CHRISTIAN HISTORY
Issue 82: Phoebe Palmer: Mother of the Holiness Movement

Phoebe Palmer: Did You Know?

Interesting facts about the American Holiness revival

Chris Armstrong

Reclaiming John

Methodist holiness advocates said their movement had started with John Wesley. They were just reminding Methodism of its founder's teachings on entire sanctification or "perfect love"-the complete orientation of the heart toward God and away from sinning.

Camping out (in style) for Christ

During its post-Civil War "camp meeting phase," the holiness revival spread quickly beyond Methodism's bounds. In 1887, Presbyterian minister A. B. Simpson founded the non-Wesleyan Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) on the teachings of Christ our Savior, Sanctifier, Healer (a common holiness theme by the 1890s), and Coming King. For many years, the C&MA held annual camp meetings at a former temperance campground in Old Orchard, Maine.

Hoofing it

The Methodist holiness folk were known for their traveling evangelists-male and female. One day, on the "gospel trail" with her organist Treena Platt, evangelist Mary Cagle's pony became ill. Having heard that John Wesley had once prayed successfully for the healing of his horse, Cagle decided to do the same. "I don't know how to pray for a horse," Platt protested. "Pray just like you would for a person," said Cagle; "we need her in the service of the Lord." Cagle wrote in her autobiography that they "prayed through to victory" in the house and then went to the barn to find the horse already mending. (Contributed by Jennifer Woodruff Tait.)

Reaching the lowest of the low

Many holiness workers followed in the footsteps of Phoebe Palmer, bringing spiritual and physical help into such poverty-stricken and seemingly godforsaken places as the tenement described in an 1854 report of New York's Five Points district: "Open that door-go in, if you can get in. There is no bed in the room-no chair-no table-no nothing-but rags, and dirt, and vermin, and degraded, rum-soaked human beings."

Just do it.

Charles G. Finney and the Oberlin perfectionists (p. 22) were the earliest 19th-century non-Wesleyans who taught an attainable holiness. Hear the Gospel, exercise your will, and you could fulfill Jesus' command: "Be ye perfect as your Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). Oberlin perfectionists found the teachings of Phoebe Palmer and the Wesleyans ethically weak and sentimental.

Harriet before ...

Uncle Tom's Cabin author Harriet Beecher Stowe, no Wesleyan herself, echoed the yearning of thousands in the holiness movement: "I have often thought 'Why am I thus restless? Why not at peace? I love God and Jesus and in general I mean to conform my life to Him.' The more I groaned in spirit, and longed and prayed, the more inveterate and determined and unsubdued seemed every opposing desire."

... and after

Stowe felt God answered her prayers: "Whereas once my heart ran with a strong current to the world, now it runs with a current the other way. The will of Christ seems to me the steady pulse of my being. I am calm, but full, and find I can do all things through Christ."

The saints go marching out

In 1877, Methodist holiness preacher John P. Brooks denounced the "easy, indulgent, accommodating, mammonized" kind of Methodism that "erected gorgeous and costly temples to gratify its pride." Brooks wrote ***The Divine Church***, the textbook for the "come-outers" who left their churches to form new denominations.

The Pentecost connection

Many holiness "come-outers" moved right through their new denominations and into the Pentecostal movement (p. 25). William Seymour, the black preacher whose Azusa Street Revival (1906) birthed Pentecostalism, had been an evangelist with Daniel S. Warner's "Evening Light Saints" (p. 33). After Azusa, some holiness churches moved wholesale into Pentecostalism.

Holiness "arrives"

The holiness campground at Ocean Grove, N.J., founded in 1869, became the most popular Christian resort on the East Coast (l). President Ulysses S. Grant was a frequent visitor. On August 25, 1899, William McKinley became the first president to speak in Ocean Grove's 8,000-seat auditorium (r). He was followed by Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William H. Taft, and Richard M. Nixon.

Bishops to zealots: "This is *our* doctrine"

In 1894 a group of Southern Methodist bishops wrote a letter sharply criticizing the Methodist holiness "party." Methodism, they said, had never stopped being a holiness church. It needed no special agencies to press the point.

The town saint and the country saint

By 1885, the national holiness movement had two distinct wings: a rural, emotional, ethically strict wing inclined to throw off churchly structure and an urban, intellectual, less rigorous wing eager to work with the mainstream churches who shared their concern for a "higher Christian life." The "come-outers" emerged from the first group.

The utmost holiness devotional classic

Oswald Chambers, author of ***My Utmost for His Highest***, was a holiness advocate. Sanctified in 1901 after an intense religious crisis, Oswald went on to visit many holiness camp meetings and teach at holiness schools (p. 25).

Why I Like the Holiness People
by Rev. John B. Culpepper

I like their aim. They aim high. If they miss, nevertheless, they have scored one good point.
They are uncompromising.
They are against sin and wrong, including Sunday trains, secular newspapers, Sunday cooking, Sunday gossip, tobacco, and other uncleanness.
They are Prohibitionists, almost to a man.
They are agitators.
They make and distribute tracts.
They circulate books.
They have a catching sort of degree of spirituality.
They are in for everything that is good.
They say "amen" out loud.
They shout as I feel.
They [root] for a fellow while he is preaching.
If the load is heavy, they all jump out and push.
Wherever you meet one, he is already organized and ready for work.
If they are scared, they pray and shout, and work and move, so that it can't be detected.
They always want to dig deeper, climb higher and know and do more.
They are long-winded in the closet, and nearly out of breath in a testimony service.
Every one of them will pray if you call on them, and if the fuse seems damp, they will pray, call or no call.
They are God's globe-trotters.
They don't ask how many are the enemy, but where are they?
They can shout in the cemetery.
They actually use the Bible in their work.
They will go to China or Africa as cheerfully as to the market.
It is not a money question with them.
They know the Holy Spirit.
They love you hard.
Their experience throws up a highway I'd like to die on.
They've come to stay.
They are unpopular with dirt, dignity, and the devil.
They are not in "ruts."
They cry and run as if they had jumped the fox. That makes me spur on in the chase.
Whenever I meet or hear one of them, it makes me want to quit something, or do something, or go somewhere, or be somebody.
They are my kinsfolk.

—Holiness Advocate*, Fayetteville, N.C., Aug. 15, 1903.*

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Phoebe Palmer: From the Editor

Phoebe Who?

Chris Armstrong

When we floated some topic ideas for future issues of ***Christian History & Biography*** to our readers at www.christianhistory.net last year, our suggestion of "Phoebe Palmer and the American Holiness Revival" elicited a resounding "Huh?"

This was all the excuse we needed. This was one of those cases of someone almost unknown today, who actually left a Rushmore-sized impression on America's religious landscape.

Phoebe Palmer was the most influential woman in the largest, fastest-growing religious group in mid-19th-century America—Methodism. By her initiative, missions were begun, camp-meetings instituted, and many thousands attested to the transforming power of divine grace. She mothered a nationwide movement that birthed such denominations as the Church of the Nazarene and the Salvation Army, bridged 18th-century Methodist revivalism to 20th-century Pentecostalism, and pioneered in social reform and female ministry.

And these are only a few parts of her compelling life story, which in turn is only one part of the wider story of the American holiness revival.

That larger story explains why, for example, the great evangelist D. L. Moody, nearing the end of this life, told his lieutenant R. A. Torrey to preach "the baptism of the Holy Spirit" above all else. It explains how such non-Wesleyans as Moody and Torrey used that electric phrase in a transitional sense—somewhere between an early Methodist meaning (an experience that brought a person to a new plane of holy living) and a Pentecostal meaning (a Spirit-empowerment signalled by speaking in tongues and other extraordinary spiritual gifts).

The holiness kaleidoscope

Through the holiness movement, a high proportion of 19th-century American Christians, and a hefty chunk of the 20th- and 21st-century church too, have been touched in some way by teachings about "Christian perfectionism": Wesleyans (Palmer) and Reformed (the Keswick movement); Quakers (Hannah Whitall Smith), Baptists (A. B. Earle), and Congregationalists (Charles G. Finney); mystics (Thomas Upham), urban missionaries (the Salvation Army), and abolitionists (the Wesleyans and Free Methodists); respected evangelists (D. L. Moody) and fringe utopians (John Noyes)—all drew from the 18th-century teachings of John Wesley and reinterpreted them through the 19th-century tradition of revivalism.

Throughout Christian history, from the martyrs and monastics to the Puritans and Pietists, movements have arisen in pursuit of a deeper devotion and more active Christlikeness. So it was in 1837 when, fresh from a personal tragedy and a transforming experience of "entire consecration" and "entire sanctification," Phoebe Palmer struck out from her comfortable New York home to do whatever the Lord demanded of her.

It turned out this included ministering to Methodist bishops in her parlor, launching benevolent missions

in the worst slums of New York, mobilizing an army of lay evangelists, writing impassioned biblical arguments for women in ministry, and preaching on two continents. And as she did these things, she helped launch a revival that changed a nation.

To everyone she met, Palmer brought a message that if one consecrated oneself entirely, believed the Bible's promises of a new empowerment to live a holy life, and asked for the grace to live that life, then one could truly testify to "entire sanctification" or holiness of heart and life. And Americans responded by the thousands, testifying as she did.

Love in the modern world

What was it about the holiness teachings of Palmer and others that appealed to such a large, diverse constituency? We need to peer inside their social world to see why these Victorian Christians felt so passionately about the potential for a "higher Christian life."

In the competitive, upwardly mobile world of mid-19th-century northeastern cities, thousands were seeking a closer walk with their Lord. Many of them had moved into the northeast's business and commercial centers from the small towns and farms of what had only recently been frontier land.

Especially as the Victorian era entered its most prosperous phase around the time of the Civil War, many felt alienated in the increasingly wealthy, formal, and (to their eyes) cold and nominal churches of the Big Denominations.

Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and many others yearned for the kind of direct, joyous communion with God and fellow believers that they had found in the old-time, warm-hearted frontier religion of the Methodist preacher Peter Cartwright or the updated but still emotionally powerful revivalism of the Congregationalist evangelist Charles Finney.

Adrift in church environments that seemed to them not much more "Christian" than their worldly work-places, these believers struggled—in camp meetings, parlor meetings, and prayer closets—to retain an intimate, powerful connection with Christ. They sought to regain the "first love" of their conversions.

The teachings of Palmer, Finney, and the many other Wesleyan and Reformed holiness teachers of their century focused on this struggle. Some did and some did not stress the possibility of an instantaneous, complete post-conversion change from sinner to saint. But all helped build up the warm communal bond of those who were "going on in Jesus" and tasting a "deeper life" in him.

Many also taught that Christ wanted his children (including laypeople!) to reach out to the poor and outcast around them with material and spiritual help. And some saw in their experience of sanctification the foreshadowing of a new age of unity between Christians of all denominations.

Such were the visionaries and rank-and-filers of the holiness movement. Join us as we get to know them better.

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Living History

From fire on Mount Athos to Saxon king crosses

Compiled by Ted Olsen and Chris Mosey

Christian Saxon king unearthed

An inspection for a road widening project in the town of Prittlewell, Essex, has yielded what British archeologists are calling the most important find in decades: an early 7th-century tomb of an apparent Anglo-Saxon king. "Two foil crosses, probably originally laid on the body or sewn to a shroud, suggest that the king had converted from paganism to Christianity," senior archaeologist Ian Blair told the press. The crosses, the first of their kind found in England (they were more popular on the continent) also may be a key to the king's identity. The skeleton has long decayed in the acidic soil, but the grave may be that of Sabert, the first Christian king of Essex. That the burial chamber also contained other goods, such as his sword and shield, copper bowls, and glass containers-not typical for Christian burials-supports the story of church historian Bede: Immediately after Sabert's death, he writes, the king's three sons "began openly to give themselves up to idolatry, which, during their father's lifetime, they had seemed somewhat to abandon, and they granted free license to their subjects to serve idols." The sons also drove out the bishop, and it wasn't until King Sigbert accepted Christianity in 653 that the faith took deeper root. Some scholars speculate that the chamber belonged to Sigbert rather than to Sabert, while most say it's too early to tell. The artifacts are now at the Museum of London.

"God's Acre"

Around the world, Moravian graveyards are known as "God's Acre." But the original ***Gudsageren*** can still be found in the East German town of Herrnhut, the home base of Moravianism's founder, Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf. Moravianism's precursor group, the 15th-century ***Unitum Fratrum***, believed strongly in the equality of all Christian women and men. That leveling is reflected in the gravestones in God's Acre, which lie flat and level with the ground. "Whatever a Brother or Sister may have achieved in life, in death one could not presume to set oneself above the brethren, even those enslaved," Zinzendorf reportedly said. Only the stones of Zinzendorf and his family are raised. It is here in God's Acre that the Moravians have held their Easter Sunday sunrise services, saying "The Lord is risen" as the sun first breaks the horizon.

Icons of faith

We are so used to the word iconic that we forget how forceful the stylization of actual icons can be," said a New York Times editorial about "Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)," a major exhibit at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. The exhibit runs through July 4, 2004 and has a massive companion volume. Some of the 350 pieces of Byzantine art from 30 countries have never been seen outside the churches and monasteries that normally house them. But in his address opening the exhibit, Patriarch Bartholomew said it's the faith that created the art, not the art itself, that viewers should behold. "May the works in this exhibit lead us to the right path of true faith from which true spiritual power derives," he said. "This spiritual power, in turn, is the creative power behind these works of art. Most importantly, it is the creative power behind works of life that are less glamorous, but nevertheless are works that produce love for one another, joy and hope in life."

Rare songs and sermons released

The most critically acclaimed box set of music in the last year may not be that of Johnny Cash, or George Harrison, or Peter, Paul, & Mary-or even come from an actual record label. ***Goodbye, Babylon***, the only offering from Dust-to-Digital Records, is a six-CD set of 135 early 20th-century gospel music recordings and 25 sermon excerpts, some as old as the Dinwiddie Coloured Quartet's 1902 "Down on the Old Camp Ground." While collections of old blues from the days of 78 RPM records are ubiquitous these days, never before has the sound of old gospel-both white and black-been compiled so extensively. ***Goodbye, Babylon*** includes such familiar names as Blind Willie McTell, Mahalia Jackson, the Carter Family, Thomas A. Dorsey, and Hank Williams. Others, from Pentecostal, Baptist, and other backgrounds, aren't known outside these recordings. Having already sold out of several printings after top reviews in ***Rolling Stone, Entertainment Weekly***, and other publications, producer Lance Ledbetter says he's planning a sequel. "We fit as much music on six discs as we possibly could, but there's a lot more I wanted to get on there," he told ***The Washington Post***. "Stuff like 'Sermon on a Silver Dollar,' and 'Something's Wrong With the Bible'; there just wasn't enough room." Such sermons, he noted, are the foundation of modern rap music.

