

**Shaping the Missionary Identity of
The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada:
Spirit Baptism and Eschatology in the Writings of
George A. Chambers and Robert E. McAlister**

A Thesis

**For the Th.M. Degree
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INTRODUCTION

Classical Pentecostals¹ have increasingly participated in the growing ecumenical dialogue in recent decades. However, this is a newer development in the Pentecostal movement.² In its relatively short history since the opening decade of the twentieth century, Pentecostalism has not involved itself with other churches or denominations.

It was not until the involvement of David du Plessis with the World Council of Churches and the larger ecumenical movement in the 1960's that Pentecostals began to open up to serious dialogue with other Christians.³ Although some involvement began at this time, Pentecostals did not begin to engage more fully in this type of dialogue until the 1980's. This increasing involvement in

¹ Classical Pentecostalism is used as a term to distinguish between that group of Pentecostal denominations and churches which generally traces its roots to the Azusa Street revival in 1906 and the charismatic Pentecostals resulting from the Charismatic Movement in the 1960's and following. The latter group did not, for the large part, leave their existing denominations as the former did. Thus, one often finds divergent theologies existent between these two groups. For this reason, a differentiation between them is necessary. However, for simplicity, and reasoning that only the classical Pentecostals will be in focus in this thesis, the term Pentecostal will be used in reference to Classical Pentecostals.

² Note, for example, that The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) only recently appointed Dr. Ron Kydd as "interchurch liaison advisor" to officially represent the PAOC "in discussions with other Christian groups." Previous to this, Kydd had personally participated in Roman Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue, beginning in the 1980's. The PAOC felt the need for an official position to represent the denomination in such discussions. This action demonstrates the official position of the PAOC in regard to ecumenical dialogue. "PAOC Appoints Interchurch Liaison Advisor" *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (March, 1998) 22-3.

³ John A. Mackay *Ecumenics: The Science of the Church Universal*. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964) 198. Mackay claims to have introduced du Plessis to the ecumenical movement.

the last two decades demonstrates a greater willingness to interact with other churches and denominations.

In November 1952, Lesslie Newbigin, speaking on the nature of the Church, argued that the presence of Pentecostals was needed in the dialogue between Protestantism and Catholicism.⁴ Any interchurch dialogue is lacking if it does not include representatives of any and every denomination. The absence of Pentecostals was the result of many factors. However, the following exploration of the theology of early Pentecostalism will demonstrate in part the theological basis that contributed to a failure on the part of Pentecostals to involve themselves in dialogue.

The Pentecostal movement is so vast and diverse that any attempt to address the whole movement is too ambitious and certainly fails in its effort. This thesis focuses on one institutional expression of Canadian Pentecostalism; namely, The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (hereafter the PAOC). The focus is further narrowed to two of the PAOC's earliest and most influential leaders, as representatives of the theology of this large body in its formative years.

Robert E. McAlister was one of the seven original signatories of the charter of the PAOC in 1919, as well as the originator and first editor of the PAOC publication, *The (Canadian) Pentecostal Testimony*. He served as editor of the paper for fifteen years and as Missionary-Secretary and General-

⁴ Lesslie Newbigin *The Household of God*. (New York: Friendship Press, 1954) 94-5.

Secretary of the General Executive for thirteen years, all the while pastoring, and thus facilitated the shaping of the thinking of an entire generation of Canadian Pentecostals. George A. Chambers, another of the original seven, was the first General Superintendent of the PAOC, a position which, along with pastoring, he held for fifteen years, 1919-1934. His leadership set the direction for the overall growth and development of the PAOC. In these positions, their preaching, teaching and writing would influence the PAOC as a whole.

In fact, Thomas Miller has referred to McAlister as the “Architect of Canadian Pentecostalism.”⁵ In the case of Chambers, his work as General Superintendent was lauded: “We do most certainly esteem him very highly in love for his work’s sake.”⁶ He was remembered as having “laid solid foundations” and as being “truly a spiritual father to the many young workers throughout our Canadian Fellowship.”⁷ In sum, the theology of these two leaders is regarded as essential for any understanding of the development of the PAOC’s self-understanding. In this way, these two leaders were very influential in their positions, and thus their theology can be seen to be of great importance for an understanding of the development of the PAOC’s

⁵ Thomas W. Miller, “The Architect of Canadian Pentecostalism: Robert E. McAlister” in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (July 1989), 9-11.

⁶ “Appreciations of Our Retiring General Superintendent” *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (December, 1934) 7.

⁷ Walter E. McAlister, “Our First General Superintendent Promoted to Glory” in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (Feb. 1958), 5.

theology as a whole. An examination of their writings will be limited to those that were produced up to and including 1936, thus encompassing the time during which they served in official leadership capacities in the PAOC.

This theology involves the Pentecostal perception of the Church, which for them is found in the missionary identity of the early Pentecostal movement. This missionary identity is affected by two other tenets of Pentecostal theology: eschatology and pneumatology. These constitute two of the four themes which Donald Dayton suggests shaped early Pentecostal theology: salvation, healing, baptism with the Holy Spirit, and the second coming of Christ.⁸

The early Pentecostal eschatology was understood and expressed as the "Latter Rain Covenant." In this concept, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was viewed as the early rain, while the present-day outpouring (i.e. 1906 and following) was believed to be the latter rain. This latter rain was interpreted to be the key indication of the imminent return of Christ. In this way, the Pentecostal understanding of eschatology and the baptism with the Holy Spirit were inexorably connected. David A. Womack presents a clear example of this connection. Writing a publication for the Assemblies of God (considered to be an American "sister" organization of the

⁸ Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*. (Metuchen, NJ: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1987) 22.

PAOC), Womack declares, "Many Pentecostal believers see in the latter-day outpouring of the Holy Spirit a sign of the soon coming of Christ...."⁹

This early Pentecostal theology must be understood in the context of its background in the Holiness movement. The origins of Pentecostalism have been traced, by various authors, to the Keswickian and Wesleyan branches of the Holiness movement.¹⁰ This thesis will build upon the current scholarship on the nineteenth century roots of Pentecostalism.

In 1958, Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen highlighted the missions emphasis of Pentecostalism. He declared Pentecostalism to be the "Third Force" in Christianity. He opined that the third force groups "are one of the most important facts in the Christian history of our times."¹¹ He compared the movement to the first century Church and to those movements which fostered the Protestant Reformation. Thus, as the third force in Christianity, he regarded Pentecostalism as a vital aspect of twentieth-century Christianity.

Van Dusen clearly recognized the missionary character of Pentecostalism. This character was noted to be evident in evangelism at home, as he reported that, "they directly approach people -- in their homes, on the streets,

⁹ David A. Womack *The Wellsprings of the Pentecostal Movement*. (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1968) 88.

¹⁰ See for example, Edith L. Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism*. 2 vols. (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1989); Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*. (Metuchen, NJ: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1987); Vinson Synan, ed. *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins*. (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1975).

¹¹ Henry P. Van Dusen, "The Third Force" in *Life*. (June 9, 1958) 122.

anywhere -- and do not wait for them to come to church."¹² An example from the inner city areas of Manhattan was used to fortify his remarks. He reported that "some years ago" not one mainline Protestant Church existed in a run-down area, "while some 50 third force congregations were active there."¹³ Van Dusen found this character to be demonstrated abroad as well. He stated, "The movement is even more active and numerous overseas than at home for the good reason that, without exception, its groups are militantly missionary (emphasis mine)."¹⁴

While the dynamic evangelistic and missionary character of Pentecostalism was recognized from outside the movement in this way, it was also valued and fostered within the "third force" movement. In 1920, R. E. McAlister referred to the PAOC, itself a part of this movement, as an "aggressive missionary enterprise."¹⁵

This orientation is reflected in the *Memorandum of Agreement* signed by the seven original leaders for the reception of the government charter of the PAOC in 1919. One of the "purposes and objects" outlined therein deals clearly with evangelism and missions: "To carry on missionary work for the

¹² Ibid., 122.

¹³ Ibid., 124.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ R. E. McAlister, "Open Letter" in *The Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*. (December, 1920), 4.

spread of the gospel.”¹⁶ Thus, the desire and drive for concentrated effort in evangelism is seen to have been built into the composition of the PAOC itself.

This stance of the PAOC regarding evangelism was reinforced in one of the first meetings of the General Assembly of the PAOC in 1919. In dealing with “the issue of One God and Trinitarian views, also the Baptismal Formula,” the General Assembly’s response was direct: “...be it resolved, that we as a body go on record as disapproving not only of the above issues, but of all other issues that divide and confuse God’s people to no profit, and that aggressive evangelism be our motto (emphasis mine).”¹⁷

The importance of reaching the unconverted with the Gospel was reinforced often in articles in *The Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*. An excerpt from W. E. McAlister’s article “Soul Winners” illustrates the early Pentecostals’ attitude toward evangelism:

Some Christians do not believe that the primary duty of the Church in this day, is the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the saving of souls;.... ...if we look at the condition of humanity round about us, I am sure that we will realize that what they need is not entertainment, not socials and banquets, not classical music, not sermons on community uplift; but real old-fashioned heartfelt salvation. If we apply our attention to all of these other things, we cannot expect that the result will be numbers of precious souls won for the Master. And we are not surprised to find that where the energies of God’s people are directed in these other channels, very few real conversions take place. If we are to win souls for Jesus, then the “salvation of souls” must be our OBJECTIVE.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Memorandum of Agreement*. PAOC Archives.

¹⁷ Minutes of the General Meeting of the General Assembly of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, Nov. 25-28, 1919. PAOC Archives.

¹⁸ W. E. McAlister, “Soul Winners” in *The Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*. (Oct. 1921) 3.

The presentation of programs was not the answer; the early Pentecostals reacted against that approach in the Churches from which they exited. The central thrust of all activities of the Pentecostal Church had to be concentrated on the objective of evangelism.

The leaders of the PAOC felt the urgency for the spread of the Gospel across the world. A. G. Ward of Winnipeg, an early minister in the Pentecostal movement in Canada, reflected on the early and lingering effect of the baptism with the Holy Spirit upon himself and others:

The vision of a lost world and of millions sitting in darkness waiting for the life-giving gospel became so real. We must go -- the urge of the Holy Spirit was upon us. We discovered that the "Go ye" of the risen Lord meant us -- that the whole business of the whole Church was to give the whole Gospel to the whole world, no matter what the cost or sacrifice might be. Missionaries went out by the score. Soon there were hundreds. Today there are more than a thousand. The Pentecostal Movement has already made a substantial contribution to the evangelization of the world -- and the urge is still upon us.¹⁹

A Pentecostal account of the burden for the spread of the gospel at home further illustrates this point. Gloria Kulbeck, a Pentecostal historian, records James Montgomery's reminiscences of the early years. He was part of a small company of pastors driving along Highway Number Two from Arnprior, Ontario, to a conference in London. "As we motored through various places,

¹⁹ A. G. Ward, "Hitherto Hath the Lord Helped Us" in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (Oct. 1956) 10.

we would remove our hats, and pray that a Pentecostal church would be founded in each of these localities.”²⁰

The PAOC was comprised of 27 assemblies in 1920²¹, with 18 missionaries being supported organizationally and financially.²² The PAOC grew to 220 churches in 1932, and now supported 37 missionaries.²³ The number of missionaries grew to 160 by 1969²⁴; and by 1986, the PAOC had grown to 1036 congregations. Offerings for World Missions in 1986 totalled \$10,139,197, which was used to support 313 foreign missionaries in 28 countries.²⁵ At present there are approximately 1,100 PAOC congregations in Canada.²⁶ It can be seen that great steps have been taken to ensure that the PAOC’s evangelistic vision is realized.

This evangelistic and missionary emphasis formed a central part of the early Pentecostal identity. Supportive of this conclusion is Irving Whitt, a Pentecostal professor and writer. He states of the PAOC, “As the young

²⁰ Gloria Kulbeck, *What God Hath Wrought: A History of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. (Toronto, ON: The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, 1958), 7.

²¹ “Directory of Canadian Pentecostal Assemblies in Co-operative Fellowship” in *The Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*. (December, 1920) 4.

²² “Disbursements” in *The Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*. (October, 1921) 3.

²³ “What Hath God Wrought!” in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (April, 1932) 4.

²⁴ Eric A. Hornby, “A Co-operative Fellowship” in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (November, 1969) 28.

²⁵ “Current Facts of Interest about The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada” Pamphlet (PAOC, 1986).

²⁶ Slauenwhite, “Fresh Breezes” 17.

movement developed, missions was central to its self-perception."²⁷ Pentecostals have readily acknowledged their self-identity to be comprised of an evangelistic and missions focus.

The infant Pentecostal movement was part of a whole milieu of eschatological thought that developed during the late nineteenth century and continued into the opening decades of the twentieth century. Dispensationalists believed the present dispensation of the Church would conclude with the imminent rapture of the Church at the return of Christ. Those pre-millennialists who did not fit into the dispensationalist position also looked for the imminent return of Christ, though they did not all necessarily agree as to the timing of the tribulation relative to this event.²⁸ Further, post-millennialists looked for the millennial Kingdom of God to be established by the Church in the present world, prior to the physical return of Christ. Thus, during the time leading up to and surrounding the birth of the Pentecostal movement, a number of religious leaders and groups pointed to the imminent return of Christ.

