

Senior Project Coversheet

**The Quest: The Contextualization of the Pentecostal Fire
Baptized Holiness Church and their Gender Roles**

Honors Project

In fulfillment of the Requirements for

The Esther G. Maynor Honors College

University of North Carolina at Pembroke

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Middle Grades Education: Math and History

May 5, 2011

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Acknowledgements

I would like to first and foremost thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ for loving me and extending an unlimited supply of mercy and forgiveness my way. I would be nothing without him. It was him that allowed me the privilege to be in the position to do the research to write this essay. I would also like to thank my husband (Frank James Cooper), six children, and my friends for their patience with me. There were many nights and /or days that I was not able to be there for them, but they were always there for me. I love you more than words can ever express. I would also like to especially thank Dr. Scott Billingsley, Dr. Jesse Peters, Dr. Charles Beem, Dr. Jane Haladay, and Dr. Rose Stremlau for all of your assistance, critique, and encouragement. This richness of this essay would not have been possible had it not been for the extensive efforts of Dilliard Wood and William Preskitt, Jr. It was their tedious and long years of gathering of the primary sources that made this possible. Thank you. I want to extend my gratitude to the Church for allowing me to spend numerous hours gathering my information.

I would also like to acknowledge the fact that the church group that I am writing is the church in which I am a member. I tried to remain as subjective as possible when writing despite my correlating beliefs.

ABSTRACT

The Pentecostal Fire Baptized Holiness Church went through many transitions before becoming the church as it is known today. The church initially took a radical stance by choosing to separate itself from its parent church and their beliefs and traditions. They ventured out into a new spiritual world and established their own foundations that were rooted in a mixture of both of the newest spiritual movements of Holiness and Pentecostalism. The PFBHC have strived to remain true to their holiness tradition of abstaining from secular society and its ever-changing cultural practices. In their quest to develop a religion that brings them as close to the original gospel as possible, this notion has been the root of the many mergers and the source of dissention that led to splits. In their reasoning, staying as far from the secular society is the best way to obtain the heavenly experiences while here on earth. Despite this primitive impulse, the PFBHC is not beyond employing pragmatic conveniences in order to survive.

They are also not completely opposed to change. They will change as a means of keeping on the margins of society even if that means changing their original position. This is especially noted in the changes made in the gender roles. The women of the PFBHC originally held many important positions that included preaching to multiple congregations, pasturing churches, fulfilling the role deaconess, and beginning new missionary sites, but as the feminist movement became more wide-spread those roles were inversely and adversely affected.

My project focuses on the history of the Pentecostal Fire Baptized Holiness Church (PFBHC). The religious history of America is as rich and diverse as American culture itself. While many may be familiar with some Pentecostals like T.D Jakes or Joyce Meyers, few people understand what it means to be Pentecostal or holiness much less how it originated. Even fewer understand or know about the history and culture of the Pentecostal Fire Baptized Holiness Church (PFBHC). I hope to not only provide a history of this religious group, but to also provide some insight into their beliefs. This essay is an attempt to give an historical summary of the Pentecostal Fire Baptized Holiness Churches. I will try to set the PFBHC in the context of the larger Pentecostal movement. I will examine its beginnings and why this group felt the need to separate from the rest of the movement. The essay also examines the efforts of the Pentecostal Fire Baptized Holiness Church to remain separate from secular society and how the gender roles within the church changed as a result.

The primary sources for this essay are located at the North Carolina Pentecostal Fire Baptized Holiness Headquarters, in McColl, South Carolina. (They are only located here for now until a new headquarters can be built). In order to arrive at a conclusion in its historical context, this paper shall discuss and compare the following primary sources: 1) *Faith and Truth* is the official church organ, its articles date from 1922 to the present; 2) original minutes from conference meetings of both the Pentecostal Holiness and the Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Church dating from the 1920s; 3) original church disciplines that identify the beliefs and practices of the early church,

dating from the 1920s; 4) the personal memoirs of some of the original leaders that include J.J. Carter, Henrietta Lawson and Richard B. Hayes; and 5) audio recordings of sermons of William Preskitt, Jr., Andrew Smith, and Henry Mizzell, who have preached in several of the churches within the conference. These sources provide insight into the mindset of the church and its beliefs and practices.

The constructs of the Pentecostal Fire Baptized Holiness Church are a conglomeration of two separate theological beliefs. First, there is the pentecostal tradition that is the result of an ever-fluctuating interpretation of the Holy Bible, but more specifically the interpretation of the book of Acts Chapter 2:1-4—“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Since the Second Great Awakening (ca. 1790-1840), the Protestant realm had historically been shifting towards a fourfold gospel that consisted of heartfelt salvation, Holy Ghost baptism, divine healing, and pre-millennialism (the literal and physical second coming of Christ in which He will reign for a millennium).¹ Pentecostals simply wanted more—a deeper and more tangible personal experience. They wanted to know God on a more intimate level. So from the 1880s, the quest for this experience manifested itself in the form of the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues or *glossolalia*. While there were sparse reports of worshippers speaking in tongues during this period, they were often discredited.

The founder of the Pentecostal movement, Charles Fox Parham, originally denounced this form of worship; he finally not only accepted it, but also started

¹ Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) pg. 1-17

preaching that the evidence of obtaining the Holy Ghost was speaking in tongues. In 1900 he open a school to teach this concept to others. It might have died out had it not been for one of his students, a black evangelist named William J. Seymour. In 1905 Seymour heard of this new doctrine and attended Parham Bible school in Topeka, Kansas. Seymour was soon able to preach this message and by the spring of 1906 carried the message to Los Angles. He rented a building in Los Angles on Azusa Street and ran a three-year revival where people all over the world came to visit. This revival is the official beginnings of the Pentecostal movement.²

Secondly, there is the holiness tradition that constructs the foundations of the Pentecostal Fire Baptized Holiness Church. The Holiness movement is a derivative of John Wesley's Methodist movement. Wesley taught that everyone was able to have his or her own personal religious experience. Its basis was focused on living a morally upright lifestyle that was free from sin and its believers forsook the practices of the secular world.

