

# PENTECOSTALISM:



Ecstatic Dionysus. From a vase now in the Paris National Museum

## NEW OUTPOURING -- OR ANCIENT HERESY?

by Rev. Professor-Emeritus Dr. Francis Nigel Lee  
Sometime Chairman of Departments of Church History and Systematic Theology  
Queensland Presbyterian Theological College, Brisbane, Australia.

Foreword by Rev. Dr. Richard Bacon, First Presbyterian Church of Rowlett, Texas.

Revised and expanded third edition, 2005

## FOREWORD

I first became acquainted with Dr. Francis Nigel Lee in Memphis, Tennessee -- when he was the Resident Scholar of Christian Studies Center. That was in 1974.

I can truthfully say that Dr. Lee has been one of two men that God has used most mightily in my Christian life. He has probably had a greater influence in my life than even my father had. I certainly admire him as much.

Dr. Lee was born in England but moved to South Africa early in his life and came to know the Savior while working in a gold mine in that country. He studied law in South Africa and was admitted to the bar to practice before the Supreme Court of that country. He continued his education in philosophy and theology and holds doctorates in both disciplines.

His dissertation on *Communist Eschatology*, published...by Craig Press, runs a massive 1177 pages and has about 5400 footnotes. Doctor Lee does not simply make 'papal pronouncements.' He thoroughly studies an issue before writing, and a reader can count on him to bring to bear just about every source there is on a subject. This booklet is no exception, as its...footnotes attest.

In addition to being a scholar, however, Dr. Lee is also a Pastor. He has pastored in both South Africa and the United States and is currently training young men for the ministry in Australia at Queensland Presbyterian Theological Hall. He is an expositor, counsellor, trainer, theologian, philosopher, attorney, father, husband, pastor, teacher, academic, world-traveller, political scientist and a very good friend. The only reason he is not a general in the army of the Confederate States of America is that he was born about 100 years too late....

The subject matter of this booklet is one of timely concern for the entire Church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Next to Antinomianism, it may be that the twentieth century will be most remembered for the Pentecostal Movement. From the Azusa Street "revival" in 1906 to this very day, possibly no other subject has received as much attention from God's people.

In the early days of the Pentecostal movement, it was in a side road off a back street. There were tent-meetings and even churches where people "spoke with other tongues" and supposed healings took place. But it did not receive much attention from the mainline Protestant denominations.

All that has changed now! Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, Baptists and even Presbyterians are now claiming to have received "the baptism of the Holy Spirit." One author has even written a book claiming that now the mainline denominations should be working to "put the fire back in the fireplace."

Presbyterian Reformed Renewal [*sic!*] held a convention at the Dallas Convention Center in 1985, and literally thousands of people took part in a call for all Presbyterians of whatever theological persuasion to receive the "baptism" and to take the "manifestations of the Spirit" back

to their own denominations and presbyteries. The Presbyterian Church (USA) has precious few evangelicals in it, but most of them are actively seeking out these "gifts." The Presbyterian Church in America, an Evangelical (and supposedly Reformed) denomination, has allowed some of its largest churches to become infested with the fruits of this movement.

I was converted as an adult in the Armed Service in 1967. Almost immediately (the time could literally be counted in hours), I was approached by Pentecostals who encouraged me to receive this "baptism of the Holy Spirit."

At that time, I hardly even knew that there was an Older and Newer Testament in the Bible. And these folks had some awfully persuasive (at least to a new convert) arguments.

Look at the book of Acts! -- I was told. See how the gifts of the Spirit take up a full three chapters in First Corinthians! It's great that you have "accepted Jesus" -- but there is so much more waiting for you, if only you'll accept it too!

Praise God, my story has a happier ending than that of many new (and some not-so-new) converts! God placed a man in my way at that time who assured me that "in Him (Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him Which is the Head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2:9-10).

I'll grant that that is not a very "theological" argument. But it is as deep as can be, and it satisfied the fragile faith of this new convert. Later, of course, I studied the issue in more depth -- and came to exactly the same conclusion.

Dr. Lee is very careful in the following study not to draw greater conclusions than the facts allow for. Part of the difficulty in a study of this nature is that there is no truly documented evidence which ties Pentecostalism in directly with Montanism. Dr. Lee does quote John Thomas Nichol (himself a Pentecostalist) to the effect that Pentecostalism has its roots in Montanism. See Dr. Lee's numbered paragraphs 432 to 436 below.

As more and more Pentecostals examine their own history, it will become evident to them that there are numerous similarities between the two movements. It is the...hope that as many copies of this booklet as possible will make their ways into the hands of Pentecostals (especially, but not limited to, Presbyterian Pentecostals).

There are numerous studies available today on the "tongues" movement. What makes this book unique is its starting point.

