

A PEOPLE'S RELIGION: THE POPULIST IMPULSE IN EARLY KANSAS
PENTECOSTALISM, 1901-1904

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines early Pentecostalism in light of the Populist Movement. There are two main arguments in this study. First, I maintain that early Kansas Pentecostalism, as seen in the teachings of Charles Fox Parham, was heavily influenced by Populist ideas and language. Parham displayed Populist tendencies in his attacks on the Protestant Establishment, which he believed had neglected to care for the spiritual and physical needs of “the people.” This failure on the part of the churches led Parham to believe that a major reform of the church was needed. Parham went beyond simply criticizing the establishment. He also developed a popular theology that empowered individuals, many of whom were poor and working-class, and created a strong sense of collective aspiration. The second argument of this study is that Populism fostered a sociopolitical environment in which Pentecostalism could thrive. Parham’s confrontations with the Protestant Establishment and his concern with the needs of “the people” was attractive to many individuals who tended to support movements that sought to disrupt the status quo. One event that can shed light on early Kansas Pentecostalism’s relationship with Populism was a revival in Galena, Kansas, a lead and zinc mining town in the southeast corner of the state, that took place from October 1903 to January 1904. By examining some of the connections between the Populist movement and early Kansas Pentecostalism, this study provides some insight into the development of one of the most popular expressions of Christianity in the world.

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INTRODUCTION

In January 1901, Topeka, Kansas, newspapers reported strange events at Charles Fox Parham's Bethel Bible School where students had apparently "spoken in tongues." On New Years night, Agnes Ozman, a student at Bethel, reportedly spoke in Chinese, a language of which she had no prior knowledge. Two days after Ozman's display of xenolalia, Parham, a radical Kansas holiness minister, and most of the other forty students at the school also began to speak in tongues. The languages reportedly heard were Swedish, Russian, Bulgarian, Chinese, Norwegian, Italian, and Spanish.¹ Parham interpreted this outpouring of the Holy Spirit as a sign of the full restoration of what he deemed "the apostolic faith" and of the imminence of Christ's return. Furthermore, Parham claimed that the ability to speak in tongues was the outward sign that a person had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. With their new capacity to speak in foreign languages, Parham declared, he and his students would be able to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to the rest of the world before Jesus' second coming. That Parham and his students spoke in tongues was not necessarily unique in Christian history. There had been sporadic reports of Christians speaking in tongues in the Modern Era prior to 1901, but the events at Topeka were

¹ Topeka Daily Capital, January 6, 1901, 2; Topeka State Journal, January 7, 1901, 4, January 9, 1901, 6, January 15, 1901, 3 January 21, 1901, 7; Topeka Mail and Breeze, February 22, 1901; Robert Owens, "The Azusa Street Revival: The Pentecostal Movement Begins in America," in The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901-2001 ed. Vinson Synan (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 44.

important because it was the first time that speaking in tongues was given the theological significance as the “initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”²

People were initially slow to accept Parham’s notion that speaking in tongues was biblical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The press portrayed Parham and his students as religious fanatics, which more than likely heightened peoples’ skepticism of the new group’s message. For the first two years, Parham’s attempts to spread the end-times message of the baptism of the Holy Spirit failed to usher in widespread change. His luck changed in late 1903 when he led a three-month long revival in Galena, Kansas, a small lead and zinc mining town in the southeast corner of the state. This revival provided him with the resources, both financial and personnel, to travel to Houston, Texas, where he opened a ten-week Bible College in 1905.

William J. Seymour, a young black holiness minister and one of Parham’s students in Houston, became convinced by Parham’s teaching that speaking in tongues was the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In January 1906, Seymour received an invitation to go to Los Angeles, California, to pastor a small holiness mission in the city. He decided that this was a sign of God’s will for him to spread the message of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. By April of that year, Seymour secured a small mission building at 312 Azusa Street and began holding revival meetings of his own. One of the most remarkable features of this revival was its egalitarianism. Observers noted that blacks, whites, Latinos, women, men, rich, and poor all

² James R. Goff, Jr., “Charles F. Parham and His Role in the Development of the Pentecostal Movement: A Reevaluation,” Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains 7 (Autumn 1984): 226-237; Goff, Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 1988), 11-16; Edith Blumhofer, Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism and American Culture (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 2 and 43-53; Synan, The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 89-92.

participated equally in the daily meetings. Almost immediately, Los Angeles newspapers reported the “Weird Babel of Tongues.” From Los Angeles, news of the “outpouring of the Spirit” spread quickly across the nation and eventually the world. Pentecostal revivals were soon reported in Canada, England, Scandinavia, Germany, India, China, Africa, and South America. These religious revivals at the turn of the century generated public awareness of Pentecostalism, a religious movement that by the 1990s had become a central theme in the story of twentieth-century Christianity and had influenced nearly every branch of the Faith.³

Recent reports indicate that there are approximately half a billion Christians who fall under the Pentecostal umbrella worldwide, making it the second largest expression of Christianity in the world second only to the Roman Catholic Church.⁴ Coming to a precise definition of Pentecostalism is difficult because there have been a number of theological and ecclesiastical splits within its ranks over the years. Pentecostals have divided over holiness doctrine, the proper mode of baptism, the nature of the Trinity, and the “uniform” evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In addition, during the 1960s and 1970s many so-called mainline Christians and Roman Catholics became interested in spiritual renewal and as a result there was an increased emphasis on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, including speaking in tongues, divine healing, and prophecy, thereby making Pentecostalism a genuinely interdenominational movement. In any case, these divisions within Pentecostalism have led some historians to divide

³ Blumhofer, Restoring the Faith, 1. For a detailed historical account of the Azusa Street revival see, Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., The Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement (Nashville, TN: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 2006).

⁴ Synan, Century of the Holy Spirit, 2.

Pentecostal history into three broad categories: classical Pentecostalism, the Charismatic movement, and Neocharismatics.⁵

Despite their diversity, Pentecostal adherents generally hold two beliefs in common. First, they teach that the gifts of the Holy Spirit described in the New Testament, such as speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, prophecy, and healing, are still available for Christians today. Second, they hold that all Christians who truly receive the “baptism with the Holy Spirit” will have an experience subsequent to conversion. This second baptism is generally accompanied by an ecstatic experience, however, many Pentecostals disagree over the biblical evidence of this spiritual baptism. Some argue that speaking in tongues is the proof of Holy Spirit baptism while others claim that any gift in the New Testament is the biblical evidence. Still others believe that Holy Spirit baptism gives Christians the power to combat evil spiritual forces.⁶ This study will

⁵ There have traditionally been two ways to consider the differences between Pentecostals and Charismatics. One is theological, especially concerning the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals have generally held that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Most Charismatics disagree and claim that any gift can be the evidence of this baptism. The other is ecclesiastical. Pentecostal may refer to any number of historic denominations, such as the Assemblies of God, the Church of God in Christ, or the Foursquare Gospel Church. Charismatics remain in the mainline churches, such as the Presbyterian Church or the Episcopal Church. Neocharismatic is a recent addition to the division of Pentecostal history. Traditionally, the three categories were the first wave (classical Pentecostalism), second wave (Charismatics in the mainline churches), and third wave (Nonpentecostal, Noncharismatic renewal). Growth of the independent and postdenominational groups around the world have led scholars to broaden the third wave and have labeled it “Neocharismatic.” The groups that fall under this heading generally come from independent, nondenominational, or indigenous groups and cannot be classified as either Pentecostal or charismatic. These are Christians that have had Pentecostal-like experiences but do not have ties to traditional Pentecostal or Charismatic denominations. “Introduction,” in The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, (hereafter cited as NIDPCM) ed. Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), xvii-xxii.

⁶ Blumhofer, Restoring, 1-2. The Pentecostal view of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is significantly different than that of other evangelical Christians, many of whom maintain that an

focus on North American classical Pentecostals. These are Pentecostals who trace their origins to 1901 and believe that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Classical Pentecostals also emphasize divine healing “in the atonement” and that the restoration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is a sign of Jesus’ imminent return.⁷

Parham and most early classical Pentecostals believed that their tongues speech was actually xenoglossa, or the ability to speak in real languages unknown to the speaker.⁸ This conception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is essential for understanding early Pentecostalism. The primary function of Holy Spirit baptism was to empower believers to speak in foreign languages so they could evangelize the world before Jesus’ second coming. Since Christ’s return was imminent, people who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit could skip years of missionary training and immediately enter the mission field. As early as June 1899, Parham lamented that there were 1,500,000,000 people in the world and that more than 1,000,000,000 of the world’s population did not have the Bible and had not heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. These

experience subsequent to conversion is not necessary to receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Rather, they believe that faith in Jesus Christ is a sign that a person has received the Holy Spirit and that this free gift of faith is sealed in water baptism. In addition to the assurance of faith, these evangelical Christians argue that the Holy Spirit in Christians’ lives is also evidenced by love. For a representative view see, Frederick D. Bruner, A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970).

⁷ Synan, “Classical Pentecostalism,” NIDPCM, 553-554.

⁸ The idea that people would be able to speak in real languages faded from Pentecostalism’s ranks within the first several years of the movement’s existence. Pentecostals eventually argued that only God could understand their tongues speech. However, Pentecostals have not given up on the notion that some tongues are real languages. Wacker, “The Functions of Faith,” 361; Wacker, Heaven Below, 44-51; Goff, Fields, 16.

disturbing statistics made rapid world evangelism necessary.⁹ Parham told Topeka reporters in 1901,

We have for long believed that the power of the Lord would be manifested in our midst, and that power would be given us to speak other languages, and that the time will come when we will be sent to go into all the nations and preach the gospel, and that the Lord will give us the power of speech to talk to the people of the various nations without having to study them in schools.¹⁰

In addition to its utilitarian function, the baptism of the Holy Spirit also had millennial significance. According to Parham, that some people had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit was a sign that the end of the age was near. He told Topeka reporters, “In the close of the age, God proposes to send forth men and women preaching in languages they know not a word of, which when interpreted by hearers will know is truly a message from God, spoken through the lips of clay by the power of the Holy Ghost.”¹¹

Parham understood the baptism of the Holy Spirit as, what church historian Douglas Jacobsen has described, an “eschatological charism.” This idea meant that Holy Spirit-baptized Christians were granted “new power and protection to be witnesses for Christ in an age of unprecedented violence and turmoil,” Jacobsen wrote. He went on to explain that the baptism of the Holy Spirit served three primary purposes in Parham’s millennial thought. First, it provided a defensive “sealing,” which would protect its recipients from Satan’s attacks during the tribulation. Second, it energized and empowered Christians to spread the gospel during the final

⁹ Apostolic Faith (Topeka), June 21, 1899, 4. See also, Goff, Fields, 72.

¹⁰ “Row at Bethel,” Topeka State Journal, January 7, 1901, 4. See also, Parham, Voice, 31.

¹¹ “Row at Bethel,” Topeka State Journal, January 7, 1901, 4; Douglas Jacobsen, Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 37.

worldwide revival. Third, it made it possible for recipients to enter into one of the three elite orders of end-times saints.¹²

These three orders were “the Redemption,” “the Bride,” and “the Man-Child.” The Redemption was specially gifted and set apart for world evangelism. It would be given extra power to spread the gospel before Jesus’ return. In order to accomplish its task, the Redemption would be immune to the extremes of weather and would have the same body as the resurrected Jesus. This latter feature would allow it to appear and disappear at will. The next group in Parham’s schema was “the Bride.” The Bride’s responsibility was to live among the Jews who had restored Palestine. While in Jerusalem, the Bride would give birth to the Man-Child, the third and most elite group in Parham’s taxonomy of end-times saints. The Man-Child, which would only number 144,000, was to be the only people taken up in the rapture. Members of the Man-Child would be given special status and power in the millennial kingdom, second only to Christ and his twelve apostles.¹³

Pentecostalism’s growth and influence has led to widespread interest concerning its origins, beliefs, and reasons for its success. Despite this scholarly attention there is a considerable amount of work that remains to be done on Pentecostalism. One aspect that has largely been unexplored by historians is Pentecostalism’s connections with the Populist Movement. Some historians have suggested that Pentecostalism was a parallel expression of

¹² Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit*, 46. Jacobsen has an informative section on the nuances of Parham’s eschatological thought and how the baptism of the Holy Spirit fit within his end-times schema. *Ibid.*, 28-50.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 44-46.

Populism¹⁴ while other scholars have noted that Pentecostal converts appeared in counties where Populist sentiment had been strong.¹⁵ Although historians have noticed some similarities and differences between the two movements there has yet to be a study that applies this analytical framework as its central focus.

There are two main arguments in this thesis. The first is that Populist ideas were reflected in the teachings of Charles Fox Parham, especially his antielitist and antiestablishment views. This perspective led him to denounce the Protestant Establishment as corrupt and in need of reform. He believed that his message of the baptism of the Holy Spirit offered such a renewal. Second, I will contend that Kansas Populism fostered a sociopolitical environment in which Pentecostalism could thrive. Both Populism and Pentecostalism emerged at a time when many Americans believed that the nation's democratic principles were being undermined by undemocratic institutions and practices. In the 1880s and 1890s, Populists maintained that the Republican and Democratic parties were hopelessly corrupt and that they no longer served as the instruments of "the people." This frustration led disillusioned Americans to create the People's, or Populist, Party in order to elect honest officials who could revive America's democratic institutions and were committed to serving the American people. Many Populists also attacked the nation's institutional churches, which they accused of hypocrisy, dishonesty, and of colluding

¹⁴ Synan, Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition, 43; Mickey Crews, The Church of God: A Social History (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 2; Goff, Fields, 11-13, 20-22, and 156; Randall J. Stephens, "The Convergence of Populism, Religion, and the Holiness-Pentecostal Movements: A Review of the Historical Literature," Fides et Historia 32 (Winter/Spring 2000): 51-64.

¹⁵ Synan, Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition, 42-43; Goff, Fields, 234 n. 39; Crews, Church of God, 1-3; Darrin Rodgers, "Prairie Fire: The Social Background to the Development of Pentecostalism in North Dakota to 1914" (B.A. thesis, Hillsdale College, 1995), 52.

with the so-called “money-power.” The Populists’ condemnations of the churches were strikingly similar to their critiques of the economic and political establishment. Pentecostalism also rejected these undemocratic developments and sought to empower the ordinary people to take control of their lives. In the case of Pentecostalism, however, the focus was mainly on the perceived failure of the Protestant Establishment to administer to the needs of the people. Therefore, they wanted to revive the Protestant churches and persuade them to return to serving what they believed was biblical Christianity. Early Pentecostalism’s confrontations with the Protestant Establishment and its focus on the spiritual needs of common folk created what can be best described as a “people’s religion.”

Pentecostalism reflected the Populist impulse in several different ways. First, it was apparent in Parham’s attacks on the Protestant Establishment. In Parham’s mind, many, if not most, Protestant churches and denominations had neglected the spiritual and physical well being of “the people.” As a result, he averred, the people were turning their backs on the churches and seeking salvation outside of Christianity. Parham went beyond simply challenging the dominion of institutional Protestant Christianity, however. He also developed a theology that empowered ordinary people and established spiritual power from the bottom-up. This impulse can be best seen in Parham’s messages of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and divine healing, both of which, he believed, gave people a sense of self-worth and self-confidence. Finally, Pentecostalism, in addition to empowering individuals, also encouraged a strong sense of collective aspiration. This impulse created a feeling of solidarity among people who had been going through hard times and were seeking solace in religion or were simply looking for a conversion experience. The camp meeting nature of early Kansas Pentecostalism encouraged this strong sense of community.

One event in early Kansas Pentecostalism that can shed light on the connections between Pentecostalism and Populism was the revival that occurred in Galena, Kansas, from October 1903 to January 1904.¹⁶ Galena was one of the many lead and zinc mining towns that emerged in the tri-state district—Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma—in the late nineteenth-century. The first notice of the meeting came on October 1, 1903, when Mary A. Arthur, a resident of Galena, published an advertisement in the Galena Evening Times. She wrote, “To My Friends and Suffering Ones. The dear Lord has sent to our midst Bro. Chas. F. Parham, Projector of Apostolic Faith Movement, under whose ministrations of the Gospel, I have been so wonderfully healed.” The services were to be held at the “Arthur block” until further notice. All were invited.¹⁷

The response was overwhelming. Regional newspapers reported that in three months of religious revival over eight hundred people had been converted to Christ and that over a thousand had been healed of various illnesses.¹⁸ One newspaper account claimed that at a baptismal service, Parham immersed over one hundred converts.¹⁹ According to Howard Goss,

¹⁶ The term revival refers to a series of organized or spontaneous meetings, which lead to religious conversions under the direction of an evangelist. Revivals are generally local or regional in nature. This is different than an awakening, which is national in scope. William G. McLoughlin, Jr., Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham (New York, NY: The Ronald Press Company, 1959).

¹⁷ Galena Evening Times, October 1, 1903, 5. The same notice was printed the next day as well. Galena Evening Times, October 2, 1903, 5.

¹⁸ “Three Months of Religious Fervor,” Joplin Daily News Herald, January 24, 1904, 11; “Meeting Closed,” Galena Evening Times, January 25, 1904, 3.

¹⁹ “Three Months of Religious Fervor,” Joplin Daily News Herald, January 24, 1984, 11.

resident of Galena and quite possibly the most prominent convert of the revival, several hundred people received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues.²⁰

The Galena revival is worth exploring in depth for several reasons. It was the first time that Parham drew the crowds and brought about the religious excitement that he had desired since he began to proclaim the message of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in 1901. During the first two years following Agnes Ozman's initial tongue-speaking experience, success was elusive and he was never able to establish a solid base. The success in Galena brings up the second reason to examine the Galena revival. The three-month long revival established Pentecostalism as a permanent presence in the tri-state region. Third, it gave Parham the confidence and resources to take his new message to a much broader audience. From his base in Kansas, he went to Houston, Texas, where he led a series of revivals and eventually established the Houston Bible School where William J. Seymour was one of his students. Fourth, the revival shows the connections between Pentecostalism and Populism since Galena was in a heavily Populist county. In most of the major elections of the 1890s, the Populist Party won significant victories there. For instance, in the election of 1892, Lorenzo Lewelling, the Populist candidate for governor, defeated Abram Smith, the Republican candidate, 3,714 to 2,714.²¹ During the same

²⁰ Ethel E. Goss, The Winds of God: The Story of the Early Pentecostal Movement (1901-1914) in the Life of Howard A. Goss rev. ed. (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1985), 36. Goss had an immense impact on the history of American Pentecostalism. In 1914, he was one of the key organizers of the Assemblies of God, now the largest white Pentecostal denomination in the world, and from which he later split over a dispute concerning the Trinity. After this departure, he helped to create the Pentecostal Church, Incorporated, which later became the United Pentecostal Church, International, one of the largest "Oneness" Pentecostal denominations in the world. "Goss, Howard Archibald," NIDPCM, 679.

²¹ Kansas Secretary of State, Eighth Biennial Report of the Secretary of State of the State of Kansas, 1891-'92 (Topeka, KS: Press of the Hamilton Printing Company, 1892) 103.

election, Cherokee County residents elected a Populist to the State Senate and sent another Populist to the State House of Representatives.²² This pattern was repeated in the election of 1894. However, this time, instead of sending one Populist to the State House of Representatives, Cherokee County elected two Populists to the Kansas House.²³ Finally, the type of people drawn to the three-month long revival can also shed light on the connections between Populism and Pentecostalism. Although many of Galena's supposed "best" citizens participated, Parham's message was especially popular among the miners of the region.²⁴

In order to gain a better understanding of how the current study's focus on the connections between Populism and Pentecostalism fits within the story of early American Pentecostalism it is essential to discuss the historiography of the early movement. Some scholars have noticed that there are two periods of Pentecostal historiography. The first wave has been labeled the "classical" interpretation. This approach to Pentecostal history is marked by its apologetic tone and its lack of interest in the historical process. In short, these historians started from a providential point of view and were not concerned with explaining the contemporary historical context in which Pentecostalism emerged, claiming that it was discontinuous from the first 1,900 years of Christian history.²⁵

²² Ibid., 118 and 123.

²³ Kansas Secretary of State, Ninth Biennial Report of the Secretary of State of the State of Kansas, 1893-'94 (Topeka, KS: Press of the Hamilton Printing Company, 1894),

²⁴ "Three Months of Religious Fervor," Joplin Daily News Herald, January 24, 1904, 11.

²⁵ My discussion on the historiography of Pentecostalism has been shaped by two informative surveys on the literature. Augustus Cerillo, "The Beginnings of American Pentecostalism: A Historiographical Overview," in Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism, ed. Edith L. Blumhofer, Russell P. Spittler, and Grant A. Wacker (Urbana, IL:

Two of the most notable books of the early period of Pentecostal historiography are Stanley Frodsham's "With Signs Following": The Story of the Latter-Day Pentecostal Revival, originally published in 1928, and Carl Brumback's Suddenly . . . From Heaven: A History of the Assemblies of God, published in 1961.²⁶ In an example of this interpretative framework, Brumback explained that the purpose of his book was to "honor the great souls who have fought so nobly and won the crown, it also desires to inspire those who are 'alive and remain' to drink at the same springs; so that though the great depart, the essence of their greatness may abide."²⁷ He further reveals his intentions when he states that he is not interested in "mundane causes," and that "any investigation, factual though it may be, which fails to yield the First Cause of this phenomenal revival [Pentecostalism] has not 'come to the knowledge of the truth.'"²⁸ These opening comments indicate to the reader what to expect from Brumback's book: an uncritical record of Pentecostalism's triumphs over adversity and an interpretation that claims these victories are clear signs of God's hand in the history of the movement. This approach to Pentecostal history dominated the field until the 1950s.

University of Illinois Press, 1999), 229-259; A. Cerillo, Jr. and Wacker, "Bibliography and Historiography of Pentecostalism in the United States," in NIDPCM, 390-405.

²⁶ Stanley Howard Frodsham, With Signs Following: The Story of the Pentecostal Revival in the Twentieth Century rev. ed. (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1946); Carl Brumback, Suddenly . . . From Heaven: A History of the Assemblies of God (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1961). Both Frodsham and Brumback represent the providential school of Pentecostal history.

²⁷ Brumback, Suddenly, vii-viii.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2. He did not explain what he meant by "mundane causes" but it can be assumed that he meant any cultural, economic, social, or political forces that helped to shape early Pentecostalism.

Historian Augustus Cerillo has labeled the second period of Pentecostal historiography the “new” interpretation. Historians in this current approach tend to be professionally trained and come to Pentecostal history with an eye toward the nineteenth-century roots of Pentecostalism and the socioeconomic and theological context within which Pentecostalism emerged as well as how Pentecostals viewed the world around them and how this outlook shaped their interaction with the surrounding society. To set themselves apart further from their more apologetic predecessors, these new historians are also interested in why Pentecostalism emerged and how it has been able to endure.²⁹

There are several works that fall under the “new” interpretation umbrella that are worth mentioning in some detail. One of the earliest and most significant of these studies is Vinson Synan’s Holiness-Pentecostal Movement, a 1971 work, in which he argued for the link between the nineteenth-century Wesleyan Holiness movement and Pentecostalism. More than previous historians, Synan sought to explain the socioeconomic, intellectual, and political setting of early Pentecostalism. He claimed that most early American Pentecostals came from agricultural and working-class backgrounds and that they cannot be understood apart from the reform movements of the Gilded Age.³⁰

Historian Robert Mapes Anderson’s Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism stands out as another influential work from this era. Anderson takes an explicitly naturalistic approach and argues that Pentecostalism was an unhealthy and socially dysfunctional

²⁹ Cerillo, “The Beginnings of American Pentecostalism,” 229-230.

³⁰ Vinson Synan, The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971). The book has since been updated in a new edition. Vinson Synan, The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997); Cerillo, “The Beginnings of American Pentecostalism,” 231.

religious response to the changes of the Gilded and Progressive ages. The earliest Pentecostals were those who had been “disinherited” from the urbanization and industrialization of American society, including farmers, the working-class, blacks, the new immigrants, and women, and as a result rejected “thisworldly” solutions to their problems for “the otherworldly,” which Anderson claimed was representative of their damaged psychological state. Anderson’s work still stands as the most authoritative study of early American Pentecostalism. However, a growing number of scholars have criticized him for his heavily naturalistic approach to religious experience.³¹

During the 1970s and 1980s, some historians began to trace the origins of Pentecostalism to the black holiness community. This work started in the 1970s with the research of black scholars James Tinney and Leonard Lovett, neither of whom were historians, and European missions scholar Walter Hollenweger. These scholars argued that Pentecostalism began in 1906 among the black holiness churches in Los Angeles and that William Seymour should be recognized as the unqualified founder of Pentecostal theology, not the white Kansas minister Charles Parham. In the 1980s, Douglas Nelson and Iain MacRobert expanded on the previous decade’s work into a full-blown black interpretation of Pentecostalism. Cerillo explained that this view can be summarized in three propositions. First, they argued that Seymour should be recognized as the founder of modern Pentecostalism. Second, they maintained that the central element of Pentecostal theology was not tongues speech but a Holy-Spirit-created egalitarian community where all distinctions of race, class, and gender are blurred. Finally, they argued that

³¹ Anderson, Vision of the Disinherited; Cerillo and Wacker, “Bibliography and Historiography,” NIDPCM, 403. For a compelling critique of Anderson’s naturalistic approach see, Wacker, “Taking Another Look at the Vision of the Disinherited,” Religious Studies Review 8 (January 1982): 15-22.

Seymour's primary influence was black American Christianity, which was a mixture of Protestantism and West African spirituality.³²

More recently, historians have begun to move away from the negative interpretation of Anderson and have begun to explore the nature of Pentecostalism as an empowering and liberating force in peoples' lives. Historian Grant Wacker has detailed how "primitive" Pentecostalism functioned as a healthy response to early converts' skepticism of modernity. His main concern was not the nineteenth-century roots of Pentecostalism but how it has managed to survive and grow. In several essays and one book, he claims that Pentecostalism's teachings on the second coming of Christ, divine healing, speaking in tongues, the role of the supernatural in everyday life, and the evils of modern-day society worked to offer people "certitude that the supernatural claims of the gospel were really true."³³ These beliefs represented the "primitive" aspect of early Pentecostalism. He described the primitive impulse as "a powerfully destructive urge to smash all human traditions in order to return to a first-century world where the Holy

³² Cerillo, "The Beginnings of American Pentecostalism," 237-238; Leonard Lovett, "Perspective on the Black Origins of the Contemporary Pentecostal Movement," Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center 1 (1973): 36-49; James S. Tinney, "William J. Seymour: Father of Modern-Day Pentecostalism," Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Society 4 (Fall 1977): 34-44; Walter J. Hollenweger, "A Black Pentecostal Concept: A Forgotten Chapter of Black History: The Black Pentecostals' Contribution to the Church Universal," Concept 30 (June 1970): 9, 16-17; Douglas J. Nelson, "For Such a Time As This: The Story of Bishop William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival" (Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, 1981); Iain MacRobert, The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA (New York, NY: St. Martin's, 1998).

³³ Grant Wacker, "The Functions of Faith in Primitive Pentecostalism," The Harvard Theological Review 77 (July-October 1984): 361.

Spirit alone reigned.”³⁴ Wacker labeled a second impulse of Pentecostalism as “pragmatism.” It was this realistic point of view that led Pentecostals to adopt whatever means necessary to spread their message. This meant that Pentecostals often utilized modern technological achievements and embraced denominational structures. According to Wacker, these two seemingly incompatible impulses have functioned together to make Pentecostalism appealing to people and to provide the movement with its staying power.³⁵

Next, historian Edith Blumhofer has defined Pentecostalism as primarily as a restorationist movement. She defined restorationism as “the impulse to restore the primitive or original order of things as revealed in Scripture, free from the accretions of church history and tradition.”³⁶ It was the sense of restoration, according to Blumhofer, that attracted Pentecostalism’s earliest converts because it allowed them to believe that they were taking part in one of the greatest events in history that would directly usher in the second coming of Christ. Furthermore, the restorationist impulse engendered the conviction that they were recreating the New Testament church after 1,900 years of human corruption.³⁷

Finally, James Goff, in Fields White Unto Harvest, published in 1988, argued that Charles Parham founded the Pentecostal movement and that the essential character of this new

³⁴ Wacker, “Searching for Eden with a Satellite Dish: Primitivism, Pragmatism, and the Pentecostal Character,” in The Primitive Church in the Modern World, ed. Richard T. Hughes (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 142.

³⁵ Wacker, “Functions of Faith,” 361; Wacker, “Playing for Keeps: The Primitivist Impulse in Early Pentecostalism,” in The American Quest for the Primitive Church, ed., Richard T. Hughes (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 196-219; Wacker, Heaven Below, 10-14 and 22-23.

³⁶ Dictionary of Christianity in America, s.v. “primitivism.”