Comparable to dispensationalists and other pre-millennialists, Pentecostals believed in the imminent return of Christ, but their specific

²⁷ Irving A. Whitt, *Developing a Pentecostal Missiology in the Canadian Context (1867-1944): The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. D.Miss. Dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1994. 188.

²⁸ Premillennialists are generally divided into three areas, according to their view of the return of Christ relative to the expected tribulation: pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, and post-tribulation.

eschatological position was shaped by their concept of the Latter Rain Covenant. In the early Pentecostal leaders' understanding, what set them apart from the other movements was God's divine sanction on their movement. While the concept of divine sanction was not original nor confined to the Pentecostal movement, early leaders, such as Chambers and McAlister, believed that God's sanction on their movement set them apart from others around them.

This perspective stemmed in part from a distinctive theology of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals felt that this theology was lost and/or neglected throughout church history and was only restored in the opening decade of the twentieth century, much the same as justification by faith for Luther, and sanctification for Wesley. Now that the "full gospel" was restored, God's plan for all time was surely to be imminently fulfilled. In this way, the restoration of this doctrine of the baptism with the Holy Spirit influenced the early Pentecostal understanding of eschatology.²⁹

I will proceed in the thesis by examining the central motif of early Pentecostal eschatology, the Latter Rain Covenant. From this, an exploration of the personal and theological backgrounds of Chambers and McAlister will

²⁹ The relationship between the early Pentecostal theology of the Holy Spirit, and early Pentecostal eschatology, expressed in the Latter Rain Covenant, is mutual. The Pentecostal understanding of a repeat of the day of Pentecost shaped the eschatology of the Latter Rain. However, it can also be noted that the concept of the Latter Rain Covenant gave rise to the expectation of such a repetition. Thus, while the causal relationship between the development of these two aspects of early Pentecostal theology is not completely clear, it does not affect the relationship of these aspects to the formation of the missionary identity of early Pentecostalism.

be pursued. The development of their views of the baptism with the Holy Spirit and eschatology will be examined. From this basis, their perspective of the Pentecostal movement as a missionary enterprise will then be analyzed. The conclusion will explore the implications of this early Pentecostal identity for present ecumenical dialogue, and re-evaluate this early identity.

Thesis Statement:

Robert E. McAlister and George A. Chambers, active in formative roles in the establishment of the PAOC, and in the formation of its theology, are representative of the early theology of the PAOC. In their theology, eschatology and pneumatology were understood in terms of the concept of the Latter Rain Covenant. These early Pentecostal leaders understood the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the opening decade of the twentieth century, experienced through the baptism with the Holy Spirit, with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues, to be the Latter Rain. This Latter Rain was understood as the empowerment needed for the evangelization of the world, as the physical latter rain was needed for the physical harvest. They believed this to be a clear sign of the imminent return of Christ. In their interpretation, it mirrored the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and thus signaled the imminent end of the church age. Those who accepted and received this experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit were believed to be set apart as God's special servants in evangelizing the

world, thus fulfilling God's purpose for the end of the present dispensation of the Spirit. In this way, the Pentecostal movement was believed to occupy a divinely sanctioned position in God's plan.

I THE LATTER RAIN COVENANT

Any approach to the eschatological thought of the early Pentecostal leaders must take into account the prevalent eschatological schema in the period in which Chambers and McAlister came into the Pentecostal movement. As D. William Faupel notes, there were several models that characterized the eschatological thought of early Pentecostalism.¹ One is the "Latter Rain" model. The Latter Rain Covenant fulfilled two purposes. It served to explain the dispensational plan of God, and provided a rationale for the rise of the modern Pentecostal movement. The Latter Rain motif allowed the early Pentecostals to understand their movement as part of the divine plan.²

There is some evidence that the concept of the Latter Rain existed before the rise of the Pentecostal movement. The leader of the Pentecostal work in Winnipeg in 1907, A. H. Argue, writing in 1955, referred to a Commentary published in 1895. He reported that the writer defined the Latter Rain in James 5:7, "to be another Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Ghost...."³ A. R.

¹ Faupel, "The Function of "Models" in the Interpretation of Pentecostal Thought" in *Pneuma* 2, no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 54-57.

² It must be understood that when the terms "dispensation" or dispensational" are used, I am not referring to dispensationalism. A clear understanding of early Pentecostal eschatology results in seeing it in distinction from dispensationalism. Dispensational eschatology is formed around seven dispensations, and separates the Church and Israel in its interpretation of Scripture. Present society was to be abandoned, for there was no hope for reform of humanity. Early Pentecostal eschatology was built around three dispensations, and saw more continuity between the Church and Israel. It also included an optimism for the spread of the Gospel for the evangelization of the world for Christ. Cf. Gerald T. Sheppard "Pentecostals and the Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism: The Anatomy of an Uneasy Relationship" in *Pneuma* 6, no. 2 (Fall 1984): 5-33.

³ A. H. Argue, "Closing Scenes in Prophecy" in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (October, 1955) 26.

Fausset, the writer of this commentary on James, concluded, "The latter rain that shall precede the spiritual harvest will probably be another Pentecost-like effusion of the Holy Ghost."⁴ While not referring specifically to the concept of the Latter Rain, A. J. Gordon⁵ also looked for a repeat of Pentecost. Referring to the present dispensation of the Spirit, he declared, "there will be an outpouring of the Spirit "upon all flesh" literally at the end of this age, as there was typically at the beginning."⁶ His words demonstrate the thought of the Latter Rain Covenant without using its terminology.

The foremost Pentecostal delineation of this concept of the latter rain is found in D. Wesley Myland's work *The Latter Rain Covenant and Pentecostal Power*, written in 1910.⁷ His was a well known work within Pentecostalism, such that Donald Dayton declares it to be the "classic expression" of the

⁴ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, on the Old and New Testaments*. A. R. Fausset, I Cor.-Rev. Vol. vi. (London and Glasgow: William Collins, Sons, & Co., Limited,) 595.

⁵ Frederick Bruner asserted that Gordon was one of several evangelical leaders from the late 18th century whom Pentecostals looked to for their theology of the Holy Spirit. See Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness*. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1970) 44-45.

⁶ A. J. Gordon, *The Holy Spirit in Missions*. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1893) 20.

⁷ D. Wesley Myland, *The Latter Rain Covenant and Pentecostal Power*. Reprinted in *Three Early Pentecostal Tracts*. ed. by Donald W. Dayton. "The Higher Christian Life" Series. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985) 96-97. Originally published in 1910.

Latter Rain teaching.⁸ Myland's central assertion was based upon the physical rainfall in Palestine, which consisted of the early and latter rains. The Latter Rain Covenant, which Deuteronomy 11:10-21 records God establishing with Israel, was understood by Myland to have literal, typical, and prophetical aspects. He believed that these three elements were to be viewed as pertaining to historical Israel, God's spiritual people (the church), and to a dispensational framework, respectively. Thus, there was to be at once a literal, spiritual and dispensational interpretation of this covenant.⁹

For Myland, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, understood and experienced in the baptism with the Spirit, evidenced by speaking in tongues, was the spiritual aspect of the Latter Rain Covenant. He saw that the early rain signified the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The latter rain was then seen to be fulfilled in the outpouring of the Spirit in the present (this being understood as the revival beginning in 1906 and following).

Myland traced the increase in rainfall in Palestine during the latter half of the nineteenth century. He reported that there was forty-three per cent more rainfall between 1890-1900 than in the period of 1860-1870. As a result, he claimed that just as the rainfall in Palestine had decreased in history but now had been recently increasing, so God's spiritual latter rain, interpreted to be

⁸ Dayton, *Theological Roots*. 27.

⁹ Myland, *The Latter Rain Covenant*. 1-2.

the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, was also being restored. To reinforce the point, he noted that Israel was physically returning to the land of Palestine in the same period of time.¹⁰

A third aspect was also fulfilled. The early rain was understood to be for sowing, while the latter rain was for harvesting. Therefore, in the spiritual sense, the early spiritual rain, i.e., the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, was for "the introduction" of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, while the latter rain, being the contemporary Spirit outpouring, was intended "for the consummation of the dispensation."¹¹ Myland found great significance in this three-fold fulfillment of the covenant:

We have literal Israel returning to their land at the same time that the literal latter rain is coming to its normal fall upon that land. This together with the spiritual latter rain falling upon God's spiritual Israel today, betokens in a remarkable way that the closing days of the Dispensation are upon us.¹²

Since he saw the physical rainfall increasing, Israel returning to the land, and at the same time, God bestowing the Holy Spirit anew, Myland believed this fulfillment of the Latter Rain Covenant signalled that God's dispensational plan was nearing completion.

This three-fold interpretation of the Latter Rain Covenant served as a means of early Pentecostal self-understanding. They believed that the

¹⁰ Ibid., 95-96.

¹¹ Ibid., 95.

¹² Ibid., 129.

outpouring of the Holy Spirit was an event of God's timing, initiated according to His purposes. As receptors of this Pentecostal experience, they believed they were to fill a large part in God's plan.

Therefore, prophetically or dispensationally, the coming of the spiritual latter rain signified, for Myland and others, the nearness of the end:

Now you see right following this outpouring of the Holy Spirit in this "latter rain" time, is the gathering of God's people, the quickening of His people, bringing them into unity for His last work, and immediately following that, comes the tribulation.

He continued by declaring that following the tribulation, Christ would return with His Bride, having taken her to himself before the tribulation.¹³ Thus, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, understood to be the latter rain, signalled for Myland and his contemporaries the imminence of Christ's return for the church. They believed it also signified God's choice in raising up the Pentecostal movement for the harvest, that is, the evangelization of the world, which was to take place in the closing period of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

Myland's teaching had a large influence on the Pentecostal movement as a whole. This is indicated in the similar concepts and vocabulary that one encounters in the writings of numerous other early Pentecostals. Aimee Semple McPherson, the founder of the International Church of the Four

¹³ Ibid., 103.

Square Gospel¹⁴, declared, "Today we live in the closing hours of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit." She recognized that the "downpour of the former rain" initiated this dispensation and therefore at present "the teaching of the Holy Ghost and latter rain is flung broadcast."¹⁵

Harvesting, as the purpose of the latter rain, was echoed through David H. McDowell, who served as Assistant Chairman of the largest American Pentecostal fellowship, the Assemblies of God, from 1923 to 1929.¹⁶ He wrote that the coming of the Lord was the whole program. He asked, then answered his own question, "What is He waiting for? That this latter rain shall fulfill His purpose." He concluded, "Oh what a gathering when the harvest is over and the grain is stored!"¹⁷ For McDowell, the outpouring of the Spirit was interpreted as the latter rain, which was preparing God's people for the evangelization of the world and therefore indicative of the impending second coming of the Lord, and thus the end of the age. He believed that this eschatology was central to Pentecostalism. McDowell declared, in 1925,

¹⁴ C. M. Robeck, Jr. "Aimee Semple McPherson" in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. eds. Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 568-571.

¹⁵ Aimee Semple McPherson, *This is That: Personal Experiences, Sermons and Writings of Aimee Semple McPherson, Evangelist*. (Los Angeles, CA: Echo Park Evangelistic Association Inc., 1923) 641.

¹⁶ Carl Brumback, *Suddenly ...From Heaven: A History of the Assemblies of God*. (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1961) 294. Brumback noted that both Myland and McDowell came from the ranks of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, in which some taught to expect the coming of the latter rain. See 89f, 94.

¹⁷ David H. McDowell, "The Purpose of the Coming of the Lord" in *The Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*. (June, 1925) 4-5.

The second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is not a feature of a program but it is THE program. The preaching of regeneration, the restoration of man back to God, the outpouring and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit upon believers, the working of signs and wonders and miracles in the earth, are features of this program, leading up to its grand and glorious fulfillment.¹⁸

For McDowell, everything else hinged upon that one theme. His Latter Rain understanding of eschatology allowed him to make sense of the rest of the developing Pentecostal movement and theology as he understood it.

Elizabeth Sisson also demonstrated an understanding of the Latter Rain. As a missionary, writer, evangelist and church planter, she received credentials from the Assemblies of God in 1917.¹⁹ She wrote, "...God has from age to age, and dispensation to dispensation...times which are fixed." She believed the time of the end to be fixed, and understood the latter rain to be an indicator of this end. She expressed it in this way: "God has fitted them together in the one plain Plan of the "last days" and the "latter rain"."²⁰ The concept of the Latter Rain enabled Sisson to interpret the developments of the time as indicative of the last days.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ C. M. Robeck, Jr. "Elizabeth Sisson" in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. eds. Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 788-789.

²⁰ Elizabeth Sisson, "The Set Time" in *The Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*. (December, 1922) 6.