Fire on Mount Athos

It was a bad March for the monks of Mount Athos, in northern Greece. About half of the 12th-century Chilandari (also known as Helandari or Helandariou) Monastery, home to two dozen Serb monks, was destroyed when fire broke out in the abbot's quarters and spread to the rest of the compound over the following 12 hours. Frescoes from the 16th and 18th centuries were lost, and only the exterior walls remain. But the monks were able to save their lives, along with the monastery's most valuable books, manuscripts, relics, and icons. "The catastrophe is unfathomable," said a monk from a nearby monastery (Mount Athos has 20). "It was horrible; we wrested everything we could from ... the flames. May God help the brotherhood." Tradition has it that another fire centuries ago engulfed much of the rest of the mountain but miraculously ceased when monks revealed its famous 12th-century icon of Mary, in which she has three hands. The nearby Church of Protaton, central church for all of the mountain's monasteries, was similarly blessed as another blaze broke out there three weeks after the Chilandari fire. Though that fire burned for three hours, firefighters were able to extinguish it before it did more than damage a bell tower.

Did Jesus heal the lepers?

As many Bible notes explain, the Greek word ***lepra*** and the Hebrew word ***shara*** aren't restricted to leprosy. They can also refer to other skin ailments, like psoriasis. In fact, some historians have doubted that leprosy, now known as Hansen's disease, even existed in Jesus' world. Not any more: Israeli archaeologist Shimon Gibson has uncovered the remains of a first-century victim of the disease-the earliest known case in the Middle East. Church fathers saw Jesus' healings of leprosy as both evidence of his divinity (in his ability to heal) and his humanity (in stretching out his hand to heal). They also decried the stigmas associated with the disease. Jesus touched the leper, said Origen, "that he might teach us that we should despise no one, or abhor them, or regard them as pitiable, because of some wound on their body." But the shame associated with Hansen's disease continued for centuries. The Council of Ancyra in 314 suggested that the disease was transmitted through bestiality, and both church and state enacted laws to isolate lepers from everyone else. They were forbidden to marry and were symbolically declared dead and buried by the church. One 13th-century chronicler estimated that about 19,000 leper houses were active in Europe in his day. The radical means of isolation may indeed have limited infection, but many today suggest that the special stigmas added to the disease wreaked a kind of spiritual death.

Along the Waldensian trail

This summer pilgrims from all over the world will travel the "Waldensian trail" through the picturesque hilltop villages of Provence. The Waldensians were followers of Pierre Valdo of Lyon (ca. 1140-1217). Protestant three centuries before Luther, they scorned transubstantiation, refused to accept the exclusive

right of priests to interpret the Bible and administer Holy Communion, and would not venerate saints or accept the practice of selling indulgences. Condemned as heretics and persecuted by the Inquisition, thousands of Waldensians fled to the isolated Lubéron mountains of Provence. In 1545, a Papal army led by the Baron of Oppède marched against them in a bloody crusade that killed at least 2,700 and sent 600 in chains to man the galleys in Marseille. Many French villages, now stops on the "Waldensian trail," were burned to the ground. Waldensians still exist, and Valdo lives on in placenames such as Valdese, North Carolina, and Colonia Valdese in Uruguay. Many American pilgrims visit a museum in Mérindol, the Waldensian "capital" in Provence, to trace their Waldensian roots. The Association of Waldensian Studies runs a website at www.route vaudoisluberon.com.

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Eyewitness

Did you know men slept on the Bridges?

William Booth

When did the plight of the homeless first pierce your heart? Bramwell Booth, son of the beloved Salvation Army founder William Booth, remembers this moment in his father's life—and how the senior Booth responded:

One morning, away back in the eighties, I was an early caller at his house in Clapton. Here I found him in his dressing-room, completing his toilet with ferocious energy. The hair-brushes which he held in either hand were being wielded with quite eloquent vigour upon a mane that was more refractory than usual, and his braces were flying like the wings of Pegasus. No good-morning-how-do-you-do here!

"Bramwell!" he cried, when he caught sight of me, "did you know that men slept out all night on the bridges?" He had arrived in London very late the night before from some town in the south of England, and had to cross the city to reach his home. What he had seen on that midnight return accounted for this morning tornado. Did I know that men slept out all night on the Bridges?

"Well, yes," I replied, "a lot of poor fellows, I suppose, do that."

"Then you ought to be ashamed of yourself to have known it and to have done nothing for them," he went on, vehemently.

I began to speak of the difficulties, burdened, as we were already, of taking up all sorts of Poor Law work, and so forth. My father stopped me with a peremptory wave of the brushes. "Go and do something!" he said. "We must do something."

"What can we do?"

"Get them shelter."

"That will cost money."

"Well, that is your affair. Something must be done. Get hold of a warehouse and warm it, and find something to cover them. But mind, Bramwell, no coddling!"

That was the beginning of The Salvation Army Shelters, the earliest and most typical institutions connected with our now world-wide Social Work. But it also throws a ray of light on the characteristic benevolence of The Army's Founder. Benevolence, which is a languid quality in many men, with him was passionate. I write of him here, as far as it is possible to do so, aside from what I humbly acknowledge to have been the great determining force of his life—namely, the uplifting and guiding influence of the Spirit of God. This apart, his benevolence was the first quality to light up.

The governing influence of his life was good will to his fellows. I am not saying that he never thought of himself. His saintship was not after the pattern of Francis d'Assisi. Nor can I say that he was always at

the same level of self-denial and self-effacement in order to give practical expression to his benevolent impulse.

But I do say, looking at his life as I saw it over a great span of years, not only in workday association as his comrade and principal helper, but in the still closer intimacy of a son, that his benevolence was the leading feature of his character. He really set out to do good to all me—an object which, no doubt, often seemed hopeless, but not on that account to be less sought after.

The horizon of his soul was not limited by human hope—it reached out to Divine Power and Love. His heart was a bottomless well of compassion, and it was for this reason that, although perhaps more widely and persistently abused than any other figure of his time, he was even more widely and tenaciously loved.

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The Da Vinci Code, Corrected

Why the lost gospels were really lost

Craig Keener

What should we make of the claim in Dan Brown's popular novel ***The Da Vinci Code*** that Constantine created the New Testament canon and suppressed 80 "gospels" in favor of the now-established four?

It is true that many works about Jesus (now labeled gospels) circulated both in the first century and later. But Brown's claim is hardly serious history; the vast majority of Christians had been reading precisely our four Gospels as Scripture since the second century at least, as writings from Irenaeus make clear. Church authorities did not wait until Constantine to fish out gospel pretenders.

In fact, the decision to canonize certain gospels rested far more on the dependable teachings handed down from the apostles to bishops than on any imperial fiat. Irenaeus, the first bishop to identify the books of the New Testament, was a disciple of Polycarp, who in turn was a disciple of Ignatius, disciple of the Apostle John. Irenaeus narrowed the canon not according to his own whims or interpretations, but through the "rule of faith" (a loosely formulated confession of faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and the saving work of Jesus) handed down by the apostolic church.

Further, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John differ in kind from the second- and third-century works called "gospels," which reflect little or no apostolic tradition and do not even fit the same genre as the canonical Gospels. The four first-century Gospels we possess are, as the church long understood and recent scholarship has confirmed, ancient ***bioi***, or "lives" of Jesus. (A ***bios*** focused on the most relevant events of a person's life, commonly leaving gaps in the chronology.) These Gospels include many elements of Jesus' Judean culture, Aramaic figures of speech, and so on; this differs sharply from later stories written about Jesus.

By contrast, second-century and later gospels tend to fall into two categories: "sayings-gospels" (favored especially by gnostics) and religious novels (what we usually call the apocryphal gospels). Gnostics belonged to a stream of thought that played down the body (hence Jesus' incarnation, earthly life, and bodily resurrection). Their tastes ran more to secret teachings for an elite—what we find in most gnostic gospels. Irenaeus distinguished the canonical Gospels from gnostic ones with the observation that the four Gospels focus on Jesus' death and resurrection, and that the writers root their claims about Jesus in references to Hebrew Scripture. Gnostics were not willing to do this.

Most other ancient gospels are essentially novels seeking to embellish the original accounts. Notably, the Jesus of many "gospels" lacks the character of the Jesus in our first-century Gospels.

Thus, for example, in the Infancy Story of Thomas (not the same as the earlier Gospel of Thomas), Jesus strikes dead a boy who bumped him. When the deceased boy's parents complain to Joseph, Jesus strikes them blind. When another observer complains because Jesus made clay sparrows on the Sabbath, Jesus claps his hands and the birds fly off.

Most novelistic gospels were fairly "orthodox" and simply appealed to the popular imaginations of many Christians eager to fill in gaps of what was known about Jesus' earthly life. Yet a work can be edifying and widely recommended without meeting the church's criteria for canonicity. The canon's Gospels had to stem from those who knew Jesus directly—or from the close associates of those who did—to

guarantee authenticity.

In short, the "lost gospels" simply did not meet the standards of Irenaeus's "rule of faith." No 4th-century imperial directive was needed to suppress these works; the church had long ago disavowed them as Scripture.

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Holiness Fire-Starter

Transformed by her child's fiery death, Phoebe Palmer lit the flames of revival on two continents.

Charles Edward White

In January of 1857 the editors of a national magazine published a portrait of Phoebe Palmer (facing page). Being honest men, they admitted that the woman herself was neither as young nor as pretty as the picture made her appear. They did say, however, that she was smarter than she looked. Palmer was probably not offended by their comments. She was friends with the editors and shared their Wesleyan heritage of plain speaking. Anyway, physical beauty was unimportant to her; what mattered was the beauty of the soul. She wanted "the beauty of holiness" that empowered one to live a well-balanced, useful life.

During her life (1807-1874) Palmer spoke to over 100,000 people about Jesus and sparked a revival that brought nearly a million people into the church. Her influential theology paved the way for such modern holiness denominations as the Church of the Nazarene and the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), and for Pentecostalism as well.

Being a well-known female speaker made her a feminist, though what would today be considered a "conservative" one: she championed the right and duty of women to speak publicly for the Lord. But Palmer did more than talk about Jesus. She put his love into action in New York City's worst slum, pioneering a new kind of incarnational philanthropy.

Youthful yearning

The heart-felt Methodism in which Phoebe was raised insisted on emphatically emotional experiences of conversion and sanctification. A bright, intense girl, Phoebe could never feel she had attained this. At the age of 13, she did have a vision of Jesus coming to enfold her in his arms and bidding her "be of good cheer." Yet despite this and other experiences, she continued through her teens to wrestle with the Methodist emphasis on emotional experience.

Distracted by the comforts and the social duties (for example the perpetual "visiting") of middle-class life, Phoebe yearned for a steady consciousness of her redemption and union with Christ—in short, for the Wesleyan sanctification experience that would overcome her constant failure to live for God, replacing it with "perfect love" towards God.

Consecrated through crisis

After ten years of marriage and the birth of three children, Palmer's yearning was intensified by a shattering experience. On July 29, 1836, Phoebe rocked her beloved 11-month-old daughter Eliza to sleep and placed her in her crib before retiring to her own room. Soon after, Phoebe heard screaming from the nursery and came running. A careless helper had tried to refill an oil lamp without putting it out. When the flames shot up, she had thrown the lamp away from her. It had landed in the crib, splashing burning oil all over the child. Stricken, Phoebe cradled the infant in her arms. Within hours, Eliza was dead.

Phoebe paced the floor, filled with anger and grief. This was the third of her children to die in infancy. She cried out in anguish to God and heard an answer that, though it seems harsh, brought her comfort: God

had taken her children because she had loved them too much and was spending too much time on them. "No other gods before me" was his command. At that moment, she resolved that she would surrender to God everything she held dear. She wrote in her diary: "Never before have I felt such a deadness to the world, and my affections so fixed on things above. God takes our treasures to heaven, that our hearts may be there also. And now I have resolved that the time I would have devoted to her [Eliza] shall be spent in work for Jesus."

A year later, almost to the day, Phoebe Palmer at last received the longed-for experience of entire sanctification. On July 27, 1837 she wrote, "Last evening, between the hours of eight and nine, my heart was emptied of self, and cleansed of all idols, from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and I realized that I dwelt in God, and felt that he had become the portion of my soul, my ***ALL IN ALL***."

A four-fold ministry

In 1840, Palmer began presiding over the "Tuesday meetings for the promotion of holiness" started by her sister Sarah Lankford Palmer in the parlor of her New York home. Soon these meetings, with their strong emphasis on testifying to one's experience with God, spread the holiness message across America.

The theology Palmer developed and presented in these meetings was a simplified and popularized version of John Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection. Her "shorter way" or "altar theology" taught that one attained sanctification through three simple steps: consecration, faith, and testimony. The believer has only to dedicate all time, talents, relationships, and goods to God; believe in his Bible promises; and then, after receiving the blessed gift of entire sanctification, tell the world about it at every opportunity. This emphasis on attainable sanctification made her the mother of the holiness movement.

As a revivalist, Palmer spoke in more than 300 camp meetings or revival services. In 1857 her preaching sparked the urban "prayer-meeting revival" that brought hundreds of thousands of converts into the American churches. In 1859 she and her husband followed the revival to the British Isles. While there Phoebe Palmer worked to reform British Christianity. Twice she wrote to Queen Victoria asking that the sovereign's band not perform on Sunday. Once she refused to hold meetings in a church that allowed alcohol to be stored in its cellar. Despite these quirks, more than 20,000 of the Palmers' hearers experienced salvation or sanctification. Dr. and Mrs. Palmer's efforts were part of a movement of the Spirit that brought over a million people into the various churches in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

Palmer's emphasis on holiness helped to remind Christians of their high calling when revivalism had flooded the church with people who were comfortable to live a merely social Christianity—holiness leaders would have said, were only "half converted." She also civilized and systematized the methods of frontier Methodist revivalism, especially the Methodist emphasis on lay ministry. The famed evangelist Charles Grandison Finney had spoken of the role of the laity in revivals, but Palmer was the first to organize their labors effectively in a city-wide effort. Her emphasis on the role of the laity helped prepare laypeople to play a major role in urban revivalism. Palmer's practice was one of the factors that transformed revivalism from Finney's clergy-centered campaigns in small towns to Moody's lay-oriented crusades in large cities.

Tongue of fire, arms of love

Where Palmer could not go in person, she went through her books and magazine. She wrote 18 books of practical theology, biography, and poetry. For 11 years she edited the ***Guide to Holiness*** and made it one of the most popular religious periodicals of the day. The ***Guide*** had an international audience with subscribers in Canada, the United Kingdom, Liberia, India, and Australia.