³⁷ Blumhofer, Restoring.

faith was an “intense millenarian-missions emphasis.”³⁸ In addition, Goff claimed that Parham’s message of salvation, sanctification, Holy Spirit baptism, pre-millennialism, and divine healing marked a “revolution of socioreligious significance.”³⁹ My argument that Populism and Pentecostalism shared a symbiotic relationship tends to support this assertion made by Goff.

This study will be divided into five chapters. Chapter one will cover the national historical context in which Pentecostalism emerged. Chapter two will discuss events in Kansas at the turn of the twentieth century with an emphasis on Populism and the nineteenth-century holiness movement. Chapter three will focus on Parham’s early life and his development as a popular religious leader. Chapter four will cover the emergence of Pentecostalism in 1901 and the details of the 1903 Galena revival. Finally, this study will end with some concluding remarks concerning early Pentecostalism’s connections with Populism and the significance of this relationship for the history of Kansas in particular and the Pentecostal movement in general. It is to the contemporary national context that this study now turns.

³⁸ Goff, Fields, 15.

³⁹ Ibid., 16.

CHAPTER 1 - The United States at the End of the Nineteenth Century: The Political, Social, and Religious World of Pentecostalism

When Pentecostalism emerged in the early-twentieth century, the United States had just experienced nearly a half-century of rapid growth and drastic change. These years, from the Civil War to the turn of the century, yielded the origins of the modern American economy and society. From the Revolution to the Civil War, historian Glenn Porter has explained, the American economic system offered the opportunity, at least for white males, to make a living for themselves and their families and the chance to improve their lot in life. Many Americans believed that the economic and business system operated according to the republican virtues and democratic aspirations of the young nation. By the early twentieth century, an environment ruled by giant multinational corporations began to replace the nineteenth-century republican world of small economic units.¹ During these years, the strains of transition were compounded by rapid industrialization, a devastating economic depression in 1893, massive flows of immigration, America's imperialistic drive, and increasingly tense relations among classes, races, and ethnic groups.² Perhaps most important of these developments was the fact that the United States was

¹ Glenn Porter, "Industrialization and Big Business," in The Gilded Age: Perspectives on the Origins of Modern America, ed. Charles W. Calhoun, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 11-12.

² John Whiteclay Chambers II, The Tyranny of Change: America in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 1-2.

increasingly becoming an industrial giant. America began the process of industrialization before the Civil War, but it was not until the post-Civil War years that the country became the world's leading industrial nation.³

While many Americans embraced the changes engendered by industrialization as signs of progress, others feared the implications they had for the nation's traditional values of individual self-restraint, morality, and republicanism. American farmers were one group that united to protest the transformations of the late nineteenth century. Facing high land prices and railroad rates, low crop prices, debt to creditors, property loss and a rise in tenancy, many American farmers in the South and the West began to believe that they were the victims of the rapid changes of the marketplace of the period.⁴ Many of these disaffected people claimed to represent the "America" of the Founders and began to decry the transformations wrought by the modern corporation and industrialization as the products of alien ideologies that subverted the promise of a nation of shopkeepers and yeoman farmers.⁵

As the United States was transitioning into an international industrial giant, many Americans continued to hold on to a set of idealistic concepts inherited from the nation's Founders that historians have labeled "republicanism." According to the Founders, history was an ongoing struggle between the forces of tyranny and liberty. To defend the country against the

³ William L. Barney, The Passage of the Republic: An Interdisciplinary History of Nineteenth-Century America (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1987), 19 and 293.

⁴ For general histories of these conditions and the rise of the Populist movement consult, Lawrence Goodwyn, The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Robert C. McMath Jr., American Populism: A Social History, 1877-1898 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993); Worth Robert Miller, "Farmers and Third-Party Politics," in Gilded Age, 283-305.

⁵ Miller, "Farmers and Third-Party Politics," 284-285.

forces of oppression, the Founders developed a freehold concept that all men had a right to the land. The Founders believed that agricultural pursuits encouraged frugality, industry, and community spirit. But, most importantly, a nation of property-owners also created an independent citizenry, which alone would be the bulwark of the young republic.⁶

It was this worldview that accompanied many Americans as they flooded west into the Great Plains after the Civil War in pursuit of the opportunities promised by agricultural pursuits. As migrants pushed further westward, they discovered that the climate in some regions, such as western Kansas and Nebraska, were not hospitable to farming. In order to make farming profitable in these areas, new techniques had to be developed. Between 1865 and 1900, advances in fertilizer and machinery greatly increased the productive output of western farmers, who found it desirable to invest in these improved methods and more land, both of which they generally purchased on credit.⁷

The new farming techniques led to an increase in farmers' ability to produce. Unfortunately for them, their production began to outpace the needs of the nation and the rest of the world. One effect of this situation was a sharp decline in farmers' incomes. As their condition worsened, they noticed that while they were losing money, the railroad companies and other middlemen, such as commission agents, futures speculators, and wholesalers, were making huge profits. Historian Worth Robert Miller wrote, "Farmers who lived in a world of underclothed and

⁶ Worth Robert Miller, "Farmers and Third-Party Politics," 285.

⁷ Ibid.

underfed people considered this nonsense.”⁸ In order to confront this state of affairs, farmers began to create agricultural cooperatives and political organizations.⁹

The first major farmer’s organization of the late nineteenth century was the Patrons of Husbandry, or the Grange, founded in 1867. This new group hoped to improve farmers’ conditions by circumventing the middleman. In order to do this, the Grange founded cooperatives for buying and selling, mills for grinding grain, manufacturing establishments and banks. Officially, the Grange was nonpartisan, however, it did support some political causes, such as state railroad and elevator regulation with some success in the Midwest. The U.S. Supreme Court eventually declared such “Granger” laws unconstitutional. The Grange’s organizational model influenced other farmer associations and eventually set the stage for third-party politics.¹⁰

The most significant third-party to grow out of the foundation created by the Grange was the Populist Party, which was organized on the national level in July 1892. The Populist Party was a third-party political movement that saw itself as the best means for correcting some of the excesses of the late nineteenth century and for creating a more just and humane society. Populists believed that the corruption and loss of democratic principles in the Republican and Democratic parties had led to the nation’s economic turmoil. The government, which Populists believed was in league with a handful of wealthy capitalists, had failed in one of its primary obligations: to protect the weak from the strong. This apparent complacency necessitated the creation of a third

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 286.

¹⁰ Ibid. There will be a more detailed discussion of some of these farmer organizations and third-parties in chapter 2.

party. The Populists declared that the surest way to cure the nation's ills was to elect pure, untainted reformers to office.¹¹

In July 1892, Populists from throughout the country gathered in Omaha, Nebraska, to officially establish the People's, or Populist, Party. The Omaha Platform declared that an unholy alliance between wealthy capitalists and the government had created a situation in which wealth was in the hands of the few and in which "the people" did not benefit from the fruits of their labor. Furthermore, the platform channeled the Declaration of Independence's claim that a people living under an oppressive government had the right to overthrow that government. The platform called for the coinage of silver, government ownership of the railroads, telephones and telegraphs, government loans on crops and land, an eight-hour work day, direct election of U.S. Senators, and a graduated income tax.¹² The Populist Party experienced only moderate success on the national level, ultimately meeting its end during the election of 1896 when the Republican candidate William McKinley defeated the Democrat-Populist candidate William Jennings Bryan.¹³

¹¹ Joe Creech, Righteous Indignation: Religion and the Populist Revolution (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006), xxiv. For a useful discussion of Populist historiography, see "Agricultural History Roundtable on Populism: Robert C. McMath, Jr., Peter H. Argersinger, Connie L. Lester, Michael F. Magliari, and Walter Nugent," Agricultural History 82 (Winter 2008): 1-35. Charles Postel has more recently argued that Populists were overtly modern and progressive in their outlook. He claimed that Populists believed that science and technology could improve their world and that they adapted the contemporary models of business to their own situation. Charles Postel, The Populist Vision (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007). For a discussion of the merits of Postel's argument refer to Worth Robert Miller, ed., "The Populist Vision: A Roundtable Discussion," Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains 32 (Spring 2009): 18-45.

¹² Goodwyn, Populist Moment, 182-183; Chambers, Tyranny, 42-43; Miller, "Farmers and Third Party Politics," 294-295.

¹³ Miller, "Farmers and Third Party Politics," 300-302.

In addition to the economic and political circumstances, many Populists were also influenced by evangelical Christianity, which historian Joe Creech explained provided the leadership and organizational models for the movement and infused it with language, meaning, and a motivational force. Some ideas held by American evangelical Christians concerning politics, democracy, economics, and relationships of class, race, and gender, not only shaped the Populist reform agenda, but also motivated them to set duty to God above allegiance to party in order to restore America's God-given system of economic liberalism and political freedom. This strong religious impulse, Creech asserted, led many Populists to construct a narrative in which the forces of God and freedom, represented by the Populists, were pitted against the forces of Satan and tyranny, represented by the two dominant political parties and wealthy capitalists. Many Populist evangelicals also feared that their own Protestant denominations were neglecting their needs by drifting toward ecclesiastical centralization. Some evangelical Populists challenged the denominational machinery and began to emphasize local congregational autonomy and individual spiritual expressions.¹⁴

The significance of Populism does not necessarily lie in its victories, almost none of which it saw during its short life, but rather in what it did for its constituency, according to historian Lawrence Goodwyn. The people who generally supported the Populist Party were those who felt a deep sense of alienation from the contemporary trends of American society and sensed that they, as independent producers, were losing their status in the nation. Populism, Goodwyn argued, gave people a sense of self-worth and taught them that they could achieve political acts of self-determination. The demands of the Populists may have seemed radical to many other

¹⁴ Creech, Righteous Indignation, xviii-xx and 48-49.

Americans, but for the men and women of the agrarian movement, “It was all possible,” Goodwyn wrote, “because America was a democratic society and people in a democracy had a right to do whatever they had the ethical courage and self-respect to try to do.” Furthermore, it empowered people to make judgments on their own rather than accepting the interpretations of culturally sanctioned “leaders.”¹⁵

Populist ideas posed a distinct challenge to the authority of the nation’s elite. The defenders of the status quo had constructed a justification of the established order that combined American exceptionalism, white supremacy, and biological determinism into an ideology known as “Social Darwinism.” By the latter part of the century, some philosophers had adapted Darwin’s biological explanation of the origin of the species to social and cultural evolution. Defenders of Social Darwinism, such as Herbert Spencer in England and William Graham Sumner in the United States, argued that evolution through natural selection explained social change through evolutionary laws such as the “survival of the fittest.”

These theorists proposed some ideas already held by many Americans, such as laissez-faire capitalism and the inevitability of progress, but they reinforced the validity of these values by adding a “scientific” explanation. Social Darwinism strengthened many Americans’ beliefs that the principles of individualism, competition, and inefficient government were laws of God and that social improvement and higher standards of living were part of God’s plan.¹⁶

Biological Darwinism and its social outgrowths had a profound impact on American religion, especially the dominant faith of the land, Protestant Christianity. The theory of

¹⁵ Goodwyn, Populist Moment, 135-136 and 153.

¹⁶ Chambers, Tyranny, 5-6; Ruth C. Crocker, “Cultural and Intellectual Life in the Gilded Age,” in Gilded Age, 219-224.

evolution challenged the worldview of many nineteenth-century American Christians concerning their concept of the Fall and that God's design pervaded all of nature.¹⁷ Although an outright acceptance of a Darwinian framework within Protestantism would not emerge until the twentieth century, there were efforts among some nineteenth-century American Protestant intellectuals to modify Christian thinking to fit the new scientific theory. Some American Protestant academics adopted evolution as proof of God's immanence, in other words, that God had a direct hand in both biological and social evolution. Church historian Martin Marty has described this idea as a "metaphysic of Progress."¹⁸ For these "new theologians," or modernists—Protestants who wanted Christianity to adjust to the norms defined by modern culture—the immanent God, who revealed himself most fully in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, replaced the transcendent God. This view of God led some theologians to argue that Jesus' salvific work for humanity no longer served as the substitute for sinful humans and instead was an example for others through his life and sacrifice. Modernists also believed that God was best understood as working within human societies and that developments in learning conveyed the realization of God's work in the world.¹⁹ For some modernists, experience and consciousness now served as authorities on par

¹⁷ Ferenc Morton Szasz, The Divided Mind of Protestant America, 1880-1930 (Birmingham, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1982), 2-3.

¹⁸ Crocker, "Cultural and Intellectual Life," 221; Martin E. Marty, Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America (New York, NY: The Dial Press, 1970), 189.

¹⁹ Mark A. Noll, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 373-374.

with scripture. Moreover, the new theologians argued that humans and God worked as co-creators in the progress of humanity.²⁰

Protestant intellectuals showed further signs of accommodation with new modes of thought by combining the ethics of Social Darwinism with a Calvinist theology, particularly the latter's ideas concerning "election." The motif of the survival of the fittest emerged in an age that was eager to reduce the apparently random events of contemporary life to comprehensible laws. Many Protestant clergy shared these concerns and created a framework in which the seemingly random circumstances of life fit into God's eternal plan. When Protestant leaders embraced Social Darwinism they individualized the ethics of election, which had previously been seen as an aspect of the covenanted community, and began to argue that economic competition was a principle of natural selection. The doctrines of survival of the fittest always meant the elimination of the unfit, the poor, and the outcast, the very people for whom Christians argued Christ had proclaimed the gospel. In any case, this Christianized version of Social Darwinism led to a type of a "gospel of wealth" in which it was assumed that material prosperity was both a sign of divine favor and that one was "fit" for competition in the marketplace.²¹

Another intellectual current shared by some elite Protestants that showed further signs of accommodation with new modes of thought was historical criticism of the Bible. Historical criticism was an attempt to explain the Bible, both its doctrines and history, in light of new knowledge of the ancient world by using literary analysis, archaeological discoveries, the theory

²⁰ Marty, Righteous Empire, 195. For the most authoritative work on Protestant modernism see, William R. Hutchinson, The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976).

²¹ Marty, Righteous Empire, 151-154.

of evolution, and comparative linguistics.²² This approach to biblical studies was one of the most controversial intellectual movements of the nineteenth century because it could be used to challenge the Bible's authority and undermine its truthfulness. Some scholars, using the methods of historical criticism, questioned the creation narrative of Genesis and the traditional authorship of many biblical books. Moreover, a number disputed the uniqueness of Christianity by arguing that it was merely one of the several religions of the Near East and that other great world religions also had their flood stories and appearances of gods on earth. Many Protestant intellectuals also began to argue that the Bible was more a product of its authors' worldview than direct revelation from God. However, as historian Mark Noll has noted, historical criticism should not be regarded as the sole influence on this new interpretation of scripture, but rather historical criticism was more of a product of changing views of religious authority and the meaning of revelation.²³

Some American Protestants' acceptance of biological and Social Darwinism and other modes of modern thought represented their defense of the status quo. This entrenched nature of late-nineteenth-century American Protestantism would eventually influence the rise of early Pentecostalism. There were at least four other impulses of late-nineteenth-century American life that influenced the emergence of Pentecostalism: restorationism, premillennialism, divine healing, and holiness. Restorationism, or primitivism, is simply "the impulse to restore the primitive or original order of things as revealed in Scripture, free from the accretions of church history and

²² Szasz, Divided Mind, 17.

²³ Noll, A History, 368-369; Szasz, Divided Mind, 15-41.

tradition.”²⁴ This ahistorical view denied the validity of church history and was rooted in a nostalgic sense of a pristine past before emperors, popes, Darwinism, and creeds had corrupted Christianity. At the end of the nineteenth century, some restorationists sought to restore the New Testament church through their own efforts while others anticipated a divine restoration that would recreate the apostolic faith. Blumhofer noted the restorationists who had the most significant impact on Pentecostalism were also premillennialists. This eschatological schema maintained that Christ’s second coming was imminent and its adherents looked for ways to cooperate with God in bringing about this sudden return.²⁵ Some premillennial restorationists looked for the renewal of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and believed that the revitalization of these gifts would be present in the end-times church.²⁶

Blumhofer explained that the restorationist vision served four primary functions, all of which had particular significance for Pentecostalism and were rooted in fundamental American characteristics. First, restorationists adopted the American impulse for reform but rather than pursuing political and social reform and perfection they sounded a call for religious reform and perfection. They also opposed nineteenth-century evolutionary optimism because they believed the best had already been realized.

Second, restorationists promoted Christian unity and simplicity. They assumed that the New Testament Church had been free of doctrinal and theological conflict and declared that contemporary Christians must reclaim this past. The restorationist’s dream for Christian

²⁴ Dictionary of Christianity in America, s.v. “primitivism.”

²⁵ Blumhofer, Restoring, 13.

²⁶ Ibid., 18-19.

reunification under a simple gospel was rooted in an emphasis on shared origins and the dream that they could recover the “pure” gospel.

Third, they grappled with eschatological issues. Many believed that they were promoting America’s destined millennial role while others maintained that their restoration of the ancient church would play an integral role in end-times Christianity. These emotions, Blumhofer explained, tapped into the broader American ethos that the nation had eschatological significance.

Fourth, most American restorationists were deeply antidenominational. They found submission to church authority intolerable, took literally the Protestant notion of the priesthood of all believers, and proclaimed that God had abandoned organized religion. Some restorationists, particularly in the nineteenth-century holiness movement, averred that the best option for Christians was “come-outism,” the idea that true Christians must reject denominationalism altogether. “This persuasion,” Blumhofer explained, “molded the subculture in which Pentecostal views flourished: early Pentecostals were often radical evangelicals whose preferences had marginalized them from the mainstream before they embraced Pentecostalism.”²⁷ Finally, some restorationists opposed certain aspects of contemporary culture, particularly its behavioral norms, and believed that they had found the true biblical way to transcend living reality, which attracted many adherents who were seeking an alternative to the norms of modern life.²⁸

²⁷ Blumhofer, Restoring, 14.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

Another current of nineteenth-century American religious thought that influenced Pentecostalism was premillennialism, which is the belief that Christ will return before the millennium, or the one thousand year reign of Christ. Eschatological emphases among Americans were not unique to the late-nineteenth century. Eighteenth-century American theologian Jonathan Edwards asserted that the events of the First Great Awakening were signs that Jesus' Second Coming was imminent. Many Americans believed the nation's victory against Britain during the Revolution was also an imminent sign of the end-times. In the nineteenth century, Charles Finney and other revivalists were convinced that Christians working toward social and political reform would help usher in Christ's kingdom. The continuity between these earlier eschatological views was postmillennialism, which is the belief that Christ will return after the millennium. This view tends to be more optimistic than premillennialism because it maintains that humans can help bring about the millennium through their own reform efforts while premillennialism rejects the notion that humans can help usher in the millennium. The rise of premillennialism in the United States was largely a product of the times. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, as Americans witnessed the bloodshed of the Civil War, the emergence of Darwinism, the rise of biblical criticism, the harsh realities of industrialization, and the questionable practices of many modern corporations, they began to embrace premillennialism.²⁹

Quite possibly the most significant end-times theory to emerge at the end of the nineteenth century was premillennial dispensationalism. This eschatological schema was the brainchild of John Nelson Darby, an Irish Anglican priest who helped to establish the Plymouth Brethren in nineteenth-century Britain. Premillennial dispensationalism divided history into

²⁹ Donald W. Dayton, Theological Roots of Pentecostalism (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1987), 158-163.

seven eras, or “dispensations,” that were each characterized by how God interacted with humanity. Darby and his followers believed that events in biblical prophecy were about to be fulfilled and would usher in the seventh (and final) dispensation. This final work of God would begin with the secret rapture of the church, which would be followed by seven years of tribulation ultimately culminating in the one thousand year reign of Christ.³⁰

Not all American evangelical Christians agreed with Darby’s division of history but most agreed with his basic premise of Christ’s imminent return. Darby and his followers held that believers had an obligation to be ready and to help make the world ready for Jesus’ second coming. As an incentive toward personal holiness and aggressive evangelism, this eschatological vision helped to create the context in which Pentecostalism emerged. Furthermore, many early Pentecostals believed that their movement was one of the key events of biblical prophecy that would usher in Christ’s return and that their movement alone ensured escape from the tribulation by taking part in the rapture.³¹

The third current of nineteenth-century American evangelical Christianity that influenced Pentecostalism was the rise in popularity of divine healing. This interest in healing, Blumhofer explained, was rooted in many American Christians’ restorationist views since it was one of the apostolic gifts and could be expected to be part of the end-times restoration. There were several

³⁰ Blumhofer, Restoring the Faith, 16.

³¹ Ibid. For a more detailed look at premillennial dispensationalism see, George Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 43-71; Ernest R. Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). Parham believed that the baptism of the Holy Spirit provided believers with a defensive “sealing” that protected them from the violence and turmoil of the tribulation. Douglas Jacobsen, Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of the Early Pentecostal Movement (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 46-50.

emphases that amplified the cultural influences that led to the popularity of divine healing. First, was a contemporary theological innovation that healing was “in the atonement” as well as claiming that it was one of the “gifts of the Spirit.” Second, healing fit with concepts of the “higher Christian life” since the Spirit’s indwelling strengthened one’s physical powers. Finally, it was a response to Christian Science, Unity, and other mind-cure movements. Many American evangelical Christians believed that such movements prospered because Christians failed to offer people hope for physical renewal.³²

Finally, the nineteenth-century holiness movement also gave birth to Pentecostalism. In June 1867, a group naming themselves “The National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Christian Holiness” issued a call for a revival meeting at Vineland, New Jersey, from July 17-26. Coming primarily from Methodist backgrounds, the organizers invited all people, without regard to denominational ties, who desired holiness and wanted to meet with other Christians in unity. The organizers hoped that all would experience a “Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Spirit” and would leave the meeting renewed so they could be more effective in their own churches. According to historian Vinson Synan, the opening of the Vineland, New Jersey, camp meeting on July 17, 1867, marked the beginning of the modern holiness crusade. For the next two decades, the American holiness movement experienced remarkable success and helped to set the stage for Pentecostalism.³³

³² Blumhofer, Restoring, 19. See also Raymond J. Cunningham, “From Holiness to Healing: The Faith Cure in America, 1872-1892,” Church History 43 (December 1974): 499-513. Parham also shared this view. Charles Fox Parham, A Voice Crying in the Wilderness (1902, repr., Joplin, MO: Joplin Printing, Co., 1944), 41.

³³ Vinson Synan, Holiness-Pentecostal, 22-29.

The holiness movement can be divided into three different branches: (1) Wesleyan, (2) Keswick, or “higher life,” and (3) radical.³⁴ The Wesleyan wing of nineteenth-century Christian holiness emerged from the Methodist Church. John Wesley’s teachings of the possibility of perfection and Charles Wesley’s hymns on life “purified by grace” influenced the views of the Methodist holiness advocates. Leaders in the holiness movement maintained that there were two separate phases of salvation available for all Christian believers. In the first, conversion or justification, the penitent sinner was forgiven of sins of commission, becoming a Christian but retaining a residue of sin. The second was called Christian perfection, or “entire sanctification,” which is the belief that a person’s inclination to sin was replaced by perfect love toward God and humanity. A person who was sanctified would no longer habitually sin nor would they commit a sin on purpose.³⁵

The holiness crusade found acceptance in the American Methodist Church for several reasons. Many Methodist conservatives hoped that holiness could serve as a bulwark against the more urbane and “progressive” ministers. These young ministers created controversy when they introduced organs and robed choirs into their churches, admitted new members without any previous education on Methodist doctrine, allowed members to dress in “fashionable” clothing, and most disturbing for many Methodists, deemphasized class meetings and altar services where believers could seek holiness. Others supported the holiness movement because it defended orthodoxy against the theological views of some of the progressive ministers, many of whom held favorable opinions of biblical criticism. In addition, some Methodist holiness proponents

³⁴ Dayton, Theological Roots, 90.

³⁵ Ibid., 27-29; Synan, Holiness-Pentecostal, 6-8.

hoped that it could reunite the Northern and Southern Methodists, who had split over the issues of the Civil War and Reconstruction. They also expected the holiness crusade to save the camp meeting, an institution that had been dwindling in the mid-nineteenth century. The camp meeting style had been replaced by more “respectable” services.³⁶

Amidst its success after 1867, the holiness movement created a significant amount of controversy, especially within the ranks of the Methodist leadership. By the 1880s, there were several factors that led to conflict and the rejection of the Holiness Movement in general. One of the most serious disputes was over the independent nature of the National Holiness Association. The aspect of this independence that drew the greatest ire from high-ranking leaders in the Methodist Church was its interdenominationalism. More than likely, this interdenominationalism generated concern among the leaders of the Methodist Church that there would be a mass exodus to the independent National Holiness Association. Also, many leaders believed the appearance of the “come-outism” movement, which encouraged people to leave established denominations because they perceived them as spiritually and morally bankrupt, would lead to the destruction of the Methodist Church. Finally, by the mid-1880s, many theologically-trained Methodist ministers began to reject the doctrine of entire sanctification. The Methodist rejection of the holiness movement led to the marginalization of holiness advocates in the Methodist Church and, eventually, the creation of holiness denominations, such as the Church of the Nazarene, Fire-Baptized Holiness Association, and the various branches of the Churches of God in the 1890s.³⁷

³⁶ Synan, Holiness-Pentecostal, 30-31.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 34-43.

The “higher life,” or Keswick movement was another branch of nineteenth-century holiness. The most famous proponent of this view was Dwight L. Moody—arguably the most popular and influential American evangelist of his time—and Reuben Torrey.³⁸ Advocates of this view were influenced by both millenarianism and restorationism. The central impulse of the higher life movement, as well as with much of nineteenth-century American evangelical Christianity, was an attempt to recover the presence of the Holy Spirit in the present age.³⁹ Higher life advocates agreed with their counterparts in the Wesleyan wing of holiness that Christians needed to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but they disagreed with both the Wesleyan notions of Christian perfection and the function of Spirit baptism. Their fascination with the Holy Spirit led many in the higher life movement to seek a “baptism with the Holy Spirit,” an experience they claimed was subsequent to the new birth, although they believed that sanctification was a progressive experience that proceeded in one’s daily Christian life rather than instantaneous as some Wesleyans held. Spirit baptism, higher life theologians proclaimed, empowered believers for service as witnesses for Christ and as social workers among the poor and downtrodden.⁴⁰ This view differed from the Wesleyan notion of entire sanctification, which maintained that the second work of grace—entire sanctification—replaced sin with perfect love toward God and humanity. Finally, the higher life movement’s emphasis on the work of the Holy

³⁸ Wacker, “The Holy Spirit and the Spirit of the Age in American Protestantism, 1880-1910,” The Journal of American History 72 (June 1985): 48 and 60; Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, 80.

³⁹ Interest in the Holy Spirit was also evident among theologically liberal Protestants. Wacker, “The Holy Spirit and the Spirit of the Age,” 54.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 48 and 57; Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture, 79-85.

Spirit, premillennialism, divine healing, and worldwide evangelism helped provide the milieu for the rise of Pentecostalism in America.⁴¹

The radical wing of the holiness movement marked the climax of the nineteenth-century holiness crusade and was distinguished by its pursuit of the “third blessing.” Spokespeople for this branch of holiness maintained that conversion, sanctification, and the baptism with the Holy Spirit were all distinct experiences, which stood in contrast to the Wesleyan and higher life notion that sanctification and Spirit baptism were the same experience. The Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, founded by Benjamin Hardin Irwin, best represented the third-blessing branch of the holiness movement. Irwin proclaimed that the “baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire” was a third experience available to all sanctified Christian believers. People who received this third blessing often displayed emotional outbursts, which included shouting, screaming, speaking in tongues, falling into trances, or an experience called the “jerks.” In addition to his innovative theology, Irwin also created a strict moral code for adherents of the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church. This moral code included prohibitions against men and women wearing “fashionable” clothing and eating pork, catfish, oysters, or anything else forbidden by the dietary laws of the Old Testament.⁴²

Many of the old-line leaders in the holiness movement were shocked by Irwin’s theology and derisively labeled it the “third blessing heresy.” These mainstream holiness teachers held onto the belief that Spirit baptism happened alongside entire sanctification. In spite of this

⁴¹ Blumhofer, Restoring, 30.

⁴² In 1895, Irwin formed the Iowa Fire-Baptized Holiness Association in Olmitz, Iowa. From this base, he spread his third blessing doctrine throughout the Midwest and the south. By 1898, he incorporated the various state organizations into the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church. Synan, Holiness-Pentecostal, 51-58; Goff, Fields, 54-55.

rejection from the rest of the holiness movement, many people were attracted to Irwin's doctrine of a third blessing. One of the earliest state organizations formed by Irwin was the Kansas Fire-Baptized Holiness Association. It is likely that Charles Parham adopted the idea that there was a third-blessing from personal contact with Irwin during one of the latter's revivals in Kansas or from some of Irwin's followers in the state.⁴³

Belief in both divine healing and premillennialism also distinguished the radical holiness wing from the mainstream holiness movement. With the rise in popularity of these two doctrines, the more classically and Methodistically oriented leaders of the National Holiness Association forbade them to be discussed at the organization's meetings. But as the holiness movement spread across the nation, it became more difficult to control local associations. By the end of the century, divine healing and premillennialism marked the radicalization of certain parts of the nineteenth-century American holiness movement.⁴⁴ The state of Kansas proved to be one place where the radical expressions of nineteenth-century holiness Christianity could thrive. The next chapter will more closely examine Kansas at the end of the nineteenth century.

