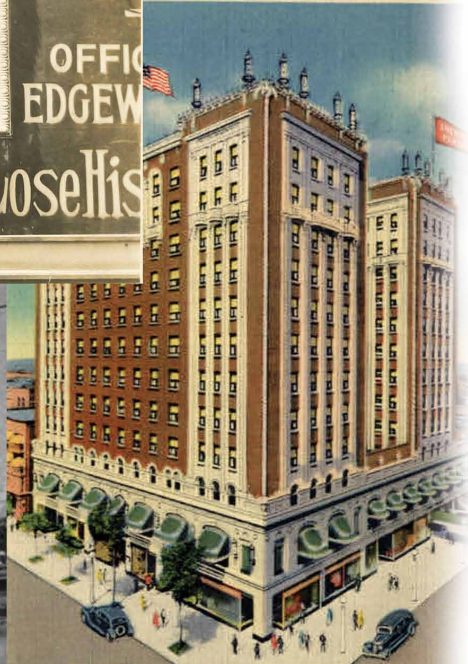
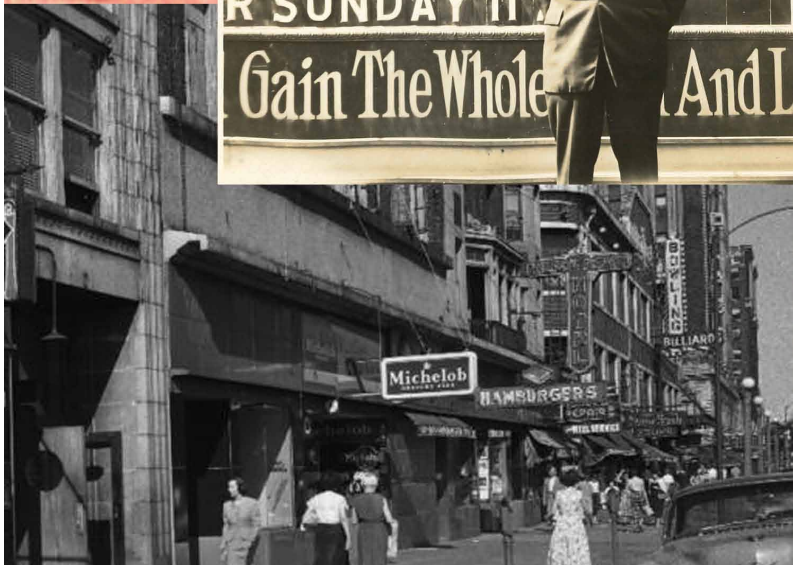




GRACE GOSPEL
FELLOWSHIP

The Grace Movement B



Editor's Note –

We know that we are into the fourth—even the fifth—generation of Christians who have been part of the grace movement in America and blessed by it. We know that our distinctly unique approach to biblical truth tends to encounter skepticism when we bring up certain topics in settings with Christian friends schooled in traditional denominations. Certainly, many of us have gotten the “first-time-I’ve-heard-that” response to a rightly divided explanation of a Bible passage, which in my mind usually stirs up a short litany that includes thanksgiving for clarity of thought that comes from a grace perspective.

I wonder, do we know and can we give a concise account for our grace distinctives? Can we give an explanation for the grace movement and our theology? It’s getting more difficult to recall by way of association with parents or “old timers” how our grace theology began; a long enough span of time has elapsed that, looking back, those early days are being lost in the haze of forgotten or fading memories. Roughly one hundred years have passed since J. C. O’Hair started expounding his theological and doctrinal thoughts (suggesting two gospels, as he put it) at conferences, on the rescue mission circuit, from the pulpit, and by pamphleteering (the internet blogosphere equivalent of his day). But his approach to biblical truth is what coalesced into key elements of mid-Acts dispensationalism and became the underpinnings of the grace movement in America.

Dr. Dale DeWitt has done extensive research (with the assistance of K. Molenkamp, T. Conklin, D. Sommer, and B. Ross) that focuses on booklets and pamphlets O’Hair authored and circulated in the early 1900s. DeWitt maintains that understanding the times and O’Hair’s then-evolving biblical interpretation contained in his early writings can give us the best picture of the grace movement’s nascent development in America.

