THE RETURN OF THE

LATTER RAIN MOVEMENT

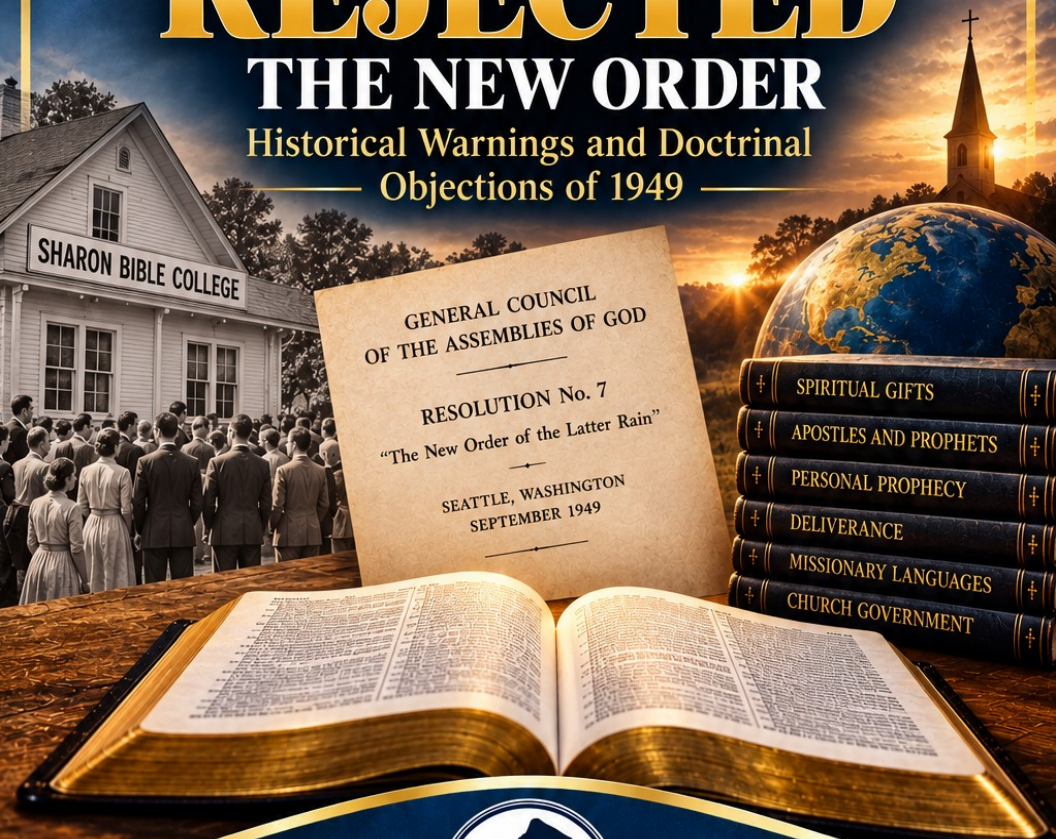
BOOKLET SIX

WHY PENTECOSTAL LEADERS

REJECTED

THE NEW ORDER

Historical Warnings and Doctrinal Objections of 1949



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THE RETURN OF THE LATTER RAIN MOVEMENT

WHY PENTECOSTAL LEADERS REJECTED THE NEW ORDER

Historical Warnings and Doctrinal Objections of 1949

Foundational Scriptures: Acts 2:42; Acts 17:10–11; 1 Corinthians 12:4–11; 1 Corinthians 14:29–33; Ephesians 2:19–22; Ephesians 4:11–16; 1 Thessalonians 5:19–22; 1 John 4:1; Jude 3.

Central Truth: Genuine revival must remain subject to the written Word of God. The Holy Ghost distributes spiritual gifts, but no individual or group may claim authority to bestow those gifts at will, establish a new foundation of apostles and prophets, or impose personal direction upon believers through supposed revelation.

INTRODUCTION

When Pentecostal Leaders Said No

In our previous studies, we examined the origins of the New Order of the Latter Rain, its emergence at North Battleford, Saskatchewan, in 1948, and the religious influences that preceded it.

