"'Rescued Women': Early Pentecostal Responses to Sex Trafficking"

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In recent years, Pentecostal scholars have shown a particular interest how Pentecostals have engaged in social issues.[1] Among the social issues neglected in these conversations is the phenomenon of early Pentecostal engagement in working with victims of human trafficking and prostitution. Dubbed the "white slave trade" by social reformers in the late nineteenth century, organized efforts by both progressives and conservatives in American society campaigned to stop the sex trafficking of women across state lines. Advocates for legal reform of the "white slave trade" sought through laws and media campaigns to protect women from exploitation through prostitution and to preserve American culture during a time when the age of industrialization was producing social and racial anxiety. At the same time, its prejudicial focus on white women, while ignoring the plight of black women, reflects the racist attitudes in American culture. Nevertheless, "white slave" abolitionists felt compelled by their Christian faith to take up the cause of "rescuing" women caught up in this exploitive industry.

This paper will trace the history of early Pentecostal responses to sex trafficking and the related issue of prostitution. As early as 1907, Pentecostals took up the cause of "rescuing" women and established Pentecostal missions in the US and abroad. Stories of women who had been rescued Details about these missions were reported on the front pages of Pentecostal papers such as the *Bridegrooms Messenger, Apostolic Faith, Weekly Evangel* and the *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate*. This study explores Pentecostal views of society and culture as well as rhetoric about trafficked women especially the concepts of victimhood, guilt, and culpability for "fallen women." It will demonstrate how ministry to trafficked

[1] Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori. *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). Also illustrative of this interest is the 2018 Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies focused on Pentecostalism and Poverty and 2012 Meeting focused on Peacemaking and Social Justice.

women positively and negatively shaped Pentecostal attitudes toward women and dress in the Pentecostal tradition.

"Fallen Women" in the Progressive Era

Beginning in the 1830s, Great Britain enacted laws to address the growing problem of women in British society viewed as falling below the high standard of Victorian virtue, particularly related to the issue of prostitution.[2] While other vices were part of proper culture, sexual sins among women carried particular levels of disgrace and shame. Once a woman had "fallen" from virtue, as either a "wayward girl" or unwed mother, she had few options left to regain her place in society.[3] Like Fontine in Victor Hugo's classic *Les Miserables,* "fallen women" were forced out of society and were left with little to keep from supporting themselves through prostitution.[4] British society considered prostitutes to be of the lowest order, being associated with "filth, disease, and social contamination."[5] Societies such as the London Society for the Protection of Young Females and National Vigilance Association fought against the growing problem of unwed mothers and prostitution of young girls.

At the same time in America, Female Reform Societies were opening homes for prostitutes and unwed mothers in Boston and New York.[6] By the mid-1800s, social reformers in the Evangelical movement, such as the Salvation Army and the Florence Crittenton Missions, established "rescue homes" where women could be "saved" from their sinful lifestyles and re-integrated into society under proper "Anglo-Victorian gender values."[7] Rescue workers opened homes for women seeking freedom from houses of prostitution in order to reform their

[2] Elizabeth M. Johnson, "Buyers Without Remorse," *Texas Law Review* 92, no. 3 (February 2014): 721.

[3] Regina G. Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890—1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 15.

[4] Jessica Rae Pliley, "Any Other Immoral Purpose: The Mann Act, Policing Women, and the American State, 1900—1941," Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 2010, 33.

[5] Johnson, "Buyers Without Remorse," 721.

[6] Pricilla Pope-Levinson, *Building the Old Time Religion: Women Evangelists in the Progressive Era* (New York: NYU Press, 2014), 160.

[7] Pliley, "Any Other Immoral Purpose," 37.

immoral lifestyles and to re-domesticate women so they could return to proper society.[8]

Culturally, white Americans were experiencing anxiety over the loss of cultural norms from urbanization and industrialization, particularly over the liberalization of women. The idea of the "New Woman" or "working girl," who exerted control over their own personal lives represented a shift in narratives about women from the romantic, domestic, Victorian female to the liberated, politically active, urban, and industrious working-class woman.[9] As Brian Donovan points out, the societal renovations of the Progressive Era helped challenge the Victorian idea of the "passionlessness female" and was important for women regaining control of their passions and leisure.[10]

In conservative religious communities, the upward mobility of women was viewed as causing the breakdown of society and female virtue. Women who pursued the independence of the "working girl" life were thought to be vulnerable to become "fallen women," primarily through sexual autonomy. Lindsey McMaster notes, "Many felt that wage-earning women were exposing themselves to danger by entering the work place, living independently and engaging in a lively social life that appeared promiscuous."[11] This freedom was thought to also be creating pockets of social rebellion, sexual immorality and venereal disease.[12] In reality, many social reformers were protecting Victorian gender norms and the regulation of human sexuality, particularly of women.

Critics of this era point out that many women saw the use of their own sexuality as a means for elevation in society. One 1858 study of prostitution in New York found that nearly half of the women chose the profession "for its freedoms, including, most prominently, the freedom to 'gratify the sexual

[8] Pliley, "Any Other Immoral Purpose," 42.

[9] Brian Donovan, *White Slave Crusades: Race, Gender, and Anti-vice Activism 1887-1917* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 6-7.

[10] Donovan, *White Slave Crusades*, 6-7.