O’Hair came on the scene during the heyday of the American Bible prophesy study conference movement. Also, the rescue mission movement was gaining momentum. Both venues fed O’Hair’s gifts for evangelism and teaching. But before reading DeWitt’s article, here is a short narrative by Uptown Chicago historian, Bill Matteson (<http://tinyurl.com/chlrwmk>, visited 02-18-2013). Sometime after O’Hair became pastor at North Shore Congregational Church he probably erected a neon sign atop the steeple to compete with all the other neon signs popping up along Wilson Avenue—the hotel, the bars, the bowling ally, the Uptown Theater. Matteson, as a young boy, recalls his personal

encounter with the preacher at the “**Christ Died For Our Sins**” Church. His story illustrates O’Hair’s evangelistic fervor and sets an appropriate mood for enjoying DeWitt’s article:

“I never knew the actual name of the church at Sheridan and Wilson but that was the big sign on the top, so that is what we called it. They would send out street ministers to preach to the drunks and sinners on Wilson Ave, usually around Kenmore. The minister would start around 7 PM Friday. He would use a large easel 4 foot long and 3 foot high and a lot of colored chalk. He would draw pictures then relate his drawings to God, religion, and spirituality and around 8 PM he would have 8 to 12 people on their knees, praying for salvation. At the proper time he would walk them the block over to the church. They would all file in and he would start with the preaching in such a manner that I was sure a thunder bolt was going to hit me right there.... They would say that you could feel the holy spirit enter your body.

“I would help the sidewalk minister with his easel and chalk.... I wondered what power that minister had; we would set up the easel and then he would have a bunch of people on their knees right there on Wilson Ave.

“I would go to Sunday School there and they gave me a Bible for going 12 Sundays in a row. The Sunday school teacher wrote in the book ‘this book will keep you from sin and sin will keep you from this book.’”

See “**The Origins of the Grace Movement**” beginning on the next page.



Above: Looking east along Wilson Blvd (circa 1955), the skyline is dominated by the Sheridan Plaza Hotel, but to its right is the steeple of O’Hair’s North Shore Church with its neon sign, “Christ died for our sins.”

The Origins of the Grace Movement

by Dale S. DeWitt

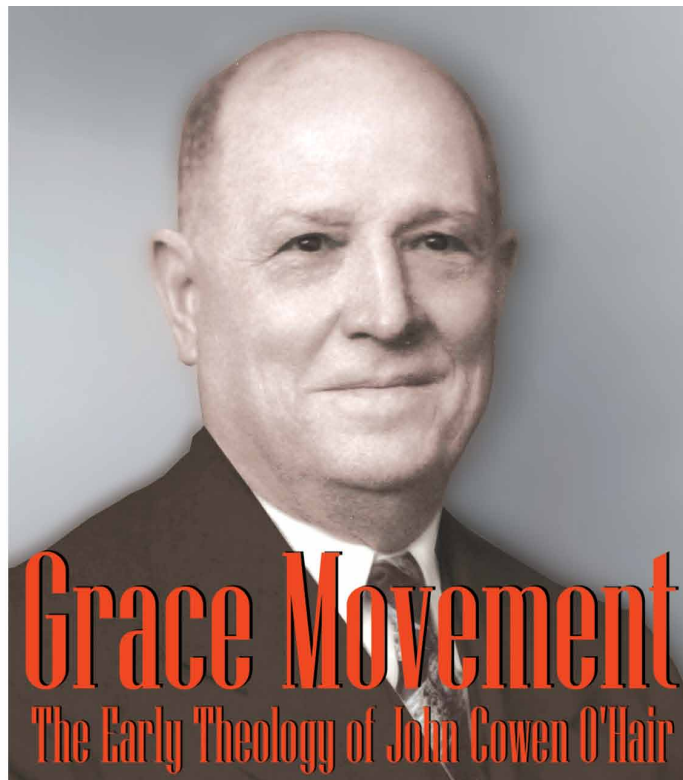
research assistants –

Katherine Molenkamp, Timothy Conklin, Don Sommer, Bryan Ross

The fountainhead of the grace movement in America was J. C. O'Hair. All early leaders such as C. F. Baker, C. R. Stam, H. Prince, H. Bultema, O. Wasson, H. Reed, H. Reich, E. Rueweler, D. Elifson, and R. Suerig, as well as others learned their form of dispensational theology from O'Hair.