We considered the earlier healing ministry of John Alexander Dowie, the postwar healing revival associated with William Branham, and the documented influence of Branham's November 1947 Vancouver meetings upon individuals connected with Sharon Orphanage and Schools.

By February 1948, the meetings at Sharon had become associated with prophecy, spiritual gifts, the laying on of hands, and expectations of a major restoration within the church.

News of the revival spread rapidly.

Ministers and believers traveled to North Battleford to investigate what was happening.

Some returned to their congregations enthusiastic about the spiritual experiences they had witnessed.

Others became concerned about teachings and practices that accompanied the movement.

By 1949, the controversy had become sufficiently serious that established Pentecostal leaders began issuing formal warnings.

Among the most significant responses was a resolution adopted by the General Council of the Assemblies of God in September 1949.

That resolution expressly disapproved of the movement known as the New Order of the Latter Rain.

This was not a rejection of Pentecostal experience.

The Assemblies of God had been founded upon belief in the baptism of the Holy Ghost, speaking in tongues, divine healing, and the continuing operation of spiritual gifts.

The controversy concerned the teachings being attached to those experiences.

Could spiritual gifts be imparted by particular ministers?

Could modern apostles and prophets become the foundation of the church?

Could personal prophecies establish God's will for another person's life?

Could human ministers exercise authority that properly belonged to Jesus Christ?

These were not minor questions.

They concerned the authority, doctrine, and government of the church.

The historical importance of the 1949 controversy is that it demonstrates how Pentecostal leaders who believed in supernatural spiritual gifts nevertheless rejected claims that went beyond Scripture.

Their warnings deserve careful consideration today.

1. THE RAPID SPREAD OF THE NEW ORDER

The revival at Sharon Orphanage and Schools began attracting attention in February 1948.

The religious community was associated with leaders including George Hawtin, Ern Hawtin, Percy G. Hunt, and Herrick Holt.

Participants described experiences involving prophecy, spiritual gifts, prayer, and the laying on of hands.

Reports circulated through *The Sharon Star* and through ministers who visited the meetings.

During 1948, the movement spread beyond North Battleford.

Individuals associated with the revival ministered in churches and gatherings across Canada and the United States.

Certain congregations became important centers of Latter Rain influence.

Among the best-known was Bethesda Missionary Temple in Detroit, Michigan, pastored by Myrtle D. Beall.

The movement also attracted interest in Vancouver and other Pentecostal communities.

Not everyone who participated understood the revival in exactly the same way.

Some emphasized worship, prayer, and spiritual renewal.

Others placed greater importance upon the restoration of church ministries, prophetic direction, and the impartation of spiritual gifts.

As the movement expanded, these differences became increasingly significant.

The rapid spread of a revival can generate enthusiasm before its doctrines have been carefully examined.

But popularity does not establish biblical truth.

Acts 17:11 (KJV)

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

The Bereans did not reject teaching simply because it was new to them.

Neither did they accept it without examination.

They searched the Scriptures.

That remains the proper response to every revival movement.

2. THE PENTECOSTAL RESPONSE BEGAN BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1949

The September 1949 resolution did not emerge without earlier concern.

As reports of the New Order circulated, ministers and denominational leaders began questioning particular practices.

In Canada, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada had already experienced organizational disagreements involving George Hawtin before the North Battleford revival began.

Those earlier disputes should not be confused with the later doctrinal controversy.

The disagreement concerning Hawtin's previous institutional relationships preceded the February 1948 revival.

The later controversy concerned the teachings and practices that developed around the New Order.

In the United States, Assemblies of God leaders also began addressing concerns before the September General Council.

A communication dated April 20, 1949, warned ministers about practices associated with the movement.

The subsequent General Council action formalized the denomination's objections.

This chronology is important.

The movement was not rejected merely because one meeting produced an emotional reaction.

The controversy developed over time as its teachings became more widely known.

Nor did every Pentecostal leader respond identically.

Some welcomed the movement.

Some participated enthusiastically before becoming concerned.

Others opposed it from an early stage.

Historical accuracy requires us to recognize those differences.

