that personal creativity and interests cease with the wedding ceremony.” For the author in the 1976 article “The 12,000 Mile Check Up,” contributing to fulfillment meant that husbands should “allow wives appropriate family income to spend as she chooses.”³⁸

As questions of equality increasingly effected the church, authors became more accepting of women working outside the home. This acceptance had ties to the political and economic changes of the 1980s. Ronald Reagan’s 1980 election was a political victory for conservative Christians. Under Reagan, the Republican party took an antifeminist stance for the first time in its history. The Reagan administration captured the votes of evangelical Christians with its opposition to the ERA and abortion. This hostile environment forced the women’s movement to focus on women’s economic and family problems, problems that eluded the grasp of policies that banned sex discrimination. Feminism, then, did not threaten the family in the same way it did in the 1970s. In addition, a second income was needed for most Americans to stave off economic decline in the 1980s. New tax policies under the Reagan administration contributed to the polarization of the economy. Income levels soared for the wealthiest 20 percent of Americans while it fell by almost 10 percent for the poorest Americans. By 1990, nearly 60 percent of married women with young children worked outside the home. As a result, Pentecostals

³⁸Quote from *Ibid.*, 7; Second quote from “The 12,000 Mile Check Up,” *Pentecostal Homelife* (Jan.-Feb. 1976): 11-12.

and other conservative Christian groups gradually accepted new roles for women, as long as they maintained them within the traditional family structure.³⁹

For example, working outside the home slowly became an acceptable alternative for women, if they maintained their church and family obligations. Women were warned, however, that dividing their time between work, family, and church sometimes meant disastrous consequences for church attendance and spirituality. The *Pentecostal Herald*, the national magazine of the UPCI, began featuring quick and easy meals for working women. In “Help for Working Mothers,” Pentecostal author Karen Perry dedicated her story to all women who worked public jobs. She sympathized with working women because they needed “the Lord, your husband, the kids, and all the angels to assist you in all the things you have to do.” Perry provided advice on scheduling meals and reminded women to plan their schedules around church activities. Both *Pentecostal Homelife* and the *Louisiana Challenger* showcased articles instructing mothers how to ensure their children’s safety when they were home alone, particularly in those after-school hours when both parents were still at work.⁴⁰

Karen Campbell also discussed the array of problems that Christian women faced when they chose to work outside the home in her 1985 article on the “Christian Working Mother.” Campbell knowingly

³⁹Roark, *American Promise*, 1122, 1132.

⁴⁰Nettie Kepler, “Mommy. Mommy? Mommy!” *Pentecostal Homelife* (September-October 1976): 13; *Pentecostal Herald* (May 1983); Beryl Brooks, “The Children of Working Mothers,” *Pentecostal Homelife* (May 1985): 6-7.

sympathized with the woman “who has been raised with proper Christian ethics” and faces the guilt of “not being home where they belong.” While maintaining that the woman’s place is in the home, she provided advice for the Christian woman “who finds herself working.” She advised women to turn to Jesus for comfort and strength in their everyday activities. Campbell reassured women “that although the American woman’s lifestyle has forcefully changed, He who created all things has not.”⁴¹

While Campbell attempted to provide helpful advice for women, she still stressed the traditional family order and division of labor. She conceded that Christian women could work, but this did not alleviate their traditional responsibilities to home and family. She reminded the Christian working mother that “her husband likes dinner at 5:00 and that her children need help with her homework.” Campbell reaffirmed her support of traditional gender roles in her 1986 article “Go, Granny, Gone.” She nostalgically recalled the day when, “Grandma knew her priorities. Family was always first.” She accused many of “today’s grandmas” of being more concerned with their careers than their families. While the world called it liberation, Campbell maintained that it was simply “Liberation from what God intended.” Her writings provide a glimpse of the shifting ideas of gender role and family life within the church. Writers suggested that it was acceptable for women to work outside the home if necessary, but there was no mention of women choosing careers for personal fulfillment. The UPCI conformed to the

⁴¹Quotes from Karen Campbell, “The Christian Working Mother,” *Pentecostal Homelife* (April 1985): 4-5.

cultural standard of women in the workplace, but it resisted this standard at the same time by glorifying the role of the woman in the home.⁴²