Writing before Myland in 1907, G. F. Taylor, an early leader of the Pentecostal Holiness Church,²¹ used the Latter Rain model to understand the emergence of the Pentecostal movement. He declared of the contemporary Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit: "This is the latter rain." For him, the Pentecostal revival in 1906 signified the beginning of the latter rain. He taught that in the scriptures, "...rains are used as types of the Holy Spirit."²² Therefore, the early and latter rains spoken of in Scripture pointed to different times of outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The early rain was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, while the present revival in 1906 was declared by Taylor to be the latter rain. This held great hope, for he postulated, "The Scriptures seem to teach that the latter rain is to be far greater than the former."²³ He also connected the latter rain with the imminence of the return of Christ, noting, "During the early rain the Holy Spirit, when giving utterance through a person, spake of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Lord; in these days of the latter rain the burden of the messages is the

²¹ H. V. Synan, "George Floyd Taylor" in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. eds. Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 842.

²² G. F. Taylor, *The Spirit and the Bride*. Republished in *Three Early Pentecostal Tracts*. "The Higher Christian Life" Series. ed. by Donald W. Dayton (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985) 90. Originally published in 1907.

²³ Ibid.

second coming of the Lord...."²⁴ The ministry of the Holy Spirit was experienced by Taylor as pointing to the imminence of Christ's return.

It is in this wider setting that we find George A. Chambers and Robert E. McAlister. This brief presentation of this broader background enables us to place them within their context and see how they relate theologically to that situation. In the next chapter we will explore the effect of the Latter Rain Covenant teaching in their writings.

²⁴ Ibid., 96.

II THE THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUNDS OF CHAMBERS & McALISTER

The personal and theological backgrounds of McAlister and Chambers are important, for they serve as a contrast to their Pentecostal theology. This will enable us to see more clearly the shift in their theological position regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is this transformation which influences their understanding of eschatology, and thus their view of the Pentecostal movement. It is to this task which we now direct our attention.

As acknowledged in the introduction, the Pentecostal movement grew largely out of the Holiness movement in the late nineteenth century. The backgrounds of Chambers and McAlister were similar. They were raised in Christian homes, and were converted in their teens. They were also exposed to the teaching of Methodism and the Holiness movement.

Robert E. McAlister had a holiness background. A letter written by his sister indicated that his parents had originally been staunch Presbyterians, and the family lived in Cobden, Ontario. At some point, the family came into contact with the Holiness movement, for McAlister was converted under Holiness ministry of Ralph C. Horner¹ (approximately 1900).²

Horner began his ministry as an evangelistic preacher in the Methodist Church, primarily in Ontario. His teachings, methods of evangelism, and affinity for the Holiness movement eventually became too objectionable for

¹ Thomas William Miller, *Canadian Pentecostals: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. (Mississauga, ON: Full Gospel Publishing House, 1994), p. 25.

² Jessie McLean, Biographical letter concerning Robert Edward McAlister, PAOC Archives.

his Methodist overseers, and he was disfellowshipped. In 1895, his name was dropped from the roll of the Montreal Conference. Shortly thereafter, the Holiness Movement Church was organized around Horner.³

Although Horner had been Methodist, his views had obviously shifted toward those of with the Holiness movement. He preached entire sanctification, and practised the use of "stripping rooms", in which those who were newly sanctified could "strip off" all excess ornamentation which was considered contrary to and a hindrance in achieving holiness.⁴ However, it seems that Horner believed in two experiences subsequent to conversion. He affirmed conversion and entire sanctification as definite experiences, but also held some belief in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing to suggest that he taught the initial evidence of speaking in tongues in connection with this baptism, but he did see the baptism of the Spirit as an enduement of spiritual power.⁵ He declared, "The Scriptures present regeneration, entire sanctification, and the baptism of power as separate, definite blessings...."⁶ Objecting to the equation of sanctification with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he wrote, "Most professors of religion know no

³ Ralph C. Horner, *Ralph C. Horner, Evangelist: Reminiscences from his Own Pen*. Published by Mrs. A. E. Horner (Brockville, ON: The Standard Church Book Room, nd), xiv-xv.

⁴ Ibid., 129.

⁵ Ralph C. Horner, *From the Altar to the Upper Room*. "Higher Life" Series (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1984), 92.

⁶ Ibid., 135.

difference between the blessing of entire sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Ghost.”⁷ This teaching that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was separate from and subsequent to entire sanctification was certainly closer to that of Pentecostalism than much else in Methodism, and followed most closely the theology of the Holiness movement.

Shortly after his conversion, McAlister left to attend bible college in Cincinnati, Ohio. According to James Craig, McAlister attended God’s Bible School in its inaugural year, 1900-1901.⁸ His education was short-lived, however. Due to ill health, he left during his second year of studies.⁹ Thus, albeit for a short time, he was exposed to the teaching of Martin Wells Knapp, the Holiness preacher who founded God’s Bible School. Knapp was a pastor, evangelist and editor, and was a member of the Christian Holiness Association. Charles E. Jones described briefly this organization and its purpose as it existed at that time and following: “...to promote entire sanctification as a crisis experience following justification.”¹⁰

At God’s Bible School, McAlister sat under Knapp’s teaching. Lloyd Raymond Day, in his examination of Knapp and God’s Bible School, stated

⁷ Ibid., 131.

⁸ Craig stated that he had reviewed the enrollment records of God’s Bible School. He found that R. E. McAlister was listed as a student in 1900-1901. James Craig, Interview. November 21, 1996.

⁹ McLean, Letter.

¹⁰ Charles Edwin Jones, *A Guide to the Study of the Holiness Movement*. (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1974) 9, 39, 676.

that Knapp's theology of "the full gospel", was comprised of: "regeneration, entire sanctification, healing, and the second coming of Jesus."¹¹ This is supported by Douglas Rudd, curator of the archives at the PAOC national office, as he related his understanding of the holiness teaching encountered at this school. He stated that its fourfold gospel consisted of salvation, sanctification, healing, and Christ's second coming.¹² Donald Dayton places Knapp within the Holiness movement and supports this delineation of Knapp's understanding of the full gospel.¹³

Knapp himself, advertising for enrollment for the first year of God's Bible School, demonstrated some of his (and thus the school's) theological commitments:

The Divinely-required qualifications of the Christian ministry are: a. A definite and conscious experience of salvation. b. The wholly-sanctifying baptism with the Holy Ghost. c. Possession of the enabling gifts of the Holy Spirit. d. A knowledge of the Word of God itself.¹⁴

Included in this advertisement are two tenets of Knapp's "full gospel": salvation, and sanctification (which he expressed in terms of Holy Spirit baptism, an issue to be discussed at more length in the following chapter).

¹¹ Lloyd Raymond Day, *A History of God's Bible School, 1900-1949*. Unpublished M.Ed. thesis, University of Cincinnati, Ohio. 1949. 166

¹² Douglas Rudd, Interview, November 21, 1996.

¹³ Dayton, *Theological Roots*. 91, 166, 174-5.

¹⁴ Martin Wells Knapp, ed. "God Over All" in *The Revivalist*. (August 9, 1900) 15.

There is little written about McAlister's pastoral or evangelistic activities before he heard about the Pentecostal message in 1906. Without identifying his denominational affiliation, McAlister indicated he was involved in ministry before 1906.¹⁵ We note however, that he did have connections with Horner's Holiness Movement Church. He was converted in this church, and his sister (if not other family members as well) was attending this church in Montreal when she received news of his experience at Azusa Street in Los Angeles. Gordon Atter concluded that McAlister conducted his ministry before 1906 as a "young Holiness preacher."¹⁶ Therefore, it is reasonable to assume Horner and Knapp were significant influences on McAlister's theology, especially as it is reflected in his pre-Pentecostal ministry.

George Chambers was raised in a Methodist church. He recounted that, after controversy concerning the local amalgamation of the Bible Christian Church with the Wesleyan Methodist Church, his parents moved and chose to raise their children in the Methodist Church in their new community.¹⁷

¹⁵ Jessie McLean, Biographical letter concerning Robert Edward McAlister, PAOC Archives. Also see McAlister's "Forty Years of Active Ministry" Typewritten remarks, unpublished. PAOC Archives. McAlister indicated that he had been in active ministry for forty-one years, and ministered for forty years in the Pentecostal movement. Thus, for at least one year, he was involved in ministry in some capacity other than as a Pentecostal.

¹⁶ Gordon F. Atter, *The Third Force*. 3rd ed. (Caledonia, ON: Acts Books, 1970) 35. Cf. James Craig, "Robert Edward McAlister: Canadian Pentecostal Pioneer" in *Eastern Journal of Practical Theology*. Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring 1989 (Peterborough, ON: Eastern Pentecostal Bible College) 6-7.

¹⁷ George A. Chambers, *Fifty Years in the Service of the King*. (Toronto, ON: The Testimony Press, 1960), 1-2.

Chambers' parents' experience of Christ was meaningful to them. He related that, at class meetings,

Father testified how God for Christ's sake had saved him, and delivered him from the tobacco habit, to which he had once been a slave. His voice would quiver, and tears would moisten his eyes.

When my mother testified, she always turned to face the class. With tears coursing down her cheeks, she would praise God for all of His goodness. This had a great effect on my early life.¹⁸

Chambers was obviously deeply affected by the faith of his parents. This upbringing in sincere Christian faith molded his thinking.

Chambers, following his conversion in his late teens, received the call to the preaching ministry. After several years and marriage, he attended, along with his wife, the holiness movement sponsored Mount of Blessing Bible School (also called God's Bible School) in Cincinnati, Ohio.¹⁹ It was here that he met A. G. Ward, another student who later became an associate with him in Pentecostal ministry. Ward was involved in the Pentecostal work in Winnipeg in 1907, and later served for a time as General Secretary of the PAOC.²⁰ As Chambers makes no mention of meeting McAlister there, one may conclude that Chambers and Ward attended the school between 1902-1905, since McAlister left sometime in the 1901-2 year, and Chambers was in ministry before the Azusa Street revival began in 1906.

¹⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹⁹ Ibid., 4.

²⁰ Miller, *Canadian Pentecostals*. 46-7.

Thus, the holiness teaching of God's Bible School would be imbibed by Chambers during his education there. There also must have been a sufficient amount of affinity with holiness theology in order for Chambers to attend a school characterized by such strong Holiness connections. That the teaching of God's Bible School greatly affected Chambers is reflected in his ministry by his own account. After their bible school education, the Chambers united with the "New Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church" and took a pastorate within that organization. Chambers records that they experienced revival, healing ministry, and exorcism as aspects of their early ministry.²¹ Reminiscing about his early ministry, Chambers stated that before coming into Pentecostalism, he had been a Holiness preacher. He recounted that because of his encounter with the "Pentecostal truth", and his "desire to walk in it", he was forced to sever all connection with the "church of [his] love".²² This demonstrates the close attachment that he felt with regard to the Holiness movement and its theology. His upbringing and bible school education had deeply impressed upon him the teachings of the Holiness movement.

Under the teaching and influence of Martin Wells Knapp and (in the case of McAlister) Ralph C. Horner, Chambers and McAlister were significantly formed in the theology of the Holiness movement. As we shall see in the following chapter, McAlister's and Chambers' thinking concerning

²¹ Chambers, *Fifty Years*. 4-8.

²² George A. Chambers, "In Retrospect...." in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (November, 1934) 7.

sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, before their involvement in the Pentecostal movement, was shaped by this Holiness teaching.

**III BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT:
SHIFTING FROM HOLINESS TO
PENTECOSTAL**

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is a central aspect of Pentecostal theology. But in early Pentecostalism it was connected inextricably with the movement's eschatological beliefs. Pentecostal theology shifted from Holiness theology, viewing the baptism with the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in tongues, as a separate experience, rather than connecting it with sanctification. This change in position is seen to be very important to an understanding of the missionary identity of early Pentecostalism. This change in position served to foster in McAlister and Chambers the view of separation from the theology of the Holiness movement.

In order to understand this shift, it is necessary for us to pursue further the theology of the baptism with the Holy Spirit which McAlister and Chambers imbibed and held to as part of their background in the Holiness movement. We will begin with an examination of the pneumatology of Martin Wells Knapp, especially his position regarding sanctification and the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and their relationship. Since Ralph C. Horner was an influence on McAlister's theology, his position on sanctification and the baptism with the Holy Spirit will also be examined, followed by McAlister's change in stance pertaining to these beliefs. Finally, we will explore the change that Chambers demonstrated in his theology regarding the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Knapp believed that sanctification and baptism with the Holy Spirit were essentially identical. Day, in his thesis exploring the history of God's Bible

School, relates that Knapp desired the experience of entire sanctification and finally received it. Thus, Knapp's own record of his experience is as follows: "By His grace I then and there entered... receiving the blessed baptism with the Spirit that cleanses from inbred sin and fills with perfect love."¹ To be baptized in the Spirit was to be entirely sanctified, to be blessed with a second experience subsequent to salvation.