The Pentecostal Fire Baptized Holiness Church went through many mergers, separations, divisions, doctrines, and leaders before it became established as the church is known today. The Fire Baptized Holiness Church was instrumental in not only uniting the Pentecostal movement and the holiness movement into one organization but as the link that produced the modern Pentecostal movement.³ The Pentecostal movement and the holiness movement are still considered two separate entities. The Fire Baptized Holiness Church merged with the Pentecostal Holiness

² Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001)

³ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971) p. 68

Church in 1911 and took on the name of the latter. The merger would not last long and after some reorganization the Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness Church as it exists today was formed on November 21, 1919 in Toccoa, Georgia. ⁴

The original beginnings of the Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness Church came about as a result of the teachings of a lawyer named Benjamin Hardin Irwin of Lincoln, Nebraska. Irwin was a follower of Isaiah Reid, who had formed the Iowa Holiness Association in 1879 in an attempt to renew and spread the Wesleyan holiness movement of entire sanctification. Irwin embraced the notions of being cleansed and separated from the sins of the world. He devoured the teaching and writings of both George Douglas Watson (1845-1924) and John Fletcher. Watson was a Wesleyan Methodist minister who published several books, articles, pamphlets, and devotionals. One of which was entitled "Holy Ghost Tears" that describes the Holy Ghost as an entity of the Godhead that cause one to have a deeper more empathetic experience as a Christian.⁵ John Fletcher was an early Methodist theologian who became John Wesley's successor. He often expounded expressly on the holiness concept in his writing and teachings. These Methodist ministers influenced Irwin in such a way as to formulate a notion of a blessing that was subsequent to the blessing of sanctification. He called this blessing the "baptism of fire."⁶

⁴ Dillard L. Wood and William H. Preskitt. *Baptized with Fire: a History of the Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness Church* (Franklin Springs: Advocate Press, 1983) p.29-30

⁵ George D. Watson, "Holy Ghost Tears." unknown.<http://articles.ochristian.com/article2495.shtml> (accessed 04/08/2011).

⁶ Randall J. Stephens, *The Fire Spreads: Holiness and Pentecostalism in the American South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008) p.180

In October of 1895, while preaching in Enid in the Oklahoma Territory, Irwin received what he perceived to be the “baptism of fire” blessing. Excited about his new experience, he sent his testimony and message to several religious periodicals located in the Midwest and the South. Armed with a new message that either antagonized or excited his audiences, Irwin continued to preach and teach his doctrine. Not everyone readily accepted the teaching. Many members of the Iowa Holiness Association disagreed with Irwin’s teaching that the “baptism of fire” was a definite work of grace equal to that of the salvation and sanctification experiences. The controversy became so heated especially after Irwin began to teach that there were varying degrees of “the fire”—Dynamite, Lyddite, Oxidite, and Selenite—that Reid asked Irwin to leave the Iowa Holiness Association.⁷

Irwin was not dissuaded. He established the Fire Baptized Holiness Association in Omitry, Iowa, in 1895. By 1898 the Fire Baptized Holiness Association had become a national organization with the establishment of an association in Anderson, South Carolina. The convening of the First National General Council of the Fire- Baptized Holiness Association had 140 representatives from nine southern and mid-western states and two Canadian providences.⁸ Irwin then purchased a printing press in October of 1899 and published his first issue of *Live Coals of Fire* near his Lincoln, Nebraska home.⁹ The movement was at its summit in 1900 when the rumors were leaked to the *Pentecostal Herald* that Irwin was found drunk and smoking a cigar on the street of an Omaha city. The creditability of the story was

⁷ Randall J. Stephens, *The Fire Spreads: Holiness and Pentecostalism in the American South*, p.182

⁸ Vinson Synan, *The Old- Time Power* (Franklin Springs: Advocate Press, 1973), p. 90

⁹ Randall J. Stephens, *The Fire Spreads: Holiness and Pentecostalism in the American South*, p.183

questionable considering the paper that “leaked” the news of Irwin’s ignominy was a moderate Wesleyan Methodist paper that opposed Irwin’s teaching. It is unknown whether the validity of the news was taken seriously, but what is known is that Irwin stopped preaching among the Fire-Baptized ranks.¹⁰

Joseph H. King kept the movement’s membership from plummeting by somewhat disassociating with the original organization by making minute changes. King was ordained in 1891 as a Methodist minister and converted to the Fire Baptized in 1898. He was elected overseer in 1900 after Irwin’s incident. In 1902, King had the name changed to the Fire Baptized Holiness Church. The periodical was renamed *Live Coals* and the distribution location moved to Royston, Georgia.¹¹

At the same time, A.B. Crumpler had similar sentiments to that of Irwin. Crumpler envisioned a more radical state for the Methodist church, one that brought them to a deeper level of entire sanctification. In 1897, he established the North Carolina Holiness Association as a branch of the National Holiness Association. But by 1898, with the parent church trying to marginalize him by keeping him from preaching his interpretation of sanctification, Crumpler left the denomination. By 1900, he had founded a new organization and called it the Pentecostal Holiness Church—named after a series of books he read about the holiness movement by

¹⁰ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971) p. 69

¹¹ Randall J. Stephens, *The Fire Spreads: Holiness and Pentecostalism in the American South*, p.184

Martin Wells Knapp, the books were known as the Pentecostal Holiness Library. It was located in Fayetteville, North Carolina.¹²