In the mid-1980s, both Norman Paslay and Pam Pugh described the value and responsibilities of women who chose to work at home. In “Yes, My Wife Works,” Paslay outlined his wife’s many responsibilities in the home. He admitted that he would not be able to accomplish her many tasks, and he encouraged men not to “take their wife’s diversity and faithfulness for granted.” Pugh gave a humorous account of women’s importance in the home. She wrote: “The women’s liberation movement has spent a lot of time and money... trying to prove there is absolutely no difference between men and women.” Pugh responded to this by outlining the inherent differences in men and women, and she supported her point by recounting the last time she was sick. It was only then that she realized how much easier women could handle the responsibilities of home and children than men. Pugh lamented that “it is not convenient for me to become tired until the children have already had their baths, a bowl of cereal, pajamas on... and have said their prayers.”⁴³

Women, however, increasingly wrote about their resistance to submission and their struggles to conform to God’s word. Beverly Harman discussed this in her article “I Struggle to Submit.” Harman apologetically asserted that there “have been so many times when I feel justified in taking the role of leadership in our home... I don’t want to be

⁴²Ibid., 4-5; Karen Campbell, “Go, Granny, Gone,” *Pentecostal Homelife* (September 1986): 6.

⁴³First quote from Norman Palsay, “Yes, My Wife Works,” *Pentecostal Homelife* (August 1986): 7; Remaining quotes from Pam Pugh, “There is a Difference,” *Pentecostal Homelife* (January 1985): 9.

on the sidelines when my husband is getting all the credit.” She used her husband’s career as an example of the difficulties she experienced in submission. “I feel insulted,” she confided, “when Gary is commended on his business sense, when it was me putting his thoughts into complete sentences, correcting the misspelled words, and putting the whole thing into a proper business letter.” Her ultimate test came when her husband wanted to make a career change that would necessitate moving to another city. She fulfilled her duty of submission, however, when she envisioned Christ on the cross. She realized that submission is not “always the easiest way out, ...but my being submissive is a way to say thank you to God.”⁴⁴

Janice Eldredge also described the difficulties she faced submitting to her husband. She confessed that at one point in her life, she “began wishing for a job... something more exciting than mopping Kool-Aid up off the floor.” Her husband rejected the idea, but Eldredge did not give up so easily. She admitted that she had already planned on spending her newly earned money on a bedspread and curtains. Soon, however, God revealed to her that “Satan was painting a pretty picture for me. He presented a career to look exciting and glamorous while staying home was projected as unimportant.” Eldredge conceded that it might be acceptable for some mothers to work outside the home, but it was not for her. She needed to appreciate her husband’s sacrifices to provide for her family and respect his authority.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Beverly Harman, “I Struggle to Submit,” *Pentecostal Homelife* (June 1985): 10-12.

⁴⁵Janice Eldredge, “Keepers at Home,” *Pentecostal Homelife* (June 1987): 13.

While many outsiders might assume that these women were merely participating in their own victimization by submitting to their husbands' will, the women themselves claimed that surrender led to freedom and power. When seen in this light, submission can become a way to achieve happiness and fulfillment. For both Eldredge and Harmon, they and their families were happier and more content after they submitted to their husbands. Harmon reassured her readers that after she finally learned to submit to her husband, she realized that he always acted in the best interest of their family.

Submission, however, was not powerlessness. Female writers often stressed the influence the woman had over her husband. A woman's power to persuade her husband was portrayed as a serious and empowering responsibility. They were charged with their own and their husbands' happiness. The previously mentioned case of "Ethel" who was sexually unresponsive to her unsaved husband provided an example of this. By not physically submitting to her husband, Ethel was a stumbling block for both of their happiness. As a result of her physical response to him, she contributed to both of their dissatisfaction and prevented him from becoming a Christian. The woman who satisfied her husband's sexual needs, however, ensured his happiness and her own because a man "will not likely look for another if he has a true wife at home." Thus, the woman was rewarded with a faithful husband and the man's "more aggressive" sexual appetite was filled.⁴⁶

Instructions to the bride at Pentecostal wedding ceremonies also reinforced the importance of female power and influence. The

⁴⁶Quotes from "Married to an Unbeliever," 30.