Donald Dayton endeavours to demonstrate that Knapp taught the baptism with the Spirit for power in living and evangelizing, but in the sources he cites this emphasis on power stems from the effects of sanctification. While this experience of sanctification is expressed in terms of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, these are one and the same, not two separate experiences.² For example, Dayton notes that, in Knapp's *Lightning Bolts From Pentecostal Skies* he does express the experience of sanctification using Pentecostal terminology. However, Knapp maintains the usage of dual terms to refer to the one experience: "Pentecostal sanctification is the work which Jesus does in a believer when He baptizes him with the Holy Ghost."³

This understanding of Knapp's personal experience of sanctification is seen most clearly in *The Double Cure*. Here, he used the term sanctification and referred to it as the "double cure", stating that this is a "second work"

¹ Day, *God's Bible School*. 7-8.

² Dayton, *Theological Roots*. See especially 91, 174-5.

³ Martin Wells Knapp, *Lightning Bolts From Pentecostal Skies*. (Cincinnati, OH: Office of the Revivalist, 1898) 33.

and a "second grace".⁴ He understood this experience to be the baptism with the Holy Spirit, for he wrote, "receiving the Holy Ghost... is simply another Bible statement of sanctification or the Double Cure."⁵ Thus, contrary to Dayton's postulation, Knapp maintained the position that sanctification could also be understood as the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Ralph C. Horner, a participant in the Holiness movement, demonstrated Holiness teaching concerning sanctification and the baptism with the Holy Spirit. It is apparent from his writing that Horner believed in three distinct experiences. He affirmed conversion and declared entire sanctification to be a "separate work of grace." Horner recounted his own experience: "My mind had been directed to a second work of grace. About two months after my conversion I heard of entire sanctification."⁶ He also had some definite belief in the baptism with the Holy Spirit. There is no evidence that he taught concerning the evidence of tongues in connection with Spirit-baptism, but he did see this experience as an enduement of spiritual power:

The baptism of the Holy Ghost takes hold of the whole being which has been sanctified wholly, and permeates every faculty and fibre of the being, so that the whole is set in motion.... Every faculty is strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man, and filled with courage, strength and enthusiasm. The crippled faculties and forces are relaxed

⁴ Martin Wells Knapp, *The Double Cure*. (Cincinnati, OH: God's Revivalist Office, nd) 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

⁶ Ralph C. Horner, *Ralph C. Horner, Evangelist: Reminiscences From His Own Pen*. (Brockville, ON: The Standard Church Book Room, nd) 9.

and electrified for actual and efficient service for the master.⁷

Evidently, Horner taught that the baptism with the Holy Spirit was a separate experience from, and subsequent to sanctification. Those could only receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit, according to Horner's statement, who were already "sanctified wholly." This teaching reflected some of the Holiness theology which developed in the latter years of the nineteenth century.

Therefore, Horner's theology, as well as that of Knapp, composed the major part of McAlister's theological background. As noted in the previous chapter, McAlister was involved in ministry, in all probability within the Holiness movement, before his involvement in the Pentecostal movement. That he ministered within this movement is some indication that he was at least in general agreement with Holiness theology.

However, McAlister was not to remain in this position theologically. In the fall of 1906, upon hearing of the revival at Azusa Street, he traveled to Los Angeles. He experienced for himself the baptism with the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues. He reported the news to his sister Jessie in Montreal, who was attending the Holiness Movement Church (the denomination formed around Horner) there. He then returned to Canada to begin Pentecostal ministry, preaching the full gospel, which for McAlister

⁷ Ralph C. Horner, *From the Altar to the Upper Room*. "Higher Life" Series (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1984) 92.

would include the baptism with the Holy Spirit evidenced with speaking in tongues.⁸

McAlister was instrumental in planting and pastoring a number of churches. In 1911, while pastoring in Ottawa, he published a paper, *The Good Report*. This was used to spread the news and teachings of the Pentecostal revival. In his earliest writings McAlister was committed to the teaching of three separate experiences. He reported in 1911, "Upwards of 70 souls have been saved, many sanctified, and some baptized with the Holy Ghost."⁹ In addition, reminiscent of Knapp's delineation of the full gospel, with the addition of "baptizer", he declared Jesus to be "our Saviour, sanctifier, healer, baptizer, "Glorious Lord and coming King."¹⁰ Thus, contrary to the Knapp's position, but following Horner, McAlister separated the experiences of sanctification and the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

In addition, he indicated a move away from Horner's position on Spirit baptism by stating that he believed the baptism with the Holy Spirit to be a definite experience evidenced by speaking in tongues. He wrote, "Have Ye Received The Holy Ghost Since Ye Believed? If so, you have an experience that tallies with the word of God, and is evidenced by the same manifestation

⁸ McLean, Letter.

⁹ R. E. McAlister, "A Good Report" in *The Good Report*. ed. by R. E. McAlister. (Ottawa, Canada, May, 1911) 1.

¹⁰ R. E. McAlister, "Apostolic Faith Movement" in *The Good Report*. (Ottawa, Canada, May, 1911) 4.

that accompanied the reception of the Holy Ghost in Apostolic days." He believed this manifestation to be "...the same sign as was given at the house of Cornelius, Acts 10, 46, where they spake with other tongues...."¹¹

His theology of the baptism with the Holy Spirit continued to shift, this time in its relationship to sanctification. In a later issue of his paper *The Good Report*, McAlister obviously and dramatically changed his position on sanctification as a separate work of grace. In an article entitled, "Sanctification Not a Second Work of Grace," he declared concerning Acts 19:1-6, and other passages, "these people believed and were then sealed or baptized with the Holy Ghost..., but no intermediate experience is in any way inferred in the account given, and to teach a second work of grace here is to add to Scripture." To downplay this dramatic change in position, McAlister concluded in a subscript: "We are not being carried about by every wind of doctrine, but we are being wafted by the heavenly breezes."¹²

This shift in McAlister's position can be attributed directly to William Durham, the architect of "The Finished Work of Calvary" in the Pentecostal movement. In this position, Durham declared that sanctification as a separate experience was unfounded and unnecessary. The believer experiences everything in salvation that Christ accomplished on Calvary. Durham wrote,

¹¹ R. E. McAlister, "Have Ye Received The Holy Ghost Since Ye Believed?" in *The Good Report*. (Ottawa, Canada, May, 1911) 2.

¹² R. E. McAlister, "Sanctification Not a Second Work of Grace" in *The Good Report*. (Ottawa, Canada, 1912) 2.

"In conversion we come into Christ, our Sanctifier, and are made holy, as well as righteous. When one really comes into Christ he is as much in Christ as he will ever be." Again, he declared, "in conversion we... come into a state of sanctification, and we are continually exhorted to live the sanctified life in the Holy Spirit."¹³

McAlister had contact with Durham before Durham's death in 1912. Durham was involved in evangelistic meetings in various locations in Ontario. McAlister was often in traveling ministry as well, and was with Durham on occasion. McAlister noted specifically that he met with Durham at A. H. Argue's mission in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and heard him "expound God's truth on the finished work of Calvary and other subjects."¹⁴ In early 1912 Durham himself testified that McAlister was a supporter of the "Finished Work".¹⁵ This contact with Durham serves to explain the dramatic shift seen in McAlister's writing between 1911 and 1912.

This change would certainly indicate that McAlister had modified his theology regarding the baptism with the Holy Spirit. His theological background was shaped by the theology of Knapp and Horner. By 1912, however, McAlister had embraced the "Finished Work" teaching. Like

¹³ William Durham, "Sanctification" in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. Wm. Durham, ed. (Vol. 1, No. 8) 2.

¹⁴ R. E. McAlister, "Winnipeg Mission" in *The Good Report*. (Ottawa, Canada, 1912) 6.

¹⁵ William Durham, "The Great Battle of Nineteen Eleven" *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (Vol II, No. 1, nd) 8.

Durham, he now believed in only two separate experiences; salvation and the baptism with the Holy Spirit. He himself indicated this shift in his position:

I was standing for the second work of grace, but became ashamed of the childish inconsistencies and persecutions inflicted on those who were standing for the one work, whom I had every reason to believe were true children of God, although at the time I considered them mistaken in their belief, but later was convinced that they were right even against my will.¹⁶

Contrary to Knapp and Horner, McAlister affirmed that the baptism with the Spirit was evidenced by speaking in tongues and was not sanctification. He stated,

This mighty Baptism was originally accompanied by the speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance....It is the same Baptism that MORE THAN A HUNDRED THOUSAND PEOPLE HAVE RECEIVED IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, accompanied with the same evidence....We believe the speaking in tongues to be the Bible evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. No one can truthfully say they have received the Baptism according to God's Word without speaking in tongues.¹⁷

We now turn to the shift in position found in Chambers' writing and experience. It is from the Holiness influence of his background and Knapp's God's Bible School that Chambers developed his stance regarding the experience of sanctification. He gave evidence himself that he held the Holiness view of the baptism with the Spirit. He reported that before receiving the Pentecostal experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, he

¹⁶ R. E. McAlister, "Error Persecutes Truth" in *The Good Report*. (Ottawa, Canada, 1912) 14.

¹⁷ R. E. McAlister, "The Baptism of the Holy Ghost" in *The Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*. (Dec. 1920) 1. This publication was the official publication of the PAOC. It was so named to distinguish it from the publication produced by Durham and his successors. In 1927, the word "Canadian" was dropped from the title.

“preached that sanctification was a definite work of grace, and was identical with the baptism of the Holy Ghost.”¹⁸ Later, Chambers admitted that the Lord “also made me feel my great need of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, though for years I had claimed to have the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, having been a holiness preacher.”¹⁹ His words indicate that he believed it was the accepted conduct of Holiness believers to believe sanctification to be the baptism with the Holy Spirit. In saying such, Chambers demonstrated that he had been in agreement with the particular teaching of Knapp and thus the Holiness movement in general.

Chambers did not always continue in this position, however. When he wrote in reference to his Holiness thinking, he did so from a perspective that was looking back to a way of thinking which seemed foreign to his new theology concerning the baptism with the Holy Spirit. He stated that he was disconcerted with the news of the Pentecostal revival in Los Angeles. It was “all very new and strange” and was “so opposite to the teaching of our [Holiness] society that I could not harmonize it with our holiness doctrine.”²⁰ The Pentecostal teaching and experience he was then being confronted with was different from his own Holiness position.

¹⁸ George A. Chambers, *Fifty Years in the Service of the King*. (Toronto, ON: The Testimony Press, 1960) 10.

¹⁹ George A. Chambers, “In Retrospect....” in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (November, 1934) 7.

²⁰ Chambers, *Fifty Years*. 11.

Evidently, Chambers' theology concerning sanctification was modified. An encounter with his friend from God's Bible School, A. G. Ward, began to change his thinking on sanctification and the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Ward, who was a leader in the Pentecostal work in Winnipeg, Manitoba, was invited by Samuel Goudie, the presiding Mennonite elder, to a Convention for the whole Mennonite Conference in Kitchener, Ontario, in 1908.²¹

Unbeknownst to Goudie (and Chambers), Ward had experienced the Pentecostal baptism with the Holy Spirit, with the evidence of speaking in tongues, in 1907. In 1908, Ward preached this new understanding and experience of the Holy Spirit at the Mennonite Convention, and then at Chambers' own church following. Chambers reports that he himself continued to preach this new experience, "baptism of the Holy Ghost accompanied by speaking in other tongues as the evidence", after Ward left. He had not experienced it himself, but had seen it evidenced in many of the lives of people around him in his ministry.²²

This change in belief and teaching in Chambers was evident in the reaction of the Mennonite Conference. As the leaders began to realize the impact of this new teaching, and its contradiction of their present "articles of faith", they demanded that the advocates of this teaching renounce it or resign. Finally, ten ministers, including Chambers, were "excommunicated

²¹ Roy C. Spaetzel, *History of the Kitchener Gospel Temple, 1909-1974*. (Kitchener, ON: np, 1974) 5-16.

²² Chambers, *Fifty Years*. 12.

from the fellowship of the Society” in 1908 for failing to renounce the teaching of the baptism with the Holy Spirit.²³

By 1910, Chambers finally experienced for himself the baptism with the Holy Spirit. He described it as follows: “The experience changed my whole life, and greatly increased the effectiveness of my ministry. The baptism of the Holy Ghost was now, not only a Bible truth to be preached, but also a blessed reality in my own life.”²⁴ This further confirmed, in his mind, the truthfulness of his new understanding of the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

The separation of sanctification and the baptism with the Holy Spirit in Chambers’ theology is evident. It is also clear that he now taught only two experiences, sanctification being dropped as a separate, definite work of grace. Around 1930, Chambers produced a pamphlet concerning the baptism with the Holy Spirit, in which he stated that this experience was “not sanctification”. He wrote concerning sanctification: “In the life of the believer this takes place at conversion which is the initial stage of Sanctification.” Thus, sanctification was seen as a process begun at conversion, not a one-time experience. He further distinguished between sanctification and the baptism with the Holy Spirit: “Sanctification is the work of the Holy Ghost both before and after receiving the Holy Ghost, but

²³ Ibid., 13-14.