⁴³ Ibid.; Goff, Fields, 54-57; Dayton, Theological Roots, 95-100. Parham listed the "baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire" as one of the central tenets of Beth-el Healing Home, the center of his ministry in Topeka, Kansas. "Teachings," Apostolic Faith (Topeka) March 22, 1899, 8.

⁴⁴ For divine healing see, Dayton, Theological Roots, 133-137. For premillennialism, ibid, 164-167.

CHAPTER 2 - The Birthplace of Pentecostalism: Kansas at the End of the Nineteenth Century

During the 1870s, historian Kenneth C. Davis has explained, many Kansas farmers enjoyed the material benefits of the nationwide economic boom, but at the same time they also began to experience a sense of alienation from the rest of society. This distance from the epicenters of American society was reflected in many Kansas farmers' perception that they had no control over the fruits of their labor, that they were in economic bondage to eastern corporations, that they bore a disproportionate share of the tax burden, and that they continued to be denied adequate, honest representation in government.¹

Farmers saw some evidence of this oppressive system in the nature of the relationship between the government, both state and federal, and the large railroad companies. To promote the expansion of the railroads, the federal government donated large chunks of public land to private corporations for railroad construction. These gifts of land, in addition to direct-money grants from the national treasury, were not handed out with the assurance that the recipients would use the money to promote the greater good and created, in the minds of some Kansas farmers "steel-girded monsters of greed having literally the power of economic life or death over western agriculture and the businesses wholly dependent on it," Davis argued.² To make matters

¹ Kenneth C. Davis, Kansas: A History (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984), 137-138 and 147.

² *Ibid.*, 139.

worse, when railroad corporations wanted to dispose of the public land that had been given to them, they often sold it in huge tracts to speculators, many of whom were foreigners. Finally, many Kansans believed that the railroad companies had “clogged the channels of democratic government,” Davis explained, by using free passes, large campaign contributions, and bribery to ensure favorable legislation.³

Amidst this frustration, Kansas experienced rapid economic and population growth during the 1880s. In 1885, the state census recorded that there were 1,268,530 people living in Kansas. This number was nine times higher than it had been in 1865 and up from less than one million in 1880. By 1888, Kansas had grown another twenty percent with a population of 1,518,552, a population not reached again until 1904. At the same time, the railroad industry was also booming in the state. During the 1870s and 1880s prominent lines, the Chicago, Rock Island, and Union Pacific, were added. In 1886, 950 miles of track were built, and the next year 1,680 miles were constructed. The railroad personnel were not the only people to benefit. This wealth was also made available to ordinary Kansans through improved farming methods, affordable land, easy credit, and high rainfall, all of which contributed to the state’s economic boom in the early and mid-1880s.⁴

Witnessing the impressive growth of cities such as Chicago, Cincinnati, and Kansas City, country towns across Kansas hoped to replicate that expansion. In order to achieve this kind of growth, they issued millions of dollars in bonds, even if it meant there was no capital to back

³ Ibid., 139-140; William Frank Zornow, Kansas: A History of the Jayhawk State (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), 134-147.

⁴ Walter Nugent, The Tolerant Populists: Kansas Populism and Nativism (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 54-55; Craig Miner, Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 2002), 146-148.

them up. This policy came to a head in the late 1880s when the buying, mortgaging, and bond-issuing got out of control and Kansas's economy was no longer experiencing a healthy growth, but a top-heavy boom. To make matters worse, starting in 1887, Kansas suffered a devastating drought, which, in addition to the deflation of crop prices, led to three successive years of crop failures. Many farmers, particularly in the newly settled central and western regions of the state, panicked and fled to avoid their debt and mortgage foreclosures.⁵

The older settled counties in northeast Kansas escaped most of the ills of the economic bust in the late 1880s. The citizens in eastern Kansas arrived early enough in the state that they benefited from the expansion of the previous decade and were able to avoid the devastating effects of the collapse. The only real consequence was when they were forced to sell their property at a lower cost than they had purchased it. Once Kansans' discontent turned into political action, this region of the state became what historian O. Gene Clanton called "the citadel of anti-Populism."⁶

Kansas farmers' grievances led to an increased interest in voluntary farm associations. These agricultural organizations, farmers hoped, would help alleviate some of their woes. These new groups would eventually influence the rise of the Populist Party. One such group was the Grange, or Patrons of Husbandry. The Grange was founded on the idea that one of the best ways to help ease the troubles of the farmer was to circumvent the middleman, who many people believed made a profit without laboring. In order to accomplish this, the Grange started

⁵ Zornow, Kansas: A History, 167-169; Nugent, Tolerant Populists, 55-58; Miner, Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 148-150

⁶ O. Gene Clanton, Common Humanity: Kansas Populism and the Battle for Justice and Equality, 1854-1903, 2nd ed. (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 2004), 54.

cooperatives for buying and selling, mills for grinding grain, manufacturing establishments, and banks. Officially, the Grange was nonpartisan, but it did promote state railroad and grain elevator regulation, which aligned the group with a particular political cause.⁷

In 1872, the first Kansas Grange was established in Hiawatha, Kansas. Two years later, Kansans had organized Granges in nearly every rural district in the state. During the election of 1874, the popularity of the Grange helped lead to the creation of the Independent Reform Party, which proved to be a force to be reckoned with by winning the second highest number of votes in the state after the Republican Party. After this election, which failed to unseat the entrenched Republican majority, there was a decline in zeal for agricultural organizations. However, Kansans interest in third-party politics remained intact. In the three elections between 1880 and 1884, the Greenback-Labor Party carried the banner of reform. In the election of 1886, the Prohibition Party picked up this mantle and was later joined by the Union-Labor Party in 1888.⁸

⁷ Miller, "Farmers and Third-Party Politics," 286.

⁸ Clanton, Common Humanity, 52-53. The Greenback-Labor Party considered labor to be the only legitimate source of value. Therefore, its supporters opined, money was simply a means of keeping track of one's labor. Greenbackers argued that the federal government should maintain stable values by adjusting the money supply to remain consistent with changes in production and population. In order to do this, Greenbackers held, the government should print paper money, or "greenbacks," because the supply of gold and silver could not be as easily controlled. Miller, "Farmers and Third-Party Politics," 289. The Prohibition Party, as the name implied, was best known for its prohibition platform. Other than its explicit support of prohibition, the Prohibition Party closely resembled the economic stance of the Populist Party, which would not be founded until 1890 in Kansas. Nugent, Tolerant Populists, 166. The Union-Labor Party was started by the Knights of Labor in February 1887. It called for reform in land, money, and transportation, which, again, were issues that were eventually adopted by the Populist Party. The Union-Labor Party did poorly on the national level in the election of 1888, however, one third of its votes came from Kansas. Miller, "Farmers and Third-Party Politics," 291.

A more significant wave of agricultural unrest emerged in 1889 with the organization of a state-branch of the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union (Southern Alliance). This southern-oriented farmers' group demanded fundamental social change through its subtreasury plan. In Kansas, however, the subtreasury plan was deemphasized. Instead, Kansans fought for the direct election of senators, nationalization of the railroads, free silver, laws against corporate and alien landholding, and laws against speculation in grain futures as a means of change. The refusal of the Republicans or Democrats to support the Alliance's demands led many in the organization to consider creating a new political party. The turning point came in the spring of 1890 when Republican U.S. Senator John J. Ingalls made comments in an interview with the New York World that alienated him from the majority of Alliance members. In response, the Alliance leadership called for a meeting in Topeka with the purpose of creating a third party.⁹

In June 1890, Alliance members met in Topeka, Kansas, to organize and write a platform for the Kansas People's [Populist] Party. Kansas Populists sought to create a "people's government" that would reform the contemporary political establishment and would improve society through direct governmental intervention.¹⁰ The platform of the Kansas People's Party stated, "The earth is the common heritage of the people; every person born into the world, is entitled equally with all others to a place to live, and earn a living, and any system of government that does not maintain and protect this inalienable right is wrong and should be changed or abolished."¹¹ In addition, the party called for the coinage of silver, legislation to prevent

⁹ Clanton, Common Humanity, 88-92.

¹⁰ Miner, Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 175.

¹¹ "People's Party Platform," in Proceedings of the Twenty-Ninth Republican State Convention of Kansas (Topeka, KS: Geo. W. Crane, Publisher, 1890), i.

speculation in futures trading in all agricultural and mechanical productions, laws against absentee and alien ownership, a subtreasury plan, and government ownership of the means of communication and transportation.¹²

The Populist Party achieved remarkable political success in Kansas, electing local leaders, governors, and state and federal legislators. In 1890, for example, the Populists gained control of the state House of Representatives and elected a U.S. senator, replacing Ingalls.¹³ Two years later, Lorenzo Lewelling was elected as the state's first Populist governor and the Populists took control of the state Senate. This same year, however, also saw the infamous "Legislative War of 1893" in which the Republicans and the Populists in the House fought over some disputed election results. The initial returns showed that the Republicans won the majority of the seats in the House, but the Populists cried foul and claimed that the Republicans stole the election. Their fighting eventually led Governor Lewelling to call for the state national guard in order to keep the peace. The state Supreme Court ultimately settled the quarrel and ruled that the Republicans had won the election.¹⁴ During these elections, the newly settled central agricultural counties and southeastern industrial counties provided the bulk of the rank and file of the Populist Party.¹⁵ By the end of the 1890s, the Kansas Populist Party, following closely behind

¹² Ibid., i-ii; Miner, Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 174; Clanton, Common Humanity, 93; Nugent, Tolerant Populists, 71.

¹³ Clanton, Common Humanity, 125-127.

¹⁴ Ibid., 183-209.

¹⁵ Ibid., 54.

the national party, lost most of its strength.¹⁶ However, some leading Populists did not abandon their reform efforts. Many of them made the easy transition into the Socialist Party.¹⁷

One of the most prominent Kansas Populists was Jeremiah Dunham Botkin, who was elected as Congressman-at-large on the Democratic-Populist ticket in 1896 and was a close friend of Charles Parham.¹⁸ Prior to his election in 1896, Botkin made a name for himself as a Methodist minister in the Southwest Kansas Conference and was an ardent prohibitionist—he ran for governor on the Prohibition ticket in 1888. As a Methodist minister, he preached a holiness message that was similar to the Keswick belief that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was “an enduement of power.”¹⁹ In a sermon from 1890, titled “The Baptism of the Holy Spirit,” he argued that “the church of Jesus Christ is to receive power, not to work miracles, but to witness for him in all the earth.”²⁰ Botkin lamented that “the modern pulpit” had ignored this central doctrine on the Holy Spirit for questions of minor importance and that its teachings on the Holy Spirit were so vague that few professing Christians had even heard of the third person of the

¹⁶ Zornow, Kansas: A History, 198-208.

¹⁷ Leland Lengel, “The Righteous Cause: Some Religious Aspects of Kansas Populism” (PhD diss., University of Oregon, 1968), 293-300.

¹⁸ Botkin visited Parham at his Beth-el healing home in Topeka in December 1899. Apostolic Faith (Topeka), January 1, 1900, 7.

¹⁹ J.D. Botkin, “The Baptism of the Holy Spirit,” in The Kansas Methodist Pulpit: A Collection of Twenty-Four Sermons by Bishop X.W. Ninde, Topeka, Kansas, and Various Members of the Four Kansas Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, compiler J.W.D. Anderson (Topeka, KS: Geo. W. Crane & Co., 1890), 224.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 225.

Godhead.²¹ If churches would only become hungry and seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Botkin averred, Christians would be able to take entire communities for Christ.²²

Botkin's preaching would eventually get him into trouble with some prominent members of his church in Wellington, Kansas, but not for his holiness views. Rather, he created controversy because he was apparently "preaching politics." In his own defense, he said he never "uttered a partisan sentiment" but that he simply denounced the evils of the day, as any responsible preacher would do. However, he claimed, "This was too much for the sensitive nerves of half a dozen self-constituted dictators in the church and half a score of old party bosses outside."²³ It was also at this time that he announced his temporary resignation from the pulpit so that he could run for Representative in the third district as the Populist Party candidate, a bid he would lose to his Republican opponent.²⁴ Botkin believed, much like his fellow Populists, that the Republican and Democratic parties had forsaken the common people and that they sought to perpetuate the status quo. What was needed, he wrote, was "true reform," which could only be found in the Populist Party. Concerning his decision to run as the Populist candidate in 1894, he stated, "It is the party of the great common people, of the vast hosts of laboring men and producers. It proposes the enthronement of those principles and policies of government in which I have believed for years, and which, in my judgment, are essential to the perpetuity of this

²¹ Ibid., 220.

²² Ibid., 227.

²³ J.D. Botkin, "Prohibitionist and Democrat," The Advocate (Topeka), August 22, 1894, 8.

²⁴ "Jeremiah D. Botkin," in A Biographical History of Eminent Men of the State of Kansas, with Portraits Engraved Expressly for this Work, compiler Hill P. Wilson (Topeka: The Hall Lithographing Company, 1901), 355.

republic.”²⁵ Although he officially ran as a Populist, Botkin described himself as a “Christian socialist.”²⁶

Botkin lost the election in 1894, but came back in 1896 to run as Congressman-at-large on the Democrat-Populist fusion ticket. In an impressive display of his popularity in the state, he won by over 10,000 votes.²⁷ A number of speeches he gave during his time in office reflected the platform of the Populist Party, namely that the government had failed to protect the well-being of the people, that the government had bowed to the interests of a few wealthy capitalists, and that government policies only made the rich richer and the poor poorer. Two of these speeches are worth looking at in some detail.

In January 1899, he gave a speech in which he came out forcefully against America’s invasion of the Philippines. He had previously supported the war in Cuba because he believed that the United States would be helping the Cubans overthrow their Spanish oppressors.²⁸ The war in the Philippines, however, was different, Botkin averred. This time the nation was not fighting for humanitarian reasons but to fill the coffers of a few wealthy individuals.²⁹ The most astonishing feature of the push for war in the Philippines, Botkin claimed, was the number of Christians who supported the war because it would give missionaries an opportunity to spread

²⁵ “Prohibitionist and Democrat,” The Advocate (Topeka), August 22, 1894, 8.

²⁶ “Botkin is Radical,” Topeka Daily Capital, September 2, 1894, 4.

²⁷ “Jeremiah D. Botkin,” Eminent Men, 355.

²⁸ Cong. Rec., 55th Cong., 2nd Session, April 12, 1898, 3745-3748.

²⁹ Cong. Rec., 55th Cong., 3rd Session, January 30, 1899, 1265-1266.

the gospel.³⁰ “Christianity,” Botkin declared, “does not propose to conquer by force, but by the resistless power of love. You can not shoot the religion of Jesus into the Filipinos with 13-inch guns, nor punch it into them with American bayonets.”³¹

A month later, he spoke in Congress on the need for both governmental and financial reform. The driving theme of these remarks was that an unholy alliance between the old parties and wealthy capitalists led to a state of affairs in which the interests of the masses of people were ignored. Botkin said that the government, for its part in this development, no longer served its purpose, which was to protect all people’s inalienable rights and to shield the weak from the strong. He intoned, “The very language of this great instrument [Declaration of Independence]—‘to secure these rights’—is an assumption that the strong will seek to live off the weak, that the wise will endeavor to overreach the foolish, and that the one prime purpose of government is to protect the weak and the foolish against the encroachments and oppression of the strong and wise.”³² In order to reverse this trend, Botkin advocated the free coinage of silver, the breaking up of trusts, the abolition of unjust tariffs, and the establishment of government postal savings bonds.³³

As seen in the example of Botkin, evangelical Christianity was a central influence on some Kansas Populists. However, Kansas Populists displayed a wide array of religious

³⁰ Ibid., 1266

³¹ Ibid., 1266. Other Kansas Populists shared Botkin’s opposition to the nation’s commercial and political imperialism. Lengel, “Righteous Cause,” 232-234.

³² Cong. Rec., 55th Cong., 3rd Session, February 27, 1899, 2502.

³³ Ibid., 2505-2510. There needs to be a deeper exploration of Botkin. A study of his life could offer a great deal of insight into the intersection of religion and politics in Kansas.

influences.³⁴ While Botkin represented the more orthodox Christian wing, Jerry “Sockless” Simpson represented the other end of the religious spectrum. Throughout his political career, Simpson rejected orthodox religious belief and was a committed deist his entire life.³⁵ Although Populists exhibited a broad range of religious beliefs, they shared a common humanitarian concern based on the principles of “the fatherhood of God” and “the brotherhood of man.” For many Populists, this meant protecting the weak from the strong and recognizing the dignity of the individual. Historian Leland Lengel described the Populist outlook as a “theological orientation centered about social concerns and based upon a fundamental interest in human welfare.”³⁶ Many, if not most, Kansas Populists believed that the nation had ignored these basic precepts. To remedy this problem, they demanded the application of Christ’s teachings to the existing economic and social conditions to solve the problems of waste, unemployment, uneven distribution of wealth, and other injustices in America.³⁷ Populists hoped to usher in this vision of society founded on the example of Christ through political action.³⁸

³⁴ For more on this diversity see, Lengel, “Righteous Cause,” 33-71. It is likely that Mary Elizabeth Lease, another prominent Kansas Populist, was also an evangelical Christian or at least had contact with evangelicals during her time with the WCTU. Worth Robert Miller, “The Populist Vision,” 27-29.

³⁵ Lengel, “Righteous Cause,” 43-44.

³⁶ Lengel, “Radical Crusaders and a Conservative Church: Attitudes of Populists Toward Contemporary Protestantism in Kansas,” American Studies 13 (Fall 1972): 57. Also see, Lengel, “Righteous Cause,” 234.

³⁷ Peter Argersinger, “Pentecostal Politics in Kansas: Religion, the Farmers’ Alliance, and the Gospel of Populism,” Kansas Quarterly 1 (Fall 1969): 30.

³⁸ Lengel, “Righteous Cause,” 80.

This religious orientation gave many Populists an overwhelming sense that they were on the side of righteousness. The Populist belief that their movement conformed most closely to the will of God meant divine providence was supposedly on their side. This certainty not only heightened the idea that a Populist victory was inevitable, but it also helped to draw sharp distinctions between the Populists and their detractors.³⁹

Populists also used their religious outlook to mount scathing critiques of the institutional churches in Kansas, which they accused of hypocrisy and corruption. Many Populists believed that the churches had failed to preach the brotherhood of man.⁴⁰ According to Lengel, Populists condemned churches with the same vehemence they attacked the so-called “money-power.”⁴¹ “Few villains,” Lengel wrote, “disturbed the faithful in quite the same way as did those churchmen who promoted selfish causes while claiming adherence to Christian principles.”⁴²

Populists expressed their antipathy toward organized religion in terms of “churchianity” versus “Christianity.” It was not Christianity they opposed, many Populists claimed, but the corruptions of so-called churchianity, which included defense of the status quo, hypocrisy, pursuit of worldly riches, and indifference toward human suffering.⁴³ The ministers and deacons of many of the institutional churches in Kansas had joined forces with the money-power to

³⁹ Ibid., 72-108.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 173; Lengel, “Radical Crusaders,” 50-51.

⁴¹ Lengel, “Righteous Cause,” 151.

⁴² Lengel, “Radical Crusaders,” 51.

⁴³ Ibid.; Lengel, “Preachers of a New Religion,” Prairie Scout 1 (1973): 71-77.

maintain the Republican dominance over the state, many Populists declared.⁴⁴ According to the Populists, the evidence of this negligence on the part of the churches was the continued success of the Republican Party, which they attributed to the acquiescence of the more “respectable” church members and ministers. The Populists believed that these people alone were responsible for the strength of the Republicans because without their support the party could not hold such political sway in the state.⁴⁵

Some Populists reserved their harshest words for pastors whose attitudes the Populists protested was inimical to their crusade. Lengel wrote, “Pastors, named without compunction, stood condemned as ‘sycophants of public opinion,’ ‘aspirants of popular favor,’ and ‘songsinger[s] to the republican state central committee.’”⁴⁶ One charge leveled against Christian ministers was their continued emphasis on the “otherworldly” in the midst of human suffering. Pastors, many Populists proclaimed, spent too much time discussing the ethereal rewards of the afterlife when comparable rewards were available on earth.⁴⁷ These attacks on the Protestant clergy, Lengel noted, slowly eroded many people’s trust in religious institutions and leaders and drove “the people” en masse from the churches.⁴⁸

In addition to their politics, many Kansans also embraced dissenting religious expressions. One of the most notable was the nineteenth-century holiness movement. For the

⁴⁴ Lengel, “Righteous Cause,” 154-155.

⁴⁵ Lengel, “Radical Crusaders,” 51.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 52; Also refer to, Lengel, “Righteous Cause,” 161.

⁴⁷ Lengel, “Radical Crusaders,” 53-55.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 53; Lengel, “Righteous Cause,” 167 and 176.

most part, holiness in Kansas seemed to follow the same pattern as the national holiness movement. This means that at the beginning, the Kansas holiness movement generally remained loyal to the Methodist Church, but as time passed many in the Methodist Church began to reject the tenets of Wesleyan perfectionism and the Methodist discipline. These shifts in the Methodist Church led some holiness proponents to separate from the denomination to form independent holiness churches and denominations. However, Kansas broke with the national movement in its tendency to accept the more radical versions of nineteenth-century holiness Christianity. Synan has suggested that there was a direct connection between the emergence of the most radical holiness groups and political and economic Populism. These radical holiness groups arose in states where the Populists had been most successful, particularly Kansas.⁴⁹

Dwight L. Moody conducted some of the earliest efforts to bring the doctrines of holiness to Kansas. During the summer of 1868, he held revival meetings, which he named “Kansas for Christ,” in Lawrence, Kansas. One observer stated that this work in the state was necessary because the “established church” had failed to bring the masses to Christ. In order to refute this statement, Methodist officials scheduled a camp meeting to promote Christian holiness in Oswego, Kansas, a small town in the southeast corner of the state.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Synan, Pentecostal-Charismatic Tradition, 42-43. He claimed that interviews with ministers of the 1894-1900 era confirmed that many, if not most, holiness people were dedicated to both William Jennings Bryan and the Populist Party. *Ibid.*, 43n53.

⁵⁰ Craig Fankhauser, “Christian Holiness in Kansas, 1870-1900” (paper presented to Seminar in American History, Pittsburg State University, March 29, 1983), 5. There has yet to be an adequate study of holiness in Kansas. Fankhauser’s work is the only material I have been able to find on this topic. His studies offer significant detail but they lack analysis. Any scholarly work on Kansas holiness would not only be fascinating, but would also add a great deal to historians’ understanding of Kansas religious history. The Kansas State Historical Society in Topeka houses a large collection of nineteenth and twentieth-century holiness periodicals printed in the state.

The Methodist officials were able to get popular evangelists Walter and Phoebe Palmer to conduct the camp meeting from July 26 to August 4, 1870. The Palmers took Oswego by storm. Contemporary witnesses reported that over fifty individuals sought conversion and another fifty confessed sanctification. These results led the advocates of holiness in southeastern Kansas to conduct another revival at the end of August of the same year. This meeting had even greater success, according to those present. At least one hundred people professed conversion and several testified to sanctification. Shortly after the revivals, converts in the region began meeting in each other's homes or in poorly constructed schoolhouses to continue the work of holiness. Historian Craig Fankhauser explained that Christian holiness was especially popular among "the common people" in the southeastern corner of the state. The Palmers were not the only Wesleyan evangelists generating religious excitement in Kansas. In March 1871, the Reverends John Inskip and William McDonald, president and vice president of the National Camp Meeting Association, respectively, and Bishop Edward Ames led a successful meeting in Paola, Kansas. The revival generated so much excitement among local clergy that they invited Inskip and his associates to hold two more National Camp Meeting Association meetings in Kansas.⁵¹

The National Camp Meeting Association, however, did not coordinate another camp meeting in Kansas until June 1879 at Bismarck Grove, about two miles from Lawrence. Individuals who attended the services testified that the Holy Spirit was clearly manifested. At the end of the meeting, witnesses claimed that twenty ministers and two hundred lay people professed "heart purity" and another fifty proclaimed conversion to Christ. Another outcome of

⁵¹ Ibid., 6-8; Fankhauser, "The Heritage of Faith: An Historical Evaluation of the Holiness Movement in America (M.A. thesis, Pittsburg State University, 1983), 73-75.

the Bismarck Grove camp meeting was the establishment of the Southwestern Holiness Association, the first interdenominational holiness association in Kansas.⁵² At the association's inception, its members declared their loyalty to the Methodist Church, maintaining that they did not intend to separate from it. The organizers' only intention was to spread the doctrine of holiness within their churches and the rest of the world.⁵³ By the early 1880s, however, the Southwestern Holiness Association, along with most other holiness groups, began to face severe criticism for their refusal to adapt to the changing world. For example, in June 1878 at the Kansas Annual Conference in Salina, Bishop Thomas Bowman intoned that the promotion of sanctification was a "practical error" and that those who advocated it risked creating division within the Methodist Church.⁵⁴

As a result of the changes and the criticisms they faced, some holiness people began to claim that their only option was to leave their denominations and to start new independent organizations. One such group was the Southwestern Holiness Association, which met in March 1882, to discuss breaking ties with the established churches. In June of that same year, the Southwestern Holiness Association met in Centralia, Missouri, and adopted a charter to form independent holiness churches, effectively severing ties with the established church.⁵⁵

This move to form a separate ecclesiastical body was soundly rejected as fanaticism and "come-outism" by the majority of the holiness leaders who wished to remain within the

⁵² Fankhauser, "Christian Holiness in Kansas," 9-11.

⁵³ Fankhauser, "Heritage of Faith," 85.

⁵⁴ Fankhauser, "Christian Holiness in Kansas," 12.

⁵⁵ Fankhauser, "Heritage of Faith," 83-86.

Methodist Church. But changes within the Methodist Church, including the acceptance of evolutionary thought among some of its leaders and clergy, lack of temperance advocacy, attendance at “improper” worldly amusements, fashionable dress, and a general trend toward theological liberalism, convinced some holiness advocates to believe that the only way to preserve holiness was to establish independent ecclesiastical bodies. The trends within the Methodist Church created a disheartening situation for most holiness groups: were they to remain loyal to the Methodist Church despite its anti-holiness stance or were they to separate from the denomination and start new churches? Most holiness advocates decided to stay in the Methodist Church, but the continual denial of Wesleyan perfectionism was the catalyst that finally drove many holiness proponents to create independent holiness denominations and churches.⁵⁶

Some people who organized these churches were considered to be on the fringe of the holiness movement because they combined holiness doctrine with their rejection of the established churches. The leaders of these independent churches often portrayed those who remained in the denominations as “anti-holiness,” “unregenerate,” “fashionable,” and “worldly-minded.”⁵⁷ Moreover, these holiness advocates had either left or been expelled from the established churches, after which they believed it was necessary to create independent holiness churches in order to spread their salvation message free from denominational control. As early as 1881, at North Topeka, Kansas, Rev. C.A. Sexton, editor of the holiness periodical Good Tidings, built and dedicated Faith Chapel, one of the earliest independent holiness churches in

⁵⁶ Synan, Pentecostal-Charismatic Tradition, 39-42.

⁵⁷ Fankhauser, “Heritage of Faith,” 111; Fankhauser, “Christian Holiness in Kansas,” 17.

the United States where radical holiness and congregational polity were first combined. The meetings at Faith Chapel were marked by their emphasis on the complete freedom of the individual to participate when they felt led by the Holy Spirit. The church did not keep official rolls and only those who claimed sanctification were recognized as members of “the true church of God.” Thus, the only binding force between members was a confession of heart purity and any human unions were deemed counterfeit and looked upon as sin and error. These leaders on the fringe of the holiness movement declared that the established churches were nothing less than “Modern Babylon” or the “Mother Harlot” and had forsaken and fallen away from God.⁵⁸

One of the most significant ways this independent mindedness manifested itself was the organization of the Kansas Fire-Baptized Holiness Church in 1898. The creation of this denomination represented Kansans’ tendencies to embrace radical movements that challenged the status quo. Kansas was one of the states most open to Benjamin Irwin’s doctrine of the “third blessing,” establishing one of the earliest state-level organizations intended to promote his teachings. Irwin’s notion of the third-blessing, which he called “the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire,” was deemed radical because it proposed that Christians could have a third experience beyond entire sanctification. Furthermore, the revival meetings conducted by the Fire-Baptized Church were also considered radical because of their exhibition of emotional worship. Converts were reported to shout, scream, speak in tongues, fall into trances, receive the Holy Ghost dance, and the “jerks.”⁵⁹ Also, the denomination was notable for its interracial nature, which further placed it on the fringe of late nineteenth-century American Christianity.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Fankhauser, “Christian Holiness in Kansas,” 17-20; Fankhauser, “Heritage of Faith,” 111-119.