[11] Lindsey McMaster, *Working Girls in the West: Representations of Wage-Earning Women* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 97-98.

[12] McMaster, *Working Girls in the West*, 91.

passions.'"[13] Traditional cultural advocates could not entertain a woman having control over her own sexuality and make her own economic choices.[14] Women's sexuality was seen only in functional terms for the male-centered ideals of procreation in order to uphold the value of family.[15] The management of female sexuality, therefore, became the imperative of reformers in order to protect women from themselves since they were viewed as vulnerable to the downward slide of immorality until they were married, while also ignoring the complicity of men.

The Mann Act and White Slavery

To curtail the liberalization of American culture and the growing problem of prostitution in urban settings, reformers began to discuss the importance of stopping women from being lured into sexual delinquency.[16] One key element Progressive reformers emphasized was that many women had not chosen prostitution, but had been coerced and trafficked into the prostitution industry. Dubbed "the white slave trade," reformers told dramatic, though often exaggerated, stories of trafficked white women being kidnapped by brutish men and forced into a life of sexual slavery. Brian Donovan notes, "Stories of sexual danger fascinated white Americans during the Progressive Era (1900-1920), and they consumed increasing numbers of white slavery narrative sin the form of plays, films, books, pamphlets and magazine articles."[17] The fact they were protecting the "white slave" is characteristic Jim Crow rhetoric which black men and immigrants were blamed for the increase in trafficking, being portrayed as

[13] Tracy Fessenden, "The Other Woman's Sphere: Nuns, Prostitutes, and the Medicalization of the Middle-Class Domesticity," in Tracy Fessenden, Nicholas F. Radel, Magdelena J. Zoborowska, eds., *The Puritan Origins of American Sex: Religion, Sexuality and National Identity in American Literature* (London: Routledge, 2001), 180

[14] McMaster, *Working Girls in the West*, 91.

[15] Fessenden, "The Other Woman's Sphere," 173.

[16] Donovan, *White Slave Crusades*, 20.

[17] Donovan, *White Slave Crusades*, 14.

"beasts waiting to sexually prey on white women."[18] So while white Americans were concerned about protecting white women, these narratives were also used to incite racial prejudice against blacks and led to rash of lynchings of black men in the first decade of the twentieth century.[19]

The moral panic garnered so much public attention that in 1910 congress passed the Mann Act, also known as the "White-slave Traffic Act," which sought bring legal reform to the prostitution industry by forbidding the crossing of state lines with a woman for prostitution or "any other immoral purpose."[20] The passage of the Mann Act was instrumental in the growth of the newly formed Federal Bureau of Investigation, which opened offices in over 300 cities to confront the issue.[21] Up until this point, laws that were passed primarily focused—rather unjustly—on regulating the sexual activity of women. Progressive reformers, while welcoming these laws, recognized that the penalty of sexual indiscretion was disproportionately enforced both legally and societally upon women while the pimps and "johns" were allowed to escape with impunity.[22] Another positive reform was the establishment of the "age of consent" and "statutory rape" to protect women from being exploited.[23] So in this way, white slave advocacy altered the sentiment about prostitution by turning the blame for prostitution on the traffickers themselves.

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[18] Pliley, "Any Other Immoral Purpose," 6-8. It also fueled nativist anxiety against immigration. In 1910, an International Congress for the Suppression of White Slave Traffic was held in Madrid focused on anti-semitic fears of Jewish traffickers.

[19] Amy Louise Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 24, points out that white southerners saw lynching as a form of justice and themselves as "honorable vindicators of justice and popular sovereignty, fulfilling their rights as citizens to punish crimes against their communities."

[20] The Mann Act (1910), 36 stats., vol 1, p. 825. The act, also known as the 'White-slave Traffic Act' is described as, "An act to further regulate interstate and foreign commerce by prohibiting the transportation therein for immoral purposes of women and girls, and for other purposes." https://archive.org/stream/283075-the-mann-act-1910/283075-the-mann-act-1910_djvu.txt (Accessed 3 December 2019).

[21] Pliley, "Any Other Immoral Purpose," 5. It is also noted that many of the arrests made by the FBI were racially focused and targeted black men who had relationships with white women. The most famous example was the legendary boxer Jack Johnson, who was arrested for kidnapping for traveling with his white girlfriend Lucille Cameron. Johnson received a posthumous pardon by President Donald Trump in 2018.

[22] Johnson, " Buyers Without Remorse," 721.

[23] Pliley, "Any Other Immoral Purpose," 43.