Just by preaching and writing, Phoebe Palmer promoted the cause of women's rights. In addition she wrote a hefty and well-argued book defending women's ministries, ***The Promise of the Father*** (1859), published again ten years later as the edited-down ***Tongue of Fire on The Daughters of the Lord; or,***

Questions in Relation to the Duty of the Christian Church in Regard to the Privileges of Her Female Membership. Arguing that the baptism of the Holy Spirit given at Pentecost was available to women as well as to men, Palmer said that the filling of the Spirit obligated both men and women to speak out for Jesus.

Not content to just speak and write, Palmer cared for people's social and physical needs. She scoured New York's slums for children for the Sunday school and took food, clothes, and medicine to needy families. With her husband, Walter (a doctor who often provided medical assistance free of charge to poor patients), she helped to establish a church in a poor neighborhood, and once she even paid a young mother to go to church with her. The woman was a cobbler and said she could not afford even two hours away from her bench. Palmer offered to replace that much of her wage, and the next Sunday church members were unsurprised to see Phoebe Palmer arrive for service with another new friend in tow.

Phoebe and Walter even, in the 1850s, adopted a teenager to help him follow Jesus. On a visit to a jail Phoebe discovered Leopold Soloman, a Jewish lad whose parents had disowned him when he became a Christian. Thrown out of his house, and with no means of support, he was arrested for vagrancy. Even after his fine was paid he was too young to be released with no place to go. Simply offering him a place to live would not satisfy the law, so the Palmers officially adopted him. (The boy's parents later reclaimed him and persuaded him to forsake his Christianity, and the Palmers never heard from him again.)

Obviously the Palmers could not adopt everyone in need, so as a director of the Methodist Ladies' Home Missionary Society, Phoebe agitated until the Society opened a settlement house in New York's worst slum, the Five Points. This "frightening warren of brothels, low-grade dives, decayed tenements, street gangs," as historian Paul Boyer describes it, was so dangerous that when Charles Dickens visited it, he took two tough policemen with him! But where Dickens feared to tread (calling it the hub of all that was "loathsome, drooping, and decayed"), Palmer went alone to show God's love to the destitute.

Palmer realized that adopting individuals and visiting families would not solve the massive problem of urban poverty. The mission house at Five Points incarnated God's love by allowing workers to live among the poor and by giving the poor a place to live as they took their first step out of poverty. Its pioneering work helped to break ground for other rescue missions and settlement houses over the next hundred years.

The freedom of a sanctified woman

Phoebe Palmer's contributions to theology, revivalism, feminism, and humanitarianism mark her as one of the most influential American women in her century. Her achievement gives rise to the question: Where did she get her energy? Obviously, having servants helped to free her from the normal routine of caring for a family. Perhaps, however, the answer lies deeper.

Palmer knew the scriptural promise that her labor in the Lord was not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58). Because she was convinced she was entirely sanctified, she believed everything she did was a "labor in the Lord." Thus she was encouraged to attempt great things for God, knowing that in an ultimate sense, she could never fail. She felt that God had promised to crown whatever she undertook with success. Armed with this confidence, she did not grow weary in well-doing.

It seems entire sanctification had the same effect in Palmer's life that justification by faith had in Luther's. In ***The Freedom of a Christian*** Luther argued that because Christians are justified by faith, they must not spend any energy trying to justify themselves. Freed from the impossible task of self-justification, they can give all the energy that used to go into scrupulous obedience and detailed confession in service of their neighbors.

In the same way, Phoebe Palmer's doctrine of sanctification by faith freed enormous energies for the

service of others. Since her "all was on the altar," she knew God accepted and empowered her. The energy that had once gone into brooding about her spiritual state was now discharged in working for others.

Palmer, however, would have answered the question in another way. She asserted, "Holiness is power." She believed that just as the Holy Spirit had energized the disciples after the day of Pentecost, so every Christian who receives the Spirit in entire sanctification will be similarly empowered. Her life, she felt, amply demonstrated this truth.

After Palmer died, tributes streamed in from many places. Robert Pearsall Smith said he knew of no other woman in the history of the church who had been so used of God to convert people and to build them up in holiness.

While Phoebe Palmer was well-known at her death, today she is almost unknown. But her obscurity would not irk her. In fact, she worried about the renown she enjoyed in her own life, feeling that such fame would detract from her heavenly reward. Like her hero, Susanna Wesley, she was "content to occupy a small space if God be glorified."

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Old forests, new meetings

No frontier-like shenanigans here.
Just a genteel urban audience returning to nature to meet their God.

In the 1840s, the Tuesday Meetings and holiness writings of Phoebe Palmer helped start the holiness revival. But the revival became a truly national phenomenon in 1867 and 1868. In 1867, the first camp meeting for the specific purpose of promoting the doctrine of Christian holiness convened. Over 10,000 came to meet God and pursue sanctification in the woods of Vineland, New Jersey. Overjoyed, the meeting's promoters decided to form the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness and hold a second encampment in 1868.

The 1868 National Camp Meeting, at Manheim, Pennsylvania, was one of the largest religious gatherings before the Moody revivals a decade later. It made celebrities of key Methodist holiness preachers and drew immediate national attention to the new movement.

Like all of the holiness camp meetings to follow, Manheim was more genteel than the frontier camp meetings of the early 1800s. The largely middle-class urban attendees had little taste for the sorts of extreme physical manifestations that had characterized those earlier gatherings. Nevertheless, as historian Melvin Dieter puts it, the atmosphere at these meetings was "packed with emotion, Methodist enthusiasm, and spiritual expectancy."

On the opening Sunday of the Manheim meeting, over 25,000 people, including more than 300 ministers, descended on the camp area. One journalist wrote, "the weather was oppressively hot; dust was abundant, water scarce, and board most miserable." But the attending crowd of Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Dutch Reformed, Congregationalists, Quakers, and others joined in testifying to God's goodness to them and awaited eagerly what He had in store for their week together.

The next afternoon, after a sermon by the Rev. John Thompson, another man, Dr. G. W. Woodruff, began to pray aloud, "when, all at once," as a nationally respected minister reported, "as sudden as if a flash of lightning from the heavens had fallen upon the people, one simultaneous burst of agony and then of glory was heard in all parts of the congregation; and for nearly an hour, the scene beggared all description. ...

Those seated far back in the audience declared that the sensation was as if a strong wind had moved from the stand over the congregation. Several intelligent people in different parts of the congregation spoke of the same phenomenon. ... Sinners stood awestricken and others fled affrighted from the congregation." The sea of weeping, praying people was galvanized, convinced they were "face to face with God."

Almost immediately, holiness promoters began establishing permanent camp meetings in such places as New Jersey (p. 4), Florida, Oregon, Niagara Falls, and even India. As the National Association marched across the country, it inspired numerous independent holiness associations and camp meetings, which became the movement's backbone for the next 50 years.

So beloved were the camp meetings that many newly founded denominations (such as the Church of the Nazarene and the Pilgrim Holiness Church) began after 1900 to establish their headquarters on their sites. Denominational conferences, district and general offices, publishing houses, and even denominational Bible schools often nestled in the groves that during the summer echoed with the weeping and triumphant shouts of the saints.

—Chris Armstrong

A covenant of entire consecration

Phoebe Palmer included the covenant excerpted here in her Entire Devotion to God ***(1845). She counseled here readers to enter into it without delay.***

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I do hereby consecrate body, soul, and spirit, time, talents, influence, family, and estate—all with which I stand connected, near or remote, to be for ever, and in the most unlimited sense, THE LORD'S.

My body I lay upon Thine altar, O Lord, that it may be a temple for the Holy Spirit to dwell in. From henceforth I rely upon Thy promise, that Thou wilt live and walk in me; believing, as I now surrender myself for all coming time to Thee, that Thou condescend to enter this Thy temple, and dost from this solemn moment hallow it with Thy indwelling presence.

My present and my future possessions, in family and estate, I here solemnly yield up in everlasting covenant to Thee if sent forth as Thy servant Jacob, to commence the pilgrimage of life alone, and under discouraging circumstances; yet, with him, I solemly vow, "Of all that Thou shalt give me, surely the tenth will I give unto Thee."

Confessing that I am utterly unable to keep one of the least of Thy commandments, unless endued with power from on high, I hereby covenant to trust in Thee for the needful aid of Thy Spirit. Thou dost now behold my entire being presented to Thee a living sacrifice. Already is the offering laid upon Thine altar. Yes, my all is upon Thine altar. By the hallowing fires of burning love, let it be consumed!

O Christ, Thou dost accept the sacrifice, and through Thy meritorious life and death, the infinite efficacy of the Blood of everlasting covenant, Thou dost accept me as Thine for ever, and dost present me before the throne of the Father without spot.

And now, O Lord, I will hold fast the profession of this my faith. And as I solemnly purpose that I would sooner die than break my covenant engagements with Thee, so will I, in obedience to the command of God, hold fast the profession of my faith unwaveringly, in face of an accusing enemy and an accusing world. And this I will through Thy grace do, irrespective of my emotions.

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The Cleansing Wave

The 19th-century holiness revival took many forms as it swept across denominational boundaries.

Edwin Woodruff Tait

The cleansing stream I see! I see!

I plunge, and oh, it cleanseth me!

Phoebe Palmer's hymn celebrating the sanctifying power of Christ's blood joined a chorus of American voices seeking to be made clean.

One of the strongest of these voices emerged from a small college in the forests of northern Ohio. Built in a key town on the Underground Railroad, Oberlin College was a novelty in its day, admitting women and integrating black students. Its reforming vision came straight out of another kind of integration: the belief that evangelical piety and social reform must be indivisible.

Oberlin's first president, Asa Mahan, and its first theology professor, the famous evangelist Charles Finney, did not hold the traditional Calvinist view of total depravity and predestination. They taught instead that sinners had the "natural" ability to believe, and that evangelistic methods could overcome their "moral" inability through the persuasive power of the Gospel. They understood saving faith as an act of the will that anyone could be expected to make immediately, without waiting for God to give the necessary grace.

In the early years of their activities at Oberlin, both Finney and Mahan applied this same understanding to the Christian's growth toward spiritual maturity—that is, the classical theological topic of sanctification. To be sanctified, they insisted, required only the same kind of simple, instantaneous faith one exercised to be converted.

In 1836, both Mahan and Finney experienced "second conversions" that they identified as "baptisms with the Holy Ghost." Mahan believed that as a result of this experience, his desires and inclinations had been purified, so that he not only was free from committing sin but no longer had a habitual tendency toward sin. Finney found in Mahan's teaching the solution to a troubling trend in his revivalistic work. Simply put: many of his converts were coming in the front door of revivalistic conversion and promptly "backsliding" out the exit. To the veteran evangelist, a robust doctrine of sanctification offered the assurance that the same grace received through faith that brought forgiveness of sin could bring a stable Christian life free from the habit of sin.

At first, Finney and Mahan were cautious about teaching this doctrine publicly. Anything akin to "perfectionism" risked linking them to the aberrant doctrines of John Humphrey Noyes, a Yale theology student who, in 1834, had claimed to be free from all sin. Noyes later founded a utopian community whose members practiced "group marriage" as a mark of unselfishness and a way of ushering in the Kingdom of God. Perfectionism, to 19th-century Americans, had begun to mean "free love," and a college admitting students of both sexes could not afford the slightest taint of scandal.

Therefore, Mahan was seriously alarmed when, during a "meeting for prayer, praise, and inquiry," a recently graduated theology student put his "beloved instructors" on the spot, asking them publicly,

"What degree of sanctification do the Scriptures authorize us to trust Christ for? May we, or may we not, trust Him to save us from all sin, and to sanctify us ***wholly***, and to do it in this present life?" Mahan later recalled thinking in dismay, "They will all rush into perfectionism" (i.e., the teaching of Noyes).

In fact, a more reasonable accusation was that these Presbyterians and Congregationalists were teaching a doctrine barely distinguishable from the Methodist understanding of Christian perfection. Indeed, both Mahan and Finney admired Wesley's writings on the subject, though Mahan was more influenced by Methodism than Finney.

Still, both theologians denied that any preparation could come before the moment of faith, either with regard to salvation or sanctification. In both cases, the only thing one can do is believe. For Methodists, on the other hand, conversion and sanctification might involve a prolonged spiritual struggle and a period of waiting for the "witness of the Spirit." To some Methodists, the Oberlin teaching seemed at once too easy and too dependent on human "natural ability" rather than the Spirit.

Unity through holiness

Similarly, Phoebe Palmer's influential "Tuesday meetings" were controversial within Methodism because they taught that sanctification could be reached instantaneously by an act of faith that was within human power. Precisely for this reason, however, Palmer began, in the 1830s, to attract a broad constituency of prominent and thoughtful northeastern evangelicals. Methodist bishops rubbed shoulders with non-Methodists like the Congregationalist scholar Thomas Upham, eager to learn the secret of holiness. Upham was the first man to be admitted to the "Tuesday Meetings," and his encounter with Palmer led him to study mystical experience, attempting to find precursors of holiness teaching in figures such as the Catholic mystic Madame Guyon and the Lutheran Johann Arndt.

Thus the holiness movement absorbed and contributed to the ecumenism of the 19th-century revivals—culminating in the "layman's revival" or "prayer revival" of 1858—which drew together Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, some Lutherans, a few Episcopalians, and even the occasional Unitarian.

Holiness teaching offered 19th-century evangelicals a means of overcoming their sectarian conflicts. Doctrine might divide, but the experience of a pure heart would unite all true believers against the threats posed by religious formalism, atheism, and Roman Catholicism. This drive toward unity found expression in the British-based Evangelical Alliance founded in 1846 (although American participation was limited by the Alliance's strict stance against slavery).

In Europe, a series of visits by American evangelists helped the Alliance's ecumenical cause. Many of these American preachers brought some form of holiness teaching with them. Phoebe Palmer and her husband visited Britain several times, contributing to an evangelical awakening that by one estimate added a million members to British evangelical churches. Another transatlantic visitor was the Presbyterian William Boardman, executive secretary of the Y.M.C.A., author of the 1858 best-seller ***The Higher Christian Life***, and the most successful evangelist of the generation between Finney and D. L. Moody.

A perfect conflagration

Two of the most important post-war revivalists in Europe were the American Quaker couple Hannah Whitall Smith and Robert Pearsall Smith. The two Smiths inspired the British Keswick movement, a non-Wesleyan holiness stream that would become highly influential back in America.

Hannah was the more theologically astute as well as the more personally stable of the two, and her public appearances were noted for their quiet logic and their lack of the emotional appeals that Victorians

associated with "feminine" rhetoric. It was Robert who experienced a "magnetic thrill of heavenly delight" in his 1867 "second blessing" experience, while Hannah's holiness teaching emphasized the subordinate role of feelings.

