CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANITIES IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH II

SOUTHERN TRADITIONS REVISITED I: THE LOST CAUSE AND RATTLE SNAKE RELIGION
FOUR GRAND DIVISIONS CLASSES

- Hospitality & Hurricane Katrina Responses
- Rock of Ages Cleft for Me: Southern Traditions Revisited
- Brand New Start: Southern Religious Innovations
- Southern Christianities in Harmony and Conflict
TWO TOPICS

The Religion of the Lost Cause, Reloaded

Rattlesnake Religion, Holiness, and the Nearness of the Holy Spirit
THE RELIGION OF THE LOST CAUSE, RELOADED

• Rev. Dr. J. Phillip Noble’s Question: “Why do so many people from Charleston like to go to China?”

• Edward Pollard and the Lost Cause

• Charles Reagan Wilson’s *Baptized in Blood*

• Father Abraham Ryan’s niece
The Unburied

Dead of the 2nd South Carolina Infantry lie in partially finished graves on the Rose Farm, the process interrupted on July 3 by the approach of Union troops. This photograph was taken by Alexander Gardner on July 5 or 6, 1863. (Library of Congress)
REMEMBERING AND MISREMEMBERING HISTORY

PRESBYTERIAN DEACON GEN. THOMAS "STONEWALL" JACKSON

UNITED DAUGHTERS OF CONFEDERACY 1894

SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS 1896

MANSIONS AND PLANTATIONS-ENSLAVED PERSONS OR SLAVES AND SERVANTS

CAUSES OF THE WAR
THE BATTLE FLAG OF THE ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA BECOMES SOMETHING ELSE
CAN A FLAG KILL?
“I love Christ, church, and family more than Mississippi, but that’s about it. Even so, that battle flag makes me wince—even though I’m the descendant of Confederate veterans.

“The gospel speaks to this. The idea of a human being attempting to “own” another human being is abhorrent in a Christian view of humanity. That should hardly need to be said these days, though it does, given the modern-day slavery enterprises of human trafficking all over the world. In the Scriptures, humanity is given dominion over the creation. We are not given dominion over our fellow image-bearing human beings (Gen. 1:27-30). The southern system of chattel slavery was built off of the things the Scripture condemns as wicked: “man-stealing” (1 Tim. 1:10), the theft of another’s labor (Jas. 5:1-6), the breaking up of families, and on and on.

“Even beyond that, though, the Flag has taken on yet another contextual meaning in the years since. The Confederate Battle Flag was the emblem of Jim Crow defiance to the civil rights movement, of the Dixiecrat opposition to integration, and of the domestic terrorism of the Ku Klux Klan and the White Citizens’ Councils of our all too recent, all too awful history.

“White Christians ought to think about what that flag says to our African-American brothers and sisters in Christ, especially in the aftermath of yet another act of white supremacist terrorism against them. The gospel frees us from scrapping for our “heritage” at the expense of others.”

Rev. Dr. Russell Moore, President of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU THINK OF PENTECOSTAL CHRISTIANS?
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RATTLESNAKES, HOLINESS, AND THE NEARNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

• "Are you going to write about snake handlers?"

• "If southern Christians believe the Bible literally, why don’t they take up serpents?"
14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

[Chapter 16 KJV]
A BRIEF HISTORY OF SOUTHERN PENTECOSTALISM

• NT Restorationism, especially Landmarkism
• Holiness Phase, mostly Methodist movement to achieve entire sanctification in this life. Huge and divisive in the South.
• Teaching that the Blessing of the Holy Spirit accompanies Sanctification.
• Next comes the Gift of Tongues, given as a confirmation of the Blessing of the Holy Spirit —taught by Parham in Topeka and Houston, it is taken by Wm. J. Stewart to Los Angeles, who starts the Azusa Street Revival 1906-1915
• Pentecost in California
Azusa Street Revival, 1906-13
Pentecost Has Come

Los Angeles Being Visited by a Revival of Bible Salvation and Pentecost as Recorded in the Book of Acts

The power of God was manifested in the city of Los Angeles in a way that had not been seen in over a century. A great number of people were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. This event was recorded in the Book of Acts.

Many received the gift of speaking in tongues and wrote of their experiences. One person described how they spoke in a language they had never learned before and that only those who spoke the same language could understand. Another person wrote about how they were filled with a new joy and peace that they had never felt before.

The revival continued for several weeks and many people were saved and baptized in the name of Jesus. It was a time of great spiritual awakening and many benefited from the power of the Holy Spirit.

In conclusion, the revival in Los Angeles was a significant event in the history of the church. It showed that the power of God is still at work in the world today and that He is ready to fill His people with His Spirit whenever they seek Him.
SOUTHERN PENTECOSTALS

• Church of God in Christ (Memphis), Church of God (Cleveland, TN), United Pentecostals are all early adopters and by the 1916 U.S. Religious Census most Pentecostals were in the South

• The Actual Pentecost Experience of the Presence of the Holy Spirit, with Tongues, Healing, and Signs

• Expectation of Christ’s imminent return
HOW DO YOU RECOGNIZE A PENTECOSTAL CHURCH?

Greater Harvest Church of God
True Way Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ
Grace Apostolic Church
The Original Church of God
Redemptive Way Assembly of God
Cathedral of Praise Inc.
Spanish Pentecostal Church of God
Hendersonville Pentecostal Church
Pentecostal Assembly Church
The Turning Point

Christ Church
Full Gospel Mission Church
True Christian Pentecostal Witnesses
New Life Apostolic Church
Friendship Pentecostal Church
First United Pentecostal Church
East Nashville United Pentecostal
Living Word International Church
Emmanuel Church of Christ

Original Christ Temple Church
Bethel House of God
Cornerstone Church
Emmanuel Apostolic Temple
Greater Christ
East Nashville Point of Mercy
Jerusalem Pentecostal Church
Church of God Sanctified
First Apostolic Church
MODERN PENTECOSTALS AND PENTECOSALIZATION
DARKNESS AND LIGHT

• Pentecostalism is down on this world and Jesus is coming soon to save us from this world, not to make it better.

• Premillennial interests, Armageddon talk (think Pat Robertson and TBN)

• And yet, Pentecostalism may be the most hopeful Christianity there is, for the Holy Spirit is even nearer than any evil and is waiting on God’s faithful so that they can do all things through Him who gives them strength.
“HEAVEN BELOW”

• Since God’s Holy Spirit did everything, Holy Spirit-filled Christians did nothing. But since Holy Spirit-filled Christians did nothing, they were free to do everything. That conviction, as inspiring as it was ironic, gave Saints the two greatest goods that mortal existence had to offer: a life beyond in all its fullness, and the life at hand in all its richness. It was heaven below. Grant Wacker
WHO’S PENTECOSTAL NOW?

• 40% of Pentecostals never speak in tongues, and only 25% of P’s churches usually feature tongues speech (Pew 2006)

• More and more churches feature praise music, women leading worship, preaching without a pulpit, and hands being raised to God, hymnals are going away, while few evangelical churches are policing their racial boundaries