As many people accepted these radically new concepts, both of these movements grew rapidly in the South. Gaston B. Cashwell added even more distinction to both the Pentecostal and Holiness movements. Cashwell had been baptized with the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues at the 1906 Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles. In the winter of 1907, he went to Dunn, North Carolina, and ran a revival out of an old tobacco barn. He preached the new message that he had heard from William Seymour. Cashwell moved through the Fire Baptized Holiness Churches and the Pentecostal Holiness churches preaching that the evidence of the Holy Ghost was speaking in tongues and if one did not speak in tongues then one did not possess the gift of the Holy Ghost. This upset many people, including denominational leaders such as J.H. King, Crumpler, and Richard B. Hayes. At first they rejected and publicly denounced this new message. King and Hayes changed their minds after extensive study and prayer. They soon accepted the gift of the Holy Ghost and glossolalia as a legitimate practice. King and Hayes then began to preach that it was a definite third work of grace and had it incorporated into their doctrine.¹³ Crumpler believed that glossolalia was a one of many gifts bestowed on the believer by the Holy Ghost, but he vehemently opposed it as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. In 1908, Crumpler walked out of the convention

¹² Joseph E. Campbell, *The Pentecostal Holiness Church 1898-1948: Its Background and History* (Raleigh: World Outlook Publications, 1981)

¹³ Dillard L. Wood, and William H. Preskitt, Jr. *Baptized with Fire: a History of the Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness Church* (Franklin Springs: Advocate Press, 1983) p. 19

held in the Holiness Tabernacle in Dunn, North Carolina, over the matter and returned to the Methodist denomination.¹⁴

By 1909, the congregations and the leaders of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church and the Pentecostal Holiness Church began discussing the possibility of merging. According to the minutes of the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church's annual session, this union was already taking place in a smaller but more significant ways. For example, a minister from the Pentecostal Holiness Church was unanimously received into the Fire Baptized Convention. There was a vote to merge with the Pentecostal Holiness Church.¹⁵ The official merger would not happen until January 31, 1911, in Falcon, North Carolina. The groups consolidated into the Pentecostal Holiness Church. S.D. Page was elected as the General Superintendent.¹⁶

The merger combined a large and resourceful denomination with a smaller and not yet developed group. The Fire-Baptized Holiness Church was a sizeable organization with a multitude of resources and still adding new churches and members to its rosters. The Pentecostal Holiness Church on the other hand was not growing as rapidly. A committee was formed to prepare a report for the spiritual condition of the church and the adoption of a Basis for Union. J.King, G.Gaines, G.Sorrow, B.Duncan, and Ralph Taylor were appointed to The Committee on the Spiritual Condition of the Church. All the men agreed that there was "the need for more liberal support" because new areas of ministry were being opened. The

¹⁴ Joseph E. Campbell, *The Pentecostal Holiness Church 1898-1948: Its Background and History* (Raleigh: World Outlook Publications, 1981)

¹⁵ Tenth Annual Session of The Georgia and Upper South Carolina State Convention of the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, Minutes of Meeting, Meeting of 22-23 Nov. 1909. Royston, GA. p 7-8

¹⁶ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971) p. 68

committee may have been using the term *liberal* to refer to financial support, but the actions of the committee indicate that it was more than that. The committee decided to adopt the name and the Basis of Union of the Pentecostal Holiness Church. By adopting the Pentecostal Holiness Church's Basis of Union, the Fire Baptized Holiness Church agreed to follow the Discipline and Doctrines of the Pentecostal Holiness Church.¹⁷

While the two churches were contemplating consolidation in 1909, Reverend William "Buck" Davis was contriving plans to start his own holiness church. The closest church was more than 14 miles away in Athens, Georgia, and not readily accessible to those living in and near Nicholson, Georgia. He took on the task of building a church in Nicholson, and with the help of his wife they "cut the sills and laid the foundation." They called their church the Nicholson Church of the Fire Baptized Holiness Band.¹⁸ Not only did they lay a physical foundation for a church building, but they also laid the foundation for a new organization.

The Nicholson Church went through many changes in its infancy. The name changed from the Fire Baptized Holiness Band to the Fire Baptized Holiness Church before it ever invited members to join on October 30, 1910. It adopted the Fire-Baptized's Basis of Union as its doctrine and did not veer from it even when the name and Basis of Union changed to the Pentecostal Holiness Church in 1911. C.I. Whitley became the first pastor and continued to preach the doctrines of the Fire-Baptized. This ultimately caused dissension within the Pentecostal Holiness Church.

¹⁷ Tenth Annual Session of The Georgia and Upper South Carolina State Convention of the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, Minutes of Meeting, Meeting of 22-23 Nov. 1909. Royston, GA. p 9

¹⁸ Rev. A.O. Hood, "Rev. WM.Murray (Buck) Davis of Nicholson Answers Last Call" *Faith and Truth*, vol. 28, no. 4 (Sept. 1947), pp. 1

The Pentecostal Holiness Church continued to develop its doctrines and practices. According to historian Douglas Foster, religious movements often follow a life cycle that moves it from a sect to a church. A “church” makes claims over all of society and seeks to incorporate itself into society. It insures that its leaders strictly adhere to the doctrines and forms of worship, but individual religious commitment and moral responsibility are not as important. A “sect” separates from society and emphasizes the total commitment of the individual members to the teachings and practices of the group. Once the newness or the edge of the sect wears off, they often move towards their acceptance and claim over society. They move towards fitting into culture instead of protesting against it.¹⁹