While providing advocacy for women in prostitution was important, the vice laws concerning prostitution and sex trafficking were designed to protect the Victorian norms concerning women by regulating female sexual activity. At issue was the desire of Victorian society to control gender norms and regulate sexuality, specifically female sexuality.[24] In order to "protect women," it was necessary to portray women as vulnerable figures who were easily flattered and seduced by men. As Lindsay McMaster points out, the white slave narrative supposed women were "fallen due primarily to the machinations of others, who deliberately mislead, deceive or even abduct her."[25] Because of this, the "fallen women" rhetoric shifted attitudes about prostitutes from a despised figure to a sympathetic figure that was worthy of redeeming. Women who had been disgraced began to be seen as victims who shared little of the culpability for their involvement in sexual delinquency. One notable Methodist rescue worker, Madeline Southard, commented, "Rarely does a girl deliberately choose a life of shame," instead she places the primary blame at the "pre-nuptial indiscretions of America's sons" and those who would exploit the "untaught" women.[26]

Salvation through Rescue Homes

While the Mann Act was the government's response to regulate the perpetrators of sexual exploitation, the path of redemption for victims of sexual violence was offered through Christian rescue homes. Rescue workers were primarily evangelical women who pioneered early concepts of social work that helped to rehabilitate women in maternal, religious and domestic skills.[27] The ministry of compassion toward these women further shifted the narrative as rescue workers viewed women as both guilty of sexual sin and as innocent victims of the unjust treatment by the exploitation of men. The matron of the Rescue Home in Guthrie Oklahoma, Pearl Homes, noted that before she joined the work in 1901, she had

[24] McMaster, *Working Girls in the West*, 91.

[25] McMaster, *Working Girls in the West*, 90

[26] M. Madeline Southard, *White Slave Traffic versus the American Home* (Louisville, KY: Pentecostal Publishing Company, 1914), 21.

[27] Regina G. Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890—1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 2.

been prejudiced against the women. But after visiting the home, God touched her heart and she recalled, "The inmates, instead of being vile, loathsome demons in human form, as I had imagined, were our erring sisters and many of them more sinned against than sinning."[28]

The women in these early rescue homes were not identified by race, but the lack of mention of black women seems to suggest that, like the broader culture, white women were the primary recipients of this ministry. While black women were excluded from the rhetoric, it doesn't mean they were always neglected. For example, the 1910 Chicago Vice Report notes that there were many "negro girls driven to evil" right along side white girls. It reports, "Colored children should receive the same moral protection that white children receive."[29] At the same time, little attention was given to fact that in some locations more black women were engaged in prostitution than white women. Ruth Rosen comments, black women "were overrepresented in the prostitute population because they found fewer avenues of economic survival available than did working class women of other backgrounds."[30] Their exclusion from the rhetoric of women who needing saving was also due to the fact that black women were often portrayed as seductive whereas white women were innocent victims.

Rather than focus on education, equal rights, equal pay or other justice for women of this era, the answer for many conservative reformers was to restore women to their proper place: the home where they could be reoriented and "trained in the splendid womanhood."[31] In addition to the religious instruction, women were taught how to cook, clean, sew, and how to be proper mothers to their children.[32] The quickest way to accomplish the re-domestication process was soteriological, placing an emphasis on salvation as process for

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[28] Pearl Holmes, "How I became a Rescue Worker," Martha A. Lee, *Mother Lee's Experience in Fifteen Years' Rescue Work* (Omaha, NE: Richard Atremus Lee, 1906), 228.

[29] Clifford G. Roe, *Horrors of the White Slave Trade: The Mighty Crusade to Protect Purity of Our Home* (London: Clifford G. Roe, 1911), 388

[30] Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 80.

[31] Southard, *White Slave Traffic versus the American Home*, 19.

[32] Pope-Levenson, 141.

domestication, albeit, applied only to women. By the turn of the 20th Century, evangelical women in the Holiness tradition employed rescue homes across America. This naturally led to early Pentecostals joining in, but adding the dimension of the experience of the Spirit to aid in the rescue of women.

Pentecostal Rescue Homes

Beginning in 1907, Pentecostal rescue homes were announced throughout Pentecostal papers. The most prominent early advocate for rescue work was G. B. Cashwell. In April 1908, Cashwell announced the opening of the Winston-Salem home as home for "any poor girl who has been slaughtered, perhaps only a minor, and now friendless, turned out from home and society and given over to brutish men."[33] Cashwell opened another rescue home in Wilmington, North Carolina where "any poor fallen girl who wants to reform and seek God and a better life." Cashwell claimed Wilmington had 20,000 inhabitants, but had eighteen to twenty "houses of ill fame" with "250 or 300 fallen women." Cashwell intended to "open these homes everywhere possible." In November of 1908, Harry P. Lott of Oklahoma City announced that he had started a Pentecostal Rescue Home for girls in conjunction with his Pentecostal mission.[34] A. L. Werham and Fannie Waterfield, who operated the home, were praised for helping many girls transition back into society. But not all were so fortunate to escape before being ravaged by disease from the prostitution lifestyle. Lott reports that one young girl "died speaking in tongues and praising God."[35]

As the popularity of the white slave narrative increased in 1910 with the passage of the Mann Act, there was a surge in emphasis in Pentecostal circles. In 1911, C. H. Culelasure started a paper called *The Pentecostal Rescue Journal*, highlighting the work of a Pentecostal rescue mission in Columbia, South Carolina, in a home that was once a "notorious den of infamy."[36] In 1913, R. E.

[33] G. B. Cashwell, "The Rescue Work," *Bridegrooms Messenger,* 14 April 1908, 2

[34] Harry Lott, "Oklahoma City," *Bridegrooms Messenger,* 1 November 1908, 4.

[35] Harry P. Lott, "The History of the Pentecostal Mission in Oklahoma City," *The Pentecostal News*, February 1912, 2

[36] *The Pentecostal Rescue Journal,* January 1911, 1; V. P. Simmons, "Rescue Work," *Bridegrooms Messenger*, 1 May 1913, 3.