Nevertheless, by September 1949, the Assemblies of God had reached a formal organizational conclusion.

3. THE 1949 GENERAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION

In September 1949, the Assemblies of God held its Twenty-Third General Council in Seattle, Washington.

The council adopted Resolution No. 7, commonly identified by its subject, *The New Order of the Latter Rain*.

The resolution expressed support for a continuing outpouring of the Holy Spirit founded upon the clear teaching of Scripture.

It then identified six categories of teaching and practice that the council disapproved.

The principal objections concerned:

1. An overemphasis upon imparting, identifying, bestowing, or confirming spiritual gifts through the laying on of hands and prophecy.
2. The teaching that the church is founded upon present-day apostles and prophets.
3. Extreme practices involving confession of sins to human beings and deliverance that attributed to human ministers prerogatives belonging to Christ.
4. The supposed impartation of languages as special equipment for missionary service.
5. The practice of imposing personal direction upon believers through prophetic utterances.
6. Other interpretations and distortions of Scripture that conflicted with the denomination's accepted teaching.

These were the resolution's historical objections, summarized here rather than reproduced as a complete official document.

The distinction matters because the resolution was not a comprehensive condemnation of every experience reported during the revival.

It addressed identifiable doctrines and practices.

We should also remember that the Assemblies of God is a Trinitarian Pentecostal denomination.

Its theological position differs from classical Oneness Pentecostalism concerning the Godhead and baptism.

Therefore, our examination does not require accepting every doctrine or organizational position of the Assemblies of God.

The historical resolution provides evidence of what its leaders rejected in 1949.

Each objection must still be evaluated independently by Scripture.

4. THE FIRST OBJECTION — IMPARTING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

One of the most prominent practices associated with the New Order was the laying on of hands for the impartation or confirmation of spiritual gifts.

The movement frequently appealed to biblical passages concerning the laying on of hands and prophecy.

The New Testament certainly records the laying on of hands.

It also records the operation of spiritual gifts.

1 Timothy 4:14 (KJV)

"Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."

Paul also wrote:

2 Timothy 1:6 (KJV)

"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."

These passages must not be ignored.

They establish that prophecy and the laying on of hands were present in New Testament ministry.

But they must be interpreted alongside the broader teaching of Scripture.

1 Corinthians 12:11 (KJV)

"But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

The Holy Ghost distributes spiritual gifts according to His own will.

The New Testament does not teach that certain ministers possess independent authority to assign whatever spiritual gifts they choose to other believers.

Prayer and the laying on of hands are biblical.

But the authority to distribute gifts belongs to God.

A minister may pray for a believer.

He may recognize evidence of a spiritual calling.

He may offer instruction, encouragement, and confirmation.

But he cannot guarantee that a particular gift will be transferred merely because he declares it.

The distinction is between **praying for what God gives** and **claiming human authority to distribute what belongs to God**.

That was at the heart of the first objection.

5. THE SECOND OBJECTION — PRESENT-DAY APOSTLES AND PROPHETS AS THE FOUNDATION

The second objection concerned the claim that the church must be built upon present-day apostles and prophets.

This issue reaches directly into the nature of church authority.

The New Testament speaks of apostles and prophets.

It also teaches that Jesus Christ gave ministries to the church.

Ephesians 4:11–12 (KJV)

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"

These verses must be understood in their context.

Christ gives ministries for the strengthening and maturity of His church.

However, Ephesians also identifies the church's foundation.

Ephesians 2:19–20 (KJV)

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;"

The foundation described here is inseparably connected with Jesus Christ and the apostolic revelation of the gospel.

The church does not need a new foundation in every generation.

The doctrine delivered through Christ's apostles remains authoritative.

The problem arises when modern religious leaders claim a governmental authority equivalent to that of the foundational apostles.

Such leaders may teach that congregations must submit to their apostolic covering.

They may claim authority to establish doctrine, direct churches, or determine God's will for believers through personal revelation.

But Scripture does not establish a continuing class of modern apostles with authority to supersede or supplement the apostolic foundation.

The church is governed by Jesus Christ through His Word.