instructions placed the woman at the center of the home and stated that the “strength of her gentle power” was boundless. The way she used her power and upheld her responsibilities to Christ and her husband provided “the balance staff” and “thermostat” for the home. The bride was advised that her husband’s happiness was in her hands that she must use her influence wisely, because “a man wants to look good in the eyes of a woman.” The woman had the capacity to “tear your husband’s self-esteem into shreds” or to use her “gentle strength” to lift him to “the height of God’s purpose for life.” If she did this successfully, she would also find happiness and fulfillment walking beside him.⁴⁷

Again, the UPC with its language of female responsibility and influence over their husbands articulated the language of antifeminism used by a wider network of conservative women. In *The Power of the Positive Woman*, antifeminist activist Phyllis Schlafly warned women that their marriages would fail if they were unable to give their husbands the “appreciation and admiration his manhood craves.” Similarly, in *The Total Woman*, Christian author Marabel Morgan instructed women that their husbands needed them to praise and appreciate their virility and masculinity. Feminist writer Barbara Ehrenreich noted that this language revealed a contemptuous image of men as weak individuals in need of their wives’ approval and support. By contrast, women are seen as active and loving individuals who use their power to ensure the happiness and well-being of their family.⁴⁸

⁴⁷“Woman to Woman,” typed page in “UPC folder” Holy Spirit Research Center, Oral Roberts University.

⁴⁸Schlafly, *The Power of a Positive Woman*, 54-55; Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment*

The story of female submission, however, does not end here. By the 1990s wifely submission had shifted from the center of Pentecostals' concerns about families. As women evangelists increased in number and authority, the messages Pentecostal women received from the platform changed focus. While the church certainly still upheld its belief in male headship and female submission, these topics shifted from the center of the stage. Discussions of submission shifted from wifely submission to surrender to God. At women's meetings and revivals, Pentecostal believers testified to the strength and power they found after they surrendered to God. Vesta Mangun preached on how women could become more powerful mothers, wives, and Christians. Mangun, co-founder of the successful Pentecostals of Alexandria, delivered a message on the "sacredness of the ordinary" and sacrifice and surrender to Jesus. Through submission and surrender to God, women could find joy and authority in everyday activities. Mangun told the story of three women at the laundromat washing clothes. When a passerby asked what they were doing, the first two replied washing clothes. The third woman, however, was a Spirit-filled woman. Her response was "I'm mothering two young children, who will someday be important and appreciate what I've done." As the women cheered, Mangun shouted, "God will make a nobody a somebody. God will take an old worm of a thing, and He will make you a **SOMEBODY.**" For the women of the UPCI, the most mundane of tasks could become an act of worship when they surrendered to God's will.⁴⁹

(New York: Doubleday, 1983), 163; R. Marie Griffith points to similar themes in *Women's Aglow* fellowship in *God's Daughters*, Chapter 6.

⁴⁹ Vesta Mangun, UPCI Louisiana Women's Conference, July 3, 2002.

Changing marriage and social patterns since the 1960s have tended to dictate United Pentecostals' ideals of female submission. Initially, the church maintained strict ideas concerning female submission and women's roles as "keepers AT home." From the mid-1970s through the 1980s, the church began to couch its language of submission in terms that would appeal to its female members, such as freedom and fulfillment. Church men and women realized that a high percentage of their members worked outside the home, and they began to address the needs of these women. Pentecostal women still subscribed to the doctrine of wifely submission, but surrender to God had become the more frequent and powerful message. Through surrender, God could empower women to do His work.

Christian submission, then, is a flexible doctrine attached to ideas of freedom and control rather than a plan for feminine subjugation. For Pentecostal women, ideals of Christian womanhood and marriage are no longer tied to the image of the happy submissive housewife. Pentecostal men and women maintain that the Bible provides the guidelines for male/female relationships, but they often have received conflicting messages about the meaning of the passages. While they uphold the doctrine of female submission as "not just a cultural, but a commanded thing," debates and uncertainty over the meanings of God's command have left the United Pentecostal Church International open to outside influence. This influence has led to Pentecostal women taking on new roles within the church.