Winsett purchased a home in Hot Springs, Arkansas and opened the Bethel Rescue Home operated by a nurse who had twenty five years of experience in rescued work, Mrs. E. W. Chambers.[37] Howard Goss and E. N. Bell joined the work as trustees and solicited help from readers to save girls from "White Slave prisons" and give them an opportunity to "get on their feet again and lead a clean life."[38] In 1917, a Pentecostal rescue home was opened in Sapulpa, Oklahoma for "fallen girls, indigent persons and homeless children."[39] Blanche Darner asked for donations of bedding, clothing, groceries and furniture in addition to monetary donations. Darner used Jesus' appeal in Matt. 25:31-46 as grounds for the duty to help these "at risk persons."

The primary method of reform for women coming out of the sex industry was spiritual. For Cashwell, the home was open to "any poor girl who want to reform and seek God and a better life."[40] Of course, rescue work did not neglect the basic needs of women, but the curriculum was primarily toward the spiritual.[41] One rescue worker proclaims,

> A rescue home does not only offer to a dear unfortunate girl a hope of getting out of the slough of despair, but brings her in contact with One whose heart bleeds for the erring and yearns over her till by His Holy Spirit at work in her she is called to again rise to His all-glorious thought for her.[42]

The baptism in the Holy Spirit was seen as the greatest tool in helping women escape their previous life. In Cleveland, J. Clark Soules reports, "God is still blessing our work among the down and out and fallen women and is saving and healing and baptizing some in the Spirit."[43] Through the baptism in the Spirit, Pentecostals believed women could restore a pathway to elevate their place in society. Reflecting Victorian norms about women, Pentecostals believed women

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[37] "Bethel Rescue Home," *Word and Witness,* 20 May 1913, 4.

[38] "Bethel Rescue Home," *Word and Witness,* 20 June 1913, 1.

[39] "A Pentecostal Rescue Home," *Weekly Evangel,* 7 April 1917, 6.

[40] V. P. Simmons, "The Rescue Work," *Bridegrooms Messenger,* 1 May 1908, 1.

[41] J. Clark Soules, "Cleveland, Ohio." *Weekly Evangel,* 24 April 1915, 2.

[42] "Rescue Work in India," *Latter Rain Evangel,* August 1911, 16.

[43] J. Clark Soules, "Cleveland, Ohio." *Weekly Evangel,* 24 April 1915, 2.

who were saved, sanctified and baptized had the possibility to once again dream of being properly married.[44]

Pentecostal Ministry to Trafficked Women

From the beginning of Pentecostal Movement, rescue work was considered a viable ministry calling. Some Pentecostals—mostly women—felt called to rescue work in the same way others were called to be missionaries or evangelists. The July 1908 Falcon Camp Meeting advertised the calling together of "leaders of rescue work" among list of the other preachers, missionaries, and evangelists.[45] Individuals testified in Pentecostal papers of their own calling to rescue work. In 1908, Flora E. Bower testified in the *Apostolic Faith* that she had been "called to rescue work" and established the Hephzibah Rescue Home in Tampa, Florida.[46] Ida Pittman felt called to rescue work after begin abandoned by her husband who married another woman. Though alone in the world, Pittman said, "the dear Lord has given me the world to love. I have a rescue home for despondent girls at present."[47] Men were also involved, but usually in advocating for support. A wealthy businessman argued that though some would be called to the work, every Christian should feel called to help what he called the "hardest and most trying work."[48]

Rescue workers had a deep sense of obligation and compassion for the plight of "fallen women" in urban settings. G. B. Cashwell believed rescue work was inherent in the Gospel of Jesus. He says, "I don't think we will need new impressions or any special revelations to know that Jesus wants fallen women rescued from a life of sin, and saved through the blood of Jesus."[49] Cashwell solicited names of women who were in situations like this and promised to "do

[44] "Rescue Work," *Bridegrooms Messenger,* 1 May 1913, 3.

[45] "Falcon Camp Meeting," *Bridegrooms Messenger*, 1 July 1908, 1.

[46] "Testimonies," *Apostolic Faith,* January 1908, 4.

[47] "Testimonies," *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate*, 13 February 1919, 12.

[48] "Rescue Work in India," *Latter Rain Evangel*, August 1911, 16.

[49] G. B. Cashwell, "Dear Bretheren and Friends," *Bridegrooms Messenger*, 1 Aug 1908, 1.

all in our power to find and rescue her."[50] Anna Kelly, sister of Pinkie Black, the matron of Wilmington, argued that helping the "precious girls" who were fallen was obeying Jesus's command to "love thy neighbor."[51] In a sermon, Ira E. David told of Col. Sam Hadley who often witnessed to prostitutes in New York and was known for renting clean hotel rooms for women to stay in while his wife witnessed to them. Hadley also befriended a group of prostitutes whose fellow worker had died but they had no money to bury her. Hadley paid for the funeral in order to earn the right to tell them about Jesus. In response, Ira David commented to the readers, "Do you love fallen girls enough to pay twenty five dollars for the chance to tell them of Jesus? That is love."[52] In each of these cases, love was the motivation for compassionate action to help women.