Pastors and other ministers are responsible to teach, shepherd, and serve according to Scripture.

They are not authorized to become an alternative foundation.

1 Corinthians 3:11 (KJV)

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

This issue will receive fuller examination in Booklet Seven.

For now, we must recognize that the objection raised in 1949 was not simply about the use of the word *apostle*.

It concerned the authority being claimed.

6. THE THIRD OBJECTION — CONFESSION, DELIVERANCE, AND HUMAN AUTHORITY

The third objection concerned extreme teachings and practices involving the confession of sins to human beings and deliverance.

The concern was that human ministers were claiming prerogatives that properly belonged to Jesus Christ.

Scripture does teach the importance of confession.

James 5:16 (KJV)

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Believers should be honest about their faults.

They should seek prayer and spiritual help.

Pastors should counsel believers with compassion and biblical wisdom.

But there is a difference between biblical confession and a system in which a minister claims exclusive authority to identify, expose, or remove another person's sins through supernatural revelation.

Forgiveness of sins is grounded in the saving work of Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 2:5 (KJV)

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"

No minister becomes an additional mediator between a believer and God.

No supposed prophet has the right to demand disclosure of private matters simply because he claims supernatural knowledge.

No individual should be placed under spiritual control through fear of what a minister might reveal.

Likewise, prayer for deliverance must remain subject to Scripture.

The New Testament records the casting out of devils in the name of Jesus Christ.

But it does not authorize ministers to exercise unrestricted control over believers through claims of spiritual authority.

The authority belongs to Jesus Christ.

The minister is His servant.

7. THE FOURTH OBJECTION — LANGUAGES FOR MISSIONARY SERVICE

Another objection concerned the supposed impartation of languages as special equipment for missionary work.

This requires careful distinction because the New Testament records genuine supernatural language manifestations.

On the Day of Pentecost, believers spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 2:4 (KJV)

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

The surrounding passage describes people from various nations hearing the wonderful works of God in their own languages.

The miracle was genuine.

But the passage does not establish that ministers can assign foreign languages to missionaries through prophetic declarations.

Neither does it teach that believers may dispense with learning the languages of the people they intend to reach.

The Holy Ghost can empower believers in extraordinary ways.

But a biblical event must not be transformed into a universal promise that Scripture does not make.

Missionaries should seek the power of the Holy Ghost.

They should also prepare responsibly for their work.

The objection was not to speaking in tongues.

It concerned claims about the purpose and impartation of particular languages that went beyond the biblical teaching.

This illustrates an important principle.

A doctrine can begin with a genuine biblical event and still become unbiblical when unsupported conclusions are added.

8. THE FIFTH OBJECTION — IMPOSING PERSONAL DIRECTION THROUGH PROPHECY

Perhaps one of the most practically significant objections concerned personal prophecy.

The New Testament teaches that prophecy operated within the early church.

It also teaches that prophetic utterances must be evaluated.

1 Corinthians 14:29 (KJV)

"Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge."

Paul did not teach that every prophetic statement must be accepted automatically.

He required examination.

The problem arises when a person claims divine authority to determine another believer's decisions.

A supposed prophet may announce whom someone should marry.

He may declare that a person must relocate, leave a church, enter a ministry, or submit to a particular leader.

He may claim that questioning the instruction is equivalent to resisting God.

Such practices can produce confusion, fear, and spiritual dependence.

Scripture does not authorize a minister to replace another believer's responsibility to obey God's Word and exercise sound judgment.

Pastors should provide biblical counsel.

Mature believers should offer wisdom and encouragement.

The Holy Ghost may bring conviction and direction.

But no personal prophecy should become an unquestionable command simply because someone declares, "Thus saith the Lord."

The church must distinguish between spiritual encouragement and imposed personal control.

1 Thessalonians 5:19–21 (KJV)

"Quench not the Spirit.

Despise not prophesyings.

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

Notice the balance.

We are not instructed to despise prophecy.

We are instructed to examine it.

The genuine operation of the Spirit does not eliminate accountability.