⁵⁹ Synan, Pentecostal-Charismatic Tradition, 52.

In 1896, Irwin, along with Jess Bathurst and George M. Henson, conducted meetings throughout Kansas. Their first stop was in Chetopa to preside over the Twelfth Annual Camp Meeting of the Neosho Valley Holiness Association where Irwin's doctrine of the third blessing was enthusiastically accepted. These camp meetings attracted people from all over southeastern Kansas, including Oswego, Cherryvale, Altamont, Mound Valley, Independence, and Baxter Springs. The three evangelists also held meetings at Healey, Junction City, and Abilene, Kansas, all of which reported similar results as the meeting at Chetopa.⁶¹

In September 1897, Irwin and his fellow Fire-Baptized evangelists returned to southeast Kansas where they were scheduled to lead the Thirteenth Annual Camp Meeting of the Neosho Valley Holiness Association. Witnesses reported that thirty people received “radical, sky-blue conversions,” plus fifty cases of sanctification and as many testimonies of divine healing, and twenty-five or thirty confessions of the “baptism of Holy Ghost and fire.” At their business meeting in the same year, the Neosho Valley Association became the second group in the United States to adopt the constitution of the Fire Baptized Holiness Association of Southern Iowa.⁶² One person who was affected by Irwin's teachings and reflected the radical tendency of his fellow Kansans was Charles Fox Parham. It is to his personality and early ministry that the next chapter will focus.

⁶⁰ Fankhauser, “Heritage of Faith,” 145.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 125-126.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 130-132.

CHAPTER 3 - Charles Fox Parham's Early Years: The Evolution of a Religious Populist Leader, 1873-1900

Charles Fox Parham was born on June 4, 1873, in Muscatine, Iowa. He was the third of five sons born to William and Ann Parham. Parham's father was a horse-collar maker and house painter and, according to Parham biographer James Goff, had achieved an average income by the time of Parham's birth. In early 1878, the Parham family moved to Sedgwick County, Kansas, in order to take advantage of the state's wheat boom. The family settled in the Anness community, which was ten miles south of Cheney, Kansas. When the family arrived, Sedgwick County ranked second in Kansas in wheat production and ranked near the top in the production of corn, oats, and Irish potatoes. The Parham family benefited from the agricultural strength of the county and by 1883, William Parham had become a respectable citizen within the community. His prominent status allowed him to serve on the district school board in 1878 and as local postmaster in 1880.¹

Amidst this family prosperity, the young Charles suffered intense personal trauma, most notably severe illness and the death of his mother. He later described himself as "being very sick and weakly" as a child.² When Parham was six months old, he suffered from a fever that, he explained, left him an invalid for several years. He said, "For five years I suffered with dreadful

¹ Goff, Fields, 18-19.

² Parham, Voice, 12. Although Parham wrote this book in 1902 and thus, beyond the scope of this chapter, I will use it frequently because it contains significant biographical information on both his early life and ministry.

spasms, and enlargement of the head, until my fore head [*sic*] became abnormally large.”³ The young Parham’s health seemed to be improving when the family moved to Kansas in 1878, but by the age of nine he was struck with inflammatory rheumatism. This illness left him so emaciated that he could apparently count the bones in his hands by holding them up to a light. After the rheumatism had run its course, he began a bout with a case of tapeworm. In order to fight the tapeworm, Parham took several medications, one of which, he said, “Was of such nature that it destroyed the lining of my stomach and dwarfed me so that I did not grow any for three years.”⁴ He remained sickly for most of his early life. By the age of twenty-five Parham claimed to have suffered from “dyspepsia,” “catarrh,” “sick headaches,” and “stigmatized eye.”⁵ He also testified that he had suffered from an abscess on his liver and that he almost died from heart failure four separate times.⁶

When he was nine years old, at the same time that he was fighting rheumatic fever, Parham said he received his first call to the Christian ministry. He recollected that “though unconverted, realized as certainly as did Samuel that God had laid His hand on us, and for many years therefore endured the feeling of Paul,—‘woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel.’”⁷ He prepared for life in the ministry by preaching to cows: “The Bible was almost a constant companion; and though unconverted, time and again we used to round up the cattle upon an

³ Sarah E. Parham, The Life of Charles F. Parham: Founder of the Apostolic Faith Movement (1930, repr., New York, NY: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985), 2.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Charles Fox Parham, “My Testimony,” Apostolic Faith (Topeka), March 30, 1899, 6.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Parham, Voice, 11.

eminence, and give them a rousing sermon upon the realities of a future life; whether of the ‘minstrels of bliss’ or ‘the wailing of the damned.’”⁸

According to Parham, these early experiences were marked by a lack of formal religious training, which was a result of a scarcity of local ministers and a family that was not particularly religious. This paucity, he claimed, aided him in his development because he came to the Bible with “no preconceived ideas.” He later explained,

These facts are stated to show that the early study and impression of the Scriptures were entirely unbiased; thus by becoming thoroughly familiar with it and reading it just as it says and not being warped by preconceived notions or interpretations we have been enabled to weather the theological gales and outstrip the clergy who attempted to tear away the main-sail and wrap it in dogmatical confines of a single organization; thus by turning the rudder of the ship, have been guided through the storms of persecution, passing the forts whose guns were loaded with fierce hatred and cruel prejudice, able to say: The ship sails in the peaceful seas of full salvation.⁹

These words are revealing because they expose the Populistic impulses that informed Parham’s religious views throughout his life. Most significant is the notion that he discovered the “truth” of the scripture on his own without deference to educated clergy or church tradition. Although he may have exaggerated his ability to read the Bible without bias, his assertion is important nonetheless because it shows that he believed that ordinary people could read and interpret the Bible on their own. Furthermore, his ability to “weather the theological gales” confirmed in Parham’s mind that he had been chosen by God to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ as he interpreted it despite his lack of formal religious training. The words also reveal an attitude of anticlericalism. According to Parham, it was the clergy who sought to stop his work and “wrap it

⁸ Ibid., 12. Throughout A Voice Crying in the Wilderness, Parham consistently referred to himself in the royal “we.”

⁹ Ibid., 13.

in the dogmatical confines of a single organization.” He more than likely believed that the clergy treated him this way because they saw his actions as a threat to their authority and thus, the status quo. Parham’s anticlericalism challenged the notion that religious knowledge was reserved for a small group of well-trained men and placed it firmly in the laps of ordinary folk.

Parham’s early religious life was also shaped by the death of his mother in 1885, when he was only twelve years old. Due to his frequent illness, Parham was under the constant supervision of his mother and as a result the two developed a close bond. On the day of his mother’s death, Parham was pulled from school and went to be by his mother’s side during her last few moments alive. Sarah Parham, his future wife, wrote, “As the mother said good-by [*sic*] to the family she was leaving, she turned her beautiful brown eyes to him and lovingly said, ‘Charlie, be good.’ There, in the presence of God and his dying mother, he vowed that he would meet her in heaven.”¹⁰ One year later, he had his conversion experience at a local religious camp meeting held by “Brother Lippard,” a Congregational minister.

At the end of one of the Thursday night meetings, Lippard told the audience that unless someone was converted he would close the revival on the following Sunday night. On the way home, Parham decided that he would profess conversion at the next service in order to keep the meetings going, because they were “quite an innovation and enjoyable place to spend the long evenings.” In other words, he was bored and was looking for something to do. The next evening, Parham stood and had himself counted as a convert, but, he said, “No interest seemed to be

¹⁰ Sarah Parham, Life, 1.

shown whether really converted or not, but the idea seemed to prevail that if a person made a strong resolution and did the best they could that was all that was required.”¹¹

On his way home from the meeting, Parham recollected, “The Holy Spirit wrought deep and pungent conviction on our heart; and from the knowledge already obtained from the Scriptures, knew it would be utterly impossible to live a Christian life, without a real conversion.”¹² He wanted what he would later call a “Know so” experience.¹³ Parham remembered that on the buggy ride home he became weighed down with the conviction of sin, but he found himself unable to pray, so he sang a hymn, “I am Coming to the Cross,” instead. While singing the hymn, he later recounted that,

. . .there flashed from the Heaven, a light above the brightness of the sun; like a stroke of lightning it penetrated, thrilling every tissue and fibre of our being; knowing by experimental knowledge what Peter knew of old, that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. . . . the experience of that night years ago, has ever been, “an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast.”¹⁴

After this incident, Parham promised God that he would go to Africa as a missionary.¹⁵

During the following years, Parham explained “nothing worthy of note happened.”¹⁶ He became a Sunday School teacher and by the time he was fifteen, held his first public camp meetings, which, he said, were met with mixed results. In 1890, at the age of seventeen, he

¹¹ Parham, Voice, 14.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Parham, Life, 12-13.

¹⁴ Parham, Voice, 15.

¹⁵ Ibid., 16.

¹⁶ Ibid., 15.

enrolled in Southwest Kansas College (now Southwestern College) in Winfield, Kansas, with the intent of studying for the ministry. He attended Southwest College for three years, leaving school before he earned his degree. According to Goff, bad health and the Panic of 1893 forced Parham to abandon his studies.¹⁷

Before the end of his first year, Parham became disillusioned with the prospects of a career as a pastor and decided to pursue a degree in medicine instead. He said that he changed his mind because he came to view ministers as burdens on society, because they demanded a high salary but offered the community little in return. As a physician, however, he could help suffering humanity while also achieving a level of substantial wealth and social respectability. It was at this time that Parham suffered a reoccurrence of rheumatic fever.¹⁸

According to Parham, this new case of rheumatic fever was not a coincidence. God was punishing him for going back on his word to become a missionary, a promise he had made after his conversion.¹⁹ The problem in Parham's mind was that he had deliberately disobeyed God and that his decision to pursue medicine was a sign that he did not trust God enough to care for him. The devil, Parham recounted, had led him to believe that he could be both a doctor and a Christian. For Parham, the two could not be reconciled and he "backslid" to the point that even his closest friends no longer recognized him as a Christian.²⁰

¹⁷ Goff, Fields, 27.

¹⁸ Parham, Voice, 16.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

While suffering from the effects of the fever and an overdose of morphine, which he said he was allowed to take as much as he desired, Parham came to the realization that he could be healed just as Jesus had healed people during his earthly ministry. He promised God that, if healed, he would recommit himself to a life in the ministry, whether as a missionary to Africa or as a preacher on street corners. After this pledge, Parham experienced what he called God's "sanctifying grace" and was healed in the spring of 1891. He interpreted his renewed health as a sign from God, "The disease was killed; at that time we felt that God had simply healed us because He had a special work for us to do."²¹

Although God had removed the fever from his body, Parham continued to deal with the effects of the disease. After he had been partially healed, his ankles became so swollen that he had to learn to walk on the sides of his feet, a condition that his doctors said was permanent. Parham claimed that this ailment remained because God had refused to grant a complete healing due to the severity of his disobedience. But Parham's newfound faith in God's healing touch led him to plead with God for complete healing. Finally, in December 1891, while sitting under an oak tree on the Southwest College campus, Parham appealed to God to give him the ability to walk normally because it was necessary in order to have a successful ministry. Shortly after making this prayer, Parham claimed that his ankles were miraculously healed.²²

After this experience, Parham vigorously pursued his new commitment to God. In May 1892, he held a series of meetings at Pleasant Valley School House near Tonganoxie, Kansas. Over the next two years, he would lead nineteen separate meetings in the town. These revivals in

²¹ Ibid., 18.

²² Ibid., 18-19.

Tonganoxie not only reassured Parham that he was called to be an evangelist, but they also established his effectiveness as a religious leader.

Sarah Parham, who was still Sarah Thistlewaite at the time of the revival in May of 1892 and had been raised as a Quaker, testified that Parham's style and message transformed her life as well as that of many other lives in Tonganoxie. She explained that she first realized her need for Christ's salvation at a camp meeting in Lawrence, Kansas, to which her grandfather had taken her when she was only thirteen. However, while going to school in Kansas City, she attended "the most fashionable churches" and had allowed "worldliness" to take over her life. On June 4, 1892, the final night of the revival in Tonganoxie, she heard Parham speak for the first time. She believed that the sermon that night had been directed toward her and that she "felt a power in the meeting that I had not known in the services I had been attending. How true were these verses and how much there was in them for me! Though I had heard many sermons of enticing words of man's wisdom, they had failed to satisfy my soul."²³

At the conclusion of the meetings in June 1892, some townspeople in Tonganoxie wrote Parham a letter in which they showed their appreciation for his work in their community. They said, "The Christians in the district thus unaminously [*sic*] express their thanks to our Heavenly Father for sending him amongst us and for the clear forcible manner in which the gospel has been preached. Many have been brought into the fold. It has been a time of refreshing from the

²³ Parham, Life, 15-17.

presence of the Lord, like rain upon the mown grass.”²⁴ Sarah Parham claimed that Tonganoxie would be one of the towns most faithful to her husband throughout his life.²⁵

One of the likely reasons that Parham was so successful in Tonganoxie was his audience-centered messages, which created an intimate connection between the young evangelist and his listeners. His wife claimed that Parham practiced extemporaneous preaching at these meetings because “he trusted God to bring the Scriptures to his remembrance and inspire to give out the meat in due season that would meet the needs of the people and feed hungry souls.”²⁶ The significant point to take from her description is that he intended his sermons to meet the “needs of the people.” This particular style of preaching seemed to be a sign that Parham was trying to separate himself from some of his more respectable counterparts in the Methodist Church. At the time of his early evangelistic efforts, it was becoming increasingly more popular within the Methodist Church for its ministers to read prepared sermons, which was a clear break with historical Methodism.²⁷ He would later use this trend as one of his primary critiques of other clergy. Simply reading a prepared text represented laxity on the part of Methodist ministers, he believed. Later in his career as an evangelist, he frequently attacked many in the clergy for failing to care for the common people and for being more concerned with filling their pockets with money and preserving their social reputation. Parham’s early years as a revivalist reveal a conscious decision to reject this lifestyle and to reach out to people in the pews.

²⁴ Ibid., 19.

²⁵ Ibid., 20.

²⁶ Ibid., 18.

²⁷ Wigger, Taking Heaven, 182-184.

Parham returned to Southwest College for the 1892-1893 school term. It was his final year but he did not finish his degree program. Instead, in March 1893, he was licensed as a local preacher in the Winfield District, Methodist Episcopal Church, North, at the annual meeting of the Southwest Kansas Conference. The following June he was appointed as a supply pastor for the Eudora, Kansas, Methodist church.²⁸ Years later, he lambasted so-called “sectarian schools” like Southwest College for being places that “provide the best facilities for back-sliding.” Generally, he declared, the faculty at these schools consisted of “back-slidden, super-annuated preachers,” who ruled along “old and prosaic lines” and did everything within their power to suppress voices of change within their denominations.²⁹ His years in Eudora were a mixed blessing for Parham. He established himself as a popular minister but he also received negative attention for some of his controversial beliefs, especially his holiness theology, his views on water baptism, church membership, and future rewards and punishment, and his refusal to submit to his superiors’ wishes.

In Eudora, he continued his emphasis on evangelism and, in addition to his pastoral duties, he held revivals in the surrounding area. His revivals were so successful that another church was established in Linwood, Kansas, after he held a series of meetings at a Congregational Church in that town. He held morning services at Eudora and traveled to Linwood to conduct afternoon services. This itinerant lifestyle suited Parham well, according to Goff, because “he worked best on the stump—recruiting and encouraging congregations—rather

²⁸ Goff, Fields, 31.

²⁹ Parham, Voice, 15.

than building a strong organizational unit.”³⁰ The Methodist hierarchy was impressed with the young preacher and in March 1894, reappointed him to another year in Eudora.³¹

What happened next in Parham’s life is not exactly clear. On the one hand, he seemed to be well liked within the Methodist leadership. According to his wife, some in the Methodist hierarchy were so impressed with Parham that he could have had any position in the church he wanted.³² On the other hand, his independent spirit and antiestablishment stance led him to cultivate his own views, even if they contradicted the Methodist Church’s teachings. This tendency to reject official denominational teaching raised the ire of some in the Methodist hierarchy.³³ At the root of this shaky relationship, Sarah Parham explained, was her husband’s “non-sectarian spirit.”³⁴

Among his controversial views were his holiness beliefs, especially his preaching of entire sanctification and a rigid moral code. By the 1890s, the Wesleyan wing of the holiness movement was well on its way to separating from the Methodist Church for the denomination’s continued denial of Wesleyan perfectionism. Some in the Methodist leadership saw this possibility as a threat because it challenged the denomination’s hierarchy and its improved social status. Proponents of Wesleyan perfectionism had been accusing the educated clergy of abandoning its position of entire sanctification for a religion of cold formalism. Parham’s stance

³⁰ Goff, Fields, 33.

³¹ Ibid; Parham, Life, 20-21.

³² Parham, Life, 24.

³³ Neither Parham nor his wife indicated whom exactly he upset in the Methodist leadership. It is likely that he frustrated both local bishops and the conference superintendent.

³⁴ Parham, Life, 24.

on holiness placed him among the suspected dissidents, Goff explained, but it would not have alienated him completely from the Methodist hierarchy. Despite Parham's holiness beliefs, his evangelistic success showed that he could be a valuable asset to the denomination.³⁵

More threatening than his holiness emphasis were Parham's theological views concerning water baptism, church membership, and future rewards and punishment, all of which engendered more uneasiness among the leadership than his holiness beliefs. At the time of his Eudora appointment, Parham had come to believe that water baptism was a meaningless ritual. He maintained that the only true baptism was a spiritual one and he encouraged his audiences to only seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit. According to his wife, his views on water baptism led him to deemphasize the importance of church membership, which he apparently saw as trivial, further frustrating the Methodist hierarchy.³⁶ Finally, Parham came to an unorthodox position on eschatological rewards and punishments. During the Tonganoxie revivals, he had befriended David Baker, an elderly Quaker and Sarah Parham's maternal grandfather. Baker and Parham often had lengthy discussions on the Bible and they both came to the conclusion that the future punishment of the wicked was unscriptural. They believed that immortality was a gift given only to the righteous. The unsaved, they claimed, would suffer but it would be a punishment of total destruction rather than eternity in hell.³⁷

³⁵ Goff, Fields, 34. For more on the transformation within the American Methodist Church see, Wigger, Taking Heaven, 173-195; Nathan Hatch, The Democratization of American Christianity (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 201-209.

³⁶ There is some indication, however, that a large number of people joined the Methodist Church as a result of Parham's efforts. Goff, Fields, 36.

³⁷ Goff, Fields, 33-35. For more on Parham's views concerning baptism see, Voice, 21-24. He eventually believed that water baptism was a useful religious practice. For an account of his opinion on church membership see, Parham, Life, 24. He published a full account of his

Parham's struggles with the Methodist leadership led him to resign from the Methodist ministry in March 1895. This was another sign of his growing antiestablishment bent. As Parham observed, "Finding the confines of a pastorate, and feeling the narrowness of sectarian churchism, we were often in conflict with the higher authorities, which eventually resulted in open rupture; and we left denominationalism forever."³⁸ Another reason for his resignation, his wife explained, was that he could no longer accept the salary because it had been raised by suppers and other so-called worldly entertainments.³⁹ Goff saw another motivation for Parham's resignation. He argued that at the root of Parham's anger was the Methodist Church's failure to ordain him. Consequently, Parham came to the conclusion that accepting ordination was an indication of compromise and that one could not obey both God and humanity. Parham's resignation, according to Goff, meant that he could now claim he received his instructions directly from heaven rather than from human institutions.⁴⁰

Although Parham and his wife claimed that he resigned from the Methodist ministry, there is some evidence that he may have been fired. In February 1901, a Lawrence, Kansas, newspaper printed a brief story on a revival Parham held in Eudora that month. The reporter

views on total annihilation in "Questions on Immortality," Apostolic Faith (Topeka), January 1, 1900, 4-5 and Charles Parham, Everlasting Gospel (n.p. [1919-1920]), 92-95 and 111-117.

³⁸ Parham, Voice, 19.

³⁹ Parham, Life, 25. Parham would later print an article on the increasing "worldiness" of most Christian churches. "State of the Church," Apostolic Faith (Topeka), March 22, 1899, 6.

⁴⁰ Goff, Fields, 36. Parham related this story to Charles Shumway, who interviewed Parham for his 1914 A.B. thesis. Charles W. Shumway, "A Study of 'The Gift of Tongues,'" (A.B. thesis, University of Southern California, 1914), 164.

wrote, “He forgot about how they closed him out by firing him out of the ME Church, as this was the test place while a Methodist preacher.”⁴¹

Shortly after his departure from the Methodist Church in 1895, Parham launched an independent ministry. For the next five years, Parham claimed, “Hundreds were converted, scores sanctified, and a few healed.”⁴² In the early years of his ministry, he worked closely with other holiness people until they began to move toward formal organization. This rejection of all ecclesiastical organizations, Methodists and holiness, further demonstrated his antiestablishment and independent nature.⁴³ But more important than the number of people converted under Parham’s ministry, was the further change in his theological views, most notably in his beliefs concerning divine healing, which gradually became a primary emphasis of his salvation message.

In September 1897, the Parhams’ first son, Claude, was born. It was also at this time that Parham suffered another health crisis, which was diagnosed as “heart disease.” Initially, his doctor prescribed “two or three different medicines,” but they contained “poison,” his wife asserted, and as a result Parham’s condition failed to improve. To make matters worse, Claude also became seriously ill and doctors told the couple that there was nothing they could do to help the newborn baby. One day, while praying for another sick man, Parham came to the realization that healing was also available to him. Sarah Parham recorded that at this moment Parham put all his trust in God for wellness, “The power of God touched his body and he was made every whit whole. He came home with new life and hope, and told me how he had taken the Great Physician

⁴¹ “Eudora,” Lawrence Daily Journal, February 12, 1901, 2.

⁴² Parham, Voice, 19. His wife also claimed that Parham’s evangelistic work led to the salvation of many people. Parham, Life, 26.

⁴³ Parham, Life, 26.

and was healed. Now, we would throw away all medicines, give up doctors and wholly trust Him as our Healer, and our baby too would be well.”⁴⁴ Both Parham and the baby were soon healed. In a display of his newfound trust in God, Parham renounced his membership in a local Masonic lodge where he held life insurance because he believed it would be inconsistent with his faith in healing.⁴⁵

Despite this revelation, Parham did not make divine healing a central aspect of his ministry at this time. It would take another tragedy in his life to convince him that he needed to preach salvation from both sin and sickness. After he and his son had been healed, one of Parham’s best friends, Ralph Gowell, whom he had met in Tonganoxie in 1892, suddenly died. Sadly, Gowell’s mother, who was also a good friend of Parham’s, died shortly after her son. Parham blamed himself for the death of his friends. He wrote, “As I knelt between the graves of my two loved friends, who might have lived if I had but told them of the power of Christ to heal, I made a vow that ‘Live or Die’ I would preach this gospel of healing.”⁴⁶

Parham came to believe that the message of divine healing was as much a part of the gospel as telling people of heaven. He said, “And this is the gospel that Jesus said should be preached to all nations as a witness, before the end should come; this is the great salvation that so many thousands are neglecting today, a salvation that heals the body as well as saves the soul.”⁴⁷ Parham blamed so-called Christian leaders for failing to bring the promise of God’s healing to

⁴⁴ Ibid., 32.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Parham would later print a story on the dangers of belonging to secret lodges. “That Lodge,” Apostolic Faith (Topeka), May 10, 1899, 3.

⁴⁶ Parham, Life, 33.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 46.

the common people. These Christian ministers risked losing possible converts to osteopathy, Christian Science, and hypnotic and magnetic healing.⁴⁸ If ministers would only preach divine healing from the pulpit, people would fill the pews and they could even save their own souls. He said, “Were this gospel fully preached today, the multitudes would hang upon the Word of God; while the heathen would flow into the hill of the Lord.”⁴⁹ He added that ministers who failed to make divine healing a central part of the salvation message risked being condemned by God.⁵⁰

Furthermore, Parham argued that faith in medicine was a sign of a lack of faith in God, who alone could bring about complete healing. A system that became more proficient in relieving pain, “The more anti-Christian is its influence; for man has ever been prone to wander to seek help from any and every source—whatever the cost—before he will humble himself in the sight of God, and accept the deliverance freely purchased for him on calvary,” he intoned.

God’s promise for healing, Parham believed, was found “in the atonement.” Parham maintained that the blood and the body of Christ served two different functions. Christ’s blood was for the cleansing of sin while his perfect body was broken for humanity’s imperfect bodies so that people could have perfect health.⁵¹ He said, “Now the atonement for healing is not in the

⁴⁸ Ibid., 41.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 46.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 40; Margaret Snell Parsons, “Divine Healing a Present Day Reality,” Apostolic Faith (Topeka), April 14, 1899, 5-6; “Divine Healing,” Apostolic Faith (Topeka), June 28, 1899, 3; A.B. Simpson, “Divine Healing,” Apostolic Faith (Topeka), November 15, 1899, 5.

⁵¹ Apostolic Faith (Topeka), August 30, 1899, 7. Isaiah 53:5 was the biblical passage that inspired this view.

blood of Jesus Christ, but in His stripes. The stripes were made in His Body; the perfect body of Christ was broken for our imperfect bodies, to bring us to perfect health.”⁵²

These aspects of Parham’s healing theology were centered in the notion that all people, who had sufficient faith, could be healed. The first step a person must take in receiving complete healing is to pursue salvation and repent of one’s sins. However, he maintained, this repentance must be sincere. If a person does not come to God with a truly repentant heart, Parham proclaimed, the “prayer of faith cannot prevail, for the healing will never take place until the sin is forgiven.”⁵³ This position allowed Parham to blame those who had not been healed under his ministry for having insufficient faith. Moreover, there was no need for a person to go to a mediator for divine healing. Parham wrote a person could “find it anywhere; alone in the house; the barn; up in the old orchard; in the fields; in a few words of silent prayer behind your desk or counter; in the busy marts of the city.”⁵⁴

In addition to divine healing, Parham also adopted Benjamin Hardin Irwin’s doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, which held that there was a third blessing available to Christians after the second blessing of sanctification. Parham interpreted his own healing as a sign that he had received the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire. He explained that when he discovered the gospel of healing, he also realized that the “Holy Ghost would not dwell in an unclean temple, and my body full of corruption and disease was unfit for the Holy Ghost and

⁵² Parham, Voice, 48.

⁵³ Ibid., 40; H.F. Carpenter, “Why Not all Healed?” Apostolic Faith (Topeka), October 18, 1899, 2-3.

⁵⁴ Parham, Voice, 47.

fire.”⁵⁵ He further recounted that after he claimed God’s promise to heal both soul and body, “The Holy Ghost and fire, the real fire of Pentecost, came in, and I have never had a pain or ache since.”⁵⁶

Armed with his new messages, Parham relocated his family to Ottawa, Kansas, in 1898, and started a ministry with divine healing as one of its emphases. Parham informed his listeners that God did not intend for them to be sick and that through the power of faith and prayer God would heal them of all ailments. A segment of Ottawa’s citizens were receptive to Parham’s message. Sarah Parham said that all classes of people came to Parham to be healed. Curious onlookers saw people allegedly healed of heart disease, consumption, and even nearsightedness.⁵⁷

Parham’s activities in Ottawa generated considerable interest in his ministry. He was often called to other cities, including Topeka, the state capital, to pray for the sick. It was in Topeka that Parham realized his ministry’s potential for growth. During the fall of 1898, Parham moved his family to the city and by the next summer had secured enough support to rent a building on the corners of Fourth and Jackson Streets in downtown Topeka. The building, which

⁵⁵ Charles Fox Parham, “My Testimony,” Apostolic Faith (Topeka) March 30, 1899, 6.

⁵⁶ Ibid. There is no indication as to where Parham picked up the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire. It is possible that he met Irwin during one of Irwin’s evangelistic endeavors in Kansas or that he simply met some of Irwin’s followers in Kansas. Either way, this doctrine became a mainstay of his salvation message prior to 1901. The baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire was listed as one of the central teachings at Beth-el Healing Home in Topeka, Kansas. “Teachings,” Apostolic Faith (Topeka), March 22, 1899, 8. He would also print an article dedicated to the subject. Charles H. Croft, “Crowning Gift from Heaven,” Apostolic Faith (Topeka), June 7, 1899, 5-6. By 1901, he was no longer incorporating the doctrine into his teachings. Goff, Fields, 55.

⁵⁷ Parham, Life, 33-35.