²⁴ Ibid., 18.

the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is the gift of Jesus and is received by the believer into himself.”²⁵

Elsewhere in his writings, Chambers placed emphasis on the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and made little or no mention of sanctification. For example, in preaching on the Pentecostal movement, he declared, “We believe... that every Christian should definitely be baptized with the Holy Spirit enduing him with power from on high.”²⁶ However, in declaring the distinctive messages of Pentecostal preachers, he omitted any reference to sanctification.

Thus, we see that Chambers’ theology of the Holy Spirit changed and developed as he embraced and experienced the message of the developing Pentecostal movement. He began from a position of two works of grace, salvation and sanctification. His newly acquired Pentecostal understanding of the baptism with the Holy Spirit expanded his position from two to three separate experiences, sanctification and baptism with the Spirit being separated. Finally, the position of sanctification as a separate work of grace was dropped, resulting in a new position of two separate experiences: salvation and baptism with the Holy Spirit.

In summary, the writings of Chambers and McAlister demonstrate their shift in theology regarding the baptism with the Holy Spirit. They began with the Holiness position of sanctification and the baptism with the Holy Spirit

²⁵ G. A. Chambers, “The Baptism of the Holy Ghost” PAOC Archives.

²⁶ G. A. Chambers, “Pentecostal movement” in *The Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*. (December, 1923) 4.

being closely related, if not one and the same experience. From this background, they moved into an experience of Pentecostalism and thus a new theology of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. This experience was seen to be evidenced by speaking in other tongues. Furthermore, the experience of sanctification was rejected finally as a separate work of grace. Therefore, Chambers' and McAlister's Pentecostal position on the baptism with the Holy Spirit separated them from the theology which they formerly held in common with the Holiness movement.

IV ESCHATOLOGY: CHAMBERS' &
McALISTER'S USE OF THE LATTER RAIN
COVENANT

The transformation in theology concerning the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which we have seen in the writings of McAlister and Chambers, is undeniably connected with their eschatological position. Indeed, this was the case in their background in the Holiness movement. As we saw in the teaching of Martin Wells Knapp, Holiness beliefs regarding soteriology (sanctification) came to be expressed in terms of pneumatology (baptism with the Holy Spirit). Along with this shift came the renewed interest in eschatology. Faupel states that this eschatology shifted from an emphasis on post-millennialism to pre-millennialism. He postulates that Holiness adherents appealed to the theology of John Fletcher to support this overall shift, a position supported by Dayton as well.¹ Upon examining Fletcher's theology, we find that this postulation is entirely reasonable.

John Fletcher, a follower and defender of Wesley and his theology, emphasized the Holy Spirit more than Wesley himself, who was "soteriologically oriented".² This emphasis on the Holy Spirit was expressed in terms of sanctification. He equated sanctification with the baptism with the Holy Spirit: "...effusions of the sanctifying Spirit are necessary to cleanse a believer from all sin." Again, Fletcher declared, "...if one powerful baptism of the Spirit "seal you unto the day of redemption, and cleanse you from all

¹ Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel*. 156. Cf. Dayton, *Theological Roots*. 92.

² Dayton, *Theological Roots*. 52.

[moral] filthiness," so much the better."³ In a sermon outline on the "General necessity of the baptism of the Holy Ghost," he stated that all are unholy and must be sanctified, thus signifying that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is necessary for sanctification.⁴

Fletcher's theology indicates the same close connection between pneumatology and eschatology as that found within the Holiness movement. Fletcher saw no diminishing of Christ's glory in his pneumatological emphasis:

Let no one then suspect that the manifestation of the Spirit must necessarily obscure the glory of the Son; especially since it is expressly declared, "that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. xii, 3.⁵

He believed that the Holy Spirit's ministry results in bringing glory to Christ, not a diminished emphasis on Him. Therefore, in his view, the emphasis on the Spirit was in reality an emphasis on Christ. He decried the lack of emphasis on the Holy Spirit and His dispensation:

They preach the cross of Christ; but they proclaim not the spiritual coming of a risen Saviour.

...we may reasonably hope that they will continue to mention the dispensation of the Spirit, at least, on every commemoration of the pentecostal glory. By this mean we may preserve among us a precious spark of sacred fire, till our returning Lord, bursting through the clouds of incredulity, shall kindle the spark into an everlasting flame.⁶

³ John Fletcher, *The Works of the Reverend John Fletcher, Late Vicar of Madeley*. (Salem, OH: Schmul Publishers, 1974), Vol. II, 632.

⁴ Ibid., Vol. IV, 195.

⁵ Ibid., Vol. III, 196.

⁶ Ibid., 197.

Though Fletcher apparently indicated here a view of a spiritual coming of Christ, he evidently saw a connection between an expectation of Christ and an emphasis on the Holy Spirit.

This connection between pneumatology and eschatology is seen further in Fletcher's teaching regarding dispensations. He taught that there are three dispensations in salvation history, these being the dispensation of the Father, the dispensation of the Son, and the dispensation of the Spirit.⁷ Each one pointed to the dispensation to come; the dispensation of the Father held the promise of the coming of the Son; that of the Son promised the coming of the Spirit; the emphasis in the dispensation of the Spirit is the promise of the future return of Christ. Fletcher declared, "This coming of Christ,... is so fully expected by those who live under the dispensation of the Spirit that they are constantly "looking for, and hastening to, the coming of the day of God."⁸ He understood the time of the Church to be the dispensation of the Spirit, for he stated that the day of Pentecost was "...the memorable day in which Christ opened the dispensation of his Spirit...."⁹ For Fletcher, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit began on the day of Pentecost, and would end with the return of Christ.

⁷ Ibid., 166-7.

⁸ Ibid., 168-9.

⁹ Ibid., Vol. I, 593.

There is some indication that Fletcher believed the return of Christ to be imminent in his day. Dayton notes that Fletcher “predicted the return of Christ between 1750 and 1770.”¹⁰ Writing to Wesley in 1775, Fletcher declared that he believed Christ’s return to be close at hand. He delineated his understanding of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation and concluded that, at the latest, Christ’s coming would occur by the third generation from that time.¹¹

Further, Fletcher held that these three dispensations, based on the persons of the Godhead, could be expressed as spiritual dispensations as well. Depending on one’s spiritual state, one was under the dispensation of the Father, “a much greater degree of fear than love”; or of the Son, “love begins to gain ascendancy over fear”; or of the Holy Spirit, “perfect love casteth out fear”.¹² He saw the optimum of these states to be the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. To take full part in what God provides for humanity is to be under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

Based on this survey of Fletcher’s thought, this understanding of time and history thus allowed the Holiness believers to adopt Fletcher’s pneumatological emphasis, and along with it, his understanding of eschatology. His understanding of spiritual dispensations, when adopted by

¹⁰ Dayton, *Theological Roots*. 151.

¹¹ Fletcher, *The Works*. Vol. IV, 238-249.

¹² *Ibid.*, Vol. III, 171.

the Holiness advocates, brought with it his understanding of three dispensations of history, and thus enabled an emphasis on pre-millennialism.¹³ The interest in Holiness circles concerning pneumatology allowed Holiness advocates to appropriate Fletcher's idea of dispensations for both spirituality and eschatology. Dayton observes that, "when Fletcher's Pentecostal framework became more prominent in the late nineteenth century [within the Holiness movement], his doctrine of dispensations also came to the fore." To buttress this claim, Dayton lists Edward Davies' *The Gift of the Holy Ghost: The Believer's Privilege*, and Daniel Steele's appendix "The Three Dispensations" in the same book, as two sources which explicitly referred to the doctrine of three dispensations.¹⁴ In this way, we see that a renewed interest in eschatology accompanied the growing interest in the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, as the emphasis in the Holiness movement shifted to the Holy Spirit, there also grew an interest in eschatology, for Fletcher's concept of the dispensation of the Spirit emphasized the promise of Christ's return. Since the emphasis on the Holy Spirit could be supported from Fletcher's theology, the Holiness advocates could also adopt his eschatology as well. That Fletcher's writings and theology were known in the Holiness and Pentecostal movements is certain. Melvin Dieter, writing on

¹³ Dayton, *Theological Roots*. 165. Referring to Fletcher and his influence, Dayton asserts, "Where these seeds are sown, the movement to premillennialism is more natural."

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 152, 92-93.

sanctification, concludes, "Fletcher's works were widely read in Methodism as it established itself as the dominant movement in America in the nineteenth century. The Methodist holiness movement... adopted the same eschatological themes."¹⁵ Charles Jones, researching the Holiness movement, found Fletcher's works being read. He lists *Fletcher on Perfection*, along with other Fletcher writings, as some of the sources for study of the Holiness movement.¹⁶

That Fletcher's eschatology was influential within the Holiness movement can be seen in the writings of Martin Wells Knapp. He taught that there were three main periods in human history: Patriarchal and Mosaic periods, the Atonement period, and the Pentecostal period. The first stretched from "Eden to the first fulfillment of the promise given there of the coming of the Christ." This period was characterized by "multitudes of flaming fingers in prophecy and type [which] pointed ever onward to the coming of the Son of God."¹⁷ The Atonement period "embraces the life of Jesus from the cradle to the cross and ascension."¹⁸ Thirdly, the Pentecostal period encompasses the Church, "from the advent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost until it is "caught up" at the

¹⁵ Melvin E. Dieter, "The Wesleyan Perspective" in *Five Views on Sanctification*. Melvin Dieter, et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987) 44.

¹⁶ Charles Edwin Jones, *A Guide to the Study of the Holiness Movement*. (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1974) 53.

¹⁷ Knapp, *Lightning Bolts*. 138-9.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Rapture.” Knapp referred to this as the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, under whose leadership “the Gospel is preached to all the world, and the Church prepared and perfected for the Rapture....”¹⁹ In Knapp’s eschatology, we see a rough duplication of Fletcher’s three dispensations, and the addition of the concept of the pre-tribulational rapture of the Church.

We now turn to an examination of McAlister’s position on eschatology, concentrating on his expectation of the return of Christ, and the vocabulary and structures he used to give expression to that theology. McAlister clearly taught the premillennial return of Christ. In 1924 he wrote, “...we look for a literal fulfillment of the third announcement, namely, that the same Jesus will come again and be seen just as literally as at His ascension.”²⁰ Further, he declared in a radio message in 1936, “The doctrine of Christ’s second coming to this world is not a complicated mystery.... It is stated in clear unmistakable language.” He concluded that message by this appeal: “He is coming in the air. At His coming the trump of God will sound. He is coming in person. This same Jesus which was taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner. His coming is personal, literal, and glorious.” He then asked the question, “Are you ready for that coming?”²¹ In order to encourage

¹⁹ Ibid., 140-1.

²⁰ R. E. McAlister, “The Three-fold Ministry of Christ” in *The Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*. (January, 1924) 2.

²¹ Robert E. McAlister, Radio Message Transcript, February 5, 1936. PAOC Archives.

this kind of readiness, he obviously taught that there is to be a pre-tribulational, i.e., imminent, rapture. In a subsequent radio broadcast he declared: "He may come at any moment, without further warning, and if you are not ready, well, you will be left here on earth to go through the Great Tribulation."²²

Demonstrating Fletcher's influence, through Knapp, McAlister understood time to be divided into three dispensations. These he saw as corresponding to the three persons of the Godhead:

"There was the dispensation of the Father, the dispensation of the Son, and now we are living in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament it was, "Hear the prophets", "Hear the prophets", "Hear the prophets". When Jesus was here upon earth, it was, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him." (Matthew 17:5). During the present time it is, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches" (Rev. 2:29).²³

The correct understanding of these dispensations was held to be necessary for right doctrine and practice. McAlister continued, "We know of many individuals, as well as groups of people, and some organizations, who, because of their failure to rightly divide the dispensational teaching of prophecy, have fallen into grievous and disastrous error and practice."²⁴ McAlister presented the view of three dispensations as correct, believed this

²² Robert E. McAlister, Radio Message Transcript, February 7, 1936. PAOC Archives.

²³ R. E. McAlister, "Dispensational Prophecy" Undated, unpublished article. PAOC Archives.

²⁴ Ibid.

position was necessary for understanding the times, and that holding this position enabled one to hold to correct doctrine and practice.

Reflecting Fletcher's influence, he taught that the present dispensation of the Holy Spirit was understood by seeing the similarities in its beginning and ending :

The Gospel dispensation originated with the ministry of Christ, and the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. It was perpetuated in the life and ministry of Spirit-filled men and women who composed the Body of Christ universally and the Church locally. It will be consummated with the rapture at Christ's second advent. It is a cycle in the dispensational plan of God, in which the end answers the beginning.²⁵

In understanding the present dispensation properly, knowing how it began at Pentecost, enabled one to understand the conclusion of that dispensation.