EPILOGUE

On a sweltering July afternoon in 2002, I attended the United Pentecostal Church International's Women's Conference in Tioga, Louisiana. Trying to escape the heat, I hurried into the large worship center where more than a thousand women from across the state gathered for the three-day event. Taken aback at the elaborate interior, I surveyed the scene. White women of various ages mingled inside a sanctuary that was decorated with elaborate banners proclaiming "Jesus is Lord" and other scriptural messages. Outside the sanctuary, tables displayed a variety of Christian romance novels, music, and self-improvement guides that were available for purchase at the worship center's bookstore or website. Laughter rang across the center as women greeted friends and relatives, elevating the already high level of excitement. Contemporary Christian music played over speakers and large screens were strategically placed around the center broadcasting the activities on the front stage where a handful of women sat waiting their turn to speak.

For the next three hours, these women took turns preaching and testifying to the crowd. One speaker, who owned a business in central Louisiana, told the audience of the power of Jesus to save His children. She told about praying with a young man until he received Holy Spirit baptism, right in the middle of her store. She encouraged women to gather in small groups and pray for the ability to do Jesus' work. As they prayed, the center rang with shouts of "I Love You Jesus." The speaker began to

cry and to urge the audience to pray for the spirit to fight Satan and spread the glorious message of Jesus. The women, most of whom had gathered in groups of three or four, held hands or laid hands on one another in prayer. A few remained in their seats, weeping and crying out to Jesus. The auditorium was filled with the sounds of women sobbing, praying, and speaking in tongues. After several hours of prayer and singing, the women participated in a final closing prayer and left the worship center ready to fight corruption and immorality for Jesus.¹

For Pentecostal women, this is a typical scene of worship. Hundreds of similar services that vary in size and place are held weekly throughout Louisiana and the nation. The expressions of faith from these women reveal a spirituality that is filled with a belief in the power of God to reach into their lives, heal their pains, and fill them with an enduring love and peacefulness. This faith cuts across boundaries of marital status, education, or social class to form networks of Spirit-filled women who believe in a personal and loving God that can bring miracles to everyday lives. Prayer, both private and public, has become an important expression of faith for Pentecostal women, and it has provided them with new leadership opportunities within the church.

In examining the roles of women within Louisiana's United Pentecostal Church International, I have analyzed the ways modern culture has influenced their places. Women's roles as church leaders, evangelists, and worshippers have experienced tremendous change over the last century. Just as cultural changes in the wake of World War II led

¹United Pentecostal Church International Women's Conference, Tioga, LA, July 3, 2002.

to a decline in women's leadership opportunities within the church, changing social norms have allowed women to partially reclaim their leadership roles. Through fundraising activities, women's organizations, and their willingness to speak of God's power to work in their lives, women have fought to restore their leadership positions and influence. As they have struggled to reclaim these roles, they have sought support and comfort from groups of other women. This desire has led to the growth of women's conferences and organizations within the church that allow women to form networks of Spirit-filled believers.

In the mid-1970s, the Louisiana District of the UPCI began hosting one-day conferences to provide women with support and an outlet to express their faith. Traditionally, Louisiana's women's organizations have led Auxiliary activities, and they organized the first women's conference. In 1979, the Louisiana Auxiliary began hosting a retreat for women who were involved in the ministry, such as pastors' wives, missionaries, and administrators' wives. In these early conferences, however, organizers had difficulty finding qualified women who were willing to speak. According to Thetus Tenney, conference organizer and wife of General Superintendent T.F. Tenney, there were very few women who were qualified and able to speak at the church's first conference. In the 1980s, however, women in Louisiana began to seek new opportunities for Christian leadership both in Pentecostal educational institutions and within the church. Female enrollment in church-sponsored colleges and seminaries increased throughout the 1980s, and women began to assert the importance of their contributions to the church.²

²Thetus Tenney, interview by author, October 15, 2002.