9. THE SIXTH OBJECTION — DISTORTING SCRIPTURE

The final category of the 1949 resolution concerned interpretations of Scripture that the denomination considered distorted or inconsistent with its accepted teaching.

This objection was broad.

It therefore requires careful handling.

Not every disagreement with an established denomination proves that a teaching is unbiblical.

Denominations can be mistaken.

Religious traditions can preserve errors.

The authority of Scripture stands above every organization.

Nevertheless, a movement that repeatedly introduces new doctrines through private revelations, symbolic interpretations, and supposed prophetic mysteries creates serious concerns.

Scripture must not be used merely as a collection of phrases to support ideas that originated elsewhere.

The meaning of a passage must be examined in context.

Historical background, grammar, audience, and the teaching of the rest of Scripture all matter.

2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

The church must distinguish between a biblical teaching and a speculative interpretation.

This is especially important when an interpretation becomes the basis for new spiritual offices, governmental structures, or claims of authority.

A teaching is not established simply because someone finds a verse that can be made to sound similar.

The question is whether the doctrine actually follows from Scripture.

10. WHY THIS WAS NOT A REJECTION OF THE HOLY GHOST

The 1949 controversy is sometimes described as a struggle between institutional Pentecostalism and spiritual freedom.

There were undoubtedly organizational tensions.

Established leaders were concerned about the influence of a rapidly expanding independent movement.

Participants in the New Order sometimes regarded denominational resistance as evidence that religious institutions were opposing revival.

But this explanation is incomplete.

The Assemblies of God already believed in divine healing, speaking in tongues, prophecy, and spiritual gifts.

Its leaders were not rejecting those teachings as such.

They were rejecting particular claims concerning their operation and authority.

This distinction is important for Apostolic Pentecostals.

We believe in the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

We believe in the operation of spiritual gifts.

We believe that God answers prayer and heals the sick.

We believe that the church should experience genuine spiritual renewal.

But none of those convictions requires us to accept the teachings of the New Order.

1 Corinthians 14:33 (KJV)

"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."

Spiritual power and biblical order are not enemies.

The Holy Ghost who inspired the Scriptures will not require believers to disregard them.

11. THE ROLE OF PASTORAL AUTHORITY

One of the practical dangers in restorationist movements is the weakening of biblical pastoral responsibility.

A visiting prophet may claim to know God's will for members of a congregation.

An outside apostle may assert authority over a local church.

A believer may be encouraged to follow a personal prophecy that contradicts sound pastoral counsel.

Such situations create serious problems.

The New Testament gives pastors responsibility to watch for the souls entrusted to their care.

Hebrews 13:17 (KJV)

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

This responsibility is not unlimited personal control.

Pastors themselves are subject to Jesus Christ and His Word.

They must not exercise authority as though they own the people of God.

1 Peter 5:2–3 (KJV)

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."

Biblical pastoral leadership is accountable, scriptural, and exercised through service.

It is not replaced by self-appointed apostles or traveling prophets.

Neither should it become authoritarian in reaction to them.

The proper answer to false spiritual authority is not another form of uncontrolled authority.

It is faithful submission to Jesus Christ and His Word.

12. WHY SOME PENTECOSTAL MINISTERS SUPPORTED THE MOVEMENT

Historical fairness requires us to acknowledge that not every established Pentecostal minister opposed the New Order.

Some respected ministers and congregations welcomed aspects of the revival.

Stanley Frodsham, a longtime editor of *The Pentecostal Evangel*, became associated with the movement.

His participation demonstrates that the controversy did not divide neatly between experienced Pentecostal ministers and inexperienced revival enthusiasts.

Some individuals believed the movement represented a genuine renewal of spiritual gifts.

They were impressed by worship, prayer, prophecy, and testimonies of changed lives.

Others believed that Pentecostal denominations had become too cautious or institutional.

These perspectives help explain the movement's appeal.

However, sincerity and ministerial experience do not establish doctrinal correctness.

A respected minister can make a mistaken judgment.

A genuine spiritual experience can be interpreted incorrectly.

A congregation can experience renewal while also adopting unsound teachings.

The church must evaluate the teaching itself.