McAlister, like many others in the early Pentecostal movement, used the Latter Rain Covenant to explain this dispensation of the Spirit more clearly: "The facts are, the latter rain has come, and God is giving the manifestation of His power to meet the need of this closing dispensation." He compared the spiritual former and latter rains and found them to be the same: "The former rain was accompanied by speaking in tongues, the manifestation of the nine gifts of the Spirit. The latter rain is accompanied by the same supernatural signs. They are identical in that respect."²⁶ The former and latter rains

²⁵ R. E. McAlister, "What the Bible Teaches Concerning Apostles" Undated, unpublished article. PAOC Archives. 1.

²⁶ R. E. McAlister, "The Manifestation of Truth" in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (December, 1927) 4-5.

therefore indicated for McAlister the beginning and end of the present dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

As with Myland, McAlister noted the significance of the restoration of the physical rainfall in Palestine. He reported that by 1906, the rainfall had increased sixty-three per cent. At the same time, the Pentecostal movement began. Further, the land of Palestine itself was being irrigated and becoming fruitful. From this observation he then drew his conclusion:

Was it just a co-incident that all this happened; that the Spirit was poured out upon God's people just at the time that He restored the former and latter rain to Palestine and it became a fruitful field and the fruitful field is being counted for a forest. Ah, no. It was ordained in the foreknowledge of God and was fulfilled.... God has had a dispensational programme.²⁷

The contemporary outpouring of the Holy Spirit was understood as the spiritual latter rain and thus interpreted to be a sign of the end of the present dispensation. This outpouring was viewed as being identical to that which happened on the day of Pentecost. This was then understood to be a signal that the present dispensation was quickly drawing to a close. This understanding in McAlister's writing demonstrates his use of the Latter Rain motif. This model reinforced the close connection which Fletcher saw between pneumatology and eschatology. The renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit, understood as the promised latter rain, indicated for McAlister the end

²⁷ R. E. McAlister, "Our Distinctive Testimony" in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (March, 1932) 18-19.

of the present dispensation, and thus the imminent, pre-tribulational return of Christ for His Church, which Knapp clearly taught.

Along with an emphasis on and clear use of the Latter Rain motif, there is some hint of the influence of the system of dispensationalism in McAlister's writing. Dispensationalism interprets history as a succession of (usually) seven periods of God's relationship to humanity. In each differing dispensation, one key aspect of this relationship is primary. Writing on dispensationalism, F. L. Arrington identifies the dispensations as: "innocence, conscience, civil government, promise, law, grace, and the kingdom."²⁸ There is also strict distinction made between Israel and the Church, and the Scriptures which apply to each. In addition, the dispensational attitude toward the world is a pessimistic one.²⁹ Historian Timothy Weber described the premillennial outlook of Dispensationalists as nothing short of "pessimism and defeatism." Dispensationalists "experienced a new desire to bring the gospel to a dying world in its final slide toward inevitable doom."³⁰ In Weber's view, they believed "the church must not think that it was commissioned to win the world for Christ.... The lack of overwhelming

²⁸ F. L. Arrington, "Dispensationalism" in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. 247.

²⁹ George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991) 41.

³⁰ Timothy P. Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) 65, 67.

success... was ultimately the preordained will of God for this age."³¹ The result was a clear division in Scripture between the Church and Israel, as well as a pessimistic outlook regarding the prospects of evangelizing the world.

Following the dispensationalist hermeneutic, McAlister once made the distinction between those Scriptures which pertained to Israel and those that applied to the Church.³² However, he did believe that most of the Scriptures which applied to Israel could also be applied to the Church. As evidenced by this article, though, he believed that there were some instances in which no spiritual application to the Church could be made. However, as this article stems from 1932, his position could be the result of a gradual shift, within Pentecostalism, towards dispensationalism.

This notwithstanding, he appeared to be open to the general thought of dispensationalism as early as 1912. In his paper *The Good Report*, he included an article, written by his brother, Harvey McAlister, which clearly promoted the teachings of dispensationalism. The author stated:

The Scriptures divide Time into seven unequal periods commonly known as "dispensations" or "ages." These are marked off in the Word by some change in God's dealings with mankind, or a portion of mankind. Each may be regarded as a new test for man. Five of those ages or tests have already swept past; we are now living in the sixth, and the seventh has yet to follow....³³

³¹ Ibid., 70.

³² R. E. McAlister, "The Jew, The Gentile, and the Church of God" in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (October, 1932) 8-10.

³³ Harvey McAlister, "Passing of Time" in *The Good Report*. ed., R. E. McAlister. (Ottawa, 1912) 9-11.

The ideas presented in this article clearly follow the teachings of dispensationalism. That McAlister included this article in his paper indicates that he was not entirely opposed to the ideas of dispensationalism, but felt that he could reconcile some of its teachings with his own.

McAlister also held some limited idea of spiritual dispensations. He highlighted the benefits of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit:

In this church age or dispensation we are under grace, and have the privilege of receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and living consistent Christian lives, overcoming sin and worldliness, the flesh and the devil, and serving God in righteousness and true holiness all the days of our life. Those who refuse God's grace and refuse the Holy Spirit, and do not avail themselves of the privileges of this dispensation will certainly not be ready when Christ comes.³⁴

Again he wrote, "Personally we only come into the enjoyment of this dispensation with the reception of the Holy Ghost as on the day of Pentecost...."³⁵ These references illustrate that McAlister's views of spiritual development or progression were similar to Fletcher's. The optimum in one's spiritual experience was the reception of the Holy Spirit baptism. Upon experiencing this baptism, the believer moved into the full benefits of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

McAlister adopted this emphasis from the Holiness movement and combined it with the Pentecostal concept of the Latter Rain. This Latter Rain

³⁴ McAlister, Radio Message. February 7, 1936.

³⁵ R. E. McAlister, "Have Ye Received the Holy Ghost Since Ye Believed?" in *The Good Report*. (May, 1911) 2.

Covenant provided for him a rationale for the Pentecostal movement, as well as the imminence of Christ's return. The inclusion of selected ideas from dispensationalism indicates that, while this eschatological system could not be wholly reconciled with his own eschatology, he did find some compatibility with it. For instance, we saw that McAlister did on one occasion make a distinction between the application of Scripture to the Church and to Israel. Also, the period which he delineated as the dispensation of the Holy Spirit corresponded to the period understood by dispensationalists to be the dispensation of grace.

In turning to an examination of the eschatological thought of George A. Chambers, we find that he demonstrates the influence of both the Pentecostal Latter Rain eschatology and the position of dispensationalism. We discover first that Chambers used the concept of the Latter Rain to interpret the times. He wrote, "The fact that we are living in the last days, and the Lord's coming is near portends that we are in the "Time" of the latter rain."³⁶ Again, following the teaching of Myland, he wrote concerning the present period:

"This present evil age" is also The age of The Holy Ghost and is known as the Church age.... "This age" was to have a spiritual early and latter rain. The early rain taking place in the early days of the age and the latter rain in the latter days.... This has taken place in these last days. These rains like the literal rain was (sic) to produce maturity and ripeness, and was to be a time of the restoration of that which had been destroyed..., that is the church was to be restored back to the healthy condition of her early days at Pentecost, when again visited by the latter

³⁶ George A. Chambers, "Our Spiritual Wine is Exhausted?" Published article from unknown journal. Photocopy in PAOC Archives.

rain in the latter days.³⁷

The coming of the latter rain, interpreted as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, was a sign of the nearness of the end, of God's preparation of the church for Christ's imminent return.

In keeping with Fletcher's link between eschatology and pneumatology and the latter rain motif, Chambers saw a close connection between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the imminent return of Christ. He noted in his early Pentecostal ministry, "Almost everyone receiving the Holy Spirit was made to know in some way that Jesus was soon to return again. Letters in gold would appear in space; a dove was felt fluttering on the face of one man."³⁸

Chambers believed in and taught the doctrine of the pretribulational and premillennial rapture. He posited, "So just before the Millenium breaks there is going to be a catching up."³⁹ The rapture would happen before the millennium. However, before the millennium would be the tribulation. Therefore, he stated, "Isaiah also pictures what we are to be caught away from, namely, 'The indignation' or 'Tribulation.'"⁴⁰

³⁷ G. A. Chambers, "This Age" in *The Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*. (June, 1926) 13-14.

³⁸ G. A. Chambers, "Fifty Years Ago" in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (May, 1956) 6.

³⁹ G. A. Chambers, "The Transfiguration, Picturing Two Phases of Our Lord's Return" in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (April, 1928) 4-5.

⁴⁰ G. A. Chambers, "The Transfiguration Picturing Two Phases of Our Lord's Second Coming" (Part Two) in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (May, 1928) 10-11, 14.

Some of Chambers' views concerning eschatology can also be gleaned from his sermon notes and annotations in his Bible. However, since there is no certainty as to the period of his life from which these notes stem, they must be treated carefully. There is the possibility that these notes were produced at a later point in his life, and would therefore reflect a shift in his thought throughout his lifetime and ministry, for in these notes there is a greater emphasis on dispensationalism than in his other writings. This would then indicate that these notes were more likely produced at a later period in his life. With this reservation noted, we will look at them briefly.

Chambers' sermon notes certainly give evidence of an affinity for dispensationalism. The effect of this theology on his preaching is evident, for Chambers referred to the "Christian dispensation" and to the number seven in Revelation as referring to "completeness and dispensational fullness and perfection."⁴¹ From these notes, it is obvious that he understood there to be seven dispensations, coinciding with dispensationalism.

Eschatology was a central part of Chambers' preaching. His notes still in existence include titles such as "Study of the Book of Revelation", "Antichrist", "The Seven Last Plagues", and "The Overcomers", as well as several sermons on other topics. This may simply reflect that these notes were kept because they were what remained from the latter years of his ministry. However, a newspaper clipping attached to his notes on "Antichrist"

⁴¹ George A. Chambers, "Study of the Book of Revelation" Sermon Notes, PAOC Archives.

is dated 1929. This indicates that at least some of the ideas contained in them stem from an earlier period in his life and ministry.

From annotations in his Bible and comments on the book of Revelation, it is evident that Chambers' held a futurist view of prophecy. He noted that the seven churches addressed in Revelation 2-3 were symbolic of various periods in history. The characteristics of these churches were to be seen in particular periods of church history. The first letter corresponded to the first period, and the other letters followed in sequential fashion, so that the last letter would correspond to the final period of Church history. He noted that the church in Philadelphia referred to the Wesleyan period, and thus, by inference, Laodicea would represent the modern period.⁴² This conclusion seems probable, for Chambers writes of chapters two and three of Revelation (the letters to the seven churches): "The then existing CHURCHES, but which speak prophetically of the entire Christian dispensation."⁴³ Therefore, the present time was the last period of Church and world history and this inferred that the return of Christ was imminent. This fits with his interpretation of the book of Revelation. He stated that the theme of the book "is THE LORD JESUS CHRIST and the events that cluster around His second coming." He saw the central text to be 1:7: "Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth

⁴² George Chambers' personal Bible. PAOC Archives.

⁴³ Chambers, "Revelation"

shall wail because of Him. Even so Amen.”⁴⁴ Therefore, for Chambers, the church of Laodicea pointed to his present time.

While the link with dispensational thought is evident in his extant sermon notes, the use of the Latter Rain motif in Chambers’ writing indicates his close connection with the thought of the larger Pentecostal Movement. This motif allowed the early Pentecostals to draw links between the contemporary outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the imminent return of Christ. The raising of the Pentecostal Movement by God indicated that the dispensation of the Holy Spirit was drawing to a close.

The strong influence of dispensationalism on his eschatology as demonstrated in his remaining sermon notes would indicate that these would be better viewed as products of his later ministry. The dichotomy between the eschatology presented in his writings and that evidenced in his personal sermon notes indicates that they probably stem from different periods of his lifetime and thus cannot be harmonized into one eschatological scheme. However, that this shift in Chambers’ theology is evident serves to point out the perceived compatibility of these two systems of eschatological thought.

The common element found in the eschatological thought of McAlister and Chambers is the centrality of the Latter Rain model of eschatology. The shift towards dispensationalism developed in later years, but goes beyond the focus of this thesis. The Latter Rain Covenant allowed them, along with many other early Pentecostals, to interpret the contemporary outpouring of the Holy

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Spirit as a divine sign of the impending end of the present dispensation. The work of the Holy Spirit, interpreted as the latter rain, was for the evangelization of the world at the end of the dispensation. This optimism for the harvest is in contrast with the pessimism which was found in our brief delineation of dispensationalism. The early Pentecostals, welcoming the fullness of the Holy Spirit, considered themselves to fill a large role in bringing about that spiritual harvest. It is this self-conception which shall be explored in the next chapter.

V CHAMBERS' & McALISTER'S VIEWS OF
THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

The Pentecostal theology of the baptism with the Holy Spirit and the Latter Rain model of eschatology, as shown in the writings of McAlister and Chambers, served to shape the missionary identity of Pentecostals. It is these aspects of their theology which contributed to their perception of the Pentecostal Movement as a whole, of which they were a part. This analysis does not deal solely with their perception of the PAOC, for this organization was viewed as only one institutional expression of the Pentecostal movement as a whole.