Parham named Beth-el Healing Home, became the new center of his ministry.⁵⁸ He intended it to be “a place where the oppressed of earth might come and find the way, the truth, and the LIFE, where the sick in soul and body might be taught the power of God to save and heal, through repentance, faith and the laying on of hands,” he wrote.⁵⁹

Goff argued that Parham’s healing ministry had several advantages over doctors and patent medicines. First, Parham’s services were free. People who came to him often made contributions but payment was neither required nor sought. Another advantage came in his healing theology. He often made a distinction between “divine healing” and “faith healers.” The difference was that Parham never claimed to have had the power to heal, rather he simply taught a message of healing. In an article likely written by Parham in the Apostolic Faith, the official publication of the healing home, the author wrote, “If a minister teaching God’s way of healing, and a person desires to be healed, and he prays and Christ heals, it doesn’t make him a divine healer. There are no divine healers. Any one claiming to be is a fakir. To assume the name ‘healer’ is to blaspheme Jesus.”⁶⁰ Furthermore, he explained that he could only help people who had sufficient faith. This approach, according to Goff, put Parham in a safe position. If a person

⁵⁸ Ibid., 36-39. In the earliest literature, Parham spelled the name of the healing home with the hyphen added. The initial newspaper reports of the Bible college in January 1901 spelled Bethel without the hyphen. This is a useful distinction and I will use it throughout this study.

⁵⁹ Charles F. Parham, “The Work Here,” Apostolic Faith (Topeka), March 30, 1899, 4.

⁶⁰ Apostolic Faith (Topeka), March 22, 1899, 6. The Apostolic Faith was a joint venture between Parham and James A. Staples, a local printer. Parham used the paper to promote his theological views, to publicize and coordinate the work at Beth-el, and to print local healing testimonies. Goff, Fields, 45-46.

was not healed, something was wrong with the sick person, not the treatment. However, if a person was healed, the reputation of the preacher involved often improved.⁶¹

One should be careful not to make too much of these explanations, Goff explained, because they tend to underestimate the appeal of the healing movement. Preachers like Parham were popular, not because of their message, but their results. Healing testimonies had to occur frequently in order to sustain people's interest. Public opinion could quickly turn against so-called healers if they failed to produce results. Parham controlled the issue by not allowing divine healing to become the primary criteria for continuing his ministry. One of the ways he managed his healing ministry was to pray for the sick in their homes. When he did pray for the sick in public, it was generally a subsidiary part of a service emphasizing evangelism. This approach, Goff argued, allowed Parham to avoid the carnival atmosphere often associated with healings, yet left room for some dramatic activity.⁶²

Parham also exploited the distrust of professional medical practice within the lower classes. By the 1890s, the medical profession had become increasingly more sophisticated and doctors were better educated and more qualified than in the past. This improvement led to higher-income levels among doctors, elevating them to their town's social and economic elite. For most Americans, changes in medicine meant better health care, but for a minority it meant estrangement from doctors. Parham played off this discontent by claiming that "the principle relief from medical science is pocket book relief."⁶³ He also declared that most of the drugs

⁶¹ Goff, Fields, 41.

⁶² Ibid., 42.

⁶³ Ibid.; Apostolic Faith (Topeka), October 18, 1899, 7.

doctors prescribed were poisons and that medicine had barely improved for over four thousand years.⁶⁴

The divine healing aspect of Parham's ministry at Beth-el was only a small part of a large operation in which he desired the home to be a place that modeled "A Living Christianity."⁶⁵ This meant that Parham offered a number of other outreach efforts to Topeka's outcasts, including a temporary orphanage, an ad hoc employment bureau, and a Rescue Home with the stated purpose of helping the city's prostitutes escape that life.⁶⁶ One of the most lavish displays of Parham's outreach efforts to the city's poor was a New Year's dinner at which over three hundred of Topeka's poorest citizens were served.⁶⁷

By 1899, Beth-el showed signs of decline. Parham's efforts that year to increase the social work of the healing home ultimately failed, he had not been able to reach prominent Topekans who could have made his financial problems disappear, the subscription list for the Apostolic Faith failed to grow, and some of his early supporters abandoned him. These factors led to a spiritual crisis in Parham's life. He wanted assurance that his work in Topeka would include more than the modest success of the healing home and street social work. By late September 1899, Parham suffered a nervous breakdown. As a result, he began to delegate the work of the healing home to others in an attempt to ease his burden and he moved his family to

⁶⁴ Parham, Voice, 41.

⁶⁵ Apostolic Faith (Topeka), July 26, 1899, 8.

⁶⁶ Goff, Fields, 48.

⁶⁷ "Food for All," Topeka State Journal, January 2, 1900, 3.

another building in Topeka to escape the demands of Beth-el. They would not return to the healing home until February 1900.⁶⁸

Parham may have received an answer to his prayers when Edward Doughty and Victor Barton, two students of Frank W. Sandford of the Holy Ghost and Us Bible School fame in Durham, Maine, came to Topeka in February 1900. In 1895, Sandford established Shiloh, a community north of Durham, Maine, which featured The Holy Ghost and Us Bible School. The school was a training ground for missionaries and evangelists. The most remarkable aspect of The Holy Ghost and Us School, however, was that it was completely debt-free. Sandford conducted the finances of the school on a “freewill basis,” which meant that he did not solicit funds but trusted God to provide for the community’s needs. Therefore, he did not charge tuition or board to his students and all services provided to others were completely free. Within ten years, there were over six hundred students at Shiloh and, remaining free of debt, it had been able to construct a seven-story tabernacle, an orphanage, a “hospital” that practiced divine healing, a community church, and a dormitory capable of holding five hundred students.⁶⁹

According to Goff, Parham was drawn to Sandford because Sandford’s work had many of the same goals with all the tangible results Parham desired. Sandford, similar to Parham, had been influenced by Dwight L. Moody and the higher life movement and he adopted both divine healing and premillennialism. The millennial view espoused by Sandford is known as the “Anglo-Israel” theory and would become one of the central themes of Parham’s ministry. This eschatological schema maintained that Anglo-Americans are one of the ten lost tribes of Israel.

⁶⁸ Goff, Fields, 49-50; Apostolic Faith (Topeka), November 1, 1899, 7.

⁶⁹ Goff, Fields, 58.

Proponents of this view believed that an elite group of Christians—the “bride of Christ”—would form the core of the millennium’s new order. Americans, Sandford concluded, as God’s “chosen people” were the logical option to fulfill this role as the “bride,” giving Anglo-Americans a primary role to play in the end-times drama. Since the end-times were near, these elite Christians needed divine empowerment in order to bring the lost to Christ. This gift was the “Baptism of the Holy Ghost” and would prepare believers to be effective evangelists with extra power and eloquence.⁷⁰

In mid-February 1900, Parham excitedly advertised that Sandford would be visiting Topeka, although he did not arrive in the city until June.⁷¹ On April 1, Parham printed a story in which Sandford had supposedly raised a girl from the dead. In the same issue, Parham showed more evidence that he had been influenced by Sandford. Parham noted, “With the last issue [March 15] our entire work passes upon a free will basis. No stipulated price will be charged for our board, but sincere seekers for all of God’s benefits in temporal and spiritual helps will be received, and let them give, as God leads, to the support of the work.”⁷² Parham also revealed a proposed construction plan that would add an auditorium and more rooms to Beth-el. He told his readers that they would need to raise \$10,000 to complete the addition.⁷³

Unfortunately for Parham, these plans did not materialize. But he experienced a renewal of energy in June 1900 when Sandford arrived in Topeka. At the end of the month, Parham was so impressed with Sandford that he enrolled with eight other Topekans at Sandford’s school in

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁷¹ *Apostolic Faith* (Topeka), February 15, 1900, 7.

⁷² *Apostolic Faith* (Topeka), April 1, 1900, 6-7.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

Maine. On the train ride to Maine, the group stopped in Chicago and took the opportunity to observe Alexander Dowie's ministry. They also stopped at Albert Benjamin Simpson's Christian and Missionary Alliance school in Nyack, New York. Simpson was another prominent nineteenth-century holiness leader. He was best known for his healing ministry and his claim that healing was available "in the atonement." Parham often printed Simpson's writings in the Apostolic Faith.⁷⁴

Parham spent an exciting six weeks at Shiloh. While there, Parham adopted Sandford's notion that a Holy Spirit baptism was available to all consecrated believers and that this baptism prepared one for world evangelism in the days before Christ's return. When Parham returned to Topeka in late September, he found that the two holiness ministers he left in charge of Beth-el had become entrenched and refused to surrender control back to him. Despite this setback, Parham was enthusiastic about his traveling experience. By mid-October, Parham decided to abandon the healing home altogether and set out on a different course. He immediately began recruiting students for a new endeavor in an old mansion on the outskirts of the city. He named this new project Bethel Bible School. The new school opened on October 15 with thirty-four students who were soon exposed to Parham's various theological views, especially the two ideas he had adopted from Sandford: faith living and the need for a Holy Spirit baptism to prepare one for world evangelism.⁷⁵

These early years reveal Parham's development as a religious populist leader in at least two ways. First was the growth of his firm antiestablishment views, which led him to challenge his superiors in the Methodist Church, come to his own conclusions on theological matters, and

⁷⁴ Goff, Fields, 53-54.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 57-61.

to branch out in the independent ministry. At the root of this antiestablishment bent was his frustration with the contemporary Protestant Establishment for what he saw as its accommodation to the world and for its negligence to bring the “full gospel” to the people. Second was his desire to meet the needs of the common people, which were best seen in his evangelistic efforts in Tonganoxie and his reason for opening Beth-el Healing Home. These two characteristics continued to be key features of Parham’s personality in the next stage of his life as the “Projector of the Apostolic Faith.” This period in Parham’s life is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 - The Emergence of Pentecostalism in Kansas, 1901-1904

When Charles Parham returned from his trip to the East Coast in October 1900, he was ecstatic. For Parham, the journey reaffirmed his belief in faith living. Whenever money was needed, Parham told Topeka journalists, God miraculously provided the necessary funds. Furthermore, his experience at Sandford's Bible school left a deep impression on him. He told reporters that the work at Shiloh was "something wonderful" and that he hoped to build his own Bible school in Topeka, which would be consciously modeled after Sandford's institution.¹

Shortly after returning to Topeka, Parham secured an old mansion on the outskirts of town—known as "Stone's Folly" by locals—from the American Bible Society of Philadelphia. Unlike Beth-el, Parham's new endeavor was more explicitly focused on training evangelists and missionaries. The only textbook was the Bible.² This new focus did not necessarily mean that Parham was abandoning his healing ministry. On the contrary, he told Topeka reporters that healing was going to remain a central theme of the school.³

Funding for the Bible school was going to be collected on a free-will basis, which meant that Parham would have no visible means of support. The hope was that people would give

¹ "He Got Money," Topeka State Journal, October 20, 1900, 14.

² Ibid.; Charles Parham, "The Latter Rain: The History of the Original Apostolic or Pentecostal Movements," Life, 51; Parham, A Voice, 32.

³ "He Got Money," Topeka State Journal, October 20, 1900, 14.

money when they felt “called” by God to do so. Furthermore, the students would not be charged for board or tuition. The only requirement, Parham wrote, was that students “should obey and seek to live the commandments of Jesus.” The plan seemed to work. According to Parham, God always supplied the school’s needs.⁴ The college also practiced a sort of proto-communism in which all of the students shared their possessions in common. When a student arrived at Bethel, they handed over their possessions and money to a common treasury, which was then used to pay for the school’s expenses.⁵

From the beginning, the primary theological theme at Bethel was the “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Parham explained that during his stay at Shiloh, he became convinced that Christian believers who claimed the power of the Holy Ghost merely had the “anointing that abideth” and not the baptism of the Holy Spirit as they believed. The anointing was sufficient for speaking in one’s native tongue, but one needed more to prepare for Christ’s second coming. Parham wrote, “We continued to preach what we believed to be the Word of God, and in the mind of Jesus; a mighty Baptism such as the disciples received of old, to make His saints today world-wide powers for good, to the end that this gospel might be preached to all the world as a witness.”⁶ Once Parham had reached this conclusion, the only task left was to verify the evidence that one had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

⁴ Parham, A Voice, 32; Parham, “The Latter Rain,” Life, 51.

⁵ “A Queer Faith,” Topeka Daily Capital, January 6, 1901, 2; “Parham Leaves,” Topeka State Journal, January 21, 1901, 7; Parham, Voice, 32. This communal lifestyle was modeled after the description of the earliest Christian community in Acts 4:32-37.

⁶ Parham, A Voice, 33.

In his earliest written account of the events on New Year's Day 1901, Parham claimed that Agnes Ozman, one of the Bethel students, asked that hands be laid upon her so that she might receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. During the prayer, he professed, "She was filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke with other tongues as the Spirit gave utterance."⁷ After witnessing this scene, Parham and the other students sought a similar experience. Parham said that two days later the Holy Spirit had fallen on twelve more students, all of whom had been sitting in an upper room and had apparently been given the ability to speak in other tongues. He interpreted this phenomenon as the "restoration of the apostolic faith."⁸ He finally discovered what he had been looking for: the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Years later, Parham elaborated on these events and added some details that were missing from the earlier accounts. One of the most glaring differences was his claim that he gave the students the task of finding the biblical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a class assignment. The story goes that Parham was getting ready to leave for Kansas City to lead services and to pick up some friends who wanted to celebrate Christmas in Topeka. Before he left, he told the students to search for "Bible evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that we might go before the world with something that was indisputable because it tallied absolutely with the Word."⁹ Lilian Thistlewaite, Parham's sister-in-law, remembered that he told the students that the renewal of the gifts of the Holy Spirit would be a sign of Christ's imminent return.¹⁰

⁷ Ibid., 34.

⁸ Ibid; "Parham's New Religion Practiced at 'Stone's Folly,'" Kansas City Times, January 27, 1901.

⁹ Parham, "The Latter Rain," Life, 52.

¹⁰ Lilian Thistlewaite, "The Wonderful History of the Latter Rain," in Life, 59.

According to Parham, when he returned from Kansas City, he gathered the students and asked them if they had completed their assignment. To his astonishment, they had unanimously come to the conclusion that speaking in tongues was the irrefutable proof of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He went on to explain that during the watch-night service on New Year's Eve, as opposed to New Year's night in the other account, Ozman requested that hands be laid upon her so that she might receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit to prepare her for the mission field. Initially he refused her request because he had not had the experience himself but he felt "pressed to do it humbly in the name of Jesus." Parham claimed, "I had scarcely repeated three dozen sentences when a glory fell upon her, a halo seemed to surround her head and face, and she began speaking in the Chinese language, and was unable to speak English for three days."¹¹

Parham and the rest of the students held three days of worship services in anticipation that the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon the rest of them. On January 3, Parham left Bethel to speak at a Free Methodist Church in Topeka. During his sermon, he told the congregation about what had happened at the school and that he believed he would experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit as soon as he returned. That night after the service, Parham went back to Bethel and,

. . . ascended to the second floor [sic], and passing down the corridor in the upper room, heard most wonderful sounds. The door was slightly ajar, the room was lit with only coal oil lamps. As I pushed open the door I found the room was filled with a sheen of white light above the brightness of the lamps. Twelve ministers, who were in the school of different denominations, were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke with other tongues. Some were sitting, some still kneeling, others standing with hands upraised. There was no violent physical manifestation, though some trembled under the power of the glory that filled them. Sister Stanley, an elderly lady, came across the room as I entered, telling me that just before I entered tongues of fire were sitting above their heads.¹²

¹¹ Parham, "Latter Rain," Life, 52-53.

¹² Ibid., 53.

When Parham witnessed this “restoration of Pentecostal power,” he fell to his knees behind a table and poured his heart in thanksgiving to God. According to Parham, those who had already received the baptism of the Holy Spirit began to sing “‘Jesus Lover of My Soul’ in at least six different languages, carrying the different parts but with a more angelic voice than I had ever listened to in all my life.”¹³ Finally, Parham experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit himself, “After praising God for some time, I asked him for the same blessing. He distinctly made it clear to me that He raised me up and trained me to declare this mighty truth to the world, and if I was willing to stand for it, with all the persecutions, hardships, trials, slander, scandal that it would entail, he would give me the blessing.”¹⁴ Parham accepted God’s command and was suddenly able to speak in Swedish and a number of other foreign languages.¹⁵

Ozman’s recollection of the events at Bethel also differs slightly from Parham’s. According to Ozman, she requested that hands be laid upon her, but unlike Parham’s later account, she claimed that she did not know she would speak in tongues. She said that she simply wanted to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶ The most significant difference in their respective accounts was in how the Pentecostal formula that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was derived. In Parham’s version, the students had

¹³ Ibid., 54.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid. In one newspaper account, Parham told Topeka reporters that it was nearly a week before the gift of tongues was bestowed upon other students. “Hindoo and Zulu,” Topeka State Journal, January 9, 1901, 6.

¹⁶ Agnes. N.O. LaBerge, What God Hath Wrought (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985), 29.

discovered that speaking in tongues was the biblical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit while in Ozman's, she uncovered this truth independently after she had already spoken in tongues. Moreover, she claimed that she then taught Parham and the other students this doctrine.¹⁷

Ozman also explained that she had spoken in tongues before January 1. In this account, she and three other female students were praying when she suddenly spoke three words in another language.¹⁸ Maude J. Neer (nee: Stanley), another student at Bethel, also claimed that Ozman had spoken in tongues before New Year's Day. She added that Ozman was eating when she apparently spoke in tongues.¹⁹

Some historians have argued that Parham came to the conclusion that speaking in tongues was the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit before he opened Bethel and that he set

¹⁷ Ibid., 29-30; LaBerge (nee: Ozman), "History of the Pentecostal Movement from January 1, 1901," 2-3, location: 3/8/1, Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, MO [hereafter cited as FPHC]. Ozman later admitted that she did not believe that speaking in tongues was the only evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. She apparently told the other students not to seek tongues but simply the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Agnes N. Ozman, "A Witness to First Scenes," in The Topeka Outpouring of 1901: 100th Anniversary Edition: Eyewitness Accounts of the Dramatic Revival that Started the Modern Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement, rev. ed., ed. Larry E. Martin (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 2000), 107.

¹⁸ Ozman, "A Witness to First Scenes," 106; Ozman, "Where the Latter Rain First Fell: The First One to Speak in Tongues," in Topeka Outpouring, 110. Thistlewaite also claimed that Ozman had uttered a few words in an unknown tongue before January 1. Parham, Life, 59.

¹⁹ Maude J. Neer, "Memories of the Holy Spirit Outpouring—Jan 1901," 2, 15/4/1, FPHC. Interestingly, neither Neer nor Ozman mentioned Parham. As Larry Martin has pointed out, Parham was more than likely excluded because he had been accused of sodomy in 1907. Many Pentecostals began to see Parham as an embarrassment to their movement. Neer's husband, Edward, was actually one of the people who accused Parham of immorality. Martin, Topeka Outpouring, 36 and 112. Ozman would later include Parham in a 1922 letter she wrote to E.N. Bell, who was superintendent of the Assemblies of God at the time. LaBerge, "History of the Pentecostal Movement from Jan. 1, 1901," 1-4.

up a situation in which his students would “discover” this doctrine on their own.²⁰ Goff has argued that Parham’s new message on the baptism of the Holy Spirit was the primary influence on his decision to open Bethel. Evidence for this motivation can be seen in Bethel’s function as a missionary-training school, that Parham told his students early on that they had not truly received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and that he based his lessons on the book of Acts.²¹

Furthermore, these scholars emphasize that Parham first stumbled upon the idea of “missionary tongues” at Beth-el in the spring of 1899 when he enthusiastically printed a story in which a woman named Jennie Glassy miraculously received the “African dialect.” In a significant move, he interpreted her gift as “the return of the apostolic faith.”²² By April 1900, he took steps to prepare people to receive the ability to speak in a foreign language when he hosted two missionaries who wanted to learn the “heathen tongue.”²³ However, it was not until his trip with Sandford that Parham witnessed people speaking in tongues for the first time when several of Sandford’s students reportedly spoke in tongues after descending from the prayer tour at Shiloh.²⁴

Although Parham went public with the events at Bethel at the Free Methodist Church on January 3, 1901, widespread notice was not achieved until a few days later when the school’s first voluntary exile attracted the attention of Topeka newspaper reporters. Samuel J. Riggins, a

²⁰ Goff, Fields, 74-75; Anderson, Vision, 56; Blumhofer, Restoring, 51.

²¹ Goff, Fields, 74-75.

²² “The Gift of Tongues,” Apostolic Faith (Topeka), May 3, 1899, 5.

²³ Apostolic Faith (Topeka) April 1, 1900, 7.

²⁴ Goff, Fields, 73-74.

student from Kansas City, left the school on January 5, because he did not believe that Parham and the other students were miraculously able to speak in foreign languages. He sought shelter at Parham's former healing home in Topeka. Riggins told reporters, "I believe the whole of them are crazy. I never saw anything like it. They were racing about the room talking and gesticulating and using this strange and senseless language which they claim is the word from the Most High. . . . I do not believe their senseless jargon means anything."²⁵ This incident was not Riggins's first dispute with his fellow students and Parham. A few weeks prior, he had left the school after a disagreement with some of the other students only to return to Bethel after the students with whom he could not work had left.²⁶ Historian Charles Shumway, who wrote his 1914 A.B. thesis on the history of speaking in tongues, reported that Parham told him that Riggins left because he had not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit himself and "that he went into Topeka and spread a rumor that the Bethel Bible School had suddenly turned into a company of raving fanatical lunatics."²⁷

A little over a week later, the school experienced another uncomfortable departure. Ralph Herrill, also from Kansas City, joined Riggins, who helped Herrill leave, at the divine healing home. He agreed with Riggins that the other students falsely believed they had the ability to speak in tongues. Herrill, however, said that Parham's language was authentic. He also commented on the claim that Ozman was able to write in Chinese characters as part of her Holy

²⁵ "A Queer Faith," Topeka Daily Capital, January 6, 1901, 2.

²⁶ "Row at Bethel," Topeka State Journal, January 7, 1901, 4.

²⁷ Shumway, "A Study of 'The Gift of Tongues,'" 168. It is not clear in Shumway's account whether this is a direct quote from Parham or if it is Shumway's paraphrase of Parham's words.

Spirit baptism, “As for the writing, I can make as many funny marks as Miss Ozman. . . . See, I can make marks just like the ones she does, but what do they mean? It’s all foolishness.”²⁸

Reporters added to this negative publicity when they published accounts of their visits to the college. One wrote, “It is a peculiar sight to see a whole room full of the men and women of the school sitting around, occasionally breaking out with brief outbursts of talk in one of the many languages which they claim to speak, and writing the quaint and indistinguishable hieroglyphics which they believe to be the characters for words in the Syrian, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic and other languages.”²⁹ Another attempted to reprint the words reportedly spoken by Thistlewaite, “‘Euossa, Euossa use, rela sema calah mala kanah leulla sage nalan. Ligne logl lazle logle. Ene mine mo, sah rah el me sah rah me.’ These sentences were translated as meaning ‘Jesus is mighty to save,’ ‘Jesus is ready to hear,’ and ‘God is love.’”³⁰

On January 21, the Topeka State Journal recorded that Parham left with seven other people from the Bethel community to start a mission tour of the United States. The stated purpose of this evangelistic tour was to visit all the major cities of the eastern United States. The band’s first stop was going to be Kansas City, where they planned to hold a few days of meetings and pray for the means to help them complete their trip before moving on to their next destination. They also hoped that they would gain some new recruits. While Parham and his cohort were optimistic about their journey, one outside observer, J. Nelson, who had taken over

²⁸ “Another Deserts,” Topeka State Journal, January 15, 1901, 3.

²⁹ “Row at Bethel,” Topeka State Journal, January 7, 1901, 4.

³⁰ “Hindoo and Zulu,” Topeka State Journal, January 9, 1901, 6. The same also quote appears in, “Claim a Strange ‘Gift of Tongues,’” Kansas City World, January 15, 1901, 7. It is not clear who translated the words reportedly spoken. It is more than likely that it was one of Parham’s students who had received the gift of translation of tongues.

Parham's healing home, was skeptical that they would have any success at all: "I have expected this. I have seen schools before where it has been claimed that the gift of tongues was received. It always ends in breaking the school up. I expected to hear of some of them leaving on a little missionary trip, and I never look for them to come back."³¹

Unfortunately for Parham and his fellow Holy Spirit-filled evangelists, the results of the Kansas City meetings fell far below their expectations. When the group arrived they secured a small building in downtown Kansas City. Initially, they had some success. They drew nightly crowds of seventy-five to more than one hundred curious spectators. Reports of miraculous healings and people speaking in tongues generated enough interest that Parham was able to hold larger meetings at the local Academy of Music. The assemblies also attracted the attention of several newspaper reporters who wanted to see what affect Parham's ministry would have on their city.³²

The success was short lived. Goff argued that one of the likely reasons was that Parham made several remarks that were intended to keep the press at arms length but would have also isolated him from the respectable clergy. He defended the communitarian lifestyle at Bethel by proclaiming the nearness of the millennial age. Christians, Parham intoned, should concentrate on restoring the conditions of the apostolic church since ownership of land and other private property would soon be done away with once Christ returned.³³ He also made comments that

³¹ "Parham Leaves," Topeka State Journal, January 21, 1901, 7. It is probable that Nelson was one of the two holiness ministers who staged a bloodless coup against Parham and refused to return control of Beth-el when Parham returned from his trip to the East Coast in October 1900. Parham, Life, 48-49.

³² "Was a Pentecost," Kansas City Journal, January 22, 1901, 1; Goff, Fields, 82.

³³ "Gift of Tongues," Kansas City Journal, January 31, 1901, 7.

would have alienated him from both the holiness people and members of the local Methodist Church. He accused the holiness people of being “clannish.” Furthermore, in a shot likely directed at clergy in the Methodist Church, he thanked God that he “did not work for a miserable little measly salary, like preachers who go about with saddle bags and a Bible.”³⁴

Parham also drew a considerable amount of attention for his unique stand on temperance. He claimed that he had been an ardent supporter of state legislation prohibiting the buying and selling of alcoholic beverages but that he changed his mind when he deemed that these laws had been ineffective. He told the audience that anyone with a “red nose” could easily find a bar in the supposed prohibition state of Kansas. The only solution, according to Parham, was for a spirit-moved revival that could save people’s bodies from alcohol and their souls from the devil.³⁵

He further displayed his antiestablishment bent when he refused vaccination in the midst of a local smallpox epidemic. At one of the nightly meetings, Parham challenged city officials to come to his home and inject he and his family with their “miserable vaccine.” He said that not only was it a violation of God’s law but that forcing him to take the vaccine was also an infringement of his religious liberty.³⁶

The people in Parham’s cohort received their fair share of publicity as well. One journalist remarked that “Parham and his wife, Miss Ozman and Miss Thistlewaite are quite intelligent, they wear clothes which fit, and have the appearance of people who frequent the

³⁴ “Are From Kansas,” Kansas City Journal, February 8, 1901, 8.

³⁵ Goff, Fields, 82-83; “Gift of Tongues,” Kansas City Journal, January 31, 1901, 7. He touched on a similar theme nearly four months later in Kansas City. “Gift of the Tongue,” Kansas City Journal, May 20, 1901, 8.

³⁶ “Preacher Issues a Defi,” Kansas City Times, February 2, 1901, 7; Goff, Fields, 83.

bath.” The same article dismissed Parham’s followers as a “tacky looking outfit as one would see in a trip around the world. They may be clean spiritually, but physically they are anything but shining marks of cleanliness.”³⁷ Other media accounts point out that the majority of Parham’s followers were poor. According to a reporter for the Kansas City World, “These people are simple. They are poor. None appears to have left ‘money or chattels behind’ to follow Parham.”³⁸

Despite the generous amount of publicity, the results of the Kansas City meetings were underwhelming. The average attendance at the meetings was approximately one hundred a night, enough to start a small apostolic mission, but not nearly enough to provide funding for a lengthy trip throughout the United States, Goff claimed.³⁹ In early February, Parham and his small group, along with some new recruits, returned to Topeka. He told reporters that events had transpired at Bethel that required his immediate attention. When asked by a journalist about rumors that he had to come back because he ran out of money, Parham said, “I have never lacked money to do things that the Lord directs me to do. I take no step unless I am inspired by the Lord to do so. The Lord suggested to me at Kansas City that I follow the plan I have outlined to you. It

³⁷ “Parham’s New Religion Practiced at ‘Stone’s Folly,’” Kansas City Times, January 27, 1901, 15; “Was a Pentecost,” Kansas City Journal, January 22, 1901, 1.

³⁸ “They Believe in a Personal God,” Kansas City World, January 22, 1901, 8. Although the correspondent’s statement that Parham’s students did not leave “‘money or chattels behind’ to follow Parham” is a bit cryptic, what the journalist likely meant was that they did not appear to have been wealthy even before they joined Parham. Also see, “Claim a Strange ‘Gift of Tongues,’” Kansas City World, January 15, 1901, 7; “Strange Scenes at a Revival,” Kansas City World, February 1, 1901, 8.