Galatians 1:8 (KJV)

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

The authority of the gospel does not change according to the reputation of the messenger.

13. THE RESPONSE OF OTHER PENTECOSTAL BODIES

The Assemblies of God was not the only Pentecostal organization concerned about the New Order.

The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada also opposed aspects of the movement.

Other Pentecostal bodies and leaders expressed reservations concerning its teachings and practices.

Their responses were not identical.

The historical record should not be simplified into a claim that every Pentecostal denomination adopted the same resolution or agreed on every objection.

Some groups responded through official statements.

Others addressed the controversy through articles, correspondence, and ministerial discussions.

The important historical point is that concern extended beyond a single organization.

The New Order raised questions about spiritual gifts, church government, and biblical authority that were significant across Pentecostal circles.

This broader opposition helps explain why the movement increasingly developed through independent congregations and networks.

It also helps explain why certain teachings survived outside the denominational structures that had rejected them.

14. WHY THE MOVEMENT CONTINUED AFTER ITS REJECTION

The 1949 resolution did not bring the New Order of the Latter Rain to an immediate end.

The movement had already spread beyond North Battleford.

Independent churches and ministers continued to promote aspects of its teaching.

Some congregations became centers of continuing influence.

Others adopted selected practices without embracing the movement's entire doctrinal system.

Over time, the original organizational identity became less important in some settings.

Ideas could survive even when the name associated with them became controversial.

A church might reject the term *Latter Rain* while continuing to emphasize restored apostles, prophetic impartation, or special spiritual government.

This does not mean that every later charismatic or apostolic movement descended directly from North Battleford.

Historical continuity must be demonstrated rather than assumed.

Nevertheless, the survival and later adaptation of certain teachings is an important part of the story.

It helps explain why the questions raised in 1949 remain relevant.

15. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RESTORATION AND ADDITION

The New Testament teaches that the church must remain faithful to the doctrine delivered by the apostles.

Throughout history, Christians have sometimes neglected biblical truths.

A church may need renewed emphasis upon prayer.

It may need to recover biblical teaching concerning holiness, evangelism, spiritual gifts, or pastoral responsibility.

Such renewal is appropriate when it brings believers back into obedience to Scripture.

But there is a difference between restoring biblical practice and adding doctrines that Scripture does not establish.

The church does not need new foundational apostles.

It does not need a prophetic hierarchy through which believers must receive divine direction.

It does not need ministers who claim authority to distribute spiritual gifts independently of the Holy Ghost.

It does not need new revelations that become necessary for understanding the gospel.

Jude 3 (KJV)

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

The faith was delivered to the saints.

The church is called to contend for it.

We may grow in our understanding of Scripture.

We may become more faithful in applying it.

But we are not authorized to establish another foundation.

16. WHAT THE 1949 WARNINGS MEAN FOR THE CHURCH TODAY

The concerns raised in 1949 should not remain merely a historical curiosity.

The same questions can arise whenever a religious movement claims extraordinary spiritual authority.

A minister may claim that God has appointed him as an apostle over churches.

A prophet may declare personal instructions for believers.

A religious leader may promise to impart gifts or anointings through a special ceremony.

A movement may teach that its leaders possess revelation necessary for the church to enter a new spiritual age.

These claims must be examined.

The church should ask whether the teaching is explicitly supported by Scripture.

It should ask whether the practice honors the authority of Jesus Christ.

It should ask whether believers remain free to examine prophetic claims.

It should ask whether pastors are being encouraged to shepherd responsibly or pressured to submit to an outside hierarchy.

It should ask whether spiritual gifts are being exercised for the edification of the church or used to establish the reputation and control of individuals.

The New Testament gives us a standard.

1 Corinthians 14:26 (KJV)

"Let all things be done unto edifying."

Spiritual gifts are intended to build up the body of Christ.

They are not given to create dependence upon religious personalities.

17. DISCERNMENT WITHOUT EXTINGUISHING REVIVAL

There are two errors the church must avoid.

The first is accepting every spiritual claim without examination.

The second is rejecting every supernatural manifestation because some individuals have misused spiritual gifts.

Neither position is biblical.