The Pentecostal Holiness Church was able to develop into a valid denomination because of their ability to balance their religious world with the natural world using a complex apparatus that allowed them to fluctuate between a pragmatic impulse and a primitive impulse. According to church historian Grant Wacker, the primitive impulse drove Pentecostals to draw as near to Goad as possible while being guided by the Spirit of God—idealism. The pragmatic impulse allowed them to operate within the scope of the real world—realism. Pentecostals, Wacker reasoned, were able to come down from their euphoric heavenly experiences long enough to provide for the natural needs of this world. Using this mechanism, the Pentecostal Holiness Church was moving in the direction that allowed them to rationally change with the times.²⁰

¹⁹ Douglas A. Foster, “Will the Cycle Be Unbroken?” *Churches of Christ Face the 21st Century* (Abilene: ACU Press, 1994)

²⁰ Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001)

In October of 1916, John J. Carter left the Pentecostal Holiness Church and formed the Pentecostal Free-Will Baptist Church in Pembroke, North Carolina. In his memoir, which records his testimony, he voices his concerns about those who compromise the gospel, and his desire to no longer be associated with the compromisers of the world. For Carter, the compromisers were those who wore neckties or more commonly referred to as the "devil hame strings" or "devil choak [choke] rags."²¹ Many considered the necktie a source of pride and should not be worn. The necktie was a source of contention for many among the Pentecostal Holiness Church members, and Carter was not the only one to take such extreme action concerning the dissension.

According to Dillard Wood and William Preskitt, Jr., in June of 1917 a heated dispute arose after one person professing to be a Christian came to the Nicholson church wearing a necktie. One of the members refused to acknowledge this person as a fellow Christian by not shaking his hand. The pastor of the church, C. Whitley, wanted to "love the tie off of him." In other words, he wanted to treat him with kindness and affection and let him come to the realization on his own. In retaliation to the member who refused to fellowship the new person and to offer their support, four of the members showed up the next Sunday wearing a necktie. A meeting was called and a rule implemented that the Pentecostal Holiness Church of Nicholson forbade the wearing of neckties. This went against the Pentecostal Holiness Church's discipline. Five members withdrew from the church. The Pentecostal Holiness Conference did not overlook the actions of the Nicholson church. The

²¹ Carter, *Advise to Ministers...*, p. 4

conflict caused the conference to send a different pastor, one that would uphold its stance on wearing a necktie. The situation escalated to the point where on July 13, 1918, the majority of the members of the Nicholson Church voted to disband and close the doors of the church. They reasoned that the Pentecostal Holiness Church as a whole had "compromised and gone to the world."²² For the members who chose to close the doors, wearing a necktie was something that was popular among the secular society and not something that correlated with the holiness tradition.

The church did not keep the doors closed for long. According to the "Minutes of the Organization of the Pentecostal Fire Baptized Holiness Church," on August 9, 1918 seven men met in Andrew O. Hood's home to form a new organization under the old doctrine and rules for the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church. C. Whitley, W. Davis, C. Moncreif, A. Hood, C. Miller, and T. Corrouth (Carruth) were the seven men who were instrumental in the move to separate from the Pentecostal Holiness Church and form a new organization. Whitley was elected the Ruling Elder and Hood was elected General Secretary.²³

One must understand the personalities and worldview of the early leaders in order to understand their motive for re-establishing the former doctrines of the Fire-Baptized movement and distancing itself from the Pentecostal Holiness Church. Many of the characteristics of these early leaders both defined and determined the

²² Dillard L., Wood, and William H. Preskitt, Jr. *Baptized with Fire: a History of the Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness Church* (Franklin Springs: Advocate Press, 1983) p. 23-24

²³ First and Second Annual general Session of the Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, Minutes of Meeting, Meeting of 21-24 Nov. 1918 in Nicholson, GA and meeting of 20-23 Nov. 1919 in Toccoa, GA. p.1

direction the church modeled and the standards that it would uphold for the next century.

Buck Davis, the original builder of the Nicholson Church in Georgia, was considered a "sincere Christian and stood for his convictions."²⁴ The ruling body of the Pentecostal Holiness Church often calls him into question for the doctrine that he preached. According to the minutes of the Second Annual Session of the Pentecostal Holiness Churches, Davis is to appear before the State Superintendent to be questioned for preaching doctrine that was erroneous. The State Superintendent may require him to turn in his credentials.²⁵ He continues to preach doctrines considered "Come-out" or rather doctrines that specify ways to make oneself distinct from secular society.

Rev. C.I. Whitley, was a diligent builder and worker. Whitley had the opportunity to stay among the Pentecostal Holiness Churches, but his decision to be the spokesperson for reorganizing the Fire-Baptized indicates that he chose for the church body to remain conservative. He worked to build and rebuild over 25 churches. He was the state moderator for 25 years, and he held several positions within the Fire Baptized Conference.²⁶ He was very conscientious about his ministry. One only needs to read the "News from the Field" section of several *Faith and Truth's* to notice that Whitley was constantly visiting his churches reiterating

²⁴ Andrew Hood, "Rev. WM Murray (Buck) Davis of Nicholson, Answers Last Call" *Faith and Truth*, vol. 28, no. 4 (Sept. 1947), pp. 1.

²⁵ Second Annual Session of the Georgia and Upper South Carolina State Convention of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, Minutes of Meeting, Meeting of 27-20 Nov. 1912. Crawford, Georgia. p 5

²⁶ Dillard L., Wood, and William H. Preskitt, Jr. *Baptized with Fire: a History of the Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness Church* (Franklin Springs: Advocate Press, 1983) p. 19

the teachings and practices of the discipline. He was a vital part of guiding the church into the more conservative holiness direction.