³⁹ Goff, Fields, 83-84.

is His will that I return here for the present. Financial difficulties never harass me.”⁴⁰ Parham also told reporters that the meetings at Kansas City had been “large and enthusiastic” and that there had been many converts. He further told Topeka reporters that during the spring and summer months all the students would set out on evangelistic work and that they would spread their new message to every section of the country. Some of the students who had received foreign tongues would enter missionary work.⁴¹

In mid-February, he took twenty students to Lawrence, Kansas, where, as at Kansas City, he achieved moderate success but failed to usher in widespread change. There was, however, some enthusiasm about Parham’s arrival. One Lawrence newspaper correspondent wrote, “Mr. Parham does not impress one as a peculiar man. Indeed he is a right good fellow and is earnest in his life work. Whatever may be said about him and his work he has attracted more attention to religion than any other religious worker in years.” The same journalist noted that Parham already had a reputation in the area as a revivalist with “great power.”⁴² Although Parham did not achieve the results he had hoped, he did draw some fairly sizable crowds. Judging from the newspaper reports, it is likely that the size of the audiences in Lawrence were similar to those in Kansas City. This would mean that Parham drew roughly one hundred people a night. One evening, for example, there were apparently forty people at the mourner’s bench seeking

⁴⁰ “Parham Home,” Topeka Daily Capital, February 9, 1901, 8.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² “A Great Worker,” Lawrence Daily World, February 12, 1901, 4. Also, see “A Great Worker,” Lawrence Weekly World, February 14, 1901, 5.

salvation.⁴³ At another nightly meeting, the building was supposedly filled to capacity and many people had to be turned away.⁴⁴

From Lawrence he returned to Kansas City where he told reporters that his new movement was on the verge of tremendous growth. He also revealed plans that in the next few months he hoped to expand Bethel's campus to include a large auditorium and to hold a three-month-long revival on the college's campus.⁴⁵ Sadly, only a week after he unveiled his plans, his year-old-son, Charles F. Parham Jr., died unexpectedly. Some of the students remained optimistic that God could raise the young child from the dead, but as Goff wrote, "Parham understood that this was a time of trial, not triumph."⁴⁶

Two months after this tragedy, Parham returned to Kansas City where he announced that there would be a large summer camp meeting at Bethel. He optimistically told reporters that thousands of people from across the United States would attend the meeting in Topeka and that he had received thousands of applications from ordained ministers who desired the baptism of the Holy Spirit so that they could enter the foreign mission field. In addition, he estimated that he had over 500 followers in Topeka and several thousand others in the country and the rest of the

⁴³ "Mr. Parham's Revival," Lawrence Daily World, February 26, 1901, 3; "Mr. Parham's Revival," Lawrence Weekly World, February 28, 1901, 4.

⁴⁴ "The Parham Revival," Lawrence Daily World, March 2, 1901, 3. The article does not indicate how many people the building could hold.

⁴⁵ "Prayer is His Cure," Kansas City Times, March 11, 1901, 8; Goff, Fields, 84-85.

⁴⁶ Goff, Fields, 85; Parham, Life, 77-79.

world.⁴⁷ He also said that his followers and he had been suffering the kind of bitter persecution that accompanies every “great reform.”⁴⁸

One likely source of this ill-treatment was other Christian ministers, whom he called “cheap, modern ministers.” He maintained that these preachers were primarily concerned with making money and keeping social calls. If a person spoke with tongues in one of these minister’s churches, the tongues-speaker would be immediately thrown out of the church and arrested, he argued. He proclaimed that it was this mindset among ministers that would have made it “an impossibility for God to give this power of tongues to modern churches, because they would not believe it, they would not tolerate it.”⁴⁹

The immense meeting that Parham predicted never happened. However, he did hold a series of meetings in June and July, but they did not draw the large response he was hoping.⁵⁰ Unfortunately for Parham, by July 20, he was forced to sell Stone’s Folly to Harry Croft, a local businessman, who turned the building into a resort cottage.⁵¹ Rumors quickly spread that Croft

⁴⁷ Goff, Fields, 85; “Says They are Persecuted,” Kansas City Times, May 17, 1901, 3; “Promises Gift of Tongues,” Kansas City World, May 17, 1901, 4; “New Kinds of Missionaries,” Kansas City Journal, May 17, 1901, 2. Goff claimed that a more realistic estimate of Parham’s followers by mid-1901 would be a combined total of five hundred. This number, Goff argued, would allow for approximately two hundred in Topeka and small congregations in Kansas City and Lawrence each numbering one hundred and fifty. Goff, Fields, 203n65.

⁴⁸ “Says they are Persecuted,” Kansas City Times, May 17, 1901, 3.

⁴⁹ “Gift of the Tongue,” Kansas City Journal, May 20, 1901, 8.

⁵⁰ “Parham in Topeka,” Topeka State Journal, June 13, 1901, 5; “Parham is Here,” Topeka State Journal, June 19, 1901, 4; “‘The Fourth’ at Bethel,” Topeka State Journal, July 1, 1901; “The Parham Celebration,” Topeka State Journal, July 5, 1901, 6; “Prayed Back to Life,” Topeka State Journal, July 24, 1901, 4.

⁵¹ “Buys the ‘Folly,’” Topeka State Journal, July 20, 1901, 8. Parham moved to a different building at 1403 West Tenth Street. Topeka State Journal, July 28, 1901, 7.

had turned the mansion into a “joint” that was frequented by Topeka’s “festive element” and was used to support his bootlegging operation.⁵²

After selling Bethel to Croft in July 1901, Parham bought a small building in Topeka with a small remnant of his Bethel students, most of whom took the selling of Stone’s Folly as a bad omen and set out for new places of service. Although things looked bleak for Parham, there is some indication that he remained optimistic through these trials. In August 1901, the Topeka State Journal reported that Parham had hired a new professor, George M. Ryder, to help with the teaching duties at Bethel. Ryder, who had taught at “Winfield College” (more than likely Southwest College), the University of Montana and the College of Tennessee, would teach Hebrew, Greek, and Latin and would be the “Chair of Evidences of Christianity.” Ryder was excited about joining the small Bible college. He said, “The work at Bethel College along Biblical lines, to my mind, is the highest and most satisfactory of any school with which I ever came into contact.”⁵³ Parham likely hoped that the appointment of Ryder, who was described as “one of the best teachers in the west,” could bring some much needed prestige to his floundering movement. In addition to Ryder, Bethel’s services were supposed to expand to include a grammar school for the children of students, lectures on economic and social problems for both men and women, and sewing societies for children.⁵⁴

By the fall of 1901, Parham closed Bethel and relocated his family to Kansas City where he wrote Kol Kare Bomidbar, his translation of the Hebrew for “A Voice Crying in the

⁵² “‘Stone’s Folly’ was Used as Home, College, Resort,” Topeka Daily Capital, November 12, 1951, 9.

⁵³ “Get a New Professor,” Topeka State Journal, August 2, 1901, 8.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Wilderness.” The title of the book is revealing. While not only an explicit reference to John the Baptist, who foretold of Jesus’ first coming, it also shows Parham’s feelings of loneliness and frustration. He finished this volume in January 1902, making it the first published example of Pentecostal theology in modern history.⁵⁵ During this time, Parham remembered, “Both the pulpit and the press sought to utterly destroy our place and prestige, until my wife, her sister and myself seemed to stand alone. Hated, despised, counted as naught, for weeks and weeks never knowing where our next meal was coming from, yet feeling that we must maintain ‘the faith once for all delivered to the saints.’”⁵⁶

Despite these difficulties, Parham remained optimistic and refused to give up. The end-times message that he had received from God was too important to allow a few setbacks to keep him from proclaiming the new Pentecostal doctrine. Soon after the birth of another son in June 1902, Parham opened the Kansas City version of Bethel, which only lasted for four months. By the fall of 1902, Parham moved his family to Lawrence where he held a series of area-wide revival meetings. These efforts generated another lethargic response. In a further sign of the Parhams’ sense of rejection, Sarah Parham remembered that some people believed that Parham and his followers were doing the work of the devil: “The people were slow to accept the truth, some declaring it was not the power of God, which enabled us to speak in other tongues.”⁵⁷

Parham stayed in Lawrence until spring 1903 when a woman who had been converted at one of his meetings in Lawrence in 1901 requested that he come to Nevada, Missouri, to hold a

⁵⁵ Goff, Fields, 86.

⁵⁶ Parham, Life, 81.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 86.

revival in that city. His stay in Nevada was a short one. By the summer, he relocated to El Dorado Springs, Missouri.⁵⁸ During the summer months, the population of El Dorado Springs nearly doubled as visitors came to bathe in the local array of mineral springs. According to Goff, Parham's decision to go to El Dorado Springs is indicative of his desire to rekindle his healing ministry. Parham, along with a small band of followers, stood at the entrance of the healing springs. After gathering a crowd, he delivered a short sermon and invited people interested in healing to visit the daily prayer meetings held in his home a block north of the springs. Those who were unsatisfied with the results of the iron water went to hear what Parham had to offer.⁵⁹

One person who visited Parham was Mary A. Arthur, a devout Methodist who had suffered for fourteen years from various illnesses. Her most seriousness ailment was blindness in one eye. She alleged that her right eye had been virtually blind from birth and that periodically she could see bright colors with it, although only for a few minutes at a time before everything would turn dark. For years, she claimed, she sought treatment from oculists, allopathy, moneopathy hygiene, osteopathy, and Christian Science. In 1898, a Dr. Tiffany Case of Kansas City attempted to do surgery on her eye for the second time, but only made matters worse. This condition also took a serious toll on her mental well being. At times, the pain became so unbearable that she contemplated suicide. After years of suffering and earnestly seeking God, she came across James 5:13-16, which she said revealed to her God's promise to heal those who pray. She immediately went to her pastor with her recent discovery and he told her that she was

⁵⁸ Ibid., 87.

⁵⁹ Goff, Fields, 88-89; Parham, Life, 87-88.

on the right track, but that he was far too busy to take the time to pray for her. She sought his help two more times but each time he had a different excuse for why he could not help her.⁶⁰

As her condition grew noticeably worse, her husband urged her to go back to El Dorado Springs. In August 1903, she returned for the fourth time. A few days after her arrival, she heard Parham and his small group of followers singing hymns, after which Parham invited people to his home. The next morning she visited Parham's house where she witnessed his group and him praying for the sick. She eventually asked for prayer and one of Parham's workers told her, "Sister, if you take the Lord for your healer, you will get along faster without the crutches."

When she left the house, she remembered,

My daughter led me out on the main street, and asked for tomatoes and cookies. . . . We went blocks to get them, and on returning, about six blocks from the place where I was prayed for, she let go of my hand to eat the cookies. Soon I spoke to her, but had no answer. I spoke again and still no answer. Then alarmed for her, I lifted my handkerchief off one eye. . . . she was a half block behind me. I could open my eyes in the light, and no pain. It was so WONDERFUL to me. I looked on a white awning, then up at the white clouds, then at the noon day sun and it was so wonderful and so beautiful. Before now its brightness made me so sick with pain. I said, "Praise God, the work is done." He answered me, "You are every whit whole." "Yes, Lord I AM every whit whole." Then His mighty healing power surged through my body from my head to my feet, making me feel like a new person. It was like being lifted from a dark pit of despair and suffering, to the mountain of transfiguration.⁶¹

Immediately after being healed, she rushed home to Galena to tell her husband what had happened. Her story attracted the attention of local townspeople. There was always someone in her house to hear "that wonderful story," Arthur claimed. Eventually, a group of businessmen,

⁶⁰ Mary A. Arthur, "History: Beginning History of Galena Church," 1-2, 16/3/1, FPHC.

⁶¹ Ibid., 3-4. The daughter in the story was actually her niece, Julia Hunter. Arthur adopted Hunter and her two brothers after their parents died. Hunter was only four at the time of the incident in El Dorado Springs. "Oral History: An Interview with Julia Hunter," Julia Hunter, interview by Wayne Warner, Galena, KS, February 26, 1981, TO46, FPHC.

who Arthur claimed were not Christians, came to the Arthur home and told her husband, ““Mr. Arthur, this is so wonderful we want you to get that man here, we need this very thing and we must have it. If you can’t get him, we will go there.””⁶²

On October 1, 1903, the Galena Evening Times printed Mary Arthur’s call, “To My Friends and Suffering Ones. The dear Lord has sent to our midst Bro. Chas. F. Parham, Projector of Apostolic Faith Movement, under whose ministrations of the Gospel, I have been so wonderfully healed.”⁶³ These initial meetings only lasted until October 3 when Parham had to go home, presumably to Cheney.⁶⁴ He would not resume the services until October 19.⁶⁵

Galena, Kansas, was established in June 1877, shortly after the discovery of rich deposits of lead and zinc ore in the area. In a few years, Galena became one of the largest producers of lead and zinc ore in the world. Evidence of Galena’s growth can be seen in the rapid increase in its population. The 1900 United States Census reported that there were 2,496 citizens in Galena in 1890. By 1900, the population jumped to 10,514.⁶⁶ Much of this growth can be attributed to the abundance of lead and zinc deposits, which created investment opportunities, jobs, and other businesses and services attracted to cities. The Lead and Zinc Annual for 1899, a pamphlet printed to trumpet the region’s mining opportunities, commented on Galena’s remarkable growth, “Men of ability and means have located there and new ideas and methods of mining and

⁶² Arthur, “Beginning,” 4.

⁶³ Galena Evening Times, October, 1, 1903, 5.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, October, 3, 1903, 5.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, October 19, 1903, 5.

⁶⁶ U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Report on Population of the United States at the Twelfth Census, 1900 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), 163.

handling ores have done wonders.” Moreover, the booming city apparently had “all the modern conveniences of a first-class city, while her wealth-giving resources are inexhaustible.”⁶⁷

A key feature of the tri-state mining business was its small, localized lease system. Historian Arrell M. Gibson, who was the foremost authority on the tri-state district, explained that the lead and zinc mining business was organized around a lease system in which landowners and mining land and royalties companies divided tracts of mineralized land into mining lots. These lots were then leased to miners for a pre-determined royalty price, ranging from five to fifty percent, once a strike was made.⁶⁸ This aspect of the region was made possible through the scattered nature and the shallow depth of the lead and zinc deposits, which discouraged large-scale mining operations because they would have been too difficult to maintain efficiently and also made it possible for people with little to no capital to seek ore. Those miners who had no capital generally formed partnerships with local merchants, called “paying partners.” In exchange for a share of the profits, the merchants furnished food, powder, and any other necessities to the miners.⁶⁹ It was this small lease-system, Gibson noted, that preserved the tri-state district as a “poor man’s camp.”⁷⁰ The Lead and Zinc Annual declared, “These conditions make this a favorable locality for poor men to operate in, for no large capital is needed to get out the lead and zinc. Mining here is inexpensive but very profitable, and that is why so many men

⁶⁷ Lead and Zinc Annual for 1899: A Book of Information about the Kansas-Missouri Mining District (Joplin, MO: Eberle & Hogan, 1899), 86.

⁶⁸ Gibson, Wilderness Bonanza: The Tri-State District of Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 68 and 127-128.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 128.

begin mining with nothing and soon amass large fortunes from the output of their mines.”⁷¹ The tri-state’s small-lease system and its geology differed greatly from the other Western mining industries, such as coal, which were more highly centralized and whose natural resources were more difficult and therefore, more expensive to extract.

Furthermore, the poor man’s camp allowed for more opportunities of social and economic mobility than other Western mining industries. This upward mobility was rooted in the scattered nature of the lead and zinc deposits, which allowed miners with little to no capital to dig for ore.⁷² Promoters of the region heralded these possibilities. The Lead and Zinc Annual for 1899 declared that many people with little or no capital had struck it rich. It read, “Men have been made rich by the stroke of a pick, and the system in vogue here of leasing mineral lands makes it possible for the common miner, without means, to become a wealthy mine owner.”⁷³ These possibilities also engendered an environment in which there was relatively little labor unrest when compared to the other Western mining camps, according to Gibson. He argued that the antipathy toward labor organization in the district was due to the nature of the poor man’s camp, which allowed miners to remain independent and therefore with no need to organize. There were small cells of the Western Federation of Labor and the International Workers of the World, but their organizers failed to unite the entire district.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Lead and Zinc Annual, 12.

⁷² Gibson, “A Social History of the Tri-State District,” The Chronicles of Oklahoma 37 (Summer 1959): 190-191

⁷³ Lead and Zinc Annual, 8.

⁷⁴ Gibson, “A Social History of the Tri-State District,” 194-195; Gibson, Wilderness Bonanza, 264-265.

The fluidity of this social environment is best seen in the vague definition of the word “miner.” Generally, when miner was used in the tri-state district it referred to both the hired workmen and the mine operator. In the early years of the district, operators often worked alongside their hired labor. It was not until 1900, that a clear separation between “miner” and “operator” emerged. After this change, “miner” came to mean a waged-employee and “operator” came to be used to refer to the mine owner. Although there may have been a trend toward this kind of hierarchy, the small leasing system remained the norm in the lead and zinc ore mining industry in the early years of the district.⁷⁵

The small, localized lease-system was gradually replaced by the entry of absentee capital, professional mining engineers, larger holdings, labor specialization, and separation of miner and operator.⁷⁶ The abundant traffic in mineral leases was attractive to many outside investors and by the 1890s, eastern and foreign capital began to buy large tracts of mineral lands. Twenty years later, many enterprises were characterized by absentee ownership. The investment from outside capital led to greater consolidation of the local mineralized lands. These outside investors continued to sublease land to local miners. However, the land-control fever resulted in a greater pyramiding of mineral land leases and royalties. It was often the case that four layers of royalty

⁷⁵ Isaac A. Hourwich, “Lead and Zinc Ore,” Department of Commerce and Labor Bureau of the Census, Special Reports: Mines and Quarries, 1902 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1905), 445 and 461-463; Gibson, “A Social History of the Tri-State District,” 190-194; Gibson, Wilderness Bonanza, 152 and 259-264.

⁷⁶ Gibson, Wilderness Bonanza, 79.

had to be paid each time a miner turned in their ore. Gibson explained that the person at the bottom of the royalty pyramid was the common workman.⁷⁷

Too much attention on the growth and wealth of the region ignores the human costs, Gibson averred. Tri-state miners faced every sort of hazard, including cave-ins, unwise use of explosives, and, most seriously, disease. In the early years of the district, disease was rampant. The most prevalent disease was silicosis, or miner's consumption, which often led to tuberculosis, another malady that threatened the lives of many people living in the tri-state district. Miners contracted silicosis by breathing in the flint dust produced by drilling and blasting. Miners who got silicosis, which is not contagious, were more susceptible to contagious diseases, such as tuberculosis. They then transmitted these contagious diseases to the poorly-housed mining camps and their families. The seriousness of silicosis was not discussed until 1913 when state and federal governments finally conducted investigations. It was only after these government studies that steps were taken to improve both the mine and camp conditions. Another industrial disease that led to worker disablement and family hardship was lead poisoning, although steps were taken much earlier to prevent the spread of this disease than they were with silicosis.⁷⁸

Finally, another key characteristic of the tri-state mining district was its intellectual and social development, which, according to Gibson, was similar to the development of the other

⁷⁷ Ibid., 148-149 and 165-166. Both Jay Gould and John D. Rockefeller showed interest in the tri-state district, although there is no evidence that either invested in the district. Ibid., 164.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 179-195.

Western mining camps.⁷⁹ First, he explained that the workmen in the tri-state district showed little interest in fine living and the amenities of life. The workers, Gibson noted, seemed to be in a perpetual state of haste as they sought to strike ore as soon as possible.⁸⁰ Second, he claimed that the miners showed a lack of interest in religion. According to Gibson, the rate of church membership in the peripheral agricultural counties amounted to about thirty-two percent while the counties in the tri-state district registered as low as fifteen percent.⁸¹

One contemporary observer, in a letter to the Church Advocate and Holiness Banner, a holiness newspaper printed in Fort Scott, Kansas, described Galena as an “awfully wicked city.”⁸² Another letter-writer to the same publication claimed that most of the Christians in Galena were hypocrites and were “living in a club era. Some of them don’t have time to devote to their families, church work or anything else outside of their clubs. . . . Two thirds of the church members in this place (Galena) either dance, play cards, go to the theatres Sunday night or stay out of church, because they have no faith in their members.”⁸³ Howard A. Goss, possibly the most prominent convert of the Galena revival in 1903, went into more detail on the spiritual and moral state of the city. He explained that men who came to work in the mines often lived a wild life, drinking, fighting, gambling, and even murdering. In the business section of the city,

⁷⁹ Gibson, “A Social History of the Tri-State District,” 182.

⁸⁰ Gibson, Wilderness Bonanza, 254.

⁸¹ Gibson, “A Social History of the Tri-State District,” 188.

⁸² C.F. Wright, “Galena, Kans. April 25th,” The Church Advocate and Holiness Banner (Fort Scott, Kansas), May 3, 1902, 8.

⁸³ Doubting Thomas, “For Mothers and Sisters,” The Church Advocate and Holiness Banner (Fort Scott, Kansas), April 20, 1901, 1.

Goss recounted, nearly every other building housed a saloon or brothel. He wrote, “Few were the mornings when I went to work that I did not see at least one dead man lying between the tent shacks where he had been thrown during the night to get him out of the way. After some nights, there would be several bodies in evidence.”⁸⁴

When Parham came to Galena in October 1903, he entered an atmosphere that appeared ripe for a religious revival. There were at least four contemporary factors that contributed to Parham’s success. First, Galena was suffering from the instability of both a booming frontier-mining town and the town’s sudden growth, which was a result of the booming lead and zinc industry in the region. However, by 1903, Galena’s population had dropped to 6,684 and by 1904 it had lowered by nearly half of what it had been to 5,261.⁸⁵ One of the most likely explanations for this rapid population decrease was the waning of the lead and zinc industry in the city and the discovery of new lead and zinc deposits elsewhere in the region. Gibson explained that while the population of the tri-state district remained stable as a whole, there was considerable mobility in the individual mining towns.⁸⁶ Tri-state miners generally followed large ore strikes because mining was the only viable industry in the county.⁸⁷ It is possible that at the

⁸⁴ Goss, The Winds of God, 30-31.

⁸⁵ Kansas Secretary of State, Fourteenth Biennial Report of the Secretary of State of the State of Kansas, 1903-1904 (Topeka: Geo. A. Clark, state printer, 1904), 113.

⁸⁶ Gibson, Wilderness, 261; Gibson, “A Social History of the Tri-State District,” 191-194.

⁸⁷ Gibson, “A Social History of the Tri-State District,” 192; John G. Clark, Towns and Minerals in Southeastern Kansas: A Study in Regional Industrialization, 1890-1930, (Lawrence, KS: State Geological Survey of Kansas, 1970), 6.

time of Parham's arrival in 1903, people had already moved to another city in the tri-state district to resume zinc or lead mining.

Second, shortly after Parham resumed the meetings on October 19, the Missouri and Kansas Zinc Miners' Association threatened to shut down the zinc mines for a week in order to get rid of ore reserves, a strategy they hoped would drive the prices up. The mine owners believed that the smelting interests were involved in a plot to decrease the price of zinc ore. According to the mine owners, the evidence for this conspiracy was that the price of the refined lead and zinc remained the same while the price for the raw ore dropped.⁸⁸ The Galena Evening Times reported that the mine operators unanimously agreed that although a shut down would "work a hardship on the miner in the ground" it was the only way to force the price of zinc back to its proper level.⁸⁹ By the early part of November, after the curtailment of supply and a week-long shut down, the price of zinc ore increased.⁹⁰

The success, however, was short-lived. By November 14, the zinc market was depressed again.⁹¹ This fall in the price of zinc led the Missouri and Kansas Zinc Miners' Association to declare another shut down beginning on November 22. They decided that this shut down would

⁸⁸ "A Shut Down Threatened," Galena Evening Times, October 22, 1903, 2. When lead and zinc is taken out of the ground it contains other elements, such as sulfur. The existence of these extra materials means the raw lead and zinc must be refined before it can be made into manufactured goods. The refinery process for lead and zinc is known as smelting. Gibson, Wilderness, 113.

⁸⁹ "A Shut Down," Galena Evening Times, October 23, 1903, 2; "Ore Producers Act," Galena Evening Times, October 26, 1903, 4. Overproduction was a major problem in the zinc industry. Clark, Towns and Minerals, 129.

⁹⁰ "Zinc Prices Steadied," Galena Evening Times, November 2, 1903, 3; "Shut Down Off," Galena Evening Times, November 5, 1903, 2.

⁹¹ "Mining Notes," Galena Evening Times, November 14, 1903, 6.

last as long as needed to curtail the supply and to send the proper message to the smelting interests.⁹² By the second week of the region-wide shut down, the Galena Evening Times reported that the poor miners suffered the most and that many of them had been left destitute. However, the mine operators were apparently doing their best to look after their laborers.⁹³ On December 10, the members of the Missouri and Kansas Zinc Miners' Association decided to reopen the mines in order to ease the hardships of the wage earners brought about by the shut down.⁹⁴

These two factors likely fostered a sense of both uncertainty and desperation among the miners in Galena. Parham's messages of spiritual certainty and that God cared for his people regardless of their status would have appealed to people experiencing these dire circumstances. Parham's teachings on divine healing and faith living promised people that, in addition to spiritual salvation, God also provided physical and material renewal. To survive life's tough situations, Parham told his audience, all one needed was faith. Furthermore, his doctrine on the baptism of the Holy Spirit guaranteed Galena citizens that even though physically destitute they could be part of God's spiritual elite.

Third, Cherokee County frequently voted the Populist ticket in the late nineteenth century and the Socialist ticket in the pre-World War I years. In nearly all the elections of the 1890s, Cherokee County voters elected Populist officials at all levels of government. Also, in the years leading up to the First World War, the southeastern counties of Kansas were fertile fields for

⁹² "Shut Down Declared," Galena Evening Times, November 19, 1903, 5.

⁹³ "Mines Shut Down," Galena Evening Times, December 5, 1903, 3.

⁹⁴ "Mining to Resume Monday," Galena Evening Times, December 10, 1903, 2.

socialism. According to Goff, in 1912, twenty-five percent of Cherokee County voted for the Socialist Party ticket.⁹⁵ The popularity of these social and political movements meant that Parham's antiestablishment and antielitist bent and his innovative ideas found an audience that was willing to listen and to take him seriously. Also, his promise that he had something better to offer than these political reform movements may have attracted converts who were disillusioned with them and their failure to bring about the change they had promised.

Finally, a series of religious revivals in nearby Joplin, Missouri, more than likely engendered a sense that revivals were to be expected and that they were beneficial for a community's well being. The largest of these revivals was held at the First Christian Church in Joplin. The meetings started in early October and continued to the end of November. It was apparently the largest religious revival ever held in southwest Missouri and possibly the state. At the end of the meetings on November 23, a local newspaper reported that over 675 people had been converted, which more than doubled the membership of the First Christian Church. The reason for this success the Reverend W.F. Turner, minister at the First Christian Church, declared was that the mining boom had ended and residents of Joplin could finally settle down and "give a little thought to religion."⁹⁶ Some of the messages of the nightly meetings would have appealed to people with a populist mindset. One evening's message, according to a local newspaper, was titled "Christ and the Common People." The central idea of the sermon was that

⁹⁵ Goff, Fields, 234n39; James R. Green, Grassroots Socialism: Radical Movements in the Southwest, 1895-1943 (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1978).

⁹⁶ "Christian Church Revival Closes with 675 Additions in Fifty-One Days," Joplin Daily Globe, November 24, 1903, 2. At the same time, a Baptist, Presbyterian, and a Methodist Episcopal church in Joplin were holding revivals. "First Baptist Church Meeting," Joplin Daily Globe, October 28, 1903, 5; "Union Meetings," Joplin Daily Globe, October 30, 1903, 5; "Interest is Unabated," Joplin Daily Globe, October 31, 1903, 5.

ordinary people were drawn to Jesus because he was plain, direct, and sympathetic to their needs. The evangelist told the audience that, “If the church would imitate the Master today our churches would be filled and the people would now hear gladly.”⁹⁷

When Parham resumed his meetings on October 19, news spread quickly.⁹⁸ The initial press coverage was mostly positive, which would remain true for the majority of Parham’s three-month long revival. The Joplin Daily Globe reported that, “The wicked are being forgiven and blessed, the blind are made to see, cripples throw away their crutches and walk as they never walked before.” The journalist also reported that the nightly meetings were overcrowded, that many people had claimed to have been healed, and that some converts had spoken in tongues. Another significant observation was that many of the town’s “best people” had vouched for the legitimacy of Parham’s proclamations that converts, through the power of the Holy Spirit, could speak in languages they had never heard or learned.⁹⁹

The next day, the Joplin Daily Globe ran a satirical piece on Parham. The article poked fun at his claim that converts could speak in tongues: “This is interesting in a linguistic sense, but just what business a bona fide Holy Spirit could possibly have with some of the foreign languages isn’t clear to some of the unfortunates who have dallied with strange tongues.”¹⁰⁰ On

⁹⁷ “Meetings very Successful,” Joplin Daily Globe, November 10, 1903, 2; “Another Great Day for Joplin Churches,” Joplin Daily News Herald, November 9, 1903, 3.