Paul instructed the Thessalonian believers not to quench the Spirit.

He also instructed them to prove all things.

These commands belong together.

A church that refuses to examine prophecy is not being more spiritual.

A church that rejects all prophecy because of abuse is not following the full instruction of Scripture either.

Biblical discernment requires both openness to God's genuine work and submission to His written Word.

The Holy Ghost is not threatened by biblical examination.

The Spirit of truth does not require believers to suspend judgment.

He leads them into truth.

The proper response to spiritual abuse is not unbelief.

It is obedience.

The proper response to doctrinal confusion is not the abandonment of spiritual gifts.

It is the restoration of biblical order.

18. LESSONS FROM THE PENTECOSTAL RESPONSE OF 1949

The historical controversy provides several important lessons.

Revival Must Be Tested by Scripture

- Large crowds, emotional worship, and extraordinary testimonies do not establish doctrinal truth.

Spiritual Gifts Belong to the Holy Ghost

- Ministers may pray and lay hands upon believers, but the Spirit distributes gifts according to His will.

The Church Has an Established Foundation

- Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone, and the church must remain faithful to the foundational apostolic doctrine.

Prophecy Must Be Examined

- No personal prophetic statement should be treated as unquestionable authority over another believer.

Ministers Must Not Claim Christ's Prerogatives

- Pastors and other ministers are servants of Jesus Christ, not additional mediators or independent sources of divine authority.

Historical Movements Must Be Evaluated Fairly

- Not every participant in the New Order believed or practiced exactly the same things. The movement's teachings must be examined specifically rather than through sweeping accusations.

Biblical Order Protects Genuine Revival

- The church does not need to choose between spiritual power and scriptural accountability. Both belong in New Testament Christianity.

19. THE FINAL AUTHORITY IS STILL THE WORD OF GOD

The 1949 controversy reveals a recurring problem in Christian history.

A movement begins with a desire for spiritual renewal.

Extraordinary experiences attract attention.

Leaders interpret those experiences as evidence of a special restoration.

New teachings emerge concerning authority, gifts, and divine direction.

Eventually, believers must decide whether the movement's claims are established by Scripture.

The same test applies today.

1 John 4:1 (KJV)

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

The command is not to believe every claim.

It is to test the spirits.

Acts 2:42 (KJV)

"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

The early church continued in the apostles' doctrine.

It did not continually search for a new apostolic foundation.

Ephesians 4:14 (KJV)

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;"

Spiritual maturity protects believers from being carried away by changing doctrines.

The answer is not a new revelation.

The answer is a deeper understanding of the revelation God has already given.

CONCLUSION

The Warnings of 1949 Still Matter

The New Order of the Latter Rain emerged from the revival at North Battleford in February 1948.

Its influence spread rapidly through Pentecostal churches and independent ministries.

Participants emphasized prophecy, spiritual gifts, the laying on of hands, and the restoration of New Testament ministries.

Some regarded the movement as a genuine spiritual awakening.

Others became concerned that certain teachings were moving beyond Scripture.

In September 1949, the Assemblies of God formally disapproved of the New Order.

Its resolution identified six principal areas of concern, including the impartation of spiritual gifts, present-day apostles and prophets as the foundation of the church, extreme confession and deliverance practices, the

impartation of missionary languages, imposed personal prophecy, and distorted scriptural interpretation.

The resolution did not represent a rejection of the Holy Ghost or the biblical operation of spiritual gifts.

It represented a judgment that particular teachings and practices were unscriptural.

Although we do not share every doctrinal position of the Assemblies of God, the historical objections raise important biblical questions.

The church must never confuse supernatural experience with doctrinal authority.

The laying on of hands does not give ministers independent control over the gifts of the Spirit.

Prophecy does not authorize personal domination.

Modern religious leaders cannot replace the foundation established through Jesus Christ and His apostles.

And no movement, regardless of its reputation or influence, possesses authority to establish doctrines beyond the Word of God.

The New Order continued through independent ministries and networks, and some of its teachings appeared in later religious movements.

Therefore, the issues raised in 1949 remain relevant.

The church should desire revival.

It should pray for the sick.

It should welcome the genuine operation of spiritual gifts.

It should expect the Holy Ghost to work among believers.

But it must never surrender the authority of Scripture.

Genuine revival does not require a new apostolic order. It requires the church to return to the doctrine, holiness, worship, and spiritual life revealed in the Word of God.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we thank You for the truth of Your Word and for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

We thank You that Your power has not diminished and that Your promises remain faithful.

Help us to desire genuine revival without accepting teachings that go beyond Scripture.

Give pastors wisdom to protect the congregations entrusted to their care.

Give believers discernment to examine spiritual claims with humility and courage.

Protect Your church from false authority, manipulation, and doctrines that place religious personalities above Your Word.

Teach us to exercise spiritual gifts in love, order, and submission to the Holy Ghost.

Keep us from despising genuine spiritual manifestations, but also keep us from accepting every claim without examination.

Help us remain steadfast in the apostles' doctrine.

May Jesus Christ always be the foundation, the head, and the center of Your church.

Let our desire be not for new titles or extraordinary positions, but for truth, holiness, salvation, and the genuine power of Your Spirit.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

HISTORICAL SOURCES AND FURTHER STUDY

1. **General Council of the Assemblies of God.** *Minutes of the Twenty-Third General Council*, Seattle, Washington, September 1949. Resolution No. 7, *The New Order of the Latter Rain*. Primary documentation of the denomination's formal objections.
2. **General Council of the Assemblies of God.** Ministerial communication dated April 20, 1949, addressing concerns about teachings associated with the New Order. Evidence that denominational warnings preceded the September resolution.
3. **Richard M. Riss.** *Latter Rain: The Latter Rain Movement of 1948 and the Mid-Twentieth Century Evangelical Awakening*. Historical study of the movement's origins, expansion, leadership, and relationship to established Pentecostal denominations.
4. **The Sharon Star.** Issues from 1948–1950. Contemporary publications associated with the North Battleford revival, useful for examining the movement's own presentation of its teachings and activities.
5. **Ernest Hawtin.** "How This Revival Began," *The Sharon Star*, August 1, 1949. A participant's account of the revival's beginnings.
6. **The Pentecostal Evangel.** Issues from 1948–1950. Contemporary Assemblies of God publications useful for examining Pentecostal responses to the movement.

7. **The Pentecostal Testimony.** Publications of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, including material addressing spiritual gifts and the New Order controversy in 1949.
8. **William W. Menzies.** *Anointed to Serve: The Story of the Assemblies of God*. Historical account of the denomination, including its response to the Latter Rain movement.
9. **Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center.** Historical archives, denominational minutes, periodicals, and related materials concerning Pentecostalism and the 1949 controversy.
10. **Historical research concerning Bethesda Missionary Temple, Myrtle D. Beall, and Stanley Frodsham.** Sources for understanding why some Pentecostal leaders supported the movement despite growing denominational opposition.

A note on historical interpretation: Official denominational records establish what an organization resolved or taught; they do not, by themselves, prove every allegation about the people or movements criticized. Likewise, revival publications document the claims and experiences reported by participants but do not independently verify every supernatural event.

SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER STUDY

The Foundation of the Church: Matthew 16:13–18; Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 3:10–11; Ephesians 2:19–22; Jude 3.

Spiritual Gifts and the Holy Ghost: Acts 2:1–18; Acts 8:14–20; 1 Corinthians 12:4–11; 1 Corinthians 14:1–33.

Laying on of Hands: Acts 6:1–6; Acts 8:14–20; Acts 13:1–3; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6; Hebrews 6:1–2.

Prophecy and Discernment: Deuteronomy 18:20–22; 1 Corinthians 14:29–33; 1 Thessalonians 5:19–22; 1 John 4:1–6.

Confession and Spiritual Authority: James 5:14–16; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:14–16; 1 Peter 5:1–4.

Pastoral Leadership: Acts 20:28–31; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:2–4.

Sound Doctrine: Acts 17:10–11; Galatians 1:6–9; Ephesians 4:11–16; 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Timothy 4:1–5.