Andrew Okie Hood was a defender and contender of his faith. Hood was very young and fiery. He was heavily influenced by the teachings and preaching of R.B. Hayes and C. Whitley. He was the mayor for five terms and a tax collector for twenty-three years in Nicholson, Georgia. He used his political clout to promote his causes. According to the *Faith and Truth*, he was a staunch advocate for the prohibition of whiskey. He often campaigned for voters to do their part at the polls and, by the same token, for church members to do their part in laboring for the "discipline of the church."²⁷

These early leaders of the Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness Church were proponents of adhering to the more conservative or primitive traditions of holiness. The Pentecostal Holiness Church was moving toward a more pragmatic religion that would appeal to the majority of the populace. This correlates with Foster's description of how a church moves from a sect to a denomination. The Pentecostal Holiness Church pragmatically reasoned the 'need for more liberal support' in order that they might reach the greater masses. This helped them to move into the realm of a denomination. But Richard B. Hayes, one of the early founding fathers of the PFBHC, summed up the sentiments of the church when he wrote, "Hide us in the Cleft of the Rock and keep us there until the spirit of this age be passed."²⁸ Their goal was to keep themselves without spot or blemish by staying separated from the

²⁷ Andrew Hood, "Brother Clarence Smith" *Faith and Truth*, vol. 24, no. 4 (Aug. 1943), pp. 1

²⁸ Richard B. Hayes, *The Spirit of the Age*. (Peace Printing Company, ca. 1910- 1925) p. 14

world or anything in its likeness until Jesus comes. Their preaching, their teaching, and their lives were set by this principle; therefore, it never moved beyond a sect.

While the PFBHC still holds to both their original Pentecostal and holiness traditions, the greater emphasis is often placed on its holiness calling. That is "the call" to come out from among the world and to be separate. The call includes abstaining from the very appearance of evil. Evil is then defined by the PFBHC as "the world." Anything that looks, sounds, or acts like popular culture or secular society constitutes the world; therefore, evil often represents anything that has to do with popular culture or secular society. If pop-culture promotes wearing bright colors, then PFBHC teaches that one should dress in plain clothes like those of the Quakers and Moravians.²⁹ If the culture promotes taking a Sunday afternoon drive in the automobiles, then PFBHC determines that the automobiles are cursed because they keep one from serving God.³⁰ PFBHC tends to define sin in direct relation to the popular culture of that time. For example, the definition of a female is most often given only in direct relation to a male. Similarly, the PFBHC find it just as difficult to define sin without relating it to some form of popular culture. The PFBHC strive to remain on the margins of society by rejecting the rest of society and its culture. This primitive impulse leads them to abstain from this-worldly materialistic culture in order to maintain its original calling.

The PFBHC are not so far removed from society that they are exempt from adopting practices and standards that are secular in origin. The value and emphasis on the holiness tradition often means that standards are set for its members that

²⁹ John J Carter, *Advice to Minister* ... (ca. 1925) p. 23

³⁰ Richard B. Hayes, *The Spirit of the Age*. (Peace Printing Company, ca. 1910- 1925) p. 8

focus on abstaining from the values and culture of secular society. This includes maintaining a dress code; abstaining from the practices of popular culture like sporting events, movie theaters, and entertainment parks; and abstaining from certain foods. But in their quest to abstain from secular society some of their notions of sin are influenced by secular society. The PFBHC men are encouraged to maintain faces free of facial hair and short hairstyles. As the military and business world developed standards for its participants, the PFBHC incorporated the same values into its practices. Many of the early founding fathers had beards and/or mustaches so it is not of matter holding to the traditions as much as allowing the notions of secular society to influence their beliefs.

The Christian church as a whole moved from a feminine “bride” to a masculine “soldier” in the early twentieth century. According to Linda Stone and Nancy McKee, as male gender roles changed from refined “manliness” to the robust masculine, the church roles changed to correlate with the new characteristics.³¹ It is evident in the hymns that were written during that time period like “I am on the Battlefield for My Lord” or “I am in the Lord’s Army.” These songs present the Christian as a soldier fighting for his salvation. The new image of a Christian often corresponded to that of the soldier. But just as the image of a Christian was changing so was the image of a soldier.

In addition to the image change that the church world as whole was experiencing, America was in the middle of a real war, World War I. World War I was the first war in which the government used massive amounts of propaganda in

³¹ Linda, Stone, and Nancy P. McKee. *Gender and Culture in America* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2002)

order “sell” its reasons for going to war. More so than any other time in previous history there were more posters, billboards, announcements, and articles penetrated throughout the nation to persuade the voters to “see” the need to go to war. Many posters perpetrated the image of the “true” soldier. The images were of soldiers in uniforms and clean-shaven faces.³² This happened during the PFBHC’s early formative years and had an impact on the mental picture of how a soldier should appear. According to art history Professor Penny Jolly, beards and facial hair were banned in the US military for practical reasons. The soldiers needed a tight and snug fit in order to create a seal when they were applying their gas masks. Just as practical, the men were required to have their heads closely shaved to keep down lice infestations. It was not long before it became standard for not only the military, but the police force too.³³ The PFBHC as the Christian soldier made the same step. Despite its earliest founders donning mustaches and beards, within 20 years it was a sin to have facial hair, and the men’s hair was required to be cut so that it was off the neckline. A US Army spokesman indicated that the continued enforcement of the ban on facial hair or long hair keeps with “long-standing traditions of uniformity, hygiene, and good order and discipline.”³⁴ In keeping with the tradition of uniformity, the PFBHC adhere to a strict dress code.

One of the justifications for the strict adherence to the dress code is often compared to the various uniforms worn by the military and ones ability to

³² Bryant, Mark. "The Man with the Poison Pen." *History Today* 56, no. 11 (November 2006): 60-61. America: History & Life, EBSCOhost (accessed May 9, 2011).