A controversy over the Ladies' Auxiliary in 1983 reflected women's struggles to gain influence within the church. At the General Conference that year, women from Louisiana proposed that the Ladies' Auxiliary officially change its name to Women's Ministries. Thetus Tenney asserted that Louisiana women wanted the name change because auxiliary implied a secondary role for women. In addition, she argued that woman was a biblical term, while lady implied a value judgment. The proposal was met with mixed response, and the General Conference ultimately rejected it. It did, however, rename the Auxiliary the Ladies' Ministries to reflect its importance within the church. Women within Louisiana, however, retained their opposition to the term "ladies," and within the state, the Ladies' Auxiliary was renamed Women's Ministries.³

Leaders within the state's Women's Ministries worked to expand and improve their annual conferences, and by 1988 Louisiana women's conferences were attracting women from all fifty states and several foreign countries. Over 10,000 women from every state attended Louisiana's women's conference in 1988. The goal of these conferences was to increase women's self-esteem and help them find a place for leadership within the church. By the 1988 conference, the number of qualified women speakers had grown to over fifty. Due to the success of the state's conferences, women's groups in other church districts began hosting women's conferences. Currently, each district of the UPCI hosts its own annual women's conference.⁴

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

During these conferences, women are encouraged to use their individual talents to work for the church and Jesus. One of the most important responsibilities assigned to women is prayer. The language surrounding women's prayer reveals the social and spiritual dynamics it involves. In *Praying for Justice*, anthropologist Carol Greenhouse described four different forms of prayer: private prayer, prayer with a third party, collective prayer, and prayer narratives. All these forms of prayer are displayed during women's conferences. Women expressed their needs and desires through prayer and provide each other assurance that their requests will be answered.⁵

Modern culture has also shaped ideas of prayer. Women's groups and conferences both in Louisiana and nationally have moved their focus from feminine submission to prayer and spiritual warfare. In their focus on spiritual warfare, United Pentecostal women are part of a larger trend in conservative women's organizations, such as the charismatic Women's Aglow fellowship. Spiritual warfare has a long history in evangelical theology and is rooted in scriptural passages. For example, Paul instructed the Ephesians to "put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." Prayer has changed from a voluntary, private activity to a method of harnessing group attention on specific issues. Women's emphasis on spiritual warfare through prayer may seem at odds with their ideas of female submission. According to Pentecostal believers, however, this form of activism is acceptable because it is selfless and ordained by God. Women use their roles as

⁵Greenhouse, *Praying for Justice*, 87-90; Griffith, *God's Daughters*, 75-76.

wives and mothers to justify spiritual warfare, because one of their goals is to protect the family. Through prayer, Spirit-filled women fight against evil forces or spirits that they believe tear apart families and generally destroy social values. Surrender to God can give ordinary women extraordinary powers that they use to “do battle” against these forces. Through prayer, women can fight for and protect their families and homes.⁶

Spiritual warfare reverses the gender roles of military combat. In military warfare men are typically the combat soldiers while women remain on the sidelines supporting them. The primary burden of spiritual warfare, however, falls to female believers who use their powers to fight Satan. Beverly LaHaye, leader of Concerned Women for America, argued that “Men are geared toward action and are the first to strike, whereas women plan strategy. Intercessory prayer is a strong weapon for Christian women.” According to religion scholar R. Marie Griffith, spiritual warfare involves the process of intercession or mediating between God and the person one is praying for as well as standing as a barrier between that person and Satan. Through this process, believers can stop Satan by preventing him from tempting individuals who rightly belong to God. Spiritual warfare mimics warfare by using a physical form of prayer involving shouting, kicking, and other movements that indicate a struggle with Satan. According to “Gretchen,” a Pentecostal believer, “Women’s roles in the church are no longer confined to selling peanut brittle. We

⁶Ephesians 6: 11-12; Griffith, *God’s Daughters*, 192-93; Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, 107.

recognize that we can work to save the lost through prayer, and we can serve on the front lines fighting for our country.”⁷

Satan’s warfare with women often includes attacks on marriage and family. Nancy Grandquist, a UPCI evangelist, told the story of Satan’s destruction of her daughter’s life at the 2000 Louisiana women’s conference. Grandquist’s daughter succumbed to worldly temptations and led a life filled with drug use and sex. Grandquist and her church members, however, continually prayed and fought for her daughter to return to Jesus. After Grandquist’s daughter got pregnant, she and her boyfriend returned to a Spirit-filled life in the church.⁸

While women like Grandquist can save their families through prayer, they also fight more visible targets, such as homosexuality, abortion, and illegal drug use. Sending prayers to God about these issues is considered at least as important as doing actual work for them, because the women believe their prayers may change people’s hearts and cleanse society of evil spirits. In this way women can partially circumvent male authority. Because men and women are considered equal when they act under spiritual authority, these women become powerful prayer warriors when they surrender themselves to God.⁹

⁷Griffith, *God’s Daughters*, 191-96; “Gretchen,” confidential interview by author, September 19, 2002; Beverly LaHaye in Diana Scimone, “Women of Valor,” *New Wine* (October 1986): 27; quoted in Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, 142.