In this chapter, we will pursue the missionary identity of early Pentecostalism as it is presented in the writings of McAlister and Chambers. We will see that they viewed the Pentecostal movement as fulfilling an important role in the divine plan of God for time and history. To begin, a brief example of one of the early Pentecostal views concerning organization will be cited, as this attitude reflected an important part of Pentecostal identity. Subsequently, McAlister's writings will be examined, followed by a survey of the writings of Chambers.

The early Pentecostals believed that God was the originator of the Pentecostal movement. This resulted in part in the desire of some individuals to refrain from glorifying or empowering any one person. As one example, William Durham was opposed to any type of human organization. He saw any attempt at such to be an affront to the leadership of Christ:

...every man, so far as I know, who has attempted to organize the Pentecostal movement or to get it under his control, has lost his power

with God and his influence with men, and God has made me to know that this will be the fate of every man who attempts to organize or control this work.

...I believe in real unity of all God's people, but not in a religious monarchy, organization of man, nor under any man; but unity in the Spirit of God, under our living Head, Jesus Christ, in God's great Spiritual Institution, the "General Assembly and Church of the First Born, which are written in Heaven."¹

Pentecostals believed that their movement was birthed by God by the outpouring of His Spirit. The Holy Spirit was for the empowering of all people for the work of God, thus all Spirit-empowered persons were to be seen as equals. Many early Pentecostals believed that power derived from church office was contrary to this spiritual power, as this example from Durham illustrates:

...God does not want some of His ministers and servants exalted above the rest, but He wants them all to stand before Him and the people on the level, and if any one is honored above another, let it be because of his power with God, his pure-holy life, his meek humble spirit, his spiritual gifts and graces, rather than on the strength of his holding some office in the church.²

Durham's position on this matter strongly indicates one Pentecostal attitude toward this movement.

This attitude is also seen in an early Canadian Pentecostal mission. James and Ellen Hebden, leaders of the independent Hebden Mission in Toronto, preached the Pentecostal full gospel for a number of years, beginning in

¹ Wm. H. Durham, "Organization" in *The Gospel Witness*. Undated publication. PAOC Archives. 13.

² Ibid.

1906. They stated in their publication, *The Promise*, that any human organization was contrary to the work of the Spirit:

... organizations have been in existence during the dark ages, but under the outpouring of the latter rain there is no place for conformation to the world. The leading of the Holy Spirit is diametrically opposed to the flesh, however beautiful that flesh may be to the eye of the world....

Not only is the free leading of the Spirit against man-made organizations, but the unity of the Spirit demands its abolition and the teaching of the one body in its membership, nourishment, edification, and ministry, is fatal to divisions....³

The Pentecostal movement was initiated by God and His work through it would be contravened by human effort in grasping for power. It was God's movement and was to be considered as such.

Early in his involvement in the Pentecostal movement, before any kind of formal organization was attempted, McAlister also saw it as God's movement. While affirming it to be led by God, he was not fundamentally opposed to human organization under God's leadership. He proclaimed, "THIS MOVEMENT has no great man at the head of it, but recognizes the HOLY GHOST, honors JESUS, magnifies he (sic) BLOOD."⁴

Furthermore, McAlister believed this movement was initiated by God for His own divine purposes. He wrote, "THIS MOVEMENT is a soul-saving agency in the hands of God."⁵ Thus, through the lens of the Latter Rain motif,

³ James Hebden & Ellen Hebden, "Organizations" in *The Promise*. (March 1910) 1.

⁴ R. E. McAlister, "Apostolic Faith Movement" in *The Good Report*. (Ottawa, Canada, May, 1911) 4.

⁵ Ibid.

he believed that the Pentecostal movement was divinely used to accomplish God's purposes in preparing and building His church for the return of Christ.

McAlister's stance regarding this special position of the Pentecostal movement continued as he helped organize the PAOC in 1919. In 1922, he declared, "This marvelous religious movement which sprang into being some sixteen years ago,... had a divine origin."⁶ Again, McAlister proclaimed,

The Pentecostal Movement is Heavenly in origin, character and destiny. The sound came from Heaven, not from earth; from above, not from beneath. The body thus formed by the descent of the Holy Ghost is not an organization; It is a Divine organism. No man or set of men were responsible for its existence.... This great Movement spread spontaneously.⁷

The perceived spontaneous character of this movement served to fortify McAlister's belief of its divine origin.

The Pentecostal movement understood itself to differ from all other religious movements in its emphasis on the present ministry of the Holy Spirit in Spirit baptism evidenced by speaking in other tongues. Thus, McAlister wrote: "The characterizing feature,... is in the belief that Pentecost can be repeated the same as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, with all the accompanying signs, manifestations, operations and gifts of the Spirit."⁸

⁶ R. E. McAlister, "The Pentecostal Movement" in *The Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*. (April, 1922) 1.

⁷ R. E. McAlister, "Deterioration or Marks of Deterioration" in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (April, 1929) 14.

⁸ McAlister, "The Pentecostal Movement" 1.

A central tenet of the Pentecostal movement was its perspective of filling a central role in God's plan for the church age. From a position of divine origin, the movement was perceived to be raised to fulfill God's purposes. McAlister stated, this movement "is destined to win and conquer in spite of all the battering-rams of Hell's opposing forces, filling her divine appointment in God's great dispensational plan...."⁹ Ten years later, in 1932, McAlister still spoke in terms of the Latter Rain Covenant. The latter rain of the Holy Spirit was falling, and this brought the empowerment of God onto the Pentecostal movement for its role in God's plan. He expressed this role as follows:

God has had a dispensational programme. He has fulfilled every jot and tittle of it and the Pentecostal Movement is filling a place in God's programme just as definitely as the apostolic church did....

Do you know that this Pentecostal Movement, which began with a mere handful in 1906, has in this incredibly short period of time forced itself into the world-wide regions and practically girdled the globe; that at the present time there are approximately six million adherents to the faith and that the Movement is increasing at the rate of thousands every week.¹⁰

He saw that as God's movement, the Pentecostal movement was raised to fill His purpose of building His church, to prepare for the harvest brought about by the latter rain. Its growth seemed to point to this divine purpose.

God's purpose then, was to be fulfilled through aggressive missions and evangelism. This purpose made it, in McAlister's perspective, "the greatest Movement that the world has ever known.... This is true, not because of the

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ R. E. McAlister, "Our Distinctive Testimony" in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (March, 1932) 19.

people who compose the Movement, but because of the position of the Movement in God's dispensational programme."¹¹ We find here a clear statement that the Pentecostal movement was God's choice for the fulfillment of the great commission in the closing days of the dispensation of the Spirit. This dictated that to be Pentecostal meant that one was necessarily missions-minded. McAlister declared,

The cause of Missions is closely associated with God's dispensational plan for the consummation of the Church and the Coming of Christ. "This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached to all nations for a witness. Then shall the end come."... Consequently, we see that Missions are an integral part of the programme for the Church of God.¹²

This missionary identity was central for McAlister in his understanding of the Pentecostal movement in God's plan. He spoke of this in terms of the Pentecostal movement, but saw missions as the responsibility of the whole "Church of God."

McAlister believed divine empowerment propelled Pentecostalism into an appointed place in God's dispensational plan. The Pentecostal movement was identified as being necessarily missionary and evangelistic because of its appointment as God's instrument for the spreading of the full gospel throughout the whole world. As the outpouring of the Spirit was accepted, and the great commission fulfilled through Spirit-empowered effort, this would prepare the world for the soon return of Christ.

¹¹ R. E. McAlister, "The Crisis Hour" in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (January, 1930) 3.

¹² R. E. McAlister, "Missionary" in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (March, 1930) 5.

Chambers' perception of the Pentecostal movement can be seen in much the same way. He believed that it was birthed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in 1906. The Pentecostals brought to the world their distinctive testimony of the gospel; in his understanding, the "full gospel". The reality of the present ministration of the Holy Spirit was initiated for the fulfillment of God's plan. Chambers believed that the renewal of the Pentecostal message culminated God's working throughout history. Chambers saw God's involvement in history in the following way: God had used Martin Luther to restore to the church the teaching of salvation by faith; He then raised up John Wesley to renew to theology the holiness of the Christian. These leaders each made a distinctive contribution in restoring to Christianity that which had previously been neglected and lost.¹³

The Pentecostal message was seen to be distinctive in its acceptance and teaching of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, thus restoring the full gospel to the church. Part of that distinctiveness would result from the work of the Holy Spirit to bring unity. Chambers saw that unity in the movement (and among all Christians if they would receive it) would be a product of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and thus could be a means to the end of reaching the world for Christ. This unity would result only when the movement was melded together by the Spirit, and based solidly on Christ as the sole foundation. He believed that this unity would convince the world of the truth

¹³ G. A. Chambers, "Pentecostal Movement" in *The Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*. (December, 1923) 2.

of the gospel. The church, "when kept by God" has "no divisions, or strivings, but all are of one heart and one soul as at the day of Pentecost, thus convincing the world of our Christianity and His Messiahship."¹⁴ The unifying work of the Holy Spirit, when accepted by the Pentecostal movement, and ultimately all Christians, would aid the spread of the gospel to the world.

In connection with this, Chambers wrote of the restoration of the Church in terms of the Latter Rain motif. The present time was "to be a time of the restoration of that which had been destroyed..., that is the church was to be restored back to the healthy condition of her early days at Pentecost, when again visited by the latter rain in the latter days."¹⁵ Thus, the restored Church could move toward unity.

Now that the gospel in its fullness had been restored, God could act to bring His plan for all time to completion. The agents of His activity would be the Pentecostal movement. Chambers did not believe that other historical movements had not been distinctive. However, this present period of the latter rain was perceived as being quite different.

It was Chambers' understanding that the Pentecostals were chosen by God for His purpose in preparing His Church for Christ's return. In a message to a conference of Pentecostal pastors and leaders, he likened the Pentecostal movement to the biblical character of Esther. She had been raised up by God

¹⁴ G. A. Chambers, "A Great Means to a Great End" in *The Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*. (March, 1926) 7.

¹⁵ Chambers, "This Age" 13-14.

for a particular purpose for a particular time in history. Likewise, the Pentecostal movement had been raised up to fulfill God's plan for the Church.

Chambers declared,

I want to... tell you, if I can, why we are here today as a people of God.... We believe, and we believe we have the Word of God behind us, and we are sure we have the sanction of the spirit upon us, that God has chosen us as a distinctive people, with a distinctive ministry, for a God-appointed time.¹⁶

In pouring out the Holy Spirit, God had selected and raised up this movement to "build exclusively the church of Jesus Christ"¹⁷ in this "God-appointed time".

The Pentecostal movement was believed to be distinctive by reason of its sanction by the Holy Spirit. Chambers maintained, "we are a distinctive people, because God was the originator of this. People say where are your headquarters? In heaven. We have no other headquarters.... Our Board is the Father, Son and Holy Ghost."¹⁸ Even though the PAOC was organized in 1919, Chambers still maintained in 1923 that God was the head of the Pentecostal movement. Since God originated this movement, it was believed to be God-ordained.

In addition, Chambers declared this movement to be unique in that it was a world-wide movement. Chambers proclaimed,

¹⁶ Chambers, "Pentecostal Movement" 2.

¹⁷ Ibid., 3.

¹⁸ Ibid.

God has called us and given us a distinctive mission.... a movement to girdle the globe. This has girdled the globe until over 3,000,000 people are rejoicing in what we have today. God has sent us out to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.... I want to say that that is our God-given mission.¹⁹

This missionary emphasis was a very central part of the Pentecostal self-perception. In likening the Pentecostals to Esther, Chambers declared:

Mordecai's message to Esther: "Who knows but you have come to the Kingdom for such a time as this," a particular time. We are living in the last days, the days when God wanted to pour out the Latter Rain and revive His heritage when it was weary, and raise up a people from among the wreckage to girdle the world with His last-day message, and a revival of old-time power.²⁰

The Pentecostal mission was filled with urgency. It was not only that they were God's people, entrusted with God's message, but that time was very short. These were believed to be the last days. The coming of the latter rain was a sign that the present dispensation was drawing to a close and Christ's return was imminent. The whole world must be given the opportunity to receive Christ in preparation for His return. God appointed the Pentecostal movement to accomplish this work for Him. In this way, Chambers saw the Pentecostals as God's chosen people for this time. He concluded, "May God help us to stand as a God recognized, God honored, distinctive people, with a distinctive mission, a distinctive testimony, for a distinctive or God appointed time."²¹

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 4.

²¹ Ibid.