It is not necessary nor even desirable to have a New Testament starting-point for the study. Dr. Lee begins where every Biblical study should begin -- in the revealed nature of the Triune Godhead.

He proceeds from there -- to show the contrasts between Biblical revelation [on the one hand] and Extra-Biblical false prophecy [on the other] -- throughout the history of redemption. He shows not only the history of the true prophetic office in Scripture, but also the history of Satan's "competing" religion down through the ages.

What actually was happening on Mount Carmel when Elijah called down fire from Heaven? What was Baal worship? How did Jezebel bring the worship of Baal and Astarte into Israel, and what form did that worship take?

What does any of that have to do with the modern Pentecostal movement? For the answers to these questions and many others that Pentecostals hope you won't ask, read on!

Now suppose that ancient Baal worship and the modern Pentecostal (or Charismatic) movement happen to have a few particulars in common? So what! Moslems have 'prayer' in common with Christianity. But does this mean that Christians should quit praying because a Non-Christian religion happens to do the same thing?

This question can only be answered in terms of what has come to be known as "the Regulative Principle of Worship." Simply stated, the Regulative Principle of Worship maintains that God is to be worshipped only in the manner prescribed by Him.

Because God has commanded that we pray to Him (and Him alone), we can be assured that it is a Christian practice -- regardless of whatever other World Religions may do or not. Because God has told us to pray with our understandings, and not in ecstatic utterances, we can also be assured that it is not His will for us to "speak in unknown tongues" (First Corinthians 14:6-11 & Matthew 6:7-13).

In addition to their differences over Calvinism, one of the primary differences between Wesley and Whitefield was Wesley's insistence on driving a wedge between justification and sanctification. This difference shows up quite clearly till this day -- between typical Evangelicals with their doctrine of "carnal Christians" (*sic*), and Calvinists with their Biblical doctrine of Perseverance of the saints.

But more important for an understanding of Pentecostalism is the fact that this Wesleyan wedge gave birth to the "holiness" movement of the last century. And it was from the Holiness Movement that twentieth-century Pentecostalism sprang. Pentecostalism is, at its foundation, a misunderstanding of sanctification and the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers.

In December of 1900, Charles Parham assigned his students at Bethel Bible Institute in Kansas to spend their winter vacation studying (from a "holiness" perspective) -- if there is a sure sign of the "baptism of the Holy Spirit." To make sure the study was loaded the way he wanted it, he informed his students that they were to study the subject beginning in Acts chapter two.

When he returned after the holidays, his students had reached a unanimous conclusion: the sure sign of "the baptism" is speaking in tongues! On January 1, 1901 (or shortly thereafter), while "tarrying" or "praying through" -- Agnes Ozman received the baptism, and the modern Pentecostal movement was underway. Parham and others received the baptism -- and proceeded to add a healing ministry. He led not a few of the saints in the midwest down that path -- before he moved his entire operation to Houston, Tx.

Another preacher, William Seymour, after hearing Parham preach, became convinced himself that believers should seek unknown tongues as a sign of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

He took that message with him to California and began to preach in April of 1906 that if he were not recognized as a true prophet -- God would destroy California. The 1906 San Francisco earthquake seemed to be a "vindication" of Seymour's message -- and the "Azusa Street Revival" took off.

In the second decade of the twentieth century, what had been a primarily Methodist movement began attracting a Baptist element. The Baptist Pentecostals later split off and formed the Assemblies of God denomination.

But it was also during this decade that we find the beginnings of 'Jesus-only' Pentecostalism, or what might be termed "Unitarian Pentecostalism." This came about as a result of a "revelation" that believers are to be baptized in the name of "Jesus only" (Acts 2:38) -- as opposed to being baptized into the Trinitarian Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19). This "controversy" within Pentecostal ranks also nearly split the Assemblies of God.

Then came radio! In the early 1920s, Aimee Semple McPherson founded the Four Square "Full Gospel" denomination. Ignoring, because undocumented, the accusations that have been made toward her -- suffice it to say that she was married a number of times. She emphasized a "healing" or "deliverance" ministry, and was the forerunner of such current Pentecostal champions as Oral Roberts and Robert Tilden.

This was still the period of tent-meetings and revivalism, and the entire movement drew its strength from a doctrine of "come-outism." They were "coming out" of the mainline denominations, because of a perceived deadness and theological "liberalism." Note that it was also at this time that the Princeton controversy was taking place in Presbyterian ranks.

And so Pentecostalism continued in its various forms -- until the 1960s. Then, Fr. Dennis Bennett -- rector of an Episcopalian church -- received the "baptism." He was quickly censured by his Church and quietly moved to a small and dying urban church in Washington.

Two things took place on the heels of one another -- that changed drastically the complexion of the entire movement. First, by preaching his "full gospel" -- Bennett was able to revive the urban church and make it a growing prosperous church. Second, *Time Magazine* found out about it -- and it was suddenly a national movement.