⁸Nancy Grandquist, “God’s Deliverance in My Family,” testimony delivered at UPCI Women’s Conference, July 7, 2000. The tape-recording of Grandquist’s message is available through Louisiana District’s Tape Ministry.

⁹Griffith, *God’s Daughters*, 194-96.

Pentecostal evangelist Vesta Mangun, for example, discussed female empowerment. In a 2002 women's conference sermon, she described former Louisiana powerhouse Huey Long and his promises to make "every man a king." Mangun said, "I'm here to tell you that God will make every woman a queen. You are an earthen vessel to God, and he will raise you up and make you a mighty force." Once a woman becomes this force, she has the authority to show the power of the Holy Spirit. With this spiritual power, women can begin spiritual warfare on the evil and moral decay in the world. Mangun encouraged women to take their "spiritual weapons" and "fight for our families, and for our children, and for our schools."¹⁰

Pentecostal women's struggle to keep the purity of their family and community has led to increasing political activism from church members. According to Sara Diamond, among those women who pray about political issues, a certain percentage will boost their prayers with action, often called "putting their feet to prayer." For example, within Louisiana, Thetus Tenney has emphasized the responsibility of women to fight immoral influences on the state's school system. She has served on the state's textbook adoption committee as well as the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Janice Troutt, a UPCI evangelist, has also encouraged activism from Pentecostal women. Troutt instructed women to invite local politicians to Women's Ministries' meetings and church services. Pentecostal women, she said, should let their local officials know that "we are a powerful force in the community"

¹⁰Vesta Mangun, 2002 UPCI Women's Conference, Tioga, LA, July 3, 2002.

and that they should respect the demands of Pentecostal church members.¹¹

Pentecostal women are also pushing the church to allow more room for women's leadership. At the 2002 General Conference, a resolution was introduced to change all gender-specific wording, such as "he" and "his," within the church's ministerial requirements. After much discussion, the resolution was tabled. Within the last fifteen years, growing numbers of women have sought careers in church ministry. While none of Louisiana's 24 licensed female UPCI ministers pastor churches, there are women who serve as assistant pastors. Through Home Missions' departments, particularly the Ethnic Outreach department, men and women have worked to establish nondenominational churches in the Oneness tradition. There are several women within the state who lead these congregations; however, they are only loosely affiliated with the UPCI. A significant step for women's leadership within the UPCI was made in 2001 when the church appointed Thetus Tenney international coordinator of its World Network of Prayer, a prayer network operating in 135 countries.¹²

Since Alice Taylor's Holy Ghost baptism in 1906, Louisiana's Spirit-filled women have experienced drastic changes in their roles within the church. While Pentecostals celebrate their adherence to old-time religious values, modern culture has shaped women's participation in the church. In the early years of Pentecostalism, women experienced almost unprecedented freedom to serve as evangelists. As the church adapted to

¹¹Ibid.; Janice Troutt, testimony, UPCI Women's conference, July 3, 2001; Diamond, *Spiritual Warfare*, 193.

¹²Interview with Thetus Tenney.

the demands of changing times, however, women's leadership opportunities declined and they sought to use their gifts by raising money for the church and educating its youth. Contemporary society also influenced the ways women lived their faith through healing practices, holiness, and family roles. While women's leadership opportunities have declined within the church, the UPCI consistently has offered women an outlet of spiritual expression through its emotional style of worship services, Holy Spirit baptism, and prayer.

By exploring the roles of Louisiana women within the United Pentecostal Church International, this dissertation has attempted to question standard paradigms of American religion that view it as a tool for preserving patriarchy. The problem with this view is that it neglects the story of conservative religion women, women who often condemn feminist reforms. While these women have often faced resistance from within the church, they have found ways to express themselves within its boundaries and have shaped the church's guidelines to meet their needs. Pentecostal women have used their authority as Spirit-filled believers to influence their homes, families, churches, and communities.

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