⁹⁸ Mary Arthur said that the meetings began “about October 20th, 1903,” Arthur, “Beginning,” 5. The earliest report of Parham’s return is Galena Evening Times, October 19, 1903, 5.

⁹⁹ “Revivalist in Galena Heals the Sick—Cripples Enabled to Walk,” Joplin Daily Globe, October 23, 1903, 1.

¹⁰⁰ Joplin Daily Globe, October 24, 1903, 4.

October 25, the same paper revealed that Parham had raised the ire of some local ministers. One of the primary reasons for this anger among the ministers was Parham's scathing attacks on the professional clergy. He accused them of ignoring their pastoral duties to pray for the sick and to spread the gospel. Instead, he declared, they were more worried about making money to "keep their soul-starved souls and bodies together" and raising funds to keep their various denominations together. These "self-styled ambassadors of the heavenly country" were the reason that "the people" were turning away from the churches, Parham stated. He also made it known that he did not believe Christian ministers should accept salaries and that any person who aided these preachers by giving them money could not receive the healing power of God.¹⁰¹

Parham also upset some local citizens. Many of the people who went to see Parham to receive divine healing were not cured. Parham declared that anyone who was not healed under his ministry did not have enough faith in God's power to heal. A correspondent for the Joplin Daily Globe reported that this notion led some disappointed people to "call down curses upon the leader and say he is a fake."¹⁰²

The article also highlighted Parham's faith-based living. Although Parham did not take up a collection or charge for his services, he still had a way to collect a significant amount of money, the reporter claimed. At the end of each service, Parham invited the entire audience to come forward to shake his right hand. Before the congregation went to greet him, he showed them his left hand and told them that if they were drop to some money in his hand he would not object. The Joplin Daily Globe reported, "It is said that in this manner Parham is able to obtain a

¹⁰¹ "Parham Creating a Sensation," Joplin Daily Globe, October 25, 1903, 3.

¹⁰² Ibid.

considerable amount of money, but he is always poor and is always willing to give his last cent to the cause of charity.”¹⁰³

The negative attention from the press and the disdain of the local clergy did nothing to sway the interests of people in Galena and the surrounding region who continued to go hear Parham preach. The meetings continued to be held in a tent in a lot adjacent to the Arthur home until cold weather and large crowds forced Parham to change the location in mid-November to the “Grand Leader” building, a large store room, on Main Street.¹⁰⁴ By this time the audience had grown so big that two meetings had to be held each day. Sarah Parham later recalled, “Though the building would accommodate a large crowd, the doors were many times thrown wide open as the crowds overflowed into the street.”¹⁰⁵ Some contemporary observers claimed that the Grand Leader building could hold between 1,000 and 2,000 people.¹⁰⁶

At the same time that the revival was increasing in popularity, the first in a series of theological attacks written by C.W. Harvey, a Quaker and a prominent Galena citizen, emerged.¹⁰⁷ This first editorial, titled “Faith Healing,” dealt with the divine healing movement.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Parham, Life, 91; Galena Evening Times, November 18, 1903, 5.

¹⁰⁵ Parham, Life, 92.

¹⁰⁶ A journalist for the Kansas City Times estimated that the Grand Leader building held 1,000 people. “A Divine Healer Cured Them?,” Kansas City Times, January 2, 1904, 10. Goss also said it held 1,000 people. Goss, Winds of God, 36. Meanwhile, a reporter for the Joplin Daily News Herald claimed that the building held 2,000 people. “Three Months of Religious Fervor,” Joplin Daily News Herald, January 24, 1904, 11.

¹⁰⁷ In addition to his religious views, Harvey was also known for his political views. In 1878, he ran for County Superintendent on the Republican ticket and in 1888, he switched over to the Prohibition Party. The article announcing his candidacy in 1888 indicated that he switched

According to Harvey, the purpose of the letter was to examine what he believed to be the true biblical teaching on healing in light of recent events in Galena. He was also prompted by his experience at a meeting where divine healing was emphasized. Apparently, someone had asked Harvey to give a testimonial on the subject, an offer he claimed he refused because he did not want to appear to be taking sides.¹⁰⁸

Harvey opened his remarks concerning divine healing by describing several different healing claims, including those made by John Alexander Dowie, Mormonism, Christian Science, the Roman Catholic Church, Hypnotism, Spiritual Magnetism, and Spiritualism. He argued that these supposed contradictory claims, even if they were miraculous, were no more valid than patent medicine testimonials or professional medicine. He then went on to compare the modern divine healing movement to Christ's healings. Jesus' miracles had one thing in common, according to Harvey: they were all complete and instantaneous. The problem with most modern healing ministries was that they fell far short of this ideal. So-called "healers," Harvey asserted, were nothing less than false prophets and "false Christs," which was a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 24:24 that false prophets would come in his name. Furthermore, more than likely with Parham in mind, Harvey asserted that healing was not an essential part of the gospel: "The thought is irresistible [*sic*]: that the extravagant claims made by some cannot be true and that healing is not a chief part of the gospel as they teach."¹⁰⁹

parties because of his support of prohibition. "Hon. Cyrus W. Harvey," Galena Miner, October 24, 1878, 2; Galena Miner, June 28, 1888, 5.

¹⁰⁸ C.W. Harvey, "Faith Healing," Galena Evening Times, November, 20, 1903, 2.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

Three days later, Sara C. Scovell, leader of the First Spiritualist Church in Galena, responded to Harvey's letter. In her editorial, Scovell defended Spiritualism as the only true exponent of faith healing. The real test of any divine healing movement, Scovell wrote, was whether its proponents were willing to drink poison or to be bitten by venomous snakes. These so-called healers always refused to test their faith in this way and "then faith fails and their shield is in taking refuge in the dignity of religious bigotry," Scovell remarked. This challenge did not threaten Spiritualists, Scovell argued, because they understood the limits of the human mind and that nature's laws could not be broken, not even by faith. This meant that a Spiritualist would not allow themselves to be bitten by poisonous snakes because they knew that they would not be healed through faith. She also had a few words to say about Parham's healing message, "The school which is holding forth in Galena now, accepts scriptures as written, and yet their faith is not equal to the bowl or a bite from a rattle snake. In this their faith is the same as any other organization, content to believe without tests." Scovell also claimed that many Spiritualists had been able to speak in other tongues.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ "A Spiritualist has a Say," Galena Evening Times, November 23, 1903, 2. For more information on Scovell, see "Sarah Cave-Scovell," Galena Weekly Republican, June 22, 1923. The First Spiritualist Church was more than likely associated with the National Spiritualist Association of Churches (NSAC), which was established in 1893 as a way to encourage fellowship and to deal with fraudulent mediums. In 1899, a six-article "Declaration of Principles" was adopted. The articles included an affirmation of the belief in "Infinite Intelligence," that Nature was the expression of this Infinite Intelligence, that understanding and living within this expression constituted true religion, that the identity of the individual continues after death, that communication with the dead is a scientific fact, and that the highest morality is contained in the "Golden Rule." Three more articles were added at a later date, one of which was an affirmation of spiritual healing. "National Spiritualist Association of Churches," in Encyclopedia of American Religions ed. J. Gordon Melton, 7th ed. (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2003), 772. According to the NSAC's website, spiritual healing has been a primary principles of Spiritualism since its beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. National Spiritualist Association of Churches, "Healing," National Spiritualist Association of Churches, <http://www.nsap.org/healing.htm> (accessed April 26, 2009).

Parham's reputation suffered another blow when Scovell recovered from what was initially believed to be either "paralysis" or a heart attack.¹¹¹ Parham seems to have exploited Scovell's condition to deprecate her Spiritualist beliefs. After her recovery, she wrote "that the pretender who announced from the rostrum Tuesday night that 'God had stricken one of the Galena Spiritualists dumb, because she opposed him and that she was now lying nigh unto death with no chance of recovery,' was sadly mistaken in his metaphor. If it was the work of his God in bringing my affliction upon me, he must have seen his mistake."¹¹²

Despite the negative publicity and occasional skepticism, Parham continued to draw large crowds to his nightly meetings. On November 29, Parham conducted the second of a series of baptismal services. The Galena Evening Times reported that twenty-six converts were baptized in the nearby Spring River. At this baptismal service, the crowd was apparently larger than at the previous week's baptismal service when twenty-three people were baptized. It was expected that another large baptismal ceremony would be held the following week.¹¹³

Several days later, Harvey wrote another editorial. This time he discussed speaking in tongues. He argued that speaking in tongues was meant to be limited and that it did not serve any useful purpose. He explained that whenever the Apostle Paul mentioned tongues in his letters, most notably I Corinthians 12 and 14, he greatly limited their use by saying that it edifies no one but the speaker. In Paul's later letters—Romans and Ephesians—this particular gift of the Holy

¹¹¹ The first newspaper report of Scovell's ailment said that she was suddenly stricken with paralysis or heart failure. "Suddenly Stricken," Galena Evening Times, November 24, 1903, 2. The next day, it was reported that her condition was not as serious as previously believed. Galena Evening Times, November 25, 1903, 5.

¹¹² Mrs. S.C. Scovell, "I am Thankful," Galena Evening Times, November 27, 1903, 5.

¹¹³ "Many Baptized," Galena Evening Times, November 30, 1903, 2.

Spirit was entirely left out, Harvey noted, as if Paul wanted to signify that they had ceased to be of importance to the early church. In addition, the fact that twenty-one books of the New Testament did not mention tongues was further proof that speaking in tongues was useless.¹¹⁴

For the next few weeks, the reports of the meetings were building up to the climax of the revival: a New Year's watch night service. Accounts of the meetings indicate that Parham continued to attract large crowds and that a significant number of people were converted at each meeting. On December 9, the Galena Evening Times estimated the number of converts to be four hundred since the beginning of the revival in October. It was expected that this number would swell to five hundred by the close of the meeting on the following Sunday.¹¹⁵ One article claimed that fifteen to twenty-five people were converted every night.¹¹⁶

In the meantime, the paper published Harvey's final editorial condemning the revival. He was concerned that too many people had been converted under Parham's ministry without seriously examining his teachings. They had simply been caught up in the excitement of the new doctrines, Harvey believed. He described these converts as "children" who had little judgment in discerning between truth and counterfeit fads. The type of people attracted to Parham, Harvey wrote, "Are known to fly by the ease and enthusiasm with which they go from one church to

¹¹⁴ C.W. Harvey, "Speaking with Tongues," Galena Evening Times, December 7, 1903, 3. Arthur T. Pierson, another critic of Pentecostal theology, made a similar argument in 1907. Robeck Jr., Azusa Street Mission and Revival, 245.

¹¹⁵ Galena Evening Times, December 9, 1903, 3.

¹¹⁶ "Baptizing Again Postponed," Galena Evening Times, December 18, 1903, 2.

another, or the zeal with which they mount any new hobby or romance in doctrine that may come along and catch their latest fancy.”¹¹⁷

Parham, who Harvey called “the chief operator in speculation and fables in our city,” got people to listen to him by claiming that he received divine guidance and revelation from God, according to Harvey. To Harvey’s frustration, Parham even went as far to call himself a prophet. Moreover, Parham’s persistent attacks on the local clergy and churches further incensed Harvey. Parham had supposedly called ministers and church members “hypocrites,” “Pharasees” [*sic*], “old dry bones,” “selfish,” “dishonest,” and “deceivers of the people.” He also proclaimed, “If Christ was to come to Galena, these ministers and members of the organized churches would join to put him to death.” These divisive condemnations of the local clergy and churches attested to the “sleight and craft” of Parham’s work, Harvey declared.¹¹⁸ Harvey’s defense of the local religious establishment may have only strengthened Parham’s attacks on that establishment. Parham possibly used Harvey’s letters as evidence that the contemporary power structure sought to stifle any voices that threatened its authority.

Furthermore, Harvey criticized specific points of Parham’s teachings, including his ideas that God created two distinct human races, that Judas was a devil-incarnate, and the future literal reign of Christ. At the end of the letter, Harvey argued that most of the people who had been converted at Parham’s meetings were sincere and honest not because of the doctrines taught but

¹¹⁷ C.W Harvey, “The Romance of Doctrine,” Galena Evening Times, December 11, 1903, 2. Lyle P. Murphy argued that Harvey wrote this final letter in response to Parham’s reaction to his previous editorial. Murphy may be right, but I did not find any evidence that Parham discussed Harvey’s letter. Lyle P. Murphy, “Beginning at Topeka: An Historical Study of the Tongues Movement,” Calvary Review 13 (Spring 1974): 9.

¹¹⁸ Harvey, “The Romance of Doctrine,” Galena Evening Times, December 11, 1903, 2.

because the Holy Spirit operates on the hearts of the unsaved. But the problem for Harvey was that too many people were being converted to nothing more than Parham and his teachings, which simply stirred the emotions and were not rooted in God's true teachings. Harvey closed his letter by saying, "The initial movement of the soul by which in honesty of heart they 'began in the spirit' is wasted, scattered, and diverted from a true spiritual divine work in the soul by all sorts of methods, theories, systems, and doctrinal romancing, so that in many, the divine work is choked out and they lodge at last on the theories of men."¹¹⁹

The climax of the meeting came on December 31, when Parham held a New Year's watch-night service. According to the Galena Evening Times's account of the meeting, people were at the Grand Leader building until five in the morning. The paper estimated that 2,500 people were present at the height of the meeting and that at least 1,000 stayed until midnight.¹²⁰ The Joplin Daily News Herald reported that over 400 people remained until the morning.¹²¹ A.W. Webber, one of the many people reportedly healed during the revival, remembered that, "business and professional men and families, as well as folk from all walks of life, remained at the altars until after sunup the next morning."¹²² Also at the all-night service, there was a foot

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ "All Night Session," Galena Evening Times, January 1, 1904, 3.

¹²¹ "Three Months of Religious Fervor," Joplin Daily News Herald, January 24, 1904, 11. Sarah Parham also claimed that there at least 400 people at the watch-night service. Parham, Life, 93.

¹²² A.W. Webber, "Revival of 1903 in Galena, Kansas," Apostolic Faith (Baxter Springs, KS), May 1944, 11.

washing and Parham ordained twelve people to the ministry.¹²³ This meeting was supposed to end the revival, but due to its success the townspeople convinced Parham to stay a few more weeks. Local businessmen provided him with the necessary funds to continue the meetings.¹²⁴

By January 19, the revival in Galena had generated enough interest that Parham was able to expand his services to include four meetings in the county, although Galena still received most of his attention. Six of Parham's workers were conducting meetings at the opera house in nearby Baxter Springs, which was apparently crowded every night. Other assemblies were being held at Gorden and Cave Springs.¹²⁵ It was also reported that dozens of other branches of Parham's services had sprung up in the local mining camps, all of which were attracting large crowds.¹²⁶

The revival also generated enthusiasm among some of the other Christian groups in Galena. The Methodist church, for example, started a revival shortly after the New Year's watch-night service.¹²⁷ The meetings at the Methodist church were more than likely started to compete with Parham and to possibly win back some of his converts. Shumway explained that the Reverend Frank W. Otto, who was the minister at the local Methodist church at the time, was

¹²³ B.F. Lawrence, "Article VIII: Reminiscences of an Eyewitness," Weekly Evangel, February 26, 1916, 4.

¹²⁴ "Blindness and Cancer Cured by Religion," St. Louis Globe Democrat, January 1, 1904, 5; "A Divine Healer Cured Them?," Kansas City Times, January 2, 1904, 10; Galena Evening Times, January 6, 1904, 3.

¹²⁵ Galena Evening Times, January 19, 1904, 3; Joplin Daily News Herald, January 20, 1904, 5; Cherokee County Republican, January 21, 1904, 8.

¹²⁶ "Three Months of Religious Fervor," Joplin Daily News Herald, January 24, 1904, 11.

¹²⁷ "A Divine Healer Cured Them?," Kansas City Times, January 2, 1904, 10.

known to be in open conflict with Parham.¹²⁸ Local newspaper reports highlighted the apparent differences between the two men. While Parham was seen as bringing about an unprecedented amount of religious excitement to the city, he was also portrayed as being divisive and fanatical.¹²⁹ At the same time, one of Otto's speeches was described as "clear, logical, and totally devoid of all fanaticism and rant."¹³⁰ The themes of some of the nightly services at the Methodist meetings reveal that they were a response to Parham. On January 14, the Reverend Hammond spoke on Pentecost. His sermon was described as "scholarly and heart touching."¹³¹ Two nights later, Otto reported that the evening's services would cover "the punishment of the wicked, or, an endless hell."¹³²

The revival services at the other churches in Galena created some resentment within the ranks of those who supported Parham's work. Some had apparently accused Hugh P. Moore, the minister at the local Baptist church, of trying to steal the spotlight from Parham. Moore addressed these accusations in a letter to the Galena Evening Times. He explained that the appointment with the revivalist for the Baptist church had been reserved since August. Furthermore, he rejected any sort of rivalry with the other revivals and maintained that he enthusiastically supported anyone who could produce religious renewal in the city. He added,

¹²⁸ Shumway, "A History of 'The Gift of Tongues,'" 169.

¹²⁹ "Parham Creating a Sensation," Joplin Daily Globe, October 25, 1903, 3; Harvey, "The Romance of Doctrine" Galena Evening Times, December 11, 1903, 2 ; "Three Months of Religious Fervor," Joplin Daily News Herald, January 24, 1904, 11.

¹³⁰ Galena Evening Times, December 29, 1903, 3.

¹³¹ "Evangelistic Meetings," Galena Evening Times, January 14, 1904, 3.

¹³² Frank W. Otto, "M.E. Church," Galena Evening Times, January 16, 1904, 2.

“And certainly there ought to be room in a town of 7,000 people for two successful meetings at the same time.”¹³³

In addition, the three-month-long revival raised the ire of the holiness leaders in Galena. C.F. Wright wrote to the Church Advocate and Holiness Banner, “There has been a sifting time here in Galena. A false teacher came here and some true saints have been deceived. . . . and are under awful delusion.”¹³⁴

Parham’s meetings closed on January 25, 1904. Parham said he was going to turn his attention to the other meetings that were being held in the county. At the end of the three-month revival, it was estimated that over 875 people had been converted to Christ, over a thousand had been healed, and several hundred had spoken in tongues.¹³⁵ These results created a sense of intense religious excitement. A reporter for the Joplin Daily News Herald wrote, “It is doubtful whether in recent years anything has occurred that has awakened the interest, excited the comment or mystified the people of this region as have the religious meetings at Galena.”¹³⁶ Goss remembered the joy he felt after being converted to Christ during the revival, “God had surely changed my life. I was so happy that everything around me seemed scintillating with joy.

¹³³ Hugh P. Moore, “A Statement to the People of Galena,” Galena Evening Times, January 2, 1904, 3.

¹³⁴ C.F. Wright, “Galena, Kans., Feb. 1st,” Church Advocate and Holiness Banner, February 6, 1904, 8.

¹³⁵ “Meeting Closed,” Galena Evening Times, January 25, 1904, 3; “Three Months of Religious Fervor,” Joplin Daily News Herald, January 24, 1904, 11.

¹³⁶ “Three Months of Religious Fervor,” Joplin Daily News Herald, January 24, 1904, 11.

God had changed my outlook on life so completely that even the old mine dumps around Galena suddenly seemed beautiful.”¹³⁷

The revival in Galena was essential to the survival and spread of Parham’s doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It was at Galena that he achieved the results that had eluded him for three years and gave him a base of operations from which he could oversee the spread of what he deemed the Apostolic Faith. Sarah Parham later proclaimed that God had shown her husband that the “gospel of the baptism of the Holy Spirit should go through a testing time for about three years, before this wonderful power should again be manifest in any remarkable way. We had experienced our years of trials and testings and now the time had come when God was going to visit His people in mercy and the Holy Spirit would again be poured out.”¹³⁸ The years of struggle and doubt seemed worth it for Parham. In three months, he accomplished what he had been unable to do in three years.

Moreover, the revival in Galena in 1903 revealed Parham’s populist message. This aspect of Parham’s teachings was most evident in his confrontations with the local establishment in the city, particularly C.W. Harvey and the Methodist church. It appears that throughout the three-month long revival, Parham consistently attacked what he saw as the establishment’s failure to provide for the needs of “the people.”¹³⁹ He proclaimed that local clergy were primarily concerned with making money and propping up their denominations. This antiestablishment bent

¹³⁷ Goss, Winds of God, 40.

¹³⁸ Parham, Life, 91.

¹³⁹ According to Harvey, Parham attacked the local clergy at all his nightly meetings. Harvey, “The Romance of Doctrine,” Galena Evening Times, December 11, 1903, 2.

had been a key feature of Parham's belief system since he left the Methodist Church in 1895, but it does not seem to have reached its fullest expression until Galena in 1903.

What made Parham's antiestablishment statements in Galena different from his prior remarks was the connection he made between the local clergy's defense of the status quo and its apparent corruption and what affect these failings had on "the people." It was in Galena that he publicly called local clergy "deceivers of the people" and declared that they were responsible for driving the people from the churches because of their complacency.¹⁴⁰ His public pronouncements in Galena not only represent a stage in his development as a religious populist preacher, but they also signify the parallels between early Pentecostalism and Populism. Parham's statements in Galena were strikingly similar to the antiestablishment convictions of the political and economic Populists of the 1890s who had declared that political and economic elites had abandoned the people. It is to a fuller explanation of these connections and some concluding remarks that this study now turns.

¹⁴⁰ Parham made similar comments a year earlier in *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*, but the Galena revival appears to be the first time that he made this stance a central feature of his meetings. Parham, *A Voice*, 54-55.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, Kansans had a national reputation for embracing movements that sought to disrupt the status quo. As historian William C. Pratt has argued, Kansas was probably the most radical state in the Union at the turn of the twentieth century.¹ Although Pratt was talking about Kansans' tendencies for left-wing politics, understanding this general mindset can also provide insight into the emergence and nature of early Pentecostalism in the state. This penchant for radicalism was also found in Kansans' religious expressions. In an H.L. Mencken-esque essay, Charles B. Driscoll observed that Kansas had a history of producing religious prophets who opposed the religious establishment.² Pentecostalism continued this radical tradition. This relationship to radicalism in Kansas's past was most evident in Pentecostalism's connections to the Populist Movement in the decades immediately preceding World War I.

Key to understanding this relationship between Populism and early Kansas Pentecostalism was what sociologists Rhys Williams and Susan Alexander described as Populism's "prophetic voice." In order to explain Populism's religious orientation, they used Max Weber's classification of "priestly" and "prophetic" civil religion. The former, they wrote, upholds the status quo and protects its power arrangements. In opposition to this view, prophetic

¹ William C. Pratt, "Historians and the Lost World of Kansas Radicalism," Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains 30 (Winter 2007/2008): 270-291.

² Charles B. Driscoll, "Major Prophets of Holy Kansas," The American Mercury 8 (May 1926): 18-26.

religious voices “challenge extant political arrangements, especially by calling down (or revealing) the judgment of the Deity. Thus prophetic voices often emerge from outside the polity and are anti-institutional. They are calling the system to account based on a higher authority,” Williams and Alexander wrote.³

At the root of Populists’ frustration was the so-called “money-power” who Populists accused of trying to establish a plutocracy of economic and political privilege. Populists believed that this system of wealth and privilege had been achieved at the expense of the masses of hard-working people and that it was the primary cause of poverty in America. This order of things, Populists declared, violated God’s “natural order” where hard work was rewarded. Moreover, the monopoly of economic and political power was in the hands of a small group of people who did not do honest work and, therefore, did not deserve their wealth because they profited from the labor of others.⁴

Populist orators channeled their anger through their speeches and writings, which Williams and Alexander explained, often called “down the judgment of God—the Almighty’s designs for the American nation—against worldly transgressors who made their fortune unjustly and used their power to keep the plain people enslaved.”⁵ Populist leaders frequently drew upon the images of the Old Testament prophets and Jesus’ actions in the gospels. One of their favorite stories used to demonize the plutocracy was Jesus driving the money-changers from the temple.

³ Rhys H. Williams and Susan M. Alexander, “Religious Rhetoric in American Populism: Civil Religion as Movement Ideology,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 33 (March 1994): 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

Not surprisingly, the Populists often portrayed themselves as replicating Jesus' actions in the temple.⁶

Some Populists also directed their prophetic ire at elites in other societal institutions, including religious ones. They accused these organizations of colluding with the economic and political plutocracy to keep the common people enslaved. It was the religious duty of Americans, Populists intoned, to stand up to such collaboration among the nation's institutional elites. Similar to their vision for American economic and political life, Populists called for a renewal of the nation's churches that would align them with the needs of the people.⁷

Populist ideals can be seen in the Reverend Charles Parham's denunciation of the American government. Similar to the Populists, Parham commended the United States for what he saw as its founding principles of religious liberty and the common brotherhood of humankind as the basis for its civil government. But he believed that the nation had abandoned these principles and at the same time had abandoned God.⁸ An article in the Apostolic Faith titled "The Destruction of the American Republic" reflected Parham's views on the state of America. The author declared, "Thus 'Liberty bell' rang out, 'Proclaim ye liberty unto all the inhabitants of the land!' This certainly was a change from the despotism of the Old World's empires, and

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 8. Also refer to, Argersinger, "Pentecostal Politics"; Lengel, "Preachers of a New Religion," "Radical Crusaders," and "Righteous Cause."

⁸ Parham, Voice, 115.

here was a country of peace, liberty and philanthropy. But, alas, what now? Guilty of all the sins of the Old World and many new ones.”⁹

Parham often used James 5:1-6 to show what happens to a nation that forgets God. In this biblical passage, the author condemned the rich for abusing the poor and declared that God would hold them accountable for their actions. The biblical-writer also added that the poor would be redeemed when Christ returned. Parham argued that this passage revealed that Christ’s return was imminent and that God would hold the nation accountable which allowed its wealth to be gathered in the hands of a few and to be accumulated in combines, corporations, and trusts. Moreover, he claimed that a fair distribution of wealth was the foundation for every great civilization of the past and that once this ceased, these societies collapsed.¹⁰ His interpretation of these verses in James is significant because it reveals his frustration with America’s elite and his Populist sympathies.

A blatant example of America’s sins, according to Parham, was the invasion of the Philippines in 1898, which he believed was being fought simply to fulfill the nation’s commercial interests. While traveling in Canada and the United States, Parham said he observed soldiers boarding ships and waving good-bye to friends and loved ones to depart for war. He contended that these men were being shipped out to fight to feed America’s “gluttonous appetite.”¹¹ He further declared, “Ere long justice with flaming sword will step from behind the pleading form of Mercy to punish a nation which has mingled the blood of thousands of human

⁹ Wesley Bradshaw, “The Destruction of the American Republic,” Apostolic Faith (Topeka), March 30, 1899, 4.

¹⁰ Parham, Everlasting, 20, 26-27, and 30; Parham, Voice, 115.

¹¹ Parham, Voice, 59.

sacrifices upon the altar of commercial and imperialistic expansion.”¹² The reasoning behind his opposition to the war in the Philippines was strikingly similar to many Populists’ views concerning the invasion, which further reveals that while Parham questioned the usefulness of the political activity of the Populists, he continued to be influenced by them.¹³ The nation not only faced the wrath of God for its incursion into the Philippines, but it also faced possible troubles at home. In an issue of the Apostolic Faith, Parham predicted that there would be civil war in America if the country did not withdraw from the Philippines because Americans would refuse to give up American lives for an unjust cause.¹⁴

The war not only took the lives of a countless number of human beings, but it also held back the cause of Christ. Sadly, Parham proclaimed, it was so-called “Christian nations” who led the war to feed these nations’ wasteful appetite.¹⁵ In a discussion on the rise of the antichrist, he attacked Christian ministers who supported the war for “trying to Christianize the world by war and sword” and accused them of “loudly commending the enlightenment of heathen by shooting day-light through them.”¹⁶ It is probable that he saw these ministers’ support of the war as a sign of their collusion with the government. Nearly twenty years later, he argued that an alliance

¹² Ibid., 118.

¹³ Lengel, “Righteous Cause,” 232-234.

¹⁴ Apostolic Faith (Topeka), June 28, 1899, 8.

¹⁵ Parham, Voice, 59.