³³ Vaidyanathan, Rajini. "Should Men in Uniform be Forced to Shave" *BBC News US and Canada*, (March 23, 2011), pp 3

³⁴ *ibid.*

determine which branch of service by the uniform that is donned. According to Rev. William Houston Preskitt, Sr. the uniform easily determines each branch of the military. For this reason the PFBHC should readily be identifies by the certain attire that they wear. Just as the military is required to adhere to a dress code, then the church should follow the same pattern. He reasoned that the world needs to readily notice a Christian by the clothes that are worn.³⁵

Secondly gender roles for women were influenced by secular society. The women in the early church played significant roles. They were not only preachers but pastors as well; they started new missions in other countries; and they were deaconesses. This was before the Civil Rights Movement and the feminist movement of the 1960s. Today those roles women play within the church has been greatly reduced as both a direct and indirect result of the modern feminist movement. Directly because the men then began preaching heavily along the lines of the submissive woman and her place, this caused many positions to be reduced. The role as pastor for a women is almost non-existent and the position of deaconess has been eliminated altogether in some churches. It indirectly influenced the gender roles of women within the church because the women began to find other venues or "callings" that brought merit to them as women. Women's Liberation allowed for more job openings that were traditionally only held by men and the push form more equitable pay. In many ways secular society influenced the gender roles of the women within the church.

³⁵ Bill Preskitt, Sr. Audio recording of message.

More than just rejecting the world, one must strive to live as close to the Scriptures as possible. This meant following not only the teaching of Jesus but it included following the examples of all the prophets. The men should look to Abraham as an example of male gender roles. For women this included living just as humbly and submissive as the example that Sarah provides by calling Abraham "lord."³⁶ Their Discipline, their preachers, their teachers, and their elders (women and men) all teach that the role of the "good woman/wife" is to first be in subjection to the Lord; secondly, obedient to her husband; thirdly, fulfill roles within and without the home; and lastly, attend to her own needs -- "thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee."³⁷ In a memorial written in remembrance of the death of Brother Carl Ward a member of the church in Toccoa, Georgia, the "Lord blessed his good wife in a wonderful way. She had not been well for several years, but God gave her strength to see after the needs of dear Brother Ward, and care for him [in his sickness]."³⁸ What made Mrs. Ward the good wife? She was able to take care of her husband even though she was sick herself. She placed his sickness and needs over her own illnesses.

A good "Godly woman" was not only submissive to her husband and the Scriptures, but it was her responsibility to ensure that she did not contribute to the sin of others. In order to keep men from sinning women should carry an air of shame and dress in modest apparel; therefore, they should not look a man in his eyes too long, wear braided hair, gold, pearls, costly array, low neck dresses, short

³⁶ Carter, *Advise to Ministers...*, p. 26

³⁷ *King James Version of the Holy Bible*, Genesis 3:16

³⁸ Rev. C.I. Whitley, "Bro. Carl C. Ward is Called [Called] to His Reward" *Faith and Truth*, vol. 32, no. 4 (Mar. 1952), pp. 1.

sleeves, split skirts, or thin waist skirts because these all lead to the necessity of the red light district.³⁹ Therefore, women dressing immodestly incited lust in the opposite sex and were the reasons prostitution was even a problem. J.J. Carter was a Methodist preacher who commonly preached in the PFBH churches and later joined the PFBHC ranks. He summed up the sentiments of the organization when he wrote, "People put on too much that equals pride; [people] take off too much that equals lust."⁴⁰ For Carter and PFBHC there was no middle ground. It was heaven or hell.

A first glance at the roles in which PFBHC women most frequently operated would most likely judge by others as suppressed and oppressed. Contrarily, women of the PFBHC had many venues in which they operated outside the seemingly submissive and restrictive roles of wife and mother. According to the PFBHC Discipline of 1919, which dictates the rules and doctrines of the church body, "We believe that God calls women to be co-laborers in the work and requires them to be under the auspices (with the help, support, or protection) and supervision of the men."⁴¹ The women of the early church did not take that to mean that they should or could be confined to just the preaching part of laboring for the Lord; they extended it to mean they could also be the pastor of a church, establish new foreign missions, and work a public occupation. All roles that were considered services for the Lord.

A woman's role was to care for the spiritual and physical needs of her family. According to Carter, a woman might have the "weaker mind[ed]," but she held one of the biggest responsibilities of either sex. She was "the mother who rocks the

³⁹ Susie Owens, "From Lula, Georgia" *Faith and Truth*, vol. 23, no. 11 (Mar. 15, 1943), pp. 7.; Richard B. Hayes, *The Spirit of the Age* p. 44-45

⁴⁰ Carter, *Advise to Ministers...*, p. 13

⁴¹ Discipline, p.31

cradle rocks the world.”⁴² She was responsible for praying for the children, the family, and others; it fell her lot to ensure that everyone made it to their heavenly home. Rev. Richard Hayes was one of the early founding fathers of the Pentecostal Holiness Church held the same sentiment as Carter. He frequently preached and fellowshiped the PFBHC organization. He expressed his disdain for women who placed materialistic objects over their responsibilities of taking care of the children and the home. “Mrs. Flypaflop dressing up her poodle dog and taking it hugged up under her fine fur coat and leaves her child back at home with a colored nurse.”⁴³ Mrs. Flapper was the gauge for which PFBHC women should measure themselves on what not to do. She is dressed both immodestly and in costly array, is walking the street alone—something no respectable woman would do, and has more care for her dog than her own child who is at home—where she should be.