Pentecostals were not content to simply speak out about societal ills related to prostitution and trafficking; action was part of the "rescue" process. Workers also felt compelled to go into the often-dangerous red light districts to find women and bring them to the rescue homes. The workers of the Haven in Columbia, South Carolina, described their strategy to fill up their home by prayer and "thoroughly scouring" the red light district for women who would accept help. In early 1907, Pentecostal workers rescued a young woman from the police station in Homestead, Pennsylvania, and took her to a Pentecostal mission where she was saved, sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit.[53] Similarly, Maude Delaney reported that in Houston, Texas, two women were rescued from jail and were "wonderfully saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit." In turn, one of these women went out on the streets and witnessed to the "big strong men who knew her and had been her companions." Under conviction the men "cried like babies" at her testimony.[5455] Carrie Judd Montgomery relayed the story of Mrs. Moise, who was known for going into the seven "immoral houses" in her

[50] G. B. Cashwell, "The Rescue Work," *Bridegrooms Messenger,* 1 May 1908, 1.

[51] Anna Kelly, "Who is My Neighbor?" *Bridegrooms Messenger,* 15 July 1908, 2.

[52] Ira E. David, "The Laws of Soul Winning," *Latter Rain Evangel,* October 1916, 6.

[53] "In Homestead, Pa.," *Apostolic Faith*, February 1907, 3.

[54] Maude M. Delaney, "Witnessing for Jesus in the South," *Latter Rain Evangel,* April 1912, 6-7.

[55] *The Pentecostal Rescue Journal,* January 1911, 1.

city and converting "both the keepers and the girls" so that the houses were "emptied."[56]

International Rescue Work

While the situation concerning the exploitation of women in America was appalling to Pentecostals, internationally the exploitation was far worse. For many missionaries, caring for orphans or operating rescue homes was a large part of their evangelistic efforts. In 1909, Cornelia L. Bonnell of the rescue home in Hong Kong, tells the story of Pau Tsu a woman whom she had rescued from child slavery. After her parents died, Pau Tsu was sold by her older brother to a man that used her for prostitution. Eventually she ran away, but because of her emotional pain she became addicted to opium to "deaden her sufferings." A young man who helped her escape to the "Tsi-liang-soo" (Chinese Recue Home) where for ten days she suffered terribly through withdrawal from opium. Finally set her free from her addictions, Pau Tsu was saved and learned to be "a virtuous woman." She even eventually married the young man that freed her.[57]

In 1917, the *Weekly Evangel* cover featured in bold the headline "SOLD!"[58] The cover included a picture of ten Japanese girls behind bars with the caption:

> Sold to work evil, the condition of thousands of these poor girls indeed pitiful. These hopeless slaves are dolled up, painted and powdered, and then exposed to the gaze of every passerby whose trade they are expected to exploit.[59]

William J. Taylor, the director of Door of Hope Mission also describes the problem of slavery in Japan.

> In one month alone, December of 1916, this place had 450,000 men visitors. . . . While during the New Year some girls are know to have received an average of six guests a night, while one girl who had sold

[56] Carrie Judd Montgomery, "Westward to our California Home," *Triumphs of Faith,* November 1910, 241-243.

[57] Cornelia L. Bonnell, "Pau Tsu," *Triumphs of Faith,* May 1909, 103-106.

[58] Darrin Rodgers, "The Assemblies of God and Japanese Sex Trafficking in 1917," Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, 12 June 2014, https://ifphc.wordpress.com/2014/06/12/the-assemblies-of-god-and-japanese-sex-trafficking-in-1917/ (accessed 11 November 2019).

[59] *The Weekly Evangel*, June 9, 1917, 1.

> herself or $500 gold, in order to send her brother to college, and to buy medicine for her sick father, received fifteen.[60]

Taylor implored his fellow Pentecostal believers to "not be silent" but to "open thy mouth" in response to injustice. Similarly, Missionary Robert Atchenson of Japan told of a young Christian woman who was sold by her mother-in law for $45, but that he was working to buy her freedom.[61]

India was another country in which Pentecostals dealt with sex trafficking. Mrs. M. W. Chapman, a missionary to India, identified the work of Pandita Ramabi and other rescue missions in India as the "most needy phase of the Pentecostal work in India."[62] She tells the story of one girl who after her parents died struggled with sorrow and anger. Having lost her job because of her temper, she answered a job advertisement in another city, not knowing it was a "scoundrel who lured her to her ruinations." Being trapped in a foreign city and feeling shame and pain of her slavery, she told of "night after night bathing her pillow with her tears." When she heard of the rescue home, she escaped and found a new life in Jesus there. Another India missionary, Annie Murray, shared that her ministry was not just to women. She said, "I believe God wants to give us a real rescue work here among fallen men. We have not sought this, but He is putting it on us and giving us faith for the liberation of the captives."[63]

Pentecostal Rhetoric Toward Trafficked Women

The white slave trade narrative created both positive and negative effects on the Pentecostal rhetoric about women.[64] Like others in rescue work, Pentecostals used rhetoric that portrayed women as victims of unjust treatment. This was true whether they were betrayed and lost their virtue to a man who abandoned them

[60] William J. Taylor, "So I Opened My Mouth," *Weekly Evangel,* 9 June 1917, 3.

[61] "Requests for Prayer," *The Bridegrooms Messenger,* 1 September 1916, 2.