O'Hair was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, December 31, 1876, the third of twelve siblings, graduated from high school and Business College there, and then took accounting jobs mostly in the lumber industry. He soon developed his own building business, building about fifty homes each in Sedalia and St. Joseph, Missouri, and San Antonio, Texas. His business activity continued from about 1896 through about 1917, when he sold his business interests and entered full-time ministry in southwest Texas. During these business years he also spent a year in Mexico as secretary to the U. S. Ambassador to Mexico who had been a personal friend of his father. In July, 1901, he married Ethel Anderson at Kansas City, Missouri. The O'Hairs had six children; one died at age two; the others lived into full adulthood and all became Christian believers.

In late 1899, O'Hair received Christ as his savior at Neme, Louisiana, near Leesville, while still single and working there at a lumber mill owned by Central Coal and Coke Company. Liv-



ing at a boarding house at the time, he came under conviction of sin while reading a Bible given him by the woman who operated the boarding house. It was a quiet and isolated conversion, and certainly a clear and decisive one. Thirteen months later he was baptized by immersion, under pressure from some Baptist friends; he had afterthoughts about whether it contributed anything to his prior baptism into Christ by the Spirit at salvation.¹ His post-baptism wonderments probably contributed to his later rethinking of water baptism.

He continued working in lumber and building businesses and did lay preaching. After moving to San Antonio, Texas, and while still a layman, O'Hair began having remarkable successes in itinerant evangelism. He was ordained to ministry in 1916 at Lockhart, Texas, by William Anderson, pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Dallas, Texas, representing the West Texas Presbytery. After selling his building business in 1917, a series of contacts brought him to Muskegon and Grand Rapids, Michigan, and the Chicago area, where in 1917, he accepted a call to the Madison Street Church of Oak Park. He continued to call the Presbyterian Church his own denomination until well into the 1920s. Before and during this pastorate he conducted evangelistic-teaching meetings around the northeast quadrant of

¹ J. C. O'Hair, *Buried with Him by Baptism*, nd, 14-17.

the United States and established many friendships among evangelical leaders. In July, 1923, he accepted the pastorate of North Shore Congregational Church at Sheridan Road and Wilson Avenue on Chicago's north side, and remained there as pastor until his death in 1958.²

The earliest stages of his thinking cannot be identified without locating the pamphlets and booklets of his earliest ministry period. I am quite aware that more early pamphlets may be found and further research is likely to result in corrections and revisions.

Identifying the Early Writings

This article is the outcome of an effort to determine the earliest history of the grace movement's theological ideas. That development lies uniquely in O'Hair's ministry, thinking, and writing. The sources for the history of O'Hair's theological thought are his many pamphlets and booklets and a 1955 taped talk he did on his own life (now also in typescript). O'Hair's files have disappeared; they were not available as a resource for this research. By his own later account, O'Hair produced 158 booklets and pamphlets during his ministry. (Hereafter, to avoid repetition, "pamphlet" will be used for both booklets and pamphlets.) In a biographical sketch of O'Hair in 1988, Timothy Conklin suggested as many as 200 or more pamphlets; this number, too, could be on the low side. Very few of these writings are dated. The only larger books by O'Hair are *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ* (1941), *One Hundred-Seventy Bible Lessons and Sermon Outlines*, and *Through the Bible in Fifty-Two Lessons*—all containing collections of short studies. Most of the separate pamphlets appear to be sermons or talks. Any account of O'Hair's early theology depends on dating clues in the early pamphlets. This is not a biography project, but a project in historical theology.

The scope of this article is limited to O'Hair's activities and thought during his first decade of ministry, roughly 1917-1930. Since only a very few of the pamphlets are dated, the titles of this period had to be determined by inference from a coincidental date in the pamphlet, *Have Ye Received the Holy Spirit since Ye Believed?* On the back cover O'Hair offers for purchase a list of his pamphlets up to the time of its publication. The earliest possible date (historians' "terminus a quo") for this pamphlet is 1929 since this date appears on a letter to "A Christian Friend," dated January 1, 1929, reproduced near the end of the pamphlet. The pamphlet could come from some years after 1929. Certain factors related to the pamphlet's publication point to a likely framework of 1929-1932.

² For more detail see, "Message given by Pastor J. C. O'Hair," November, 1955, Grace Bible College Library, in typescript (hereafter, "Message"); also *ibid.*, "A Thank-You Letter" (to the North Shore Church congregation on the occasion of the O'Hairs' fifty-sixth wedding anniversary), July, 1957, Grace Bible College Library archives; a basic article by T. Conklin, "J. C. O'Hair—Leader Among Leaders," *Truth* 38, February, 1988, 4-6 (with a portrait photo of O'Hair from 1928 on the cover).