Initially women enjoyed a significant amount of power within the church. Many were not only preachers, but they also held the position of pastors, deaconesses, and foreign missionaries. If Mrs. Flypaflop represented the deviant according to the standards of the Church, then Sister Henrietta Lawson on the other hand was the epitome of the virtuous woman with in the PFBHC world. According to the February 1945 issue of the *Faith and Truth* dedicated in memory of the passing of Sis. Henrietta Lawson, many attest of her unselfish caring and rearing of her motherless nephew and her sickly father even to the extent that she took a public job to keep the family together. She was labeled by those who knew her as,

⁴² Carter, *Advice to Ministers...*, p. 10; A hand that Rocks the Cradle Rocks the world. William Ross Wallace.

⁴³ Richard B. Hayes, *The Spirit of the Age* p. 14

“the most humble” or “more like Jesus than anyone that I had met.” But her fame within the church world was not attributed to just the care of her earthly family. It was the prayers that she sent up for her spiritual family; it was the wonderful preaching that she did; and it was the sick people she visited in their homes that brought her the greatest renown.⁴⁴

Another female agent within the ranks of preacher and pastor indicated her public power within the church world. Mrs. Lottie Chasteen of Suwanee, Georgia writes to the Faith and Truth to “pray for ‘our’ little church, Pine Grove. ‘I’ plan to start a revival there soon.⁴⁵ This indicates that she had the power to decide that ‘she’ was going to start the revival. There is not a “we” or “they” to indicate that anyone has helped her to make that decision. The decision to hold a revival is given to the pastor and/or the deacons of the church. It is unlikely that her role was that of deaconess because as a deaconess she would have acted in conjunction with the pastor and the deacons and therefore indicated a “we.”

Many women within the Pentecostal realm were “called” to use their gift of speaking in other tongues to go out and minister to other countries. Just as the early church in Acts had done, many believed that the gifts of tongues enabled one to not only speak other languages, but also to be understood by the natives.⁴⁶ The women of the PFBHC were called to begin foreign missions. Miss Pearl Ballew from Toccoa, Georgia was “called by God” to go to India to “win souls.”⁴⁷ She left Toccoa by herself

⁴⁴ Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Beam, “From Atlanta, Georgia” *Faith and Truth*, vol. 25, no. 10 (Feb. 15, 1945), pp. 1; *Faith and Truth*, vol. 25, no. 10 (Feb. 15, 1945), pp. 1-4

⁴⁵ Mrs. Lottie Chasteen, “From Suwanee, Georgia” *Faith and Truth*, vol. 32, no. 4 (Mar. 1952), pp. 1

⁴⁶ Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) pg.44

⁴⁷ Miss Pearl Ballew, “From Sister Ballew” *Faith and Truth*, (Feb. 1939) pp.3

in March of 1941 to begin a mission work in Puri, India. She boarded a train and then a ship with the "prayer that I would meet someone and not have to be alone." She felt her mission was to help convert Muslims [Mohammedan Teacher] to Christ. The willingness to be called to work for the Lord in India and travel to an unknown land during wartime speaks volumes of her level of confidence and independence. This calling was outside the realm of the "keepers at home."

Women also had a significant amount of power as deaconess. According to the PFBHC discipline, a woman's role as deaconess was to assist the male deacons. They visited the sick, collected funds and distributed among the needy members, and enforced the proper discipline among the female members.⁴⁸ As deaconess women were included in business meetings and allowed to have a say in purchasing transactions.

Today there are still women preachers, but the position of pastor is often discouraged with messages similar to the one in the opening vignette. Today there is one woman within the organization who holds the position of pastor. The women actively participating in the capacity as either deaconess or female foreign missionary has also seen a considerably reduction. In some of the churches the position of deaconess has been discontinued altogether on the grounds that it is unscriptural. Women going into the mission field do so with their husbands.

By the 1960's female Pentecostal preachers were out numbering their contemporaries when it was unheard of for a woman to be a preacher much less

⁴⁸ Discipline, pp. 61

pastors.⁴⁹ While the statistics include all realms of Pentecostal, there are still several women listed among the PFBHC. How then did the women within the PFBHC move to such a seemingly regressive position? Essentially the progressive Women's Liberation Movement caused both a direct and indirect reaction. Theoretically the Women's Liberation Movement should have only accentuated these women and promoted them in the cause of spreading the gospel just as it did for the women in Women Aglow organization.⁵⁰ These women offered spiritual and emotional support to one another. The feminist movement allowed this organization to offer and provide support to women all over the world.

PFBHC tends to hold more to their holiness tradition and adamantly resist the notion of change. This is apparent in T.M. Duncan's message to the people when he makes one aware of how the church has changed within the last twenty-three years and reprimands the people for "making light of old time holiness, and are becoming more modernized."⁵¹ Mrs. R.W. Nobles reinforces his sentiments with her firm stance on the "old time way of holiness just like I heard it preached twenty years ago."⁵² Resistance to change tends to be selective. Change is acceptable as long as it makes one more "holy" and change is unacceptable to anyone who deviates from any holiness standard (dress, drink, public entertainment, etc.). To deviate equates to one becoming more worldly as observed in Mary Huff's testimony of how "glad she was that the Lord took the desire for the world, and worldly things away from me...tea, coffee, bottle drinks, tobacco products, etc. They say the times have

⁴⁹ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States*, p. 188

⁵⁰ R. Marie Griffith, *God's Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission*

⁵¹ T.M.Duncan, "Form [From] Mobile, Ala." *Faith and Truth*, vol. 32, no. 4 (Mar. 1952), pp. 4.

⁵² Mrs. R.W. Nobles, "From Chadbourn, NC" *Faith and Truth*, vol. 32, no. 4 (Mar. 1952), pp. 5.

changed, but it is no worse to serve the devil than to serve the badman Churchanity."⁵³ Thus Mrs. Huff implied that one participated in any of the things she named then one was a hypocrite and only serving the notion of church. For PFBHC and its members, the world (rather pop culture) is its guide as to what is acceptable behavior and what is considered deviant.