[62] Mrs. M. W. Chapman, "The Most Needy," *Latter Rain Evangel,* January 1911, 21.

[63] "From Sister Annie Murray," *Bridegrooms Messenger*, 15 August 1912, 2.

[64] I am deeply grateful for Joy A. Qualls, "*God Forgive Us For Being Women:" Rhetoric, Theology, and the Pentecostal Tradition* (Eugene OR: Pickwick, 2018), for drawing attention to the tensions in the Pentecostal Movement concerning the rhetoric of empowerment and restriction for women in ministry.

or had been abducted and coerced into sexual slavery.[65] The sexual exploitation industry was reviled as an "infamous plot for the ruin of young girls" in American society where the "brightest and best" of girls were becoming "victims of devilish lust."[66] G. B. Cashwell's pointed the blame toward the "lust of men" for the grand "scheme of the devil" to enslave women in disgraceful lifestyles.[67]

The rhetoric about the women themselves was sympathetic, referring to women as "victims" who were "poor" or "unfortunate" girls.[68] While these were sympathetic terms, they did carry with it some of the Victorian connotations of women as easily swayed and vulnerable.[69] However, Pentecostals recognized that it was not necessarily their choice; it was violence perpetrated by men against women. A woman in this situation was unjustly "robbed of innocence" and "left homeless and friendless" with only a broken heart and ruined life.[70] Cashwell referred to the sexual violence done to women in prostitution as "slaughter"[71] But women who were in the rescue home were also portrayed positively as valuable and "precious."[72] This rhetoric was intended to instill a sense of sympathy and compassion for women who had engaged in what would otherwise be considered by Pentecostals as notorious and sinful behaviors.

Beyond the experiences of the women themselves, Pentecostals justified ministry to trafficked women through biblical examples of "fallen women." V. P. Simmons wrote a passionate article about biblical examples of "rescued women," arguing that Jesus himself came to earth "to engage in rescue work." He notes that of the genealogy of Christ, three were women and "those were rescued women": Tamar (daughter of Judah), Rahab, and Bathsheba. He also mentions Jesus' concern for other "sinful women" such as Samaritan woman, the Syro-

[65] G. B. Cashwell, "Dear Bretheren and Friends," *Bridegrooms Messenger*, 1 Aug 1908, 1.

[66] "Satanic Devices," *Bridegrooms Messenger*, 14 April 1908, 4

[67] G. B. Cashwell, "The Rescue Work," *Bridegrooms Messenger*, 14 April 1908, 2

[68] "Satanic Devices," *Bridegrooms Messenger*, 14 April 1908, 4; "The Rescue Work," *Bridegrooms Messenger*, 1 August 1908, 4.

[69] McMaster, *Working Girls in the West*, 90.

[70] Anna Kelly, "Who is My Neighbor?" *Bridegrooms Messenger*, 15 July 1908, 2.

[71] G. B. Cashwell, "The Rescue Work," *Bridegrooms Messenger*, 14 April 1908, 2

[72] Kelly, "Who is My Neighbor?," 2.

Phoenician woman, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna. Therefore, believers were called to "follow in Jesus' footsteps, reproving the ungodly, comforting the afflicted, rescuing the fallen, binding up broken hearts."[73] Another writer related the Samaritan woman at the well as a "fallen women" who Jesus valued enough to "bring a town to the feet of the Messiah!"[74]

Despite the recognition that women were victims, Pentecostals pointed to certain holiness concerns about society that they believed lured women into sinful lifestyles. Pentecostals blamed entertainment establishments that promoted drinking and dancing with exposing women to the potential for sexual exploitation. One author notes, "The dance is the greatest feeder of the brothel. Nine tenths of the fallen women of our land took their first downward steps in the ball room."[75] Similarly, Willard Pope saw the ballroom as a place where "hundreds and thousands of mother's girls are wrecked and ruined"[76] Pentecostals also identified movie houses as gateways to human trafficking. E. N. Bell used several of the stories of failed abductions of women by sleep inducing poison to serve as a "solemn warning to unattended and unprotected women everywhere …. Keep away from the vice haunts of moving picture shows." [77] Willard Pope quotes the Chief of Police in Durham, North Carolina who blames the cause of so many "fallen girls" in the city on moving pictures. [78] The idea that vulnerable, innocent girls could be abducted in movie theaters was part of the narratives in White Slave literature. Willard Pope used exaggerated statistics from the white slave literature to make the appalling claim that some 600,000 girls had been "sold at the block in the traffic of slavery" and that this issue was worse than the "slaves in the south."[79]

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[73] "Rescued Women," *Bridegrooms Messenger*, 1 May 1908, 2.

[74] "He Remembereth We Are Dust," *Weekly Evangel,* 5 January 1918, 4.

[75] Chas W. McCrosson, "Awake To Righteousness, Not Sin," *The Pentecostal Herald,* 1 October 1922, 4.

[76] W. H. Pope, "Morphine Tablets of Hell," *The Latter Rain Evangel,* December 1918, 5.

[77] "White Slave Craft," *Word and Witness,* 20 January 1914, 3.

[78] Pope, "Morphine Tablets of Hell," 5.

[79] W. H. Pope, "Morphine Tablets of Hell," *The Latter Rain Evangel,* December 1918, 5.