On the back cover of *Have Ye Received...*, O'Hair listed about thirty of his own pamphlets available for purchase. The list is probably not exhaustive, but it does include several of the most important pamphlets of the 1920s which bear on his views in this early period—views which became essential to the grace movement's distinctive theology. Perhaps nine other pamphlets belong to the period of 1917-1922; they are included in the discussion. (See the Appendix for a complete list of pamphlets from 1917 through 1930 which will appear at the series' conclusion)

To gain perspective and context for O'Hair's early views and themes, and his early development and writing, a brief account of the broader setting in early twentieth century evangelicalism will be useful.

The Larger Evangelical Context

Beginning about 1875, a small group of Bible prophecy students with premillennial convictions began meeting at various locations in the northeast quadrant of the United States; this American form of prophecy study grew from its parent movement in England and Scotland. The group's membership expanded and within a short time its yearly meetings came to be called the Niagara Conference, so named for its yearly meeting site at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario—a resort village on the west bank of the Niagara River where it empties into Lake Ontario below Niagara Falls. In 1878, a large Prophetic Conference, mostly planned and organized by members of the Niagara group, gathered for a week of prophetic study and messages at Trinity Church, New York City. Several more such Prophetic Conferences met during the three ensuing decades, growing in attendance toward several thousand with each successive meeting; the conferences occurred about every five to seven years. The Prophetic Conferences were dominated by Calvinist Presbyterian and Reformed ministers and a few of their seminary professors.³ James Brookes, Pastor of Walnut Street Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, Missouri, and C. I. Scofield became notable leaders of this prophetic study movement.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, Scofield (earlier the U. S. attorney for Kansas) began working on his famous Reference Bible, the leading—but by no means only—expression of the Prophetic and Niagara Conferences' discussions of premillennialism. Premillennialism is the belief that Christ's return would mark the beginning of his prophesied kingdom on earth. This view of the end times was held by several leading church fathers before Augustine's amillennial influence and was revived after 1600 in Germany by Reformed professor, John Henry Alsted, and in England by Anglican Joseph Mede; it gained ground rapidly in America after 1850. The Scofield Reference Bible also

Continued on page 4

³ G. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 46.

introduced the long-developing related idea of a series of “dispensations,” a term describing the eras and sequence of God’s relations with man (for example, promise, law, grace and kingdom). Premillennialism thus had a long though somewhat disrupted history.

During one period of O’Hair’s business life, before entering ministry in 1917, he and Mrs. O’Hair lived in St. Louis. O’Hair does not say he attended James Brookes’ Walnut Street Presbyterian Church (later the Washington Compton Presbyterian Church) during his business years there, although he may have; but he does refer to it as his church while living in St. Louis and working with the St. Louis Gospel Center for nineteen weeks some time during 1919–1921—a sojourn which included his Indianapolis evangelism and teaching meetings discussed below.

C. I. Scofield had also attended Walnut Street Church after his conversion. The same James Brookes was Scofield’s pastor during the years of Scofield’s early Christian growth. Brookes soon became a major leader in the Niagara and Prophetic Conferences.⁴ Plymouth Brethren founder and dispensational theologian, J. N. Darby (d. 1882), probably preached in Walnut Street Church during the 1870s or early 1880s during Brookes’ pastorate. O’Hair read both Scofield and Darby; they were formative for his dispensational premillennialism, along with the influence of Walnut Street Church.

In Chicago, O’Hair was in touch with premillennial Fundamentalist leader, Harry Ironside, of Moody Memorial Church, with James M. Gray, president of Moody Bible Institute, and with Harry J. Hager, evangelistic millenarian pastor of the large Bethany Reformed Church of Roseland, on Chicago’s far south side. Between 1917 and 1923, O’Hair also became acquainted with his predecessor at North Shore Congregational Church, Paul Allen, during two teaching visits before accepting its pastorate in 1923. Allen had recently converted to a form of premillennialism from the culture Christianity of the Modernist/Social Gospel movement; he spoke about his change at Chicago Hebrew Mission about 1918;⁵ O’Hair was interested in the Jews and Jewish evangelization due to friendships with several Jews. He also had regular contacts with William R. Newell, a former superintendent of Moody Bible Institute and pastor of Bethesda Congregational Church, also on Chicago’s north side. During O’Hair’s early years in Chicago, Newell conducted occasional teaching meetings at North Shore Church and elsewhere in Chicago; he later issued

a famous commentary on Romans in which he expressed views similar to O’Hair’s on baptism in Romans 6:1–4.⁶