According to Sylvia D. Hoffert the period between 1920 and 1975 was a transitional time in which women were redefining femininity. Women's Liberation movement challenged the conventional attitudes about womanhood and raised public awareness as to the inequality of education and job opportunities. It also publicized women's rights to birth control and abortion. More and more women were entering the workforce. Thus challenging and changing traditional gender roles for women.⁵⁴

In keeping with their holiness tradition to shun the practices of secular society, the men felt a greater need to ensure that their women were not following the patterns of the world. Thus, they became stricter in the roles for women and pressed to keep their women in more submissive and in less public roles. In 1982, Bill Preskitt, Sr. preached to his congregation that a woman's place was in the home and that a woman should be willing to live on the means that her husband provides.⁵⁵ Still in 2001, Henry Mizzell a preacher who preaches among the PFBHC, preached to the congregation in Pembroke, NC, that the Women's Liberation

⁵³ Mrs. Mary Huff, "From Dadeville, Alabama" *Faith and Truth*, vol. 32, no. 4 (Mar. 1952), pp. 6.

⁵⁴ Sylvia D. Hoffert, *A History of Gender in America: Essays, Documents, and Articles*. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2003) pp. 361

⁵⁵ Bill Preskitt, Sr. Audio recording of message.

movement was one of the worst things that could have happened to women folk.⁵⁶ The role of deaconesses was discontinued in some of the churches because the title "deaconesses" is not recorded in the Bible.⁵⁷ This is not something that has happened within the whole organization. Women are still preaching, but not in the full capacity that they initially carried and the former years permitted. There are women who work in the foreign mission field, but a husband is usually in attendance.

In the last thirty to forty years there has been a gradual shift in the roles in which women exhibited their importance outside the realm of "the keepers at home" and the church. They became missionaries to the work force. Women had less influence in the church. While the men of the church were teaching that women should keep silent in the church and be keepers at home, the Women's Liberation movement opened the doors for many women to have access to careers. It also offered many venues by which women could define themselves. Women within the PFBHC began to have new callings in their lives. Women within the church had always worked as a means to help support the family, but to be called to a greater work within the secular society became acceptable. One woman testified that God had called her to be a nurse.⁵⁸ Several women have testified to being called to be teachers for the Lord.⁵⁹ Because of the men pressing for the women to stay in her place, they may have felt less of an inclination to be called to a greater work within the church and looked elsewhere. The women's movement allowed for women to be

⁵⁶ Henry Mizzell, Audio recording of message.

⁵⁷ Mt. Zion PFBHC located in Pembroke, NC in a business meeting, 2006

⁵⁸ Gail Lowery, testimony given at Little Mission Holiness Church in 1995.

⁵⁹ Sis. Linda Norwood (1990s), Sis. C.J Hardin (1994) personal testimonies.

called to other areas like nurses, teachers, doctors, etc. Women simply felt the call to "Go out into the world" and wanted to contribute to the greater cause. The feminist movement allowed women this privilege. God had opened the doors for them to evangelize not only their world, but the secular world too.

Change had to come to the Pentecostal Fire Baptized Holiness Church if for no other reason than the world around them changed. The PFBHC favors its holiness tradition and often looks to the world as its gauge as a definition as to what is sin; therefore, as the world and secular society has changed so has the Church. The women's movement of the sixties played no small part in how the men denote the gender roles for its women today. In the earlier years, women were expressively more vocal and eager to do a work for the Lord within the church structure, and there were minimal debilitations. In the latter years, everyone is encouraged to obey the Lord, but women should make sure that they keep their submissive quiet role in doing so. While some may have chosen to avoid this complicated zone of trying to determine when to keep silent when God has called one to preach and when to speak, others felt the call to not only gain a career, but also win souls in the process.

Change is inevitable and unavoidable. As hard as one might try to remain the same, life happens everyday and life tends to make one change. According to Joan Scott, gender roles are not exempt from this constant state of flux.⁶⁰ Most Pentecostal Fire Baptized Holiness members would argue that since "God does not change; therefore, neither should we (or our gender roles)." Despite this claim for

⁶⁰ Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?" *American Historical Review* 91, 5 (1986) 1053-1075. (available through JSTOR) p. 1054

continuity, gender roles for women have changed since the organization began. In the early years of the Pentecostal Fire Baptized Holiness Church women played a significant and public role within the functioning of the church. Women were preachers (including filling the role of pastor), evangelist, foreign missionaries, and deaconesses. Today as a result of the Women's Liberation Movement the public roles of women within the church have degenerated to a state in which women are no longer developing foreign missions nor are they deaconesses. Women are still preachers, but the position of pastor has been significantly reduced to one. The secular world both directly and inversely affected this change in the gender roles within the Pentecostal Fire Baptized Holiness Church.

The PFBHC went through many transitions before becoming the Church as it is known today. The church initially took a radical stance by choosing to separate itself from its parent church and their beliefs and traditions. They ventured out into a new spiritual world and established their own foundations that were rooted in a mixture of both of the newest spiritual movements of Holiness and Pentecostalism. The PFBHC have strived to remain true to their holiness tradition of abstaining from secular society and its ever-changing cultural practices. In their quest to develop a religion that brings them as close to the original gospel as possible, this notion has been the root of the many mergers and the source of dissention that led to splits. In their reasoning, staying as far from the secular society is the best way to obtain the heavenly experiences while here on earth. Despite this primitive impulse, the PFBHC is not beyond employing pragmatic conveniences in order to survive. They

are also not completely opposed to change. They will change as a means of keeping on the margins of society even if that means changing their original position.

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