¹⁶ Ibid., 114. Parham’s use of the word “heathen” was commonly used by Christians at the time to describe nonbelievers.

between the government, the wealthy, and the churches, “exploited the masses for profit or drove them en masse to war, to perpetuate their misrule.”¹⁷

Parham further showed his Populist sympathies when he wrote a glowing obituary for Julius Wayland, a prominent American socialist and editor of Appeal to Reason, a socialist newspaper printed in Girard, Kansas. In the obituary, Parham commended Wayland’s efforts to bring about a more just and fair society, but he argued that Wayland’s attempts failed because they did not have Jesus Christ at their center. Parham declared that if Wayland had recognized that only Christ could usher in the perfect society at his second coming, he could have been a valuable asset to Christianity: “Had Mr. Wayland realized the true remedial system of God’s plan, what a world of good and blessing he would have been to mankind; but let us all trust his work was the reflection on the people for their preparation for the good things to come.”¹⁸

Parham also adopted the anti-capitalist views and class antagonism of the Populists and Socialists. He argued that the Bible predicted that there would be an international struggle between the governments, the rich, and the churches on the one side and the masses of wage slaves on the other side.¹⁹ Parham claimed that the governments, the rich, and the churches represented the “old order” and that the masses stood for the “new order.” In a socialistic tone, he said that the old order maintained its power through nationalism, which was used to divide the people of the world, and through the exploitation of the masses. The new order, he wrote, “Knows no national boundaries, believing in the universal brotherhood of mankind and the

¹⁷ Parham, Everlasting Gospel, 28.

¹⁸ Charles F. Parham, “Suicide of Wayland,” Apostolic Faith (Baxter Springs), December 1912, 9.

¹⁹ Parham, Everlasting, 20.

establishment of the teachings of Jesus Christ as a foundation for all laws, whether political or social.”²⁰ These two orders, Parham declared, could not be reconciled and neither would rest until the other was destroyed.²¹

Elsewhere, Parham claimed that socialism and other reform movements were “the heart-cry to see Jesus.”²² However, Parham argued, these attempts at political organization were in vain because “the governments were in the hands of the rich, the nobles, and the plutocrats, who forestalled all legislative action in the interests of the masses.”²³ True reform, Parham declared, could only come about through a movement that promised to save both soul and body. He said that if he had all the prestige and money of the various reform groups, he could bring about the society they envisioned.²⁴ In January 1901, he told a Kansas City audience, “But if I had all the money that the W.C.T.U. spends in fighting the liquor traffic I could send out spirit moved men and women who would move the world, and who not only save men’s bodies from the liquor traffic, but also their souls from the devil.”²⁵

²⁰ Ibid., 28.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Charles F. Parham, “We Have Found Him,” in Selected Sermons of the Late Charles F. Parham and Sarah E. Parham, compiled by Robert L. Parham (Baxter Springs, KS: Robert L. Parham, 1941), 2.

²³ Parham, Everlasting, 28.

²⁴ Parham, “We Have Found Him,” in Selected Sermons, 2.

²⁵ “Gift of Tongues,” Kansas City Journal, January 31, 1901, 7. He made a similar statement in May 1901. “Gift of the Tongue,” Kansas City Journal, May 20, 1901, 8. The W.C.T.U. was the Women’s Christian Temperance Union. It was a nineteenth-century reform group.

Parham's arguments against direct political activity seem to indicate that he may have once been involved in politics himself, but that he grew disillusioned when these efforts appeared to have failed. This possibility is reinforced by comments he made in Kansas City in January 1901 when he told listeners that his attempts to help enact prohibition in Kansas fell short of his goals.²⁶ In another statement, more than likely in reference to his frustration with the ineffectiveness of this political advocacy, he proclaimed, "In my old home in Kansas, I used to pick the geese, but they grew feathers again. You can shear a hog but it will grow bristles again. In everything in the world, unless we have Jesus Christ, they will be no lasting benefit to the human race."²⁷ Therefore, it is highly probable that Parham saw his religious activity as a substitute for his previous involvement in politics. However, rather than totally abandon his political views, he appears to have applied the ideas and rhetoric of Populism to his religious thought, particularly in his establishment of Bethel Bible College's communalism, his confrontations with the Protestant Establishment, and his development of the theology of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Similar to the goals of the Populists and the Socialists, Parham and his students at Bethel created an egalitarian community in which class and social distinctions were erased. The only requirement was that the students should follow the teachings of Jesus. Parham said, "No difference was made whether the students had any means to offer or whether they did not; but one thing was strictly required that they should obey and seek to live the commandments of

²⁶ "Gift of Tongues," Kansas City Journal, January 31, 1901, 7.

²⁷ Parham, "We Have Found Him," in Selected Sermons, 2.

Jesus.”²⁸ Bethel’s brand of socialism was the model for the world that would be ushered in by Christ, Parham argued. In Kansas City, in January 1901, he said, “The day is at hand for the restoration of the apostolic faith. Private ownership of land and of all other things will be done away with and all Christian people will pour their money and their all into the coffers of Christ.”²⁹ In his obituary for Wayland, Parham claimed that in this future kingdom labor would receive its full reward, the poor would not be forced to choose between crime and death, and humanity would share all possessions in common.³⁰

Parham’s attacks on other clergy often resembled the Populists’ denunciations of the political, social, and economic elites. The two held in common the notion that persons in positions of power had neglected the interests of the people. As this study has demonstrated, in Parham’s mind, respectable ministers were more concerned with making money and maintaining their social status than administering to the spiritual and physical needs of their congregations. Furthermore, similar to the Populists, Parham called these Christian leaders to task before God for what he perceived as their moral and spiritual deadness.

This idea that modern preachers did not meet God’s ideal for the church, or at least Parham’s notion of that ideal, had long been a key aspect of Parham’s belief system. One of the

²⁸ Parham, Voice, 32.

²⁹ “Gift of Tongues,” Kansas City Journal, January 31, 1901, 7. He made similar comments in March 1901. “Parham Returns,” Kansas City Journal, March 11, 1901, 8.

³⁰ Parham, “Suicide of Wayland,” Apostolic Faith (Baxter Springs), December 1912, 9. Goff cited a pamphlet advertising Parham’s lecture on “Christianity v. Socialism” that further indicates that Parham may have had socialist tendencies. It read, “He [Parham] is a Christian, not a Socialist, but graduated from a school of Socialism.” “Christianity v. Socialism” and “Mass Meeting of the Unemployed,” Handbills in Parham Family Scrapbook, quoted in Goff, Fields, 156.

ways that Parham spread this message was through the pages of the Apostolic Faith. He often printed articles that reflected his own views. In an early issue, he ran an article titled “State of the Church” in which the author declared that the modern Christian church had neglected God for “worldliness” and had failed to care for the poor.³¹ Another article, titled “Holiness and the Churches,” also lamented that modern churches had been seduced by the world and that its ministers were nothing more than “mammon-seeking professors of religion.”³² Other articles in the Apostolic Faith claimed that educated ministers could no longer appeal to the masses because the seminaries did not teach them how to reach the common folk.³³

By 1901, Parham was articulating a similar view during his initial efforts to spread the Pentecostal version of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In Kansas City, he said, “All your modern ministers do is sit around all week, pay a social call or two, take tea with one of their congregation, write a sermon once, or maybe twice, a week and take up a collection on Sunday. That’s what your paid, cheap modern ministers do, and that’s about all you get out of them.”³⁴ His attacks on the clergy could often be divisive and alienating. For example, in Galena in 1903, he accused the local clergy of being “hypocrites,” “Pharasees,” “old dry bones,” “selfish,” “dishonest,” and “deceivers of the people.”³⁵ This final phrase is a further indication that Parham

³¹ R.S. Foster, “State of the Church,” Apostolic Faith (Topeka), March 22, 1899, 6.

³² A.W. Orwig, “Holiness and the Churches,” Apostolic Faith, (Topeka), November 15, 1899, 4.

³³ “His Life a Burden,” Apostolic Faith (Topeka), June 14, 1899, 2; “How to Reach the Workingman,” Apostolic Faith (Topeka), October 18, 1899, 3.

³⁴ “Gift of the Tongue,” Kansas City Journal, May 20, 1901, 8.

³⁵ Harvey, “The Romance of Doctrine,” Galena Evening Times, December 11, 1903, 2.

adopted Populist ideas and rhetoric. Mary Elizabeth Lease, a prominent Kansas Populist, claimed that an organized effort between “an aristocracy of royalty” and “an aristocracy of gold” was being made to “deceive the people.”³⁶

Parham argued that the clergy was responsible for driving “the people” from the churches. The October 25, 1903, edition of the Joplin Daily Globe recorded him as saying,

A most shameful scene is witnessed every Sabbath when people who profess to be citizens of heaven and ambassadors of God sent from that country to do business for the Master are found piteously and whiningly begging on street corners and in hallways and in churches for a few cents to keep their poor starved souls and bodies together and oil the machinery of their different organizations to keep them running. No wonder the people are turning away in disgust from these self-styled ambassadors of the heavenly country and spend their time in gathering wool instead of feeding the flock.³⁷

An important phrase to highlight in Parham’s statements is “the people.” Populists often used this term to distinguish between the elites, who controlled the establishment and ruled unjustly, and the common folk, who were supposedly the pillars of American society but had been relegated to a position of inferiority by wealthy interests. Moreover, “the people” were honest and hard-working folk as opposed to the money-powers who made their profits through the labor of others and through financial manipulation. An article in the Apostolic Faith, which discussed the future of the United States, articulated this view: “The common people will remain sound and virtuous. The rich will become corrupt, avaricious, and degraded, and will ruin themselves with their own riches.”³⁸ In terms of religious institutions, the people were those who filled the pews and generally had not been granted access to positions of authority in the churches because they

³⁶ “Cheered Mary E. Lease,” New York World, August 11, 1896.

³⁷ “Parham Creating a Sensation,” Joplin Daily Globe, October 25, 1903, 3.

³⁸ “United States’ Coming Great War,” Apostolic Faith (Topeka), May 10, 1899, 4.

did not have the proper credentials, usually a degree from a theological school. It was these common folk that religious leaders were supposed to provide with spiritual solace and guidance, Parham argued. But, similar to elites in other institutions, they had abandoned their duty to the people.

Also seen in Parham's attacks on the Protestant Establishment was the Populist idea that the leaders were not "honest toilers."³⁹ This particular form of antielitism held that most ministers in the organized churches did not deserve their salary or accolades because they did little to provide spiritual or physical nourishment for the people in the pews. Too many ministers sought the position, Parham claimed, because "of its ease and moral atmosphere or from its remunerative value which some have been able to obtain by having reached the upper rounds of the ladder in scholarly attainments."⁴⁰ In order to weed out these worthless ministers Parham proposed that they should all stop receiving a stated salary. Once they rejected a salary the quality of the ministry would greatly improve because "the workman is worthy of his hire, and without a stipulated salary every true minister of God would receive exactly what he is worth."⁴¹ This practice would rid the world of what Parham called "the modern useless professional ministry."⁴²

³⁹ Mary Elizabeth Lease used this term to describe elites who depended on the labor of others. Since these people were not "honest toilers," she declared, they should not be allowed to hold positions of power. In her mind, the common people were the only true honest toilers. Williams and Alexander, "Religious Rhetoric in American Populism," 6.

⁴⁰ Parham, Voice, 11.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 66. He made a similar statement in Galena. "Parham Creating a Sensation," Joplin Daily Globe, October 25, 1903, 3.

⁴² Parham, Voice, 66.

Ministers and churches were also guilty of aligning with the rich and the government, Parham averred. In Galena, this belief that the churches had colluded with the established powers came to the surface when he declared, “If Christ was to come to Galena, these ministers and members of the organized churches would join to put him to death.”⁴³ This statement was likely a reference to the elite religious leaders in the gospels who had been corrupted by their own prestige and respectability and plotted with the Roman authorities to kill Jesus, because he threatened the status quo.

Years later, Parham expanded on this view, when he stated that the church’s role in this unholy alliance was to indoctrinate the people with a sense of nationalism. The church took on this function because it had lost its spiritual power and had been forsaken of God.⁴⁴ At the root of the problem for Parham was the modern church’s ineffectiveness in offering people an example of “practical Christianity.”⁴⁵ It was because of the church’s failure to care for the people that so many pursued salvation outside of Christianity, turned completely from God, or sought relief through government and social reform.⁴⁶

As Goff pointed out, Parham’s populist tendencies were nurtured by the Kansas political and social environment of the late-nineteenth century.⁴⁷ However, what Goff did not discuss was

⁴³ Harvey, “The Romance of Doctrine,” Galena Evening Times, December 11, 1903, 2.

⁴⁴ Parham, Everlasting Gospel, 28.

⁴⁵ Charles F. Parham, “We Have Found Him,” in Selected Sermons of the Late Charles F. Parham and Sarah E. Parham, compiled by Robert L. Parham (Baxter Springs, KS: Robert L. Parham, 1941), 2.

⁴⁶ Parham, Everlasting, 33.

⁴⁷ Goff, Fields, 20-22.

any specific influences in Parham's life. There appear to be at least two likely sources that either shaped or nurtured Parham's populist views, particularly his antiestablishment bent and his concern for "the people." First, was his friendship with Congressman Jeremiah Botkin. In a day and age when almost everybody in a given Kansas community knew each other, it is highly probable that the two met while Parham was a student at Southwest College where Botkin was one of the college's founders and served on the board of trustees.⁴⁸ Botkin's influence on Parham can be seen in the latter's views concerning the invasion of the Philippines. Both men argued that the war was nothing more than an excuse to further America's imperialistic and commercial interests.

Another highly probable influence on Parham was his affiliation with the Kansas Prohibition Movement. It is more than likely that Parham was involved with the state Prohibition Party. Both he and his wife claimed that he was crucial in enforcing prohibition in the cities in which they had lived.⁴⁹ The Kansas Prohibition Party was one of the most radically progressive political parties in the state in the nineteenth century. Its 1888 platform revealed this tendency. It called for the government ownership of the railroads, suffrage for women, and the election of the president and vice president by direct popular vote. Many of these ideas were considered and shared by the Kansas Populists.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ "Hon. J.D. Botkin," The Paul Jones Monthly Magazine 1 (September 1908): 16.

⁴⁹ "Gift of Tongues," Kansas City Journal, January 31, 1901, 7; "Eudora," Lawrence Daily World, February 12, 1901, 2; Parham Life, 25.

⁵⁰ "Kansas Prohibition Platform," Daily Leader (Topeka), October 13, 1888, 3. In 1890, the Prohibition Party and the Populist had a similar platform with the exception that the Prohibition Party had an explicit prohibition stance, called for women's suffrage, the Australian ballot, and the direct popular election of U.S. Senators. "People's Party Platform," Twenty-Ninth Republican State Convention; "Platform of the Prohibition Party," *ibid.*, vi-vii.

In addition to its rhetoric, Populism also fostered a sociopolitical environment in which Pentecostalism could thrive. The Populists' attacks on the political and economic establishment created a foundation on which Parham's denunciations of the religious establishment could find an audience. The antiestablishment bent of the Populists and Parham resonated with many people who stood outside the halls of power and believed that the elites in these organizations no longer had the people's interests in mind. Furthermore, both Populism and Pentecostalism instilled a sense of personal empowerment and collective identity in individuals and groups that the dominant culture had defined as marginal. As Blumhofer has pointed out, "People deprived of worldly status found in Pentecostal missions position and dignity as mediators in God's end-times message, who unlike the socially and economically empowered for whom they toiled, truly understood the times in which they lived."⁵¹

Early Pentecostal meetings reveal the cross section of people who were attracted to Parham's teachings. Some of the earliest newspaper accounts of Parham's followers describe them as poor.⁵² Both Agnes Ozman and Howard Goss, for example, spent their early years living in poverty.⁵³ Another newspaper story reported that women made up the majority in Parham's cohort.⁵⁴ In Galena, Parham's message was especially popular among the miners.⁵⁵ At the same

⁵¹ Blumhofer, Restoring, 89.

⁵² "Claim a Strange 'Gift of Tongues,'" Kansas City World, January 15, 1901, 7; "They Believe in a Personal God," Kansas City World, January 22, 1901, 8; "Strange Scenes at a Revival," Kansas City World, February 1, 1901, 8.

⁵³ LaBerge, What God Hath Wrought, 7; Goss, Winds of God, 20-21 and 27-28.

⁵⁴ "Was a Pentecost," Kansas City Journal, January 22, 1901, 1. Ozman later said that the restoration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit was especially encouraging for women because God also gave them the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Ozman, What God Hath Wrought, 31.

time, as best seen in Galena, some wealthy people also desired divine healing and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁶ Another group drawn to Parham was the sick. There were also some reports of racial minorities in attendance at the early Apostolic Faith meetings, some of whom even received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁷ In Kansas City in March 1901, Parham told audiences about the recently completed services in Lawrence where “three negroes” were given the ability to speak in other languages.⁵⁸ Also, a Native American in Galena from the nearby “Pawnee reservation” heard a woman speak in his native tongue.⁵⁹

What united this broad spectrum of individuals was what most people may have always wanted, according to Wacker: “Meaning for this world and salvation for the next.”⁶⁰ Pentecostalism became so successful, particularly in Galena, because it promised these treasures

⁵⁵ “Three Months of Religious Fervor,” Joplin Daily News Herald, January 24, 1904, 11.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*; “Revivalist in Galena Heals the Sick,” Joplin Daily Globe, October 23, 1903, 1.

⁵⁷ The interracial nature of the meetings does not appear to have started until February 1901. Bethel was not interracial and there were only whites present in January 1901. Thistlewaite, “Wonderful History of the Latter Rain,” 63.

⁵⁸ “Prayer is His Cure,” Kansas City Times, March 11, 1901, 8. Although some racial minorities took part in Parham’s meetings, by twenty-first-century standards he would be considered a white supremacist. His views on Anglo-Israelism and the interracial nature of the Azusa Street revival would be deemed offensive to many people today. However, one needs to be careful not to outright condemn Parham for his racial opinions. It is significant that he made accommodations for William Seymour at his Houston Bible school, despite the strict segregationist laws and attitudes in Texas, and that he preached alongside Seymour to the black people in Houston. His opinions on race can best be described as “paternalistic,” meaning that he felt an obligation to those he deemed inferior. Parham was convinced that his end-times message superseded the constrictions of society. Goff, Fields, 107-111.

⁵⁹ “Three Months of Religious Fervor,” Joplin Daily News Herald, January 24, 1904, 11.

⁶⁰ Wacker, “Functions of Faith in Primitive Pentecostalism,” 363.

to all people, regardless of their station in life.⁶¹ In March 1901, Parham told a Kansas City audience that he could “take the ordinary man or woman and in thirty days he will receive the gift of tongues.”⁶² One group that this promise appealed to was women, who made up a large portion of Parham’s early followers. In the earliest years of the Pentecostal Movement, women were often given the opportunity to hold positions of leadership since the baptism of the Holy Spirit was available to anyone. Ozman commented, “This is a great encouragement to us women today. We know God who gave the woman the Bohemian languages spoken in them also is giving today.”⁶³ Parham also showed a willingness to accept women as religious authorities when he left two women, Mary Arthur and Francene Dobson, in charge of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Galena.⁶⁴

Early Pentecostal revivals displayed this egalitarianism by blurring social divisions. In Galena, for example, a Joplin journalist observed,

Here the man of prominence and position clasps hands with the uneducated son of toil or oft times with those who have a prison record back of them. Here women who have formerly lived for society and gayety kneel behind some fallen sister and endeavors to point her heavenward and here the “followers” receive what they term “the Pentecost” and are enabled to speak in foreign tongues languages with which, when free from this power, utterly unfamiliar.⁶⁵

The “heavenly chorus,” which consisted of persons apparently singing in tongues at the same time, further demonstrated the egalitarian nature of Pentecostalism. Thistlewaite claimed to have

⁶¹ “Are From Kansas,” Kansas City Journal, February 8, 1901, 8.

⁶² “Prayer is His Cure,” Kansas City Times, March 11, 1901, 8.

⁶³ LaBerge, What God Hath Wrought, 31.

⁶⁴ Brumback, Suddenly, 29.

⁶⁵ “Three Months of Religious Fervor,” Joplin Daily Globe, January 24, 1904, 11.

participated in this heavenly singing in Topeka in January 1901.⁶⁶ Arthur also said that in Galena a crowd began to sing a hymn in “the most perfect Latin tongues.”⁶⁷ Historian Gary B. McGee described the significance of the heavenly chorus for early Pentecostals: “The harmony that emanated by way of such happenings involved far more than music; it united Pentecostals together from many backgrounds, swept them up into the eschatological worship of heaven—pulling back the curtain briefly to let them glimpse the divine love for humankind.”⁶⁸

Early converts were also likely drawn to Parham’s idea that despite their earthly status, they could become one of God’s spiritual elite during the end-times, possibly even ruling alongside Christ and his apostles. They earned this favored status through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, his teachings on the baptism of the Holy Spirit provided hope for a better future to people who were on the bottom of the social ladder. Where political and social movements had failed to bring about the realization of the “brotherhood of man,” Parham maintained that God would prevail through the efforts of Spirit-baptized believers.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit also gave people comfort amidst the uncertainties of life.

Parham wrote,

Speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance is God’s witness to the Baptism, and is your assurance that you have been sealed unto the day of redemption; all doubts and fears are vanquished, and you are enabled to tread through the darkness of these last days, smiling triumphantly at the gathering shadows, while the waves are rolling and the lightning flashing amidst the conclaves of planets, the falling of nations, and the crashing

⁶⁶ Thistlewaite, “Wonderful History,” Life, 61-62.

⁶⁷ Arthur, “Beginning,” 6.

⁶⁸ Gary B. McGee, ““The New World of Realities in Which We Live””: How Speaking in Tongues Empowered Early Pentecostals,” Pnuema 30, no. 1 (2008): 119-120.

of all inanimate nature in that terrible earthquake, the like of which has never been known.⁶⁹

This personal empowerment can be seen in the testimonies of many early Pentecostals.

Thistlewaite declared, “Never had such a hallowed joy, such a refined glory or such an abundance of peace ever come into my life. The Comforter had come and the words of Jesus being brought continually to my remembrance as Scripture after Scripture was unfolded by day and by night filled me with a settled rest and quietness my soul had never know [sic] before, I lived in the heavenlies.”⁷⁰

Through his populist message, Parham helped to create a movement that can be best described as a “people’s religion.” This populist orientation lasted for the first generation of American Pentecostal history until a desire for acceptance within the mainstream of evangelical Christianity led Pentecostals to create denominational institutions and to embrace mainstream American culture.⁷¹ Perhaps the most significant ways early Pentecostals continued this populist spirit was through their persistent antiestablishment stance and their consistent rejection of mainstream evangelical Christianity. True Christianity, early adherents believed, could only exist on the fringes of socially respectable religion.⁷²

There are at least two ways to recognize early Pentecostalism’s place in the general framework of American religious history. First, Pentecostalism can be considered as America’s

⁶⁹ Parham, Everlasting, 68.

⁷⁰ Thistlewaite, “Wonderful History,” Life, 61-62.

⁷¹ For an overview of these changes see, Blumhofer, Restoring, 142-163.

⁷² Ibid., 96. Both mainstream evangelical Christianity and theologically liberal churches rejected early Pentecostalism, relegating its adherents to the category of “holy rollers.”

third indigenous denomination, in addition to the Disciples of Christ and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Many of Pentecostalism's practices, including divine healing and speaking in tongues, and its emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, did not necessarily make it unique. In the case of divine healing and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, these were two beliefs that were already prominent in many nineteenth-century holiness circles.⁷³ Furthermore, reports of speaking in tongues were hardly new.⁷⁴ What was new in Pentecostalism was its belief that speaking in tongues was the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that tongues was an end-times mission tool, and that their emergence at Bethel in 1901 signified the "latter rain," or the final sign that Jesus' return was imminent. These teachings created the foundation for the Azusa Street Revival and later Pentecostal practice.⁷⁵

Second, the emergence of the Pentecostal Movement can be explained within the context of Sidney Mead's argument that American Protestantism is best understood as the history of denominationalism. Mead's basic premise in his landmark book The Lively Experiment was that the institutionalization of religious liberty in the United States created a unique dilemma for

⁷³ Dayton, Theological Roots of Pentecostalism, 87-141; Wacker, "The Holy Spirit and the Spirit of the Age in American Protestantism, 1880-1910," 45-62.

⁷⁴ George H. Williams and Edith Waldvogel [Blumhofer], "A History of Speaking in Tongues and Related Gifts," in The Charismatic Movement, ed., Michael Hamilton (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), 81-89; Synan, Century of the Holy Spirit, 18-26; Synan, Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition, 87-88. Parham was familiar with some reports of people speaking in tongues that predated the events in 1901. "The Gift of Tongues," Apostolic Faith (Topeka), May 3, 1899, 5; "Revivalist in Galena Heals the Sick," Joplin Daily Globe, October 23, 1903, 1; Parham, Voice, 29.

⁷⁵ Goff, "Charles F. Parham and His Role in the Development of the Pentecostal Movement"; Goff, Fields, 11-16; Blumhofer, Restoring the Faith, 2 and 43-53; Synan, Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition, 89-92; Robert Owens, "The Azusa Street Revival: The Pentecostal Movement Begins in America," in Vinson Synan, Century of the Holy Spirit, 43.

Americans, many of whom had lived under a state-established church. In response to this situation, American Protestants began to form denominations, which Mead defined as “a voluntary association of like-hearted and like-minded individuals, who are united on the basis of common beliefs for the purpose of accomplishing tangible and defined objectives.”⁷⁶ As the nineteenth century progressed, Mead demonstrated, these groups became entrenched and began to conflate “Americanism” with “Christianity.” According to Mead, this meant that many American Christians began to develop a theology in defense of democratic ideals and laissez faire capitalism. At the center of their justification of Americanism was the idea of progress, which allowed members and leaders of the so-called “respectable churches” to embrace the changes of the late-nineteenth century, even the less desirable aspects, Mead noted.⁷⁷ This move by the nation’s denominations created what historian Henry May described as “a massive, almost unbroken front in its defense of the status quo.”⁷⁸

Pentecostalism emerged as a challenge to this complacency and the entrenched Protestant Establishment, which had emerged in the late nineteenth century. It offered a refutation of the system of thought that had come to dominate certain segments of American Christianity, which had abandoned the supernatural claims of the gospel for a more naturalistic faith.

Pentecostalism’s emphasis on divine healing and the baptism of the Holy Spirit reaffirmed for

⁷⁶ Sidney E. Mead, The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963), 104. Mead’s thesis loses its strength in the post-World War II period in America when Americans began to shed denominational loyalty in a much more mobile and restless society.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 134-155.

⁷⁸ Henry F. May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1963), 91.

many Christians the reality of the supernatural.⁷⁹ Moreover, Pentecostalism's populist spirit further marked it as a dissenting voice.

Some historians have already indicated that there may have been a connection between Populism and the early Pentecostal Movement yet they have not applied this analytical framework as their central focus. The current study, therefore, is the first to make the possible parallels between Populism and Pentecostalism its primary focus. This approach to early Pentecostalism reveals that it had a symbiotic relationship with social and political Populism. There are two primary ways that this interconnection can be seen in the early Pentecostal Movement. The first is that Populism provided an ideological framework by which Charles Fox Parham could denounce the religious establishment as corrupt and in need of reform. This means that Populism's idea that the political and economic establishment no longer represented "the people" and that there needed to be change within that system helped to shape or was at least reflected in Parham's rhetoric. Much of this populist influence can be seen in Parham's language condemning modern churches and ministers. At the same time, he also developed a theology that gave the common people a sense of dignity and hope. He told them that regardless of their earthly status, they could become one of God's spiritual elite and that they could help to usher in the millennial kingdom.

My study has also demonstrated that Populism fostered a sociopolitical environment in which Parham's attacks on the establishment and his innovative theology could thrive. This relationship is best seen in the Galena revival of October 1903 to January 1904. Galena was in one of the most heavily Populist, and later Socialist, regions in Kansas. The success in Galena

⁷⁹ Wacker, "Functions of Faith," 356-363.

needs to be considered in light of Parham's previous failures in northeastern Kansas, which Clanton labeled "the citadel of anti-Populism." Parham's confrontations with the local establishment in Galena and his populist theological message was attractive to many people who supported other movements that challenged the status quo and that focused on the needs of "the people" rather than the maintenance of institutions or the desires of the elite.

Both the Populist and Pentecostal movements emerged at a unique time in American history. In the social and political realm, there were vast disparities in wealth and an alliance between the government and wealthy capitalists appeared to be wreaking havoc on the republic and reaping huge profits at the expense of "the people." In the religious realm, the entrenched and increasingly theologically liberal Protestant Establishment seemed all too willing to defend the status quo in the name of God and to deny the supernatural claims of the gospel in the name of science and progress, even if it meant alienating "the people." The rise of Populism and Pentecostalism cannot be understood apart from this historical context. In response to their times, they both created a belief system that challenged the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century establishment, focused on the needs of "the people," and offered an alternative to the status quo.

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