From Saving Women to Blaming Women

While the white slave trade issue did much to open both political and religious conversations about the plight of sexually exploited women, it also fueled much of the Pentecostal holiness codes about female dress. By the late 1920s, the hysteria was in decline and most of the rhetoric around "fallen women" turned the focus on the women's culpability in creating the cultural environment that encouraged sexual exploitation. An article in the *Pentecostal Herald* comments, "It is impossible for a woman to enter a company of men, in the regulation ball room dress, without causing some men to commit adultery in their hearts."[80] This emphasis on holiness dress code caused a shift from women as vulnerable to male exploitation to a new emphasis on portraying men as innocent and vulnerable to exploitation from women. The implication was that women and their perceived lack of proper dress were ultimately to blame for the sexual proclivities of men. This attitude is demonstrated in a 1926 article in the *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate,* which asks, "What is wrong with men?" The answer, he replies, was that modern women were lax in their morals in things like dress. He says, "The greatest advertisement for immorality that a fallen women has been able to use is that of a shapely form and much revealed body." The author further implicated "mannish" dress, "bobbed hair," and "long trousers" as the primary reason that "modern" women were not respected. He commenting, "Now, what is there about her to cause him to really respect her?"[81] In the end, he blamed women for the problem of sexual exploitation and immorality.

For Pentecostals, the best way to stop the exploitation of women was to hide the women's body behind modesty conventions. As Elaine Lawless points out, long dresses and high necklines were the embodiment of Pentecostal values in opposition with societal norms.[82] Since dress was a form of liberation that they

[80] Chas W. McCrosson, "Awake To Righteousness, Not Sin," *The Pentecostal Herald,* 1 October 1922, 4.

[81] "What's the Matter with the Men?" *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate,* 8 April 1926, 7, 11.

[82] Elaine J. Lawless, *God's Peculiar People: Women's Voices & Folk Tradition in a Pentecostal Church* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2005), 37

blamed for the issues of prostitution and sex trafficking, restriction of dress by hiding women behind plain clothing the antidote.[83] Unfortunately, Pentecostals used the issue of sex trafficking as a way to enforce patriarchal ideas of dress upon women as a way to police and control the sexuality of women. Inherent in this view is the tendency to blame the victim for sexual assault and relieve the perpetrators of their culpability. Even among Pentecostals, male perpetrators have been protect by church members while the female victims villainized.[84] Such was the case for the author of the *Dakes Annotated Bible*, Finis Dake, who was arrested under the Mann Act for transporting a teen across state lines. He and his church members disavowed any wrong doing.[85]

Conclusion

Mark Cartledge recently addressed the contemporary global problem of sex trafficking and proposed a theological response in light of Pentecost.[86] He argued that sex trafficking affected several sociological dimensions of human existence including power, money, and sex. It is through this lens that I will make some final remarks about the promises and perils of the early Pentecostal responses to the social issue of sex trafficking.

First, early Pentecostals recognized that there were unjust societal power dynamics that contributed to the victimization of women and robbed them of

[83] Dara Delgado, "The Practicality of Holiness: A Historical Examination of Class, Race, and Gender within Black Holiness Pentecostalism, Bishop Ida Bell Robinson, and Mount Sinai Holiness Church of America," *Pneuma* 41, no 1 (2019): 59.

[84] This is illustrated by *Pnuema* 41, no. 1 (2019) issue focusing on the "Pentecostal Me Too" movement which speaks out against sexual violence in the Pentecostal and Charismatic Community.

[85] In 1937, Dake was charged and convicted in federal court under the Mann Act in Milwaukee for transporting 16-year-old Emma Barcelli from Wisconsin to Illinois.[85] Barcelli told the court Dake had "petting parties" with her in hotel rooms from Milwaukee to St. Louis that he had booked under a false name. Dake denied any sexual transgressions and blamed the Devil for his "unjust persecution." His wife and congregation supported his innocence as well. The judge was lenient with him and gave him a six month sentence. Dake, who was an Assemblies of God minister, withdrew from the denomination in March of 1937. See, "Petting Parson, But Jail Waits," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* February 10, 1937, http://learntheology.com/dake_trial_conviction/Dake_News_Federal_Sentence.pdf (Accessed 26 December 2019)

[86] Mark J. Cartledge, "Being Human and Sex Trafficking: A Theological Response in the Light of Pentecost," *Pnuema* 41, nos. 3-4 (2019), 371-420. This was originally a Presidential address by Cartledge at the 2019 Society for Pentecostal Studies Annual meeting.

their freedom and their human rights.[87] This was seen in laws that disproportionately focused on women in the enforcement of vice laws, where "fallen women" were powerless to help themselves out of their situation. Into this void of powerlessness, Pentecostals offered women the gift of Spirit-empowerment. As Cartledge points out, the Pentecostal experience is itself an act of liberation for the placeless and voiceless, which is offered freely and equitably.[88] At the same time, that ethic of freedom was racially selective. There is little indication of efforts to rescue women of color, nor did they acknowledge the inherent racial bias of adopting the cultural phrase "white slave." They conformed to the racist culture and offered ministry to white women by white women, thus neglecting justice for black victims of sexual exploitation.[89]