This placed a great burden on the Pentecostal people. Chambers expressed this burden and urgency of the task of world evangelization in an appeal to the Pentecostal people:

...so with our hearts and heads together, our shoulders to the wheel and our hands in His great hand, let us together, through prayer and every other ministry of the Spirit, so long as Jesus tarries, do all we can for a world perishing in darkness at home and abroad.²²

The momentous task of world evangelization was the challenge laid before the Pentecostal movement. Chambers himself expressed his dedication to this mission. He desired, "to be true to my Lord and do all I can to extend His cause and Kingdom and hasten the Coming of King (sic) back for His Bride."²³ When the world could be reached with the full gospel message, the Lord would return for His Church. Thus the challenge was the proclamation of the gospel to the whole world. This was a large task, but Chambers was confident of the empowering of the Holy Spirit for this work: "If we will only take our place in God..., many millions who are now in distress and trouble and darkness will be blessed and helped and brought to the light. God who started this thing is going to see it through to certain victory."²⁴ Thus, he saw the contemporary outpouring of the Holy Spirit as the enablement of the

²² George A. Chambers, "To The Pentecostal Family" in *The Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*. (January, 1921) 1.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ G. A. Chambers, "Sermon Broadcast from Wesley Pentecostal Assembly, At First Annual Conference" in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (November, 1928) 17.

Pentecostal movement to declare the gospel to the world with divine power and authority.

We see in the perspectives of McAlister and Chambers a common understanding of the Pentecostal movement. It was not just another church, but was appointed to bring to completion God's dispensational program for all time. Thus, this perspective was realized in fervent evangelism and missions activity. The Pentecostals believed they were entrusted with the full gospel message and must reach the world in the short time remaining.

CONCLUSION

It is evident from this examination of the writings of Robert E. McAlister and George A. Chambers that they believed the Pentecostal movement, of which they were part, was a distinctive body, separate from all others. The missionary identity of the early Pentecostals informed their perspective in many aspects of their theology and activity. The central self-perception of the Pentecostal movement grew out of a shift in pneumatology. It was a shift from the focus on sanctification inherited from the Holiness movement to a Pentecostal understanding and experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit as evidenced by speaking in tongues. This pneumatological shift, however insignificant it might be perceived by some, psychologically separated the early Pentecostals from the largely Holiness background out of which they came. This perception of separation served to set them apart in their own self-identification. They were no longer Holiness, but Pentecostal in their pneumatology.

Further shaping the missionary identity of the early Pentecostals was their distinctive eschatology in the concept of the Latter Rain Covenant. The present dispensation of the Holy Spirit was understood to be framed by the giving of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, viewed as the former rain, and the present outpouring of the Holy Spirit, interpreted as the latter rain. The latter rain was given for the preparation of the spiritual harvest, and thus signaled for the early Pentecostals the imminent return of Christ.

In accepting and experiencing this contemporary outpouring of the Spirit, the early Pentecostals believed that they were appointed by God to be the movement instrumental to bring in the harvest in preparation for Christ's return. Seeing themselves in this key position in God's dispensational plan, the Pentecostals felt the heavy burden of reaching the world for Christ. It was from this worldview that the self-identity of the early Pentecostals developed. They believed they were not just another denomination or church organization. They were a movement ordained by God for the evangelization of the world for Christ, as they were empowered by the Holy Spirit.

This Pentecostal self-identity is clearly articulated in the writings of McAlister and Chambers. It is also apparent that the early Pentecostals felt the empowering of the Holy Spirit was essential for the fulfilling of this mission. The Holy Spirit was seen to be the all-important, enabling means to the end of world-wide missions.

The effects of this missionary identity on other aspects of Pentecostalism are clear, particularly in the area of organization. It brings into focus the approach to organization taken by some of the original leaders. As we saw in the writings of Durham and the Hebdens, organization was often seen to be simply a human structure, and therefore contrary to what the Holy Spirit was desiring to do through the Pentecostal movement. Some of the early Pentecostals feared that organization would lead them to become like the Churches they had left. However, the movement in Canada grew to sufficient

numbers that some type of organization was found to be necessary in order to preserve and extend the accomplishments already attained.

Organization began to be viewed as a necessity, though it needed to be of a form designed to be least intrusive as possible. The acceptance of organization was softened by seeing it as necessary in furthering the work of evangelism and missions. McAlister appealed to the constituency of the young PAOC to channel missions offerings through the national office, as this would do more to further the missions endeavour than would individual churches acting on their own. In addition, Chambers looked back on the individual efforts of Pentecostal leaders with regret: "After years of battling along, each man for himself (some calling it the faith life), seeing and doing some quite foolish things, we finally woke up to the fact that some order and system was needed and right."¹ The suggestion of organization in Canada "resulted from the phenomenal growth of the Pentecostal revival in Eastern Canada, and from a desire to consolidate and strengthen the work of God."² This move toward organization was justified in the results it brought in missions, for in 1934 he declared, "As grew the home base, so grew the foreign work."³

¹ Chambers, "In Retrospect...." 7.

² Chambers, *Fifty Years*. 38.

³ Chambers, "In Retrospect...." 7.

In time however, some Pentecostals felt that the essential element of the Holy Spirit was being lost or neglected. For example, in his later life and ministry, Chambers himself voiced concern over the direction in which he saw the PAOC developing. In 1940, he appealed:

Our Assemblies have had everything on the religious program menu, as the saying is, "from soup to nuts," and they have (endured) enjoyed all kinds of hash mixed up from Boy and Girl preachers, comedians, Ex this and Ex that, high pressure evangelism with its horse power preaching. Programs of different types, and organized efforts of fantastic natures, have all been resorted to, and each in turn have ended with failure, disgust, disappointment, and heart sick pastors and people with a frowning God looking down on it all. Surely it is time to call a halt and quit and let God perform once more.⁴

The sentiment of this article was repeated in another written in 1946. Chambers believed the PAOC was implicitly abandoning their reliance on the Holy Spirit. At that time, Chambers asked pointedly:

Have we awakened to find we were misled, or mistaken in the early days of this revival? Is that which to us then was vital and most necessary after all unnecessary? Was it a racket? If so, then we owe the world a very humble public apology....⁵

Chambers evidently felt that some within the PAOC were abandoning the reliance on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, which the early Pentecostals felt to be crucial, in favour of creative ministry programs.

The implications of the missionary identity are wide-ranging for the PAOC (and in many cases the larger Pentecostal movement). For numerous reasons,

⁴ George A. Chambers, "A Timely Message from George A. Chambers" in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (February 15, 1940) 7.

⁵ George A. Chambers, "The Love of Many Waxen Cold" in *The Pentecostal Testimony*. (February 1, 1946) 4.

within early Pentecostalism there was often found hostile attitudes to other churches and denominations. Chambers himself implied that the abandonment of reliance on the ministry and work of the Holy Spirit would make the PAOC like any other Church. In the article cited above, he concluded that if there was nothing "vital" or "necessary" from the "early days of this revival," the Pentecostals should "call for a world wide federation or a returning to the various evangelical bodies out of which we came."⁶ By implication, without an acceptance of the Pentecostal understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit, the PAOC would be lowered to the level of other Churches.

Therefore, from their perceived position of being ordained by God, the early Pentecostals and their movement could easily develop into elitism. Pentecostals could, and often have felt superior to other Christians and organizations by reason of their own openness to the person and activity of the Holy Spirit. In order to foster constructive dialogue with other Christians and organizations, it is imperative that this attitude be disengaged. To some extent, this has been accomplished. That Pentecostals have been willing to enter into associations and dialogue with other Christians demonstrates that this attitude has been changing. However, there are areas in which some Pentecostals view other churches as "dead" or merely "nominal". Pentecostals must acknowledge that the Holy Spirit is actively ministering in and through

⁶ Ibid.

Christians and organizations outside of their own Churches. Emphasizing the positive aspects of the theology and ministry of other Churches can open avenues for dialogue with these other Christians and groups. Pentecostals must recognize that they do not own the Holy Spirit. Every part of the Church is needed to complete the body of Christ.⁷ Each church or denomination has strengths that it brings to the Church.

There are beneficial aspects for this area of dialogue as well. The emphasis which Pentecostals have placed on the person and work of the Holy Spirit can be demonstrated and communicated to other churches. This must be done in a spirit of humility rather than from a position of superiority. Lesslie Newbigin has acknowledged that Pentecostal Christians have much to offer to the Church. It is only in building partnerships with other Churches that Pentecostals can have a positive influence on various Christian organizations.

The positive aspects of the early Pentecost missionary identity need to be emphasized. The fervent commitment to spreading the Gospel to the world, in the power of the Spirit, is vital to the life of the Church as a whole. Conversely, the potentially negative effects of this identity must be counteracted. The Holy Spirit does not respect denominational lines or creeds. It must be recognized that He is active in many differing areas of the

⁷ I Corinthians 12.

Church. Only when these issues are presented and understood clearly can Pentecostals dialogue meaningfully with their fellow Christians.

The role of the Holy Spirit is crucial for furthering dialogue. Chambers' view of the Holy Spirit's work in unity is pertinent here. "This oneness will not be brought about through legislation or a mechanical sticking together... but like gold brought together from all parts of the world put into the melting pot and by means of the fire of the Holy Ghost, melted together until our identity is lost."⁸ A renewed emphasis on and appreciation for the present ministry of the Holy Spirit in all churches can be a beginning for effective dialogue. Unity in the Church will not happen solely from human effort. It is only as each church body recognizes the role of the Holy Spirit can true unity occur.

⁸ G. A. Chambers, "A Great Means to a Great End" in *The Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*. (March, 1926) 7.

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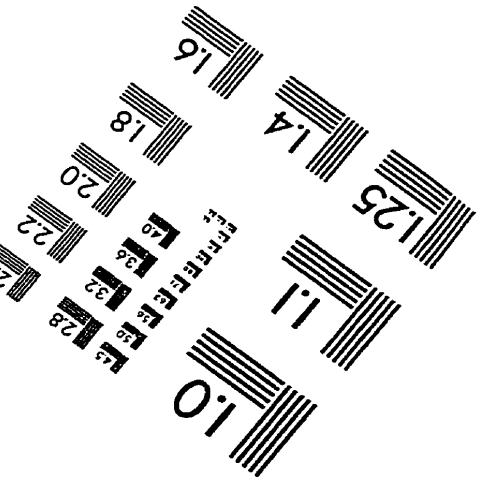
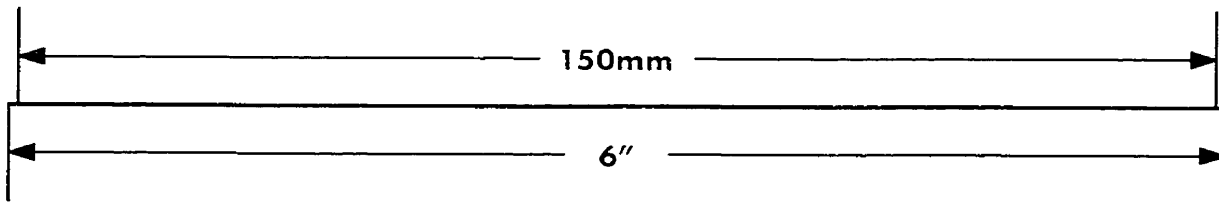
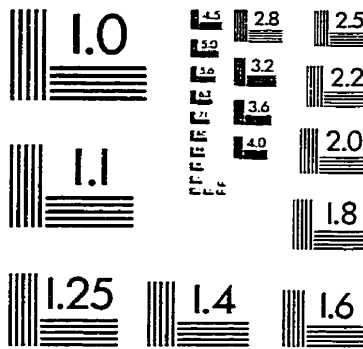
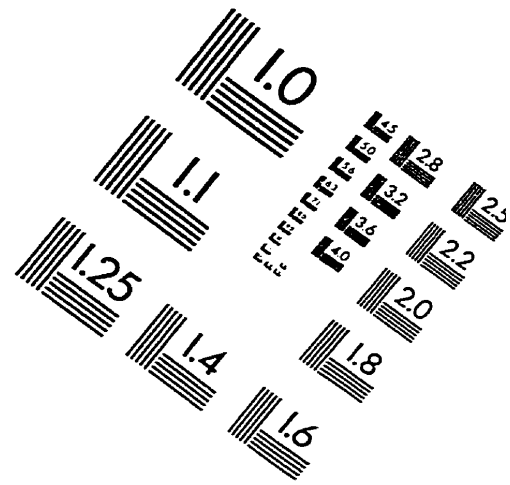
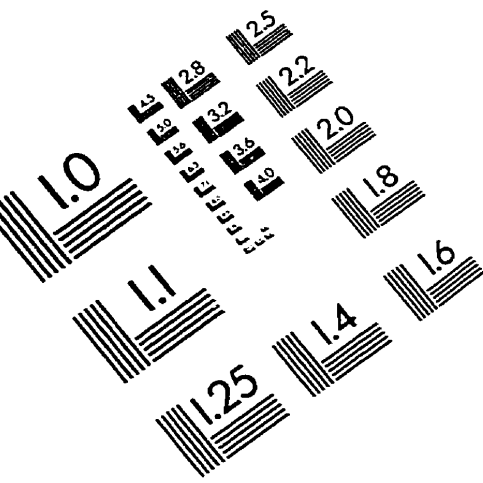
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IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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