Up to this point, Pentecostalism had been a "fundamentalist" religion. *I.e.*, Pentecostals stood firmly for the plenary, verbal inspiration of Scripture -- in spite of the fact that they also allowed for a good deal of extra-Biblical revelation as well. Suddenly, doctrine became far less important (or at least much more fluid)... A new term, "Charismatic," took over.

Then, in 1964, came the 'Duquesne weekend.' Some Roman Catholics had contacted an Episcopal priest for advice on having a retreat. He referred them to a charismatic lay couple. A retreat was planned.... In addition to taking along their Bibles, the group also took along two other books -- David Wilkerson's *The Cross and the Switchblade* and Sherrill's *They Spoke in Other Tongues*. And so, Pentecostalism invaded the Roman Church.

Ralph Martin took the 'Full Gospel' to various Romanist churches and campuses, and it simply branched out from there. What had been a "come out" movement, was now being characterized by a "come in" attitude. Neo-Pentecostalism's lack of emphasis on any kind of doctrinal distinctions at all -- other than an insistence salvation is at least two steps (baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit) -- has made it one of the slipperiest heresies in Church History.

Pentecostalism is the exact opposite of the Reformed Faith. There can never be a marriage of the two, because they are diametrically opposed to one another. While the Reformers and their modern followers maintain that Scripture and it alone is sufficient for all faith and practice, we are assured by Pentecostalists that "new" revelations are necessary -- to be truly spiritual. The Reformed faith informs us that Christian maturity is the result of God conforming us to the image of the Second Person of the Godhead; but Pentecostalism claims instant spirituality that is evidenced by nonsense-syllables, oracles and "miraculous" healings.

Pentecostalists make the interesting claim that they alone have a lively faith -- because that faith is evidenced by "movement." I was even informed recently that the reason the High Priest wore bells on his robe, was so that the people could hear him "dancing before the Lord." In point of fact, a good bit of dancing actually did take place in the Old Testament -- but it was around a golden calf (Exodus 32:1-6)!

When I was a youngster, I once watched my grandmother killing chickens. She chopped their heads off, and the bodies flopped all over the barnyard -- even to the point of frightening me. Now there was plenty of "movement" in those chicken bodies. But I can assure anyone that there was not a bit of life.

Life is characterized by movement. That much is true. But it is also characterized by growth and reproduction. The Christian life, also, should be characterized by growth. It is an unfortunate fact that most Pentecostalists end up "stunted" -- because they have become enamored with an experience of some kind. Whether even that experience is Christian, I leave to the reader to decide after carefully studying this booklet.

Doctor Lee has shown decisively that the so-called "baptism of the Holy Spirit" [of Pentecostalism] is actually a frenzy that was common in the Greek mystery-religions -- and the religions from which they, in turn, had sprung. For those interested in pursuing the subject further, to see what has become of the **doctrinal** portions of those religions -- I would recommend Alexander Hislop's *The Two Babylons*.

Hislop's book, like this one by Dr. Lee, is thoroughly documented and footnoted. In it he shows that the old religion of Nimrod (*via* Egypt and the Greek mysteries) has now found a doctrinal and liturgical home in the religion of Romanism. It is hardly a wonder, after reading Hislop and Lee, that Pentecostalism has made such inroads into Romanism.

One final note. It may be (and has been) objected by some Pentecostalists that because no books or letters written by Montanus survive today -- that it is impossible to know exactly what he actually believed, did, or taught. All we know of Montanus and the Phrygians has been written by those who opposed him.

That is true. What we find in looking at the writings of orthodoxy, however, we find everywhere. Montanus was condemned from every quarter of Christianity. He was excommunicated by churches in Asia Minor; written against from Rome and the rest of Europe; and condemned from Syria and Egypt -- over a period that began in his own lifetime and extended for several centuries thereafter. It staggers the imagination to even attempt to conceive of so many independent sources all telling the same lie.

So, this book comes to you with my heartiest recommendation. Doctor Lee's approach throughout the book, is one of love toward erring brethren. He does not condemn the people who are currently involved in Pentecostalism -- but makes it very clear from both Scriptural and historical sources that the doctrines peculiar to Pentecostalism, as well as its practices, are condemned by God and by the entire history of the Christian Church.

It is the responsibility of the Reformed community to explain from Scripture and from Church History exactly where an erring brother has gone wrong -- and this is to be done with an eye toward restoring that erring brother to the truth and to fellowship with the rest of the saints (see Matthew 18:15-20). Paul asked the Corinthian Church, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" [Galatians 4:16 *cf.* First Corinthians 13:1f & 14:3-20]

This book goes out with that attitude; *viz.*, that we do not become the enemy of someone but indeed his friend and rescuer when we tell the truth. It is hoped that the book will also be received in that spirit.

Richard Bacon  
1986