Second, early Pentecostals saw the Holy Spirit as a key element that could reverse the damage done to victims of sexual exploitation and give women the possibility of life beyond the brothel. They believed healing was possible and that salvation could restore women to a place of dignity and worth. However, these concepts of salvation and empowerment were culturally shaped. For Pentecostals, salvation was domestication to Victorian values of womanhood and control of female sexuality, dress, and access to social spaces. This empowerment tension is further seen as Pentecostals recognized rescue work as a valid ministry calling that empowered women to minister the same transformational experiences found in other male-dominated ministry roles. Female rescue workers functioned as evangelists, healers, and led many women into transformational experiences with the Holy Spirit. In turn, many of those rescued through this ministry were also given places to become co-workers in the ministry to trafficked women. Yet again, these women were also perpetuating some of these inherently sexist values that continued to be barriers to true

[87] Cartledge, "Being Human and Sex Trafficking," 382.

[88] Cartledge, "Being Human and Sex Trafficking," 389

[89] Similar patterns can be seen in patterns of racial segregation rather than integration in early Pentecostal denominations. White culture contolled where black members could exist, specifically advocating for 'colored' branches of white Pentecostal denominations. See Kimberly Ervin Alexander and James P. Bowers, "Race and Gender Equality in a Classical Pentecostal Denomination: How Godly Love Flourished and Floundered," in Amos Yong and Matthew T. Lee (eds.), *Godly Love: Impediments and Possibilities* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012), 131-52.

liberation and equality with men, a value that early Pentecostals claimed to care about.

Third, this study shows how early Pentecostals offered intrinsic worth to women beyond the monetary value of exploiting their sexuality for the lust of heterosexual men.[90] As Cartledge notes, sexual slavery is a de-humanizing act that objectifies and commoditizes women's bodies and robs them of their freedom.[91] Pentecostal rescue workers offered value and dignity to women by not judging them as depraved or wretched, but seeing them as precious and valuable. Pentecostals rescue homes, while focusing primarily on spiritual reform and domestic skills, sought to empower women with skills that provided worth within cultural norms. While the norms of society early Pentecostals operated under would fall below modern standards of liberation for women, what was offered was the hope of regaining place in society and a life beyond the scarlet letter.

Fourth, this study reveals early Pentecostal attitudes toward women who were in the prostitution industry. While sexual sin was forbidden, Pentecostals did not portray sex itself as something inherently immoral or sinful.[92] While they did believe sensual behaviors—such as dancing and drinking—contributed to the lack of sexual propriety in society, they were also deeply concerned by the exploitation of women's sexuality to fulfill the "lust of men." This was important in how "fallen women" were depicted. Women who had been betrayed by men (unwed mothers) or exploited by men (prostitutes) were considered to be victims more so than sinners. In most cases, these women were forced into the lifestyle of prostitution by exploitation of others. This conviction sent Pentecostals into red light districts to find and rescue women from those who were exploiting them. They offered homes that focused on redeeming the sexuality of trafficked women. Ultimately they believed a saved, sanctified, and Holy Ghost filled

[90] Cartledge, "Being Human and Sex Trafficking," 383.

[91] Cartledge, "Being Human and Sex Trafficking," 383.

[92] An example of this can be found in "Questions and Answers," *Weekly Evangel,* 14 April 1917, 9, where E. N. Bell rejected the teaching that Spirit-filled believers were to never have sex again and acknowledged that sex in a marriage is good and right.

woman could be restored to re-engage in society and in healthy marital relationships.

Finally, this study demonstrated that the Pentecostal church was the center of ministry to trafficked women. Pentecostals joined in the support for legislation that sought to target the men who were perpetrating crimes of sex trafficking and supported the women who were victims through rescue homes. Pentecostals opened their homes and hearts to victims of human trafficking. They embodied exactly what Cartledge proposes for a Pentecostal response. He notes, "From the pulsating energy of the Spirit we have received, we respond with a bursting overflow of love towards those in bondage by offering our time, our talent, and our treasure."[93] Early Pentecostals courageously sought out and compassionately embraced traumatized women, offered opportunities for healing and redemption, and even nursed those dying of sexually transmitted diseases. In place of the guilt, shame, and pain women incurred through the violence of men, they offered forgiveness, empowerment, identity and purpose in their Spirit-filled Christian faith. In all of these acts of compassion, Pentecostals were willing to go beyond simply speaking out against evil, they were willing to engage in the painful and challenging work of helping victims of sexual exploitation and violence.

Today, most ministries to victims of sexual exploitation are confined to para-church or international missions agencies like Project Rescue. The Pentecostal church needs to recapture its missional nature and reclaim its "rescue mission" identity where church members saw themselves as workers to go out to the places of need rather than the current consumerist mentality. While specialization is needed in ministry to victims, the church should be on the front line of engagement with women who have been victimized, many of which may already be sitting in our churches every Sunday. Pentecostal pastors can draw on the past to see their responsibility to speak out against this dark industry and mobilize believers in efforts of social transformation. Embedded in the ethos of Pentecostalism is the history of missional work of the Spirit is the potential to raise up women and empower them to their full potential and for the church to

[93] Cartledge, "Being Human and Sex Trafficking," 390.

become a prophetic voice, a missional community and a place of restoration for victims of sexual exploitation.