Robert, it turned out, should have listened to Hannah's counsel of emotional restraint. On a conference stage in Brighton in 1874, he hinted that the sanctified were free to act in ways that contradicted normal conventions—an opinion uncomfortably close to Noyes's. These fears seemed to be confirmed when he was discovered kissing a young woman in a hotel room. The matter was hushed up under the euphemism of "poor health," and the Smiths hurried back to America, their public speaking activity ended except for one brief appearance some years later.

The legacy of the Smiths lived on, however, in the English "Keswick" conferences, which began in the 1870s and continue today. Keswick participants—a denominationally mixed but predominantly Anglican group—preferred Boardman's term "the higher Christian life" to the more radical Wesleyan language of "entire sanctification" or "perfection." They denied that sinful tendencies could be eradicated (as many American Methodists believed). Instead, they taught that sin was counteracted by the experience of "baptism with the Spirit," allowing for a joyful and victorious Christian life.

From holiness to power

Many Methodist holiness leaders already taught that on the day of Pentecost, the 120 were entirely sanctified in the Wesleyan sense. Since it was the Holy Spirit who had done this at Pentecost, these teachers were comfortable calling the second blessing experience of entire sanctification a "baptism in the Holy Spirit."

The most successful evangelist of the late 19th century, D. L. Moody, also participated in the Keswick movement. Moody himself experienced a "second blessing" in 1871, at a point of confusion and uncertainty in his evangelistic career. Two Free Methodist (p. 32) women who attended his preaching confronted him, telling him that he needed "the power of the Spirit." After initial resistance, Moody humbled himself and asked for their prayers. As a result, Moody recalled later, "there came a great hunger into my soul. I did not know what it was. I began to cry out as I never did before. I really felt that I did not want to live if could not have this power for service."

While walking through the streets of New York, Moody made a final consecration of himself and his work to God, and felt such an overwhelming sense of God's nearness that he rushed to a friend's house and begged for a room where he could lock himself in. He spent several hours alone with God, and as he put it, "I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay his hand." This experience was followed by his first trip to England and the beginning of his international ministry.

Moody seems to have interpreted his "Spirit baptism" primarily in terms of power for service rather than freedom from sin, and this interpretation became the hallmark of American Keswick holiness teaching. The growing Bible School movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, represented by institutions such as Columbia Bible College and Moody's own Bible Institute, also popularized the teaching of the higher Christian life.

By the end of the 19th century, evangelicals were losing much of their former influence in society and were dividing into fundamentalist and modernist camps. Many were no longer optimistic that the world would be transformed through the preaching of holiness. They saw the world instead, in a favorite image of Moody's, as a "wrecked vessel." And they launched themselves outward in a last, herculean attempt to save as many as possible from the floundering ship before she capsized and Christ returned.

Spirit baptism, in its new Keswick form as a source of evangelizing power, proved irresistible to these evangelicals. Thousands sought it, from almost every denomination.

Mark of the true church

At the beginning of the 20th century, some "come-outers" arose in the holiness ranks who wanted to recapture the zeal and purity of the apostolic Church. They found this primitive purity obscured by the conventional, middle-class nature of much early 20th-century Christianity, and they concluded that it could only be recaptured by separating from the compromised denominations.

From this radical holiness milieu arose the first Pentecostals, believing they had found the mark of the true, pure church. This was the empowering baptism with the Spirit, whose outward sign, they decided, was the apostolic gift of speaking in tongues. Though it had been through some permutations, Pentecostal Spirit baptism was not so different from that taught by Finney, Moody, and the Smiths.

Around the middle of the 20th century, Pentecostal-like experience broke out among members of many other Christian churches, eventually including Roman Catholicism. These "charismatics," with their renewed commitment to a common Christian experience that transcended dogmatic differences, were in many ways the heirs of the revivalistic evangelicals of the 19th century.

Like the non-Methodist Christians who sat at the feet of Phoebe Palmer and went out to change the face of 19th-century Christendom, modern believers from many traditions have been inspired by the charismatic movement to seek a more intimate knowledge of Christ and a more vivid experience of the Holy Spirit's power.

For His Highest

Today the non-Wesleyan holiness tradition lives on. The Keswick conferences still meet in England, and an American counterpart exists in New Jersey. Many institutions central to evangelical life, such as Moody Bible Institute, ***Christianity Today***, Wheaton College, and Dallas Theological Seminary, have historic links with Keswick or "higher life" evangelicalism, although the distinctive Wesleyan teaching of entire sanctification is hard to find in any of them.

Most influentially, several devotional books written by holiness teachers continue to transmit the movement's teachings to new generations. Hannah Whitall Smith's ***The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*** is still widely read today, while her husband's success and disgrace are equally forgotten except by historians. ***Streams in the Desert*** by Lettie Cowman, a holiness missionary to Korea, is another perennial best-seller.

The most significant of all is ***My Utmost for His Highest***, the transcript by Gertrude Chambers of a series of lectures given by her husband Oswald.

Oswald Chambers was the son of a Baptist minister, but after his experience of sanctification he identified himself firmly with Wesleyan holiness institutions. After his death in 1917, his passionate, contemplative, and at the same time sternly practical writings struck a chord with evangelical Christians of all persuasions. The enduring popularity of My Utmost for His Highest reflects the deep appeal of holiness spirituality and its potential to transcend division among Christians by calling all believers to a wholehearted devotion to Christ.

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The Holiness Movement Timeline

1824-1923

Origins

1836 Sarah Worrall Lankford (Phoebe Palmer's sister) founds the Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness in New York City. Charles Finney lectures on holiness in New York City. John Humphrey Noyes founds a perfectionist intentional community at Putney, Vermont—precursor to his controversial Oneida (New York) community.

1837 Phoebe Worrall Palmer experiences entire sanctification. Timothy Merritt founds the ***Guide to Christian Perfection***, later ***Guide to Holiness***.

1843 Orange Scott organizes the Wesleyan Methodist Connection at Utica, New York. Phoebe Palmer publishes ***The Way of Holiness***.

1850 The Five Points Mission is founded in New York City by Phoebe Palmer and other Methodist women.

1857 Extensive revivals break out in Ontario, Canada as a result of Phoebe Palmer's ministry.

1858 The Presbyterian W. E. Boardman's fast-selling ***Higher Christian Life*** popularizes holiness in non-Methodist terms.

1859 Phoebe Palmer publishes ***The Promise of the Father***, a closely argued biblical defense of women in ministry that would influence Catherine Booth, cofounder of the Salvation Army.

1860 B.T. Roberts and John Wesley Redfield found the Free Methodist Church on ideals of abolition, egalitarianism, and holiness.

Transatlantic revival

1867 The first National Holiness Association (NHA) camp meeting is held at Vineland, New Jersey.

1868 The second NHA camp meeting attracts over 20,000 people to Manheim, Pennsylvania. Many experience it as a powerful "Pentecost."

1871 The Western Holiness Association—first of the regional associations that prefigured "come-outism"—is formed at Bloomington, Illinois.

1874 Hannah Whitall Smith and Robert Pearsall Smith speak in England at the ecumenical Broadlands and Oxford meetings in England for the promotion of holiness.

1875 The first Keswick Convention meets.

1877 General holiness conventions meet in Cincinnati and New York City.

Institutionalization

1878 William and Catherine Booth organize the Salvation Army.

1881 D. S. Warner starts the Church of God Reformation Movement, later the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana).

1886 The first Salvation Army home for "fallen women" is founded in New York City.

1895 First Church of the Nazarene is founded in Los Angeles, California.

1901 Alma White founds the Pentecostal Union, later Pillar of Fire.

1906 The Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles marks the beginning of Pentecostalism.

1907 The Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene is organized in Chicago.

1908 The Church of the Nazarene is founded.

1910 The Brethren in Christ adopt a holiness statement on sanctification.

1923 Methodist college president and holiness preacher Henry Clay Morrison founds Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky.

Events in American Christianity

1835 A group of abolitionist students leave Lane Seminary of Cincinnati to join the newly formed Oberlin College, making that school a reform center.

1844 Methodist Episcopal Church divides into Northern and Southern denominations.

1852 Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes ***Uncle Tom's Cabin***. Stowe was sympathetic to the holiness movement and wrote on sanctification.

1858-59 The Layman's Revival in New York City and other Northeastern urban centers popularizes the "higher Christian life."

1866 Frances Willard, who later became president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, professes sanctification under the Palmers.

1871 D. L. Moody experiences his "enduement of power." Two years later, he begins his first great U.K. campaign.

1890 Moody's Chicago Bible Institute building dedicated.

1939 The Methodist Episcopal Church (North and South) re-unites and re-absorbs an earlier offshoot, the Methodist Protestant Church, to form The Methodist Church.

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Saving Souls & Bodies

Contrary to stereotype, the joy of the holiness life often spilled over into social ministry.

William Kostlevy

For some critics, the term "holiness movement" has conjured images of navel-gazing holy rollers too interested in getting a spiritual thrill or (at most) saving souls to care about alleviating social distress. This caricature is simply not accurate. The movement's most enduring legacy is a nationwide network of missions to the socially and economically disadvantaged—primarily in inner-city neighborhoods.

Holiness leaders, like their eighteenth-century Methodist forebears, taught that sanctification does not stop in the individual heart, but must overflow into "social holiness." Just as cleansing from all sin could occur in this life (against the traditional view that it occurred after the soul left the body, to prepare the believer to stand before a holy God), the ideal of the perfect community was also for today—not to be pushed off into the hereafter.

To its critics, the reform-minded Christian perfectionism that emanated from such places as Oberlin College and the Free Will Baptist churches of the Northeastern states threatened the social fabric. For example, in Western New York, radicalized churches not only circulated anti-slavery petitions, but even hired African-American pastors and, in a few extreme cases, women.

For some, this holiness activism had its limits. Phoebe Palmer, for example, was closely associated with the anti-abolitionist faction of New York City Methodists. In spite of her friendship with Oberlin College president Charles G. Finney, she refused to permit the expression of abolitionist sentiments during her weekly holiness meetings.

The very model of a modern urban mission

But in other respects, Palmer followed through on the social implications of holiness. For example, she was greatly moved by the poverty she encountered in New York. Believing that with wealth came social responsibility, Palmer dedicated a portion of her considerable family fortune to relief work. In the early 1840s, she began visiting and distributing tracts among the city's poor and ministering to the prisoners at the notorious jail known as the Tombs. From 1847 to 1858, Palmer served as corresponding secretary of the New York Female Assistance Society for the Relief and Instruction of the Sick Poor.

Palmer's crowning social achievement was the key role she played in the transformation of an old brewery located in one of the city's most notorious areas into the Five Points Mission (p. 20). No isolated initiative, the Five Points work became the model for later Protestant institutional missions in American cities. Complete with a chapel, parsonage, classrooms, baths, and 20 apartments, the new facility opened in 1850. Next door was the Five Points House of Industry, which provided employment, food, clothing, and temporary housing for as many as 500 poor women and their children.

During the last half of the 19th century, holiness bodies operating in nearly all urban areas in North America, Northern Europe, and even Australia established hundreds of urban missions with the intention of providing such emergency services as food, housing, and job training. While other religious bodies established similar missions, few seriously rivaled holiness missions in size or pervasiveness. As late as 1924 a study of the "homeless man problem" in San Francisco found that nearly all emergency food and housing services were being provided by holiness-inspired urban ministries, such as the Peniel Mission,

the Volunteers of America, and the Salvation Army.

Sanctification's best fruit

B. T. Roberts, founder of the Free Methodist Church (p. 32), believed that the two most pressing reasons for making the mission to the poor central to the mission of the church were the teaching of Scripture and the example of Jesus. As Roberts noted, when John the Baptist inquired if Jesus were the Messiah, the Savior responded, "The blind see, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."

If Roberts turned to the example of Jesus to justify ministry to the poor, others looked to the logic of the Wesleyan doctrine of "holiness" or "perfect love." As Phoebe Palmer insisted, holiness made one a servant. A servant was one who was "entirely unselfish" and shared in Jesus' great work of suffering service to humanity. Catherine Booth, who shared Palmer's views, argued that the question of holiness —"how much like God can we can be?"—was the central question facing the church.

In contrast to the cynicism that would later pervade Christianity, the 19th-century holiness revival was profoundly optimistic. As holiness missionaries saw individual lives transformed, they believed social transformation was a distinct possibility. The chief fruit of sanctification was love toward God and humanity. No wonder such holiness luminaries as Charles Finney and Phoebe Palmer often seemed as concerned with temporal human needs as they were with individual eternal destiny.

The mood of the movement was positive. As Daniel Steele, a holiness advocate and professor at Boston University, insisted in his preface to Catherine Booth's widely read ***Aggressive Christianity***, Booth was "no gloomy pessimist, wailing the decay of Christianity." Indeed, a holiness pessimist was an oxymoron.

The Free Methodist Church, a mostly rural denomination, provides one of the best illustrations of the extent of holiness efforts to meet human needs. B. T. Roberts made preaching the gospel to the poor a founding aim of his church. He bequeathed, and subsequent leaders elaborated, a clear and sophisticated rationale for Free Methodists' ministry among the poor.

Beginning in the early 1860s, Free Methodist laywoman Jane Dunning established Providence Mission in the heart of New York City's African-American ghetto. Dunning and her co-workers fed, bathed, and attempted to minister to the needs of a community that was under constant legal and extralegal harassment dating from the bloody anti-African-American riots of the late 1830s. Over the next 60 years Free Methodists actively fought for the extension of civil liberties not only to African-Americans but also to Asian immigrants.

By the end of the 19th century this denomination of fewer than 30,000 members was operating rescue missions and homes for unwed mothers in dozens of American cities.

Industrial homes and slum sisters

While the work of holiness missions began with providing food and shelter for men, women, and families, mission workers quickly realized that such needs demanded more systemic solutions. The Salvation Army established "industrial homes" that usually included work rooms for the renovation of secondhand furniture and the sorting of used articles, a retail store, a relief department that met the needs of the most impoverished, and a residence for the homeless. Emma Whittmore's Door of Hope Mission in New York City, one of the many missions ministering to so-called "fallen women," taught basic skills in gardening, poultry care, and dressmaking to its residents, who shared the profits earned from their work.

Perhaps the most successful social program of the Salvation Army was the employment bureau, an

American Salvation Army response to the depression of the 1890s that had immediate results. In 1893, the San Francisco Corps found work for 165 men. By 1897, when General Frederick Booth-Tucker established a national employment bureau, 2,600 applications were received for work. Although it took nearly two years to find employment for many of the first 1,975 applicants, the Army was able to report that its success rate approached 100 percent.

One of the most common sources of employment for rescue mission converts was in the missions themselves. As the ***Christian Herald*** said of the first annual convention of the Union of Gospel Missions in 1896, the gathering was "remarkable for the number of superintendents who were themselves converted in gospel missions."

From its origins in the 1830s and 1840s, the holiness movement was largely a movement of middle-class women. These women generously and fearlessly staffed the rescue missions of the Free Methodist Church, the West Coast-based Peniel Missions, Salvation Army centers, and other city missions. For example, in 1890, Salvation Army Captain Emma Bown sent the first "slum sisters" in pairs into the streets of New York City. Scrubbing floors, cooking meals, washing stroke victims, and simply living among the poor, Bown and her co-workers earned the respect of the people they served. In an age offering few opportunities to women, the Salvation Army and other holiness denominations provided meaningful roles outside the home and avenues of service to the bright, young, idealistic women who were its primary operatives.

Uplifting fallen women

Because Christian concern for the female victims of prostitution was as old as the Gospel, it appropriately emerged as the focus of one of the primary holiness social ministries. As urbanization spread, "red-light districts" became common features of nearly all major urban areas by the late 19th century.

While attempting to minister to prostitutes in New York City, the wealthy New York City druggist and evangelical convert Charles N. Crittenton realized that unless women were provided with career alternatives to prostitution, preaching would be useless. Consequently, in 1883, Crittenton founded the Florence Crittenton Mission, named in honor of Crittenton's recently deceased daughter, on New York's Bleecker Street. In 1890, a second mission was established in San Francisco. With the assistance of Kate Waller Barrett, the widow of an Episcopal priest who had entered the experience of full salvation under Crittenton's preaching, the number of Florence Crittenton Missions grew to over 70 by the time of Crittenton's death in 1909.

Meanwhile, others were duplicating Crittenton's efforts. In 1883, the Salvation Army opened its first rest cottage for "fallen women" in Glasgow, Scotland. Others followed, and within 10 years, 1,500 women had been received into the United Kingdom's 14 rest cottages. Half of these had earned their living from prostitution.

The Salvation Army opened its first American "rescue home" in Brooklyn in 1886 and within a decade was operating five homes in the United States. In 1896, not wanting to duplicate Christian social services, Crittenton worked closely with such holiness bodies as the Salvation Army and the Christian and Missionary Alliance to organize the National Gospel Mission Union. This body was dedicated to coordinating evangelical social ministries.

One notable holiness assault on prostitution occurred in Japan under the leadership of Salvation Army writer Gunpei Yamamuro. The author of one of the most widely read Japanese books of the last century, ***Heimin no Fukuin*** (***Common People's Gospel***, 1899), Yamamuro initiated a full-scale struggle against legalized prostitution. Promising women safety and training, the Salvation Army "rescue cottage" was quickly overcrowded by women seeking a new start in life. Other religious bodies soon followed the Army's lead, and the number of prostitutes in Tokyo fell by nearly one-fourth.

Most holiness social ministries were more modest. When the British press reported that many working class children went to school hungry, Salvation Army corps responded by providing nutritious inexpensive breakfasts. Especially notable were the movement's ministries among prisoners. The employment bureaus sponsored by the Salvation Army and especially the Volunteers of America found jobs for literally thousands of ex-offenders.

As the numbers of holiness camp meetings dotting the rural landscape decline, holiness missions continue to flourish and meet real human needs. The Salvation Army, more self-consciously holiness than ever, remains the most trusted national service agency, while in Chicago, the Free Methodist Church continues to sponsor the Olive Branch Mission, the city's oldest rescue mission. And holiness leaders persevere in reawakening the evangelical social conscience in the early 21st century, while calling on Christians to take responsibility for the needs of their brothers and sisters in Christ.

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The Lord's Agitators

Holiness leaders were a fractious bunch, but there was vision behind their division.

Sarah E. Johnson, Ginger Kolbaba, Jennifer Woodruff Tait, and Stan Ingersol

Orange Scott (1800-1847): Witness against slavery

Orange Scott's heart bled for the slaves. But when he tried to convince his Methodist denomination that abolition was the only answer, they did not thank him for it.

Born in 1800 into a very poor Vermont family, Scott received only 13 months of formal education before becoming a Methodist preacher. When in 1833 he became convinced of the evils of slavery, he sent copies of William Lloyd Garrison's newspaper, the ***Liberator***, to 100 Methodist preachers in New England. This made abolitionists of most of them and made Scott famous—or infamous—in the denomination.

At this time, many who opposed slavery refused to call for its immediate end—and many Methodists worried that taking an abolitionist stance would hinder the Gospel in the South. Scott, however, preached conversion, holiness, and the end of slavery as one message.

In 1836, Scott stood up at the Methodist Episcopal Church's General Conference to share his passion for abolition. For his trouble, he was labelled a "reckless incendiary" and stripped of his presiding eldership. Unbowed, he continued agitating against Methodist tolerance of slavery until, in 1842, he tired of the fray and made his exit.

Scott soon joined others who had left the MEC in forming the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America. The Connection barred slaveholders and slavery sympathizers, insisting that slaveholding could not be part of a holy life.

After Scott's death in 1847, the Wesleyans continued to preach sanctification. And when emancipation was finally accomplished, they joined the national holiness revival and turned their attention to saving the souls and purifying the hearts of all Americans.

—Sarah E. Johnson

Benjamin Titus Roberts (1823-1893): Free at last

During the 1850s, all hell—or heaven, depending on perspective—broke loose in the Genesee Conference (western New York) of the Methodist Episcopal Church. A party labelled by its opponents "the Nazarites" arose to take their respectable denomination to task for condoning secret societies, renting out pews for as much as $100 a year, and becoming—as they saw it—stiff and formal in their worship practices.

Leading the dissent was Benjamin Titus Roberts, a man who, like Charles G. Finney, had put aside a promising legal career to plead the cause of Jesus. Roberts saw "the Bible standard of Christianity" John Wesley had upheld going into eclipse and Methodism becoming a rich man's preserve. Particularly odious to Roberts were pew rentals. By auctioning pews to the highest bidder, he charged, Methodist churches were saying, "We want none in our congregation but those who are able to move in fashionable circles."

In 1858, the Genesee Conference expelled Roberts. Two years later, he and his supporters organized a new church committed to free pews and freedom in worship. They called themselves Free Methodists.

Roberts took his commitments to biblical Christianity and the poor into his new denomination. He emphasized entire sanctification as a distinct work of the Spirit after justification. He spoke against slavery and supported a death tax that would prevent the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few.

Though Free Methodists have consistently upheld the doctrine of entire sanctification, some say Roberts's concern for the poor has declined in the denomination. Yet in recent years Free Methodists have begun to reclaim the kind of vision that prompted Roberts to claim, "My special mission is to preach the gospel to the poor."

—Sarah E. Johnson

D. S. Warner (1842-1895): One God, One Church, One Sanctification

On October 1, 1881, Daniel Sidney (D. S.) Warner stepped in front of a group of about 30 people in Beaver Dam, Indiana, to share a vision. Frail, sickly, raised the son of an alcoholic tavern-keeper, Daniel spoke now with all the fiery authority of a prophet.

He attacked the churches of his day with their focus on denominations, sects, creeds, and formal membership. He rejected all "human organization" and painted a picture of a restored New Testament church—a fraternity whose only tests of fellowship were salvation and a holy life.

Then he made a revolutionary move: he announced he was finished with religious groups that divided Christians. Five people agreed with him.

Two weeks later, in Carson City, Michigan, Warner made a second, similar speech. And this time, the Church of God Reformation Movement was born.

Warner was a preacher affiliated with the National Holiness Association. But when his new vision came, he left the Association and became a leader in the "come-outer" holiness exodus from the denominations.

From the beginning, Warner's Church of God—today the **Church of God (Anderson, Indiana)**—was determined not to be organized like the other churches. Rather than have church buildings, they chose to meet outdoors at campmeetings. They called themselves "the Evening Lighters," because they believed that at the evening time of the Gospel day (Zech. 14:7), God would restore the church to its fullness before Christ returned.

Warner paid a dear price for his vision. In 1884 his wife, Sarah, accepted a doctrine of marital celibacy and super-holiness taught by R. S. Stockwell and left him, denouncing him and his teachings.

Warner was never comfortable with the label of "founder," insisting that building the church was the Holy Spirit's job alone. But clearly it was his tireless preaching of an open, inclusive New Testament church that energized so many to spread his winsome vision: without labels or limits, they sought to restore the true, holy catholic church founded by Christ, practice personal holiness, and minister help and healing to the world around them.

—Ginger Kolbaba

Henry Clay Morrison (1857-1942): The holiness preacher who wouldn't "come out"

Not all holiness believers came out of their denominations. One who stayed in, and encouraged others to do so, was Henry Clay Morrison. A dynamic orator with a "trumpet voice," a tireless editor, a surprising college and seminary president, and a globe-trotting evangelist most at home in the Kentucky bluegrass, Morrison spent his life preaching the gospel of holiness that had transformed him—from within the Methodist denomination he loved.

Morrison was raised in Southern Kentucky, where he became first a local Methodist pastor and then a traveling evangelist. In 1886 he professed entire sanctification, following a lengthy struggle during which the "blessing" seemed to leave him twice before he was finally willing to testify.

Morrison immediately began to trumpet the holiness message through his evangelistic meetings and his newspaper, ***The Kentucky Methodist***—renamed ***The Pentecostal Herald*** in 1897. This brought him the enmity of southern Methodism's theological modernists and the threat of expulsion. With strong support, however, he weathered a mockery of a trial and went on to be elected several times delegate to Methodism's highest law-making body, the General Conference.

When Morrison later assumed the presidency of Asbury College (1910-25, 1933-40), he dedicated himself to carrying on the school's holiness mission, using the ***Pentecostal Herald*** to raise money for the institution.

In 1923, Morrison established **Asbury Theological Seminary** to send out preachers "well trained, with a gracious experience of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and genuinely true to the Scriptures as interpreted and preached by John Wesley and his co-workers."

When criticized by "come-outer" holiness groups for his commitment to episcopal Methodism, he replied, "I have never heard from [God] any call to change my church relations." His autobiography was not kind to come-outers. "Methodism in her origin," he wrote, "with her history, her doctrines, so broad, so ample, so full, reaching out to all men, and promising salvation from all sin, was ingrained into my very being."

Henry Clay Morrison died as he had lived, preaching holiness at a Methodist church in Tennessee.

—Jennifer Woodruff Tait

Phineas F. Bresee (1838-1915): Identifying with the poorest of the poor

Describing the "Glory Barn," his **Church of the Nazarene**'s first church building in Los Angeles, Phineas F. Bresee said, "We want places so plain that every board will say welcome to the poorest."

Bresee grew up under the ministry of the circuit-riding preachers who criss-crossed his native Catskill Mountains. Entering the ministry at age 18, he took Methodist pastorates first in Iowa and then in Southern California. In 1867, while still in Iowa, He experienced the grace of entire sanctification, but he remained aloof from the holiness movement until his move to California in the early 1880s.

By 1894, Bresee had led all the major Methodist churches in the Los Angeles area. At his last Methodist pastorate, Boyle Heights Methodist Episcopal Church, Los Angeles, he brought in noted black evangelist Amanda Berry Smith (p. 40) to conduct a protracted revival. A respected and skilled preacher, Bresee's best-known holiness sermon, "The Transferred Image," described how the moral image of God is imprinted by grace on human beings.

In his mid-50s, Bresee grew intensely interested in the urban poor. In 1894, he withdrew from Methodism and affiliated with the Peniel Mission, an inner-city holiness ministry to the indigent. J. P. Widney, a physician and the retired president of the University of Southern California, joined Bresee at the mission.

While the mission's directors wanted to focus on the transient population, Bresee and Widney became convinced that the urban poor needed not just missions but strong family-oriented churches. In October 1895 the two men organized a congregation they called the Church of the Nazarene, to communicate their sense that Jesus had identified with "the lowly, toiling masses."

The Church of the Nazarene grew into a regional denomination, then merged with similar regional denominations located in the East and the South in 1907 and 1908, creating the present-day Church of the Nazarene. Today, the Nazarenes number over 1.4 million members worldwide, with over half living outside of North America.

Bresee continued to pastor the Los Angeles church until 1911 and acted as the new denomination's senior general superintendent until his death in 1915. He also founded Pasadena College (now Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego). To the end, his vision was always that of the "Glory Barn": "Let the Church of the Nazarene be true to its commission; not great and elegant buildings, but to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, and wipe away the tears of sorrowing, and gather jewels for His diadem."

—Stan Ingersol

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I received my commission from Him, brother

How women preachers built up the holiness movement

Jennifer Woodruff Tait

In 1771, John Wesley received a remarkable letter from devout Methodist convert Mary Bosanquet (1739-1815). With her friends Sarah Crosby (1729-1804) and Sarah Ryan (1724-1768), Bosanquet had been running an orphanage and leading the small-group Methodist gatherings for spiritual growth that Wesley termed "class meetings." Crosby had in fact been speaking to groups sometimes numbering in the hundreds—though Wesley would not let her call her spiritual testimony "preaching." Bosanquet too had been leading class meetings, and been criticized for doing it.

She met the criticism head-on in her letter to Wesley: "Several object to this, saying 'A woman ought not to teach or take authority over a man.'" This might mean, Bosanquet allowed, that a woman should not take authority over her husband. But it emphatically did not mean that "she shall not entreat sinners to come to Jesus, nor say, come and I will tell you what God has done for my soul." Not every woman was called to be a preacher, no more than every man; but "some have an extraordinary call to it, and woe be to them if they obey it not."

That very month, June 1771, Wesley endorsed Bosanquet's friend Crosby as a lay preacher, using the phrase "extraordinary call." He gave his stamp of approval to Bosanquet as well. Both women became tireless evangelists, and some 41 women eventually became lay preachers in "Mr. Wesley's Methodism."

In 1781 Bosanquet married Wesley's intended successor John Fletcher. After Fletcher's death in 1785, Mary continued to hold preaching meetings and care for her late husband's Anglican parish, even appointing one of his successors. Despite the resolution passed in the Methodist Conference in 1803 (after Wesley's death) that women would not be allowed to preach, Bosanquet/Fletcher continued to preach five sermons a week until she died in her late 70s.

Coming to America

These were among the first women to find in Methodism a liberating power to preach the gospel, but they were not the last. A qualified openness to women as spiritual leaders carried over into American Methodism—brought to the colonies in the 1760s and a lay-led movement until Wesley ordained the first American preachers at the Methodist Episcopal Church's founding in 1784.

Barbara Heck, an early Irish Methodist émigré who encouraged her cousin Philip Embury to continue in America the lay preaching he had begun in England, earned from one Methodist historian the title "foundress" of American Methodism. As the story is sometimes told, Heck discovered a group of her fellow Irish immigrants playing cards. She swept the cards into the fire and marched to Philip's house, where she urged him to take up preaching again lest their friends and relatives "all go to hell!" Philip protested that he had neither a congregation nor a preaching house. "Preach in your own house and to your own company," said Barbara, and Methodism was born in New York.

In the 1800s, white and African-American women—including United Brethren prison chaplain Lydia Sexton (1799-1894) and African Methodist Episcopal evangelist Jarena Lee (b. 1783)—began to seek licensing to preach within the Methodist denominations.

Not all women preachers found this sanction necessary. For example, Phoebe Palmer never sought a license, though her ministry received tacit approval from the Methodist bishop and other clergy who attended her Tuesday Meetings.

"Well, God allows it"

Those who did obtain the church's imprimatur often stated that they would have continued without it. Maggie Newton Van Cott (1830-1914), the first woman licensed to preach in the Methodist Episcopal Church, began by obtaining an exhorter's license (exhorting differed from preaching in that the speaker did not "take a text" from the Bible to expound). When a critic protested that this license did not allow her to preach sermons, she replied, "Don't it? Well, God allows it. I received my commission from Him, brother."

Van Cott also famously commented to the pastor of the Duane Street (NY) M.E. Church, "I believe my tongue is my own, John, and I will use it when I please, where I please, and as I please." This she did as a traveling evangelist from 1866 to 1912. When she turned 50 in 1880, it was said that up to that point she had traveled 143,417 miles, held 9,933 revival meetings, and preached 4,294 sermons.

As Methodism and the holiness movement began to part ways, many holiness groups practiced in their earliest years an openness to the ministry of women that the more theologically liberal mainline denomination frequently lacked. Most Wesleyan/Holiness denominations gave licenses to and ordained women and men alike, although the women often faced more opposition and were given more difficult pastoral assignments.

Female traveling evangelists were also common, though not uncontroversial, in holiness circles. Among the most famous was the African Methodist Episcopal preacher, singer, missionary, and orphans' home founder Amanda Berry Smith (1837-1915). Unlike her earlier A.M.E. preaching colleague Jarena Lee, Smith ministered largely in white contexts, and she later became instrumental in the work of Frances Willard's Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).

Smith had endured two unhappy marriages—the second one, ironically, to an A.M.E. preacher—and, though highly esteemed in holiness circles, still felt frequently the sting of racism. She wrote at one point in her autobiography, "I think some people would understand the quintessence of sanctifying grace if they could be black about twenty-four hours."

Founding mothers

Several prominent female evangelists—Catherine Booth (1829-1890), Mary Lee Cagle (1864-1955), Alma White (1862-1946), and Lela McConnell (1884-1970)—were crucial in founding well-known holiness organizations in Britain and America.

Booth, the wife of a preacher in the reform-minded Methodist New Connexion in England and a writer of spiritual tracts, published a short pamphlet titled ***Female Ministry*** in 1859 to defend Phoebe Palmer's English preaching tour. "Who," she wrote in her introduction, "would dare to challenge the sainted Madame Guyon, Lady Maxwell, the talented mother of the Wesleys, Mrs. Fletcher," or a host of other famous spiritual women "with being unwomanly or ambitious?" Women in every age had been crucial agents in leading souls to Christ, and there was Biblical warrant for their actions. "My studies in 'Bible Criticism' etc.," she maintained, "have not informed me that a woman must cease to speak before she can obey."

Booth began preaching in her own right in 1860. At the Annual Conference of the new Connexion in 1861, William was assigned to a prosperous church but protested that he was called to the work of evangelism. A compromise was suggested, but at that point Catherine's voice could be heard speaking out from

the gallery where women were seated: "Never!"

The Booths decided to withdraw from the New Connexion and undertake an itinerant evangelistic ministry. They opened a mission in London in 1865 to preach holiness and minister to the poor—renamed the Salvation Army in 1878. Men and women held equal leadership ranks in the Army from its inception, and the Booths' daughter Evangeline (1865-1950) later served as head or "General" of the entire organization.

Catherine Booth designed the flag and uniform of the new organization, including the famous women's headgear, known as the "hallelujah bonnet." She wrote prolifically in support of the Army, temperance, housing for the poor, and the humane treatment of animals. Diagnosed with cancer in 1888, she preached almost until her death and refused morphine at the end in order to keep her mind clear to assist her husband with the writing of his famous book ***In Darkest England and the Way Out*** (1890). Today approximately half of the officers (ministers) in the Salvation Army are female.

Mary Cagle, who entered the preaching ministry after the death of her first husband, Methodist evangelist R. L. Harris, took up his work of planting churches and organizing them into a loose network that after a series of mergers became part of the Church of the Nazarene. This group ordained her in 1899. Her second husband, originally a cowhand, was saved, sanctified, and called to preach under Cagle's evangelistic ministry. Tellingly, though, it was eventually that husband, H. C. Cagle, who became a district superintendent while Mary Cagle served as a district evangelist in the new denomination—showing that women were more likely to be approved when exercising an extraordinary rather than an ordinary call.

The first woman bishop

Alma White and her husband established a new holiness organization, the Pillar of Fire, specifically because of the opposition to women preachers in the Methodist Episcopal Church. An anti-female Methodist faction that controlled the Colorado Holiness Association refused to let White speak at their camp meetings. White responded by founding a group originally known as the Pentecostal Union—later the Pillar of Fire—claiming that she was "ready to lay my life down in sacrifice on the altar of the Methodist Church" until that church "made no provision for me to preach the Gospel."

Although White's husband Kent possessed Methodist ordination, it was Alma who took full control of the new group into her own hands. Kent's opposition to his wife's evangelistic career became more and more outspoken, and eventually they separated due to his acceptance of speaking in tongues, which she resisted. It was Alma, however, who kept charge of the Pillar of Fire, and she was consecrated bishop of the denomination in 1918 by an evangelist in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, W. B. Godbey. This made her the first known woman bishop in any Christian denomination.

White never stopped writing, preaching, and starting new things. She was an ardent advocate of woman's rights and a supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment, which was first proposed in 1923. She also introduced vegetarianism to the Pillar of Fire, explaining her biblical and experiential justification in ***Why I Do Not Eat Meat*** (1939). At the age of 55, "after much trepidation" as a Pillar of Fire news release reported, she learned to drive and obtained a New Jersey driver's license. At about the same time she also learned to swim, "which, though perfectly consistent with her way of doing things," claimed the same news release, "greatly surprised her friends."

Kentucky mountain mother

McConnell, who did possess a form of ordination as a local deacon in the Methodist Episcopal Church, felt called to establish a holiness ministry in Kentucky while a student at Asbury College in the 1920s. McConnell undertook preaching tours through eastern Kentucky and, with the support of Asbury, organized a group of preaching stations that became known as the Kentucky Mountain Holiness Association.

Refusing offers from a Methodist bishop to place the KMHA under that church's (male) authority, McConnell supervised a network of pastors—of whom at times more than half were women. She also founded several boarding schools, a Bible training school (now Kentucky Mountain Bible College), and a radio station.

Women such as these were the rule rather than the exception. Though not all holiness woman with an "extraordinary call" sought ordination or founded denominations, many preached, traveled, and wrote extensively, seeking conversions and sanctifications through their revival meetings and through writings that ranged from the devotional to the polemic—sometimes combining both.

Many of these women leaders cited Bosanquet/ Fletcher, Crosby, Hester Rogers (1756-1794), and Palmer as their influence and inspiration. (Rogers, a contemporary of Fletcher and Crosby and a follower of Wesley, was the author of an autobiography immensely popular among Methodists. Though she had not had a preaching ministry, Rogers had led classes and bands and dispensed spiritual counsel through correspondence.)

"... and daughters will prophesy"

Susie Stanley, in ***Holy Boldness: Women Preachers' Autobiographies and the Sanctified Self*** (University of Tennessee, 2002), shows that holiness women argued for their public ministry not only from results, but from affirmations of women's ministry in the Bible. Examples abounded: Jesus worked with and affirmed women as disciples; Mary Magdalene was the first to testify to the resurrection; Phoebe was a deacon in the early church; and Paul listed women church leaders in and other letters, famously declaring in Galatians 3:28 that there was "neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

Mary Cagle, particularly impressed by the example of Philip's four prophesying daughters (Acts 21:8-9), wrote in a sermon titled "Woman's Right to Preach" that "according to the Bible, Webster, and Clarke, Philip had a family of four girl preachers, and there is no record given in the Bible that any man had a family of four boy preachers. There is nearly always a black sheep among the boys."

The paradigmatic Bible event for women preachers was Pentecost. Then, women as well as men had been empowered by the Holy Spirit, as Joel's prophecy was fulfilled: that God would pour his Spirit on his sons and daughters and that God's "handmaidens" would be among those who prophesied (Acts 2:16-18 Joel 2:28-29).

It was from Joel's words that Palmer drew the titles of her two famous defenses of female ministry, ***The Promise of the Father*** (1859) and ***The Tongue of Fire on the Daughters of the Lord*** (1869). Paul's comments that forbade women from speaking were interpreted as local injunctions only (since elsewhere, as in 1 Corinthians 11:5, Paul gave women directions on how to pray and prophesy in public). Submission to male authority was interpreted in the manner Bosanquet/Fletcher had pioneered—as referring to the marriage relationship only, not the exercise of prophetic calls to ministry.

Since the influence of Fundamentalism in the 1920s, some modern holiness denominations—excepting the Salvation Army—have dealt ambiguously with their early commitment to the public ministry of women. Wesleyan groups remain challenged not only by Scripture but by the example of their own history, beginning when Wesley opened that letter from Mary Bosanquet. The question that framed Jarena Lee's testimony in her 1836 autobiography still echoes: "If the man may preach, because the Saviour died for him, why not the woman? seeing he died for her also. Is he not a whole Saviour, instead of a half one?"

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The Quest

Christians have long desired to live lives unmarred by sin—and have walked many roads on the quest.

Elesha Coffman

Simeon Stylites, Margery Kempe, and Philip Jacob Spener share little in the way of biographical details. Simeon, a fourth-century hermit, lived atop a pillar for 36 years, eating only one small meal per week. Margery made a deal with her husband around 1413 that if he would grant her wish of celibacy, she would grant his wish that she drink beer with him on Fridays. Spener, a seventeenth-century German divine, so impressed the ruling House of Saxony with his pious writings and pastoral effectiveness that he earned free postal privileges.

These three figures likely would not have approved of each other's methods and might not even have recognized each other as Christians. Yet all achieved fame as paragons of holiness.

Some aspects of the pursuit of holiness have remained constant throughout church history. ***The Shepherd of Hermas***, a second-century apocalyptic book that almost made it into the canon, prescribes this lifestyle:

"Do no evil in your life, and serve the Lord with a pure heart: keep His commandments, walking in His precepts, and let no evil desire arise in your heart; and believe in God. If you do these things, and fear Him, and abstain from every evil thing, you will live unto God; and if you do these things, you will keep a great fast, and one acceptable before God."

Christians in all times and places could affirm this basic plan for drawing near to God. God's character and precepts are always the same. But holiness also entails being "set apart" from the world. As the world has changed, so have ideals of holiness.

Desert superheroes

Simeon was not the only pillar-dwelling hermit of his era. He inspired a small wave of stylites, who took their name from the Greek word for "column," ***stulos***. And this group was just an extreme manifestation of a much larger trend in the early church: asceticism.

Antony of Egypt led the ascetic exodus from imperial cities into the provincial wilderness. Born in 251 into a prosperous family, he lived a conventional Christian life until his late teens, when both of his parents died. Soon after inheriting their estate, Antony happened into a church where he heard Jesus' directive to the rich young man: "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor and follow me, and you will have treasure in heaven."

Antony obeyed. His fourth-century biographer, the theologian Athanasius, wrote, "Antony, as though God had put him in mind of the Saints, and the passage had been read on his account, went out immediately from the church, and gave the possessions of his forefathers to the villagers ... that they should be no more a clog upon himself and his sister."

After settling his sister in a convent, Antony embarked on a life of discipline. He drastically reduced his bodily comforts, including food, sleep, and bathing. He shut himself up in a tomb for awhile, that he might

further mortify his flesh while engaging in spiritual battle with the Devil.

Eventually, he established a monastery about 230 miles southwest of Alexandria that attracted a knot of like-minded men. His fame spread, due largely to Athanasius's biography, and other monasteries sprang up in the Egyptian desert, close enough to water and civilization to facilitate the monks' survival, but far enough away to stand as a rebuke to society.

Though asceticism had its roots in the third century, it emerged as a significant movement after Constantine's conversion to Christianity in 312 put an end to systematic persecution of Christians within the Roman Empire.

Practically overnight, Christians exchanged their identity as a threatened minority for most-favored-religion status. Most Christians celebrated the transformation as the greatest thing to hit the world since Christ himself. But new opportunities for wealth and power necessitated a new emphasis on holiness.

Even Christians who chose not to undertake the rigors of desert monasticism sought to follow Antony's example in small ways. Augustine, who credited Athanasius's ***Life of Antony*** as a catalyst for his own conversion, attempted to live as a monk even while serving as bishop of the bustling city of Hippo.

Augustine barred women, including his sister, from his residence. He carved as much time as he could from his busy schedule for reading, writing, and meditation. He also refused gifts from his parishioners unless, as in the famous case of a tunic a woman had made for her deceased brother and wanted her pastor to have, saying no would break someone's heart.

Medieval mystics

The monastic ideal captured the Christian imagination through the Middle Ages. The word "religious" was used not as an adjective to describe any observant Christian, but as a noun to designate the full-time holy living under vows of poverty and chastity.

As life for monks, nuns, and friars became ever more ordered by rules—regarding dress, work, speech, and activities for every waking hour—a new ideal of holiness emerged: mysticism. Women, who generally were not allowed a voice in the affairs of church or state, became especially prominent in the ranks of the mystics.

Medieval women were hardly the first Christians to report otherworldly visions. The apostles Paul and John caught glimpses of heaven, as did Augustine and many other members of the early church. Medieval men, including Joachim of Fiore, Dante, and John of the Cross, had visions, too. But the accounts of women's spiritual experiences from about the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries are among the most famous and fascinating documents from the period.

Margery Kempe was born in England near the end of this era. She was empowered to broker the beer-for-celibacy deal with her husband because Jesus himself appeared to her in prayer and told her it was all right. She also reported direct communication with God the Father, the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary, Peter, Paul, and other saints.

As she traveled around Europe, Margery's spiritual sensitivities frequently moved her to uncontrollable tears. In her autobiography (which she dictated to one or more unknown writers because she was illiterate), she noted "that when she saw women in Rome carrying children in their arms, if she could discover that any were boys, she would cry, roar and weep as if she had seen Christ in his childhood. And if she could have had her way, she would often have taken the children out of their mothers' arms and kissed them instead of Christ."

Margery's outbursts caused many observers to suspect her of being demon-possessed, but she found some priests who viewed her emotionalism as a sign of acute devotion. Through these supportive clergymen, who probably took responsibility for recording and publicizing her story, she gained access to the writings of mystics who had gone before her.

Perhaps the most notable medieval mystic was Hildegard of Bingen, a twelfth-century German noblewoman who managed both to lead a large convent and to influence European politics. She offered vivid textual descriptions of her visions, including one in which "Heaven was opened and a fiery light of exceeding brilliance came and permeated my whole brain, and inflamed my whole heart and my whole breast." She also captured many of her visions in vibrant works of art.

Puritans, Precisians, and Pietists

After the Reformation, Protestant nations established state churches that mixed new theology with old forms. In the minds of some Christians, these churches soon grew cold. To heat things up, radicals re-emphasized holiness—and usually got derided for their efforts.

Within the Anglican Church in the sixteenth century, dissent took the form of Puritanism. Puritans railed against lingering "popish" elements in the established church, including elaborate ceremony, rigid hierarchy, and a calendar full of specious holidays. In opposition, Puritans pressed for more direct preaching, more parish control of church affairs, and a more austere lifestyle.

The Puritan project made some headway in England, though its leaders faced consistent opposition. They got the nickname "Puritans" from critics who mocked their "holier than thou" attitude. Eventually, of course, many Puritans left England to set up their model society in America. They still get mocked here, too.

As Puritan literature circulated in Reformed sectors of Germany and the Netherlands, it spurred some Christians there to start their own reform movement, which was sarcastically dubbed Precisianism owing to its undue preciseness. Precisians combined Puritan concern for rightly ordered family and social life with a spiritualism born of local mystical traditions.

The Lutheran response to these reform impulses became known by another originally pejorative term: Pietism. Pietists spent comparatively less energy on outward forms and comparatively more on the state of the believer's heart. Their emotional hymns and moving devotional works, such as Spener's ***Pia Desideria*** (or ***Heartfelt Desire for God***), had broad influence on the Continent, in England, and in America.

Though the holiness movement seemed to burst onto the scene in the 19th century, its emphases were rooted in previous eras of church history. The movement's suspicion of worldly pleasures echoed the cry of desert ascetics and Puritans. Its openness to women's voices and palpable experiences of God's Spirit hearkened back to medieval mysticism and Pietism. And its attention to serving the Lord with a pure heart was as old as Christianity itself.

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1854: Three Voices Wake a Sleeping Church

Bruce Heydt

At certain times during the Christian era, social, spiritual, and political forces have converged to create an environment primed for a revival. Such an alignment occurred exactly 150 years ago—seemingly a most unlikely time for God to do a new thing.

In Britain, Queen Victoria ruled over a vast bureaucratic Empire, but even outside the British sphere of influence, the Victorian Age was characterized by a love of orderliness and a sense of upper-class Anglo-Saxon superiority—what Rudyard Kipling infamously labeled "the white man's burden." Notably, it was also the time of the industrial revolution: a birth of factories and mass production. Their era's prosperous, mechanizing mood affected not only the way Victorians treated their servants and made their furniture, but also the way they preached the Gospel.

That is, until 1854. In that year, three men launched ministries that would shake their comfortable churches to the core.

Hudson Taylor (1832-1905)

The first rule of medicine is that a doctor should do his patient no harm. It might equally be said that the first rule of evangelism is that anyone preaching the Gospel should not condemn his listeners. What the pioneering missionary Hudson Taylor found upon arriving in China in 1854, however, was that the Western missionaries who had preceded him openly disdained and criticized their Chinese flock. His response changed missions then and now.

When the Taiping Rebellion broke out in 1851, its leaders claiming to embrace Christianity, Western mission societies had jumped at the chance to enter the country with the blessings of a new regime. Taylor, the son of a Methodist preacher, joined the rush, landing in Shanghai just before his 22nd birthday.

Once on this hot, war-torn, and disease-ridden mission field, the young man found that most of his fellow missionaries thought the prospects for evangelism dim. Many congregated in comfortable Western enclaves rather than venturing into the country's squalid interior. Their condescending attitudes toward the Chinese did nothing to reassure the peasants, who suspiciously viewed them as Western imperialists.

Deeply troubled, Taylor returned to England six years later and literally rewrote the book on Chinese evangelism. In ***China, Its Spiritual Need and Claims***, he said, "What does the Master teach us? Is it not that if one sheep out of a hundred be lost, we are to leave the ninety and nine and seek that one? But here the proportions are almost reversed, and we stay at home with the one sheep, and take no heed to the ninety and nine perishing ones!"

He had already severed ties with his sponsor, the China Evangelization Society, and now he created the China Inland Mission, the policies of which, he intended, would undo the errors made by previous agencies.

Taylor returned to China in 1866, and throughout the years that followed he disagreed sharply with British policies and worked to build a mutual respect between his mission workers and the Chinese. On one occasion after locals looted and burned his mission outpost, British gunboats steamed up the Yangtze River to exact retribution. Taylor, however, refused to bring any charges against the arsonists and returned to re-establish his mission. Likewise, following the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 in which many British missionaries lost their property, the British government imposed fines on the Chinese by way of compensation. But Taylor would not accept any of the money, saying that the Chinese themselves had lost even more.

Taylor summed up his approach: "Quietly settling among the people, obtaining free, familiar, and unrestrained communication with them, attracting their esteem and confidence, and so living as to be examples to them of what Chinese Christians should be." To this end (and to the shock of those back home), Taylor began wearing Chinese dress and adopting their customs.

Taylor's policy of meeting the Chinese on their own terms produced remarkable results. By the time of his death, he had established 20 mission stations throughout China, collected a team of 849 missionary associates, and overseen the growth of a Chinese church of 125,000 souls.

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)

In 1861, Charles Haddon Spurgeon wrote that the Church of England, by its dependence on empty ritual, was "ruining souls, and turning this nation to ... infidelity." Poverty, he also noted, most afflicted those European countries where church ritualism most prospered. For Spurgeon, the lesson was clear: ritual without compassion is dead.

Spurgeon's critique was not calculated to win him friends. But he was acting in the long non-conformist tradition of Essex, his home county. John Bunyan, author of ***Pilgrim's Progress***, who had been jailed for his religious principles, was one of his heroes.

Spurgeon was 15 when an accidental encounter cemented this Puritan zeal. He entered a church to take shelter from a snow squall. The preacher was reading from Isaiah 45: "Look upon me and be saved." Spying Charles standing by himself, he interrupted his sermon to note, "That young man there looks very miserable," and to urge Spurgeon to consider the Scripture he had just read. On his way home, Spurgeon realized in a flash the power of God's grace. Within a year, he began preaching the Gospel himself, and in the momentous year of 1854, he became the pastor of London's Park Street Chapel.

During his first three years of preaching, mostly at a Baptist church in Cambridgeshire, Spurgeon discovered that he possessed a rare talent for speaking. But he also learned that his parishioners were not moved so much by ritual or religious jargon as by simple, honest talk and sincere compassion.

Many times, he must have looked out over the congregation from the pulpit and thought, "That fellow there looks very miserable." In response, he addressed their physical as well as their spiritual misery, launching social ministries such as the Stockwell Orphanage for indigent children.

"I feel that the best way to lift up the lost and degraded from the horrible pit and miry clay is to preach Jesus Christ and him Crucified," Spurgeon wrote, "but this need not prevent me from using all possible measures to promote social reform."

The London establishment, which preferred to wrap the Gospel in a more sophisticated but often ethereal package, disdained Spurgeon's hands-on approach: "All the most solemn mysteries of our holy religion are by him rudely, roughly, and impiously handled," complained one critic.

However, Spurgeon's compassion proved more effective than the establishment's ritual: attendance at Park Street grew from 80 in 1854 to 5,000, then to 10,000.

Spurgeon's London was the grimy, work-house London immortalized by Charles Dickens. His parishioners may not have been sophisticated, but they could well understand the need for grace. And he, too, knew of suffering—chiefly from rheumatism, of which he ultimately died.

In this shared pain, though, Spurgeon saw a divine purpose. He believed suffering penetrates selfishness and pride, and humbles us in preparation for answering God's call on our lives. This message gave meaning to dark times and brought Londoners by the thousands to a new understanding of God's grace.

Sören Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

A preacher looking for a shining example of Christian charity would probably never settle on the early life of the Danish philosopher Sören Kierkegaard. The pivotal event during these years was his quixotic relationship with Regina Olsen. Although she was then seeing someone else, Sören became infatuated with Regina and persuaded her to end her previous relationship. He then proposed marriage, and she accepted.

Then Kierkegaard had a change of heart. But rather than break the engagement himself, he began behaving obnoxiously so Regina would get fed up and leave him, and thus bear the stigma of ending the relationship.

The guilt he felt over this episode led Kierkegaard to question his own faith and the impact of society on faith. He began pondering a paradox: How is it possible to become truly Christian in Christendom? To his eyes, far from producing energized Christian individuals, the established institutions of his day churned out bland, mindless drones with little understanding of their own identity or sense of responsibility.

Kierkegaard set for himself the task of shaking up the established social order. He took his inspiration from Socrates, who had forced his disciples to think for themselves by constantly questioning their assumptions.

For Kierkegaard, the most troubling aspect of traditionalism was the barrier it had erected between Christians and the saving grace of God. He perceived that faith, for many, had become nothing more than the rote parroting of the liturgy. In contrast to this institutional form of religion, he wrote, true Christian faith must be passionate and based on personal experience.

Between 1854 and 1855, Kierkegaard wrote 21 articles attacking the Danish institutional church for its neglect of the essential teachings of Christ and its undue reliance on its own form and ritual. His writings reintroduced his generation, and each one since, to a God with whom we are meant to live in heartfelt relationship, not to study analytically.

A fatal stroke cut this literary explosion short and stilled Kierkegaard's pen, but his ideas continued to percolate. As the trends that prompted his writing became even more prevalent in subsequent years, his work seemed to grow more relevant, and eventually it had even more impact on 20th-century thinking than on his own age.

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Innocent's Corrupted Crusade

Good intentions couldn't stop Innocent III's crusade from going horribly wrong.

Steven Gertz

The band of knights who gathered at Count Thibaut of Champaigne's castle in November 1199 intended simply to enjoy their host's hospitality and impress their ladies in jousting tournaments. But when the electric preacher Fulk of Neuilly gained entrance to the castle and publicly lamented the success of Saladin's Muslim forces in the Holy Land, frivolity left the hall. Wearing crosses of cloth across their shoulders, Count Thibaut and a company of knights marched to Pope Innocent III and pledged their lives to war.

Innocent was delighted with Thibaut's offer. For over a year, he'd worked among the monastic orders to inflame crusader wrath over the losses Saladin had inflicted—to little effect. Finally, a new leader had emerged to challenge the Muslims. Rome could now answer the frantic calls for help coming from besieged crusaders in the coastal city of Tyre.

Innocent and Thibaut decided to strike first at Egypt, the vulnerable underbelly of Saladin's forces. In 1201, Thibaut sent envoys to the doge of Venice requesting ships for the voyage, since the Turks now made land passage too dangerous. The doge agreed, setting a departure date of June 1202. But he charged a hefty price of 85,000 silver marks.

Deals in the dark

Then the unexpected happened. Thibaut fell ill and died, and another nobleman, Boniface of Montferrat, took his place as commander of the Fourth Crusade. While visiting a friend in Germany, Boniface met Alexius Angelinus, son of Constantinople's dispossessed emperor, now seeking men and arms in his quest to regain the throne of Christianity's eastern empire.

Alexius tried to persuade Boniface to redirect the crusaders away from Egypt and retake Constantinople for the Angelina family. In return, Alexius offered part of Constantinople and the Byzantine empire to Boniface as his personal fief. And, as a bone to the pope, he promised to enforce the Eastern Church's submission to Rome as the supreme head of the Church.

Returning to Rome, Boniface asked Innocent for permission to direct the crusade through Constantinople. The pope, concerned for East-West relations, said no.

When the time came for the crusaders to sail, the debt to Venice had not yet been fully paid. The doge insisted that Boniface could sail only if the army first captured Venice's rival Hungarian town of Zara. Boniface agreed, and Zara fell to the crusaders in November 1202. Innocent was aghast—he denounced the pillage of Zara and reproached Boniface for attacking fellow Christians.

But Innocent was no longer in control of his crusade. Boniface still owed the doge a substantial debt, and he decided to take Alexius up on his offer. The pope received word that Boniface was now taking the army to Constantinople. At first, he rationalized the move, hoping Alexius would help his cause in the Holy Land. Upon hearing that a crusader army was marching on the Greek capital, Constantinople's emperor fled his throne, and city officials installed Alexius in his stead.

The conflagration begins

All had gone according to plan, or so Alexius thought. But when the new emperor—keeping his promise to the papacy—commanded his Orthodox bishops to submit to Rome, he was met with sullen silence. Further, seeing the French swagger down their streets angered many Greeks. Their anger increased when Venetians acting out of "piety" set fire to a mosque visited by Muslim merchants, and it burned out of control, sweeping the city in a massive conflagration.

Soon a mob of Greeks was storming the palace, and one of the leaders—now declared the new emperor—threw Alexius into the imperial dungeon and strangled him.

Nothing remained for the crusaders but war. Frankish bishops denounced the new emperor as a murderer and the Greeks as schismatic, and declared that it was Rome's duty to subjugate Constantinople by force. After a failed first attempt, on April 12, 1204 the army attacked from their Venetian ships. Crossing over on ladders thrown from the ships' masts, the crusaders took the city's towers, and with the cry of "Holy Sepulchre!" they sent the Greek army into retreat. By the end of the day, Constantinople had fallen.

Massacre and mayhem

The starving, exhausted soldiers looted palaces and peasants alike, heedless of Boniface's attempts to control the pillaging.

Not even the hallowed Sancta Sophia was safe. Historian Donald Queller describes the scene: "Mules and other beasts of burden were driven up to the altar to bear away the precious ornaments of the church, desecrating it with their droppings." While soldiers drank from the altar-vessels, writes Steven Runciman, "a prostitute set herself on the Patriarch's throne and began to sing a ribald French song."

In the West, Innocent at first received the news of Constantinople's fall with enthusiasm. The pope thought he could now depend on the city to fight the Muslims. The Sultan of Egypt, he had heard, was already trembling, fearing he was next.

But when the details of crusader barbarism filtered back, Innocent was devastated. How could he speak of unity with his Orthodox brethren when such unspeakable acts had been committed against them by his own soldiers?

Innocent's regret came too late. He had hoped to make Constantinople his ally—instead, the Fourth Crusade sealed the schism between West and East. And it further weakened the city, now targeted by the rising power of the Ottoman Turks.

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Changed Lives

How I entered George MacDonald's world

Madeleine L'Engle

I was an unsuccessful, nonachieving child at school, unappreciated and unloved by teachers and peers alike. My real world was my solitary life, in my little back bedroom that looked out onto a courtyard and the windows of other apartments. There, I ate with my feet on the desk and a book on my chest and was completely happy. It was there that I met George MacDonald, the nineteenth-century Scottish novelist (***Lilith, Phantastes, Sir Gibbie***) and children's book writer (***The Princess and the Goblin, At the Back of the North Wind***).

MacDonald's name sometimes brings up an image of easy comfort, of a world where everything is going to be beautiful as long as we are loving, of a kindly God who never chastises the beloved children. But that image is a false one. Although this prolific writer indeed had a loving heart, his fiction shows that he also had a realistic view of the complexity of human nature.

MacDonald's own health was precarious. Late in life, his lungs hemorrhaged—and not for the first time—and everything seemed dark. And then he began to write his fantasies.

Above all, it was these fantasies that opened up for me a wider world. The curtain is often pulled aside when things are most difficult or painful, for it is during these times, I have learned, that Christ is closest to us. "The Son of God suffered unto death," MacDonald wrote, "not that men might not suffer, but that their sufferings might be like his."

The wise woman is always prominent in his work. North Wind (in ***At the Back of the North Wind***) has to sink a ship, and she explains to young Diamond, "I will tell you how I am able to bear it, Diamond: I am always hearing, through every noise, through all the noise I am making myself, even, the noise of a far-off song. I do not exactly know where it is, or what it means; and I don't hear much of it, only the odor of its music, as it were, flitting across the great hollows of the ocean outside this air in which I make such a storm; but what I do hear is quite enough to make me able to bear the cry from the drowning ship."

I cannot understand this strange mercy except in the language which George MacDonald introduced to me. Yet Scripture itself, in which George MacDonald is grounded, is full of this strange language. Ezekiel, with his extraordinary wheels (echoed in John's ***Revelation***), with his dry bones crying out to God to be enfleshed; Daniel, again echoed in ***Revelation***; even hilarious Jonah—all offer us a world of radiant wildness, where we see brilliance in the forests of the night.

Meeting George MacDonald's writing when I was very young was a blessing to my understanding of God and creation and our own small but potentially beautiful place in it. As MacDonald makes clear all through his writing, God promises us joy, but not safety; a full life, but not a painless one; the laughter that comes with full faith in God's loving purpose, but also tears. He promises us a broad road with a narrow gate, with lions and other wild beasts ready to attack unless Love speaks first, and angels are standing by. There are, indeed, manifestations of energies, both good and evil, which we human beings are seldom able to see because we have rejected the world of fantasy and faerie as untrue.

Madeleine L'Engle is author of such children's classics as* A Wrinkle in Time *and* A Swiftly Tilting Planet *as well as

many books for adults. This article is adapted from* More Than Words*, edited by Philip Yancey and James Schaap (Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2002.) Used by permission.

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Phoebe Palmer: Recommended Resources

A little help navigating the kaleidoscopic holiness revival

No one who studies the far-flung, interdenominational **holiness movement** is under any illusions that they can tie the whole thing up with a bow, giving a summary of all of its aspects in a single essay. The best approximation of this feat is the first chapter of Timothy L. Smith, ***Called Unto Holiness: The Story of the Nazarenes - The Formative Years*** (Nazarene Publishing House, 1962). The dean of holiness studies, Smith was a Nazarene scholar of impeccable credentials. The rest of this book is the classic history of one of the largest holiness denominations.

William C. Kostlevy has done a great service by producing his well-edited ***Historical Dictionary of the Holiness Movement*** (Rowman & Littlefield, 2001). This handy 300-pager is full not only of reliable information but also of vignettes and quirky gems on every facet of the movement.

Timothy L. Smith's magnum opus, ***Revivalism and Social Reform*** (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), forever destroyed the notion that the holiness folk were too heavenly-minded to be any earthly good. Using an impressive battery of primary sources, Smith shows that the benevolent activism of the so-called "social gospel" originated with holiness evangelicals.

Melvin E. Dieter's ***The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*** (Rowman & Little- field, 1996) is an insider account that gives a good overview of the movement. Its thesis is that the holiness movement arose from a filtering of Wesley's perfectionist teachings through 19th..century revivalism, For more on how Palmer's teachings and those of other holiness proponents fit into the theological world of American Methodism, John L. Peters's ***Christian Perfection and American Methodism*** (Zondervan, 1985) is the book.

There are a number of good sources on **Phoebe Palmer**. ***Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings,*** edited by **Thomas C. Oden (Paulist Press, 1988)** gives us a panoramic sense of the shape and power of her life and teachings. Charles Edward White's ***The Beauty of Holiness: Phoebe Palmer as Theologian, Revivalist, Feminist. and Humanitarian*** (Zondervan/Francis Asbury Press, 1986) is an eminently readable survey of Palmer's life from an unabashed fan. Harold Raser's ***Phoebe Palmer: Her Life and Thought*** (Edwin Mellen Press, 1987) is a critical intellectual biography that traces the sources and shape of Palmer's teachings.

We can only mention a few of the many resources on key **holiness figures and denominations**. A readable, well-illustrated, and information-packed account of the Salvation Army in United States is Diane Winston, ***Red-Hot and Righteous: The Urban Religion of The Salvation Army*** (Harvard University Press, 1999). The fascinating ***Autobiography*** of the black holiness evangelist Amanda Berry Smith (Oxford University Press, 1988) is well worth the read. A later, more radical holiness woman gets a thorough and affectionate treatment in Susie Cunningham Stanley, ***Feminist Pillar of Fire: The Life of Alma White*** (Pilgrim Press, 1993).

The distinctions and the links between the **Holiness and Pentecostal** movements are well-explained in a number of books. The best telling of the story of how certain "come-outer" holiness groups moved on into Pentecostalism is Vinson Synan, The ***Holiness–Pentecostal Tradition,*** second edition (Eerdmans, 1997). On the shift in definitions of the key term "baptism with the Holy Spirit" from early Methodism through the holiness movement and into Pentecostalism, see Donald W. Dayton, ***Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*** (Hendrickson, I 987).

Two books stand out as guides to the **Victorian urban world** in which the American holiness movement was born and flourished during its early decades. The first of these is Paul Boyer's ***Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920*** (Harvard University Press, 1978), a fascinating survey covering (among other things) all of the major Christian social initiatives during this critical period, and marred only by a tendency to read religion as a reflection of "more basic" social forces.

The second reveals the seamier side of Victorian America, uncovering some of the social worries that shaped middle-class reform during that period. This is Karen Halttunen's ***Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870*** (Yale University Press, 1986).

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All of Christian History in 6 Hours

This audio *tour de force* is strong meat for a mature Christian audience.

Chris Armstrong

Luke Timothy Johnson of Emory University has rendered a service to the church with his Teaching Company audio course: "Great World Religions: Christianity." But he has had to be "cruel to be kind."

A master translator

The truly great teachers anticipate the questions of their students. Then they answer them in a way that hits home. That is, they have the knack not only of drawing up answers from their well of specialist knowledge but working that wondrous translation from their guild's specialist language to a public language. And, even more important, not just any public language, but a language that their students understand—intellectually, intuitively, emotionally.

This feat of intellectual, cultural, ***human*** translation is sadly beyond many university professors—as any who have sat through certain courses will attest. Thus when we find a master teacher adept at this miraculous feat of translation, we should indeed, as the Teaching Company does, distribute the fruits of their labor widely and preserve them for posterity. This is the vision of the Teaching Company's "Great Courses" series.

Luke Timothy Johnson is, in the sense I've described, a master translator. Though playing "guess what the professor is thinking" is a hazardous sport, I'll take the guess: It seems to me that Johnson, as he prepared and taught "Great World Religions: Christianity," has kept a particular audience in his mind's eye. This audience seems, if I reconstruct the clues correctly, to consist of non-Christians and nominal Christians who just can't get beyond certain ugly facts about Christianity (folks likely to have a bumper sticker that reads: "I'm for the separation of church and hate"). They have grown up in a Western world shaped, yes, by the power of the Gospel, but also and often more visibly by the many cultural, political, and ecclesiastical mistakes of a church that is far from perfect.

Whether this reconstruction of Johnson's intent is true or not, the clues that have led me to guess at it have also shaped this review, as will become evident.

Helpful handles

To begin with the positive—and there is much here to be positive about—Johnson handles well the extreme compression of the format (twelve 30-minute lectures), providing some illuminating typologies and crystalline explanations. A few examples:

—He contextualizes Christianity well with other world religions. For example, he argues persuasively that Christianity, unlike other world religions, is not law-focused. Unlike Judaism earlier and Islam later, this faith was not (or at least, not for more than a few decades) the glue of an ethnically unified society, but rather in its first centuries a marginalized, relatively powerless group inside an empire run by "foreigners." The result of this sociological fact, Johnson argues, is that beyond the obvious moral center (Ten Commandments, Sermon on the Mount), Christianity has struggled to provide clear rules for engagement with culture, and even rules for social morality.

—He lays out five critical transformations the church underwent in its first centuries of expansion: geographical, sociological, linguistic, cultural, and demographic.

—He explains concisely how "dualism" in various forms mounted the biggest and most dangerous challenge in 2nd- and early 3rd-century Christianity, and how the church responded.

—He shows clearly the second challenge of that age: the move to introduce new, subjective sources of authority to supplement the testimony of the apostles.

—He traces the three chief sources of authority that developed in reaction to those challenges: Scripture, Bishops, and Creed. And he shows how all three gained their authority and how they came together to create Christianity's binding doctrines in the early ecumenical councils.

There is much more here of a luminous, clarifying nature. For example, Johnson shows how, after Constantine launched the faith from persecuted minority status to culture-shaping power broker, Christianity "expanded to fill the public space" with elaborate architecture, Roman-esque bureaucracy, and stunning art and music. And how, by the same token, Christianity began to take a custodial role in larger society, recognizing certain public responsibilities as it endowed charities and defined the very passage of time through the festivals and saints' days of the liturgical year.

Johnson is also sure-footed near the end of the story, as he takes us through the three events that disestablished Christianity (that is, disengaged it from public power): the French, American, and Russian revolutions, and gives a helpful typology of how the Enlightenment critical tradition—and the "modernity" it created—elicited very different responses from each of the traditional Christian confessions.

All of this he does in much more powerful, direct, concrete language than the abstract shorthand I am using to summarize it.

Conflict trumps coherence

On the negative side: Whether Johnson intended this or not, his course might have a certain appeal to bright outsiders or fringe fellow-travelers struggling with the "big questions" about a fragmented, wheat-and-tares Christianity and its poor record on many fronts. But I am not sure this presentation says enough about the real strengths of Christianity—at least, once this world religion has crossed the Constantinian Rubicon from marginalized sect to culture-shaping power—to be helpful to that audience (or, more seriously, to leave any audience with a balanced, well-rounded sense of the faith).

There is about this course the whiff of the liberal historian of yesteryear who surveyed church history only to show where the church has betrayed the "kernel of the Gospel"—which, upon close examination, turns out to be a flaccid, ill-defined religion of love. A modern example of this tired approach, pioneered by the nineteenth-century historian Adolf Harnack, is Robert Farrar Capon's tellingly titled ***The Astonished Heart: Reclaiming the Good News from the Lost-And-Found of Church History***. This approach is of course (and I am not accusing Johnson of this entirely, just as a tendency) one-sided, as it fails to show that even in the midst of great error and heartbreaking conflict, Jesus has continued to build his church, against which the gates of hell will not stand.

To state this more positively: One does sense that Johnson, as a believer who has taken his dedication to the faith so seriously that he has become a church historian (and perhaps more impressively, in a previous life, a Benedictine monk), trains this harsh light on the faith because he believes the truth of the Gospel and does not wish to see it obscured or diminished by the many errors of the human institutions that have attempted to live that truth in the world. And in the end, this "wounded lover" approach does make this tape series strong broth for strong Christians. But it is ***not*** introductory milk for baby

Christians, nor (***a fortiori***) an appropriate introduction for those whose prejudices against the church are already strongly formed in some of the directions Johnson explores.

It is not that the negatives Johnson describes are not truly part of the speckled history of the institutional church. Sadly, they are. Rather, though he begins well, hinting (he cannot do much more in this format) at the great power and resilience of the resurrection experience that catapulted the church to every land and tongue, he does not sustain this sense of the underlying spiritual power and intellectual coherence of Christianity. These themes become—especially in the course's last third—swallowed up in the negative point about tension and struggle.

Where the course may indeed be very helpful—because the things that it says are true!—is in deepening the understanding of Christians who lean to glib triumphalism. The mistakes of the past that Johnson portrays so concisely must indeed be reckoned with. We must understand that, as Christians, we belong to a body of human believers who are saved—but not yet perfected. There ain't no perfect church. If we identify any particular confession or ecclesiastical body as God's Own Way of Doing Things, we will end up defending some very peculiar behavior indeed. And this, for American believers especially, can be a valuable lesson.

For a nuanced presentation that is less heir to this problem, I recommend Johnson's more extended Teaching Company course: "Early Christianity: The Experience of the Divine." This course has the added merit of remaining in Johnson's area of scholarly specialty: New Testament and Christian Origins. And all of the strong points I list above apply here even more strongly.

For a later period, I also recommend Brad Gregory's "History of Christianity in the Reformation Era." Gregory's course, in particular, is a sterling example of how church history can be done in a mode that is both critical and affirming. He deals with one of the most divisive and violent periods of Christian history, the Reformation era, yet gives a strong sense of why so many people found this faith worth fighting and dying for. We hear much more of the voice of those involved. (I intend to review, on this site, both of the courses just mentioned. These and other courses are available at the Teaching Company's site, www.teach12.com.)

The bottom line:

Mature Christians who are not shaken by the organizing principle of the course—the paradox that Christianity has always taught a message of peace and unity and has always become entangled with conflict and division—will find much meat here. They will be challenged in a positive way as they listen to the last one-third of the course, where Johnson lays out the major areas of tension and conflict in the church's history: the split between the three major confessions, the wrangles of Christianity and politics, the tensions of Christianity and culture, and the struggle of modern Christianity to answer the critical challenge of the Enlightenment and make its way in a secularizing society. For this audience, the course is a worthy choice.