

CHARISMATIC CONFUSION

Updated and Expanded

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and

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Contents

Charismatic Confusion in the 21st Century	7
Preface to the Updated Edition	9
The First Wave: Classical Pentecostalism	11
The Second Wave: The Charismatic Movement	15
The Third Wave: Signs and Wonders	19
Charismatic Confusion	23
Preface to the Original Edition	25
Exegetical Confusion	27
Dispensational Confusion	33
Theological Confusion	43
Ecclesiastical Confusion	49
Conclusion	57
Bibliography	59

**CHARISMATIC
CONFUSION
IN THE
21ST CENTURY**

Preface to the Updated Edition

I am honored that the editors at Regular Baptist Press have asked me to update the booklet entitled *Charismatic Confusion* written by my former theology professor, Dr. Ernest D. Pickering. It was published in 1976 by Baptist Bible College, Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania, and later published by Regular Baptist Press.

Rather than interrupting the flow of Dr. Pickering's work with my thoughts, I have chosen to provide this introductory update to the current charismatic scene and then to provide some current data for Dr. Pickering's original work.

In this update I intend to accomplish three goals.

First, I will sharpen the distinction between classical Pentecostalism (known as the "first wave" of the twentieth-century renewal of the gifts) and the charismatic movement (known as the

“second wave”). A reference work that I found very helpful is *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (revised and expanded edition, Stanley M. Burgess, editor, Eduard M. van der Maas, associate editor; hereafter identified as NIDPCM).

Second, I will describe the “third wave,” a movement that promotes and emphasizes “signs and wonders” but which did not exist at the time Dr. Pickering wrote his booklet.

Third, and finally, I will supplement each of the four major sections of Dr. Pickering’s work with updated material.

These updates are found under the heading of “Confusion in the 21st Century” at the conclusion of each of Dr. Pickering’s chapters.

The First Wave: Classical Pentecostalism

This movement began in the early 1900s among Wesleyan (or Holiness) people who believed God wanted to perform two works of grace in the life of a person: *salvation* in which one's sins were pardoned and a later work called *sanctification* in which the root of sin was replaced by intense love for God. For Wesleyans who had embraced Pentecostalism, speaking in tongues became the inevitable evidence of a third work of grace: the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Generally when Holiness people began to speak in tongues, their denominations expelled them, and so they formed new organizations. Two such groups are the Church of God (Cleveland,

Tennessee) and the Pentecostal Holiness Church (since 1975 known as the International Pentecostal Holiness Church; NIDP-CM, 800).

Soon people from non-Wesleyan churches were speaking in tongues. They rejected the idea that believers could have the root of sin removed in an experience called sanctification. Instead they saw speaking in tongues as an evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit for power in growth and service. These people were known as “finished work” Pentecostals. The Assemblies of God denomination promotes this belief.

Another major theological division among early Pentecostals concerned the baptismal formula: Should one be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or in the name of Jesus Christ? Among those who argued for the latter formula were some who denied the triune nature of the Godhead, teaching instead the idea that there is only one Person in the Godhead. They believe Jesus is the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Many of these people began to teach that water baptism in the name of Jesus, along with speaking in tongues, was necessary for the forgiveness of sins. The United Pentecostal Church advocates this view.

Classical Pentecostals taught that all of the gifts had been restored, and this included healing. They believed that Christ’s death not only purchased forgiveness of sins but also healing for the body, and that believers have a right to claim both benefits. Support for faith healers like Kathryn Kuhlman and Oral Roberts has always been great. Another healing evangelist, Kenneth Hagin, Sr., has had a Pentecostal ministry since the late 1930s that has emphasized not only healing but prosperity as God’s will for believers.

Characteristics of classical Pentecostalism include (1) a heritage originating in the early 1900s, (2) a strong emphasis on both personal and organizational separation, (3) a belief that security was conditional, thus salvation could be lost, and (4) an insistence that speaking in tongues was the necessary initial evidence of the

baptism of the Holy Spirit. Usually the early Pentecostals were lower-income, blue-collar workers who had been marginalized by American society. Initially there was racial integration among these Pentecostals, but soon segregated church groups were formed.