The millenarian renewal movement and its literature were larger than St. Louis and Chicago. During his itinerant evangelist period (1917–1923), O’Hair preached at premillennial A. B. Simpson’s Tabernacle in New York City and on Long Island. He also held teaching meetings in Pennsylvania. L. S. Chafer founded Dallas Theological Seminary during O’Hair’s early ministry years (1924) and had already published the most, and still, important early primer on dispensational theology, *The Kingdom in History and Prophecy* (1915). The published studies of the 1878 and 1886 Prophetic Conferences were available, and G. N. H. Peters had issued his massive three-volume *Theocratic Kingdom* in the 1880s—still the most detailed work on premillennialism in America. Darby’s voluminous written studies were becoming available in O’Hair’s early years and the famous twelve-volume work, *The Fundamentals*, had just been completed. Harry Bultema of Muskegon and Martin DeHaan of Grand Rapids, Michigan, were preaching premillennialism, writing millenarian studies, and holding Bible conferences in West Michigan. The writings of Sir Robert Anderson, British dispensationalist and head of Britain’s detective bureau, Scotland Yard, were available, as were the writings of British extreme dispensationalist, Ethelbert Bullinger, and the early Plymouth Brethren.

The impact of Scofield’s Reference Bible is obvious in O’Hair’s pamphlet of the 1920s, *A Dispensational Study of the Bible—Genesis to Revelation*, where he fully adopts the Scofield view of the dispensations along with details of definition found in the Reference Bible. Another important detail of the Reference Bible was its view of the church as a Pauline revelation not found elsewhere in Scripture, which Scofield outlined in his note on Ephesians 3:6 (p. 1252). Most of these resources were current and used by O’Hair.

The authors and studies discussed above were part of the larger Fundamentalist reaction to postmillennialism and the Modernist Social Gospel movement it generated after 1875.⁷ This movement diluted biblical salvation and theology by redefining biblical theological language in humanistic, ethical terms, and reducing the basics of Christianity to the fatherhood of God; the brotherhood of man; the infinite value of persons; and love as the supreme value and Christianity’s calling. Against this theologi-

⁴ On Brookes, the current full-length study of stature is Carl Sanders II, *The Premillennial Faith of James Brookes: Reexamining the Roots of American Dispensationalism*, (Lanham MD: University Press of America, 2001); on Washington Compton-Walnut Street Church, see 44.

⁵ Paul R. Allen, “In the Latter Days,” in *The Jew in History and Prophecy* (Chicago: The Chicago Hebrew Mission, 1918), 64–67. Allen’s story reads like a confession.

⁶ Former members of North Shore Church remember Newell’s presence during O’Hair’s early years. Although mentioned a few times, Newell does not figure prominently in O’Hair’s pamphlets. The above material on Newell is from interviews in 2012 with Gloria Koch by the author and with John LaVier by Donald Sommer.

⁷ J. Moorhead, *World Without End; Mainstream American Protestant Visions of the Last Things, 1880–1925*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999). Gradually, nineteenth-century postmillennialism, stemming earlier from Jonathan Edwards, morphed into the Social Gospel.

cally diluting movement, a protest arose in the last quarter of the nineteenth century with the aim of restoring the fundamentals of biblical faith—the Bible as God’s inerrant Word; Christ as fully God and fully man; his virgin birth, atoning death and bodily resurrection; and his literal Second Coming and worldwide kingdom of peace. O’Hair was part of this movement. His pamphlets often mention Modernism as a disappointing movement and serious threat to the churches.

As in Paul Allen’s case, Modernism tended to view liberal arts education, human intelligence, cultural engagement and moral progress—not atonement-based salvation by faith—as the basic corrective to the human struggle with evil. In reaction, Fundamentalism took a dim view of liberal arts education and social ethics, and adopted separation from culture as essential to its own corrective stress on personal salvation. Hence this larger movement, except for its Reformed and Presbyterian sector, separated itself from culture, “worldly” amusements, and even in some cases sports and government; in this respect it shared in the Reformation Anabaptist tradition. Fundamentalism chose rather to settle for Bible institutes as its form of Christian education. O’Hair adhered to this set of ideas, including a dim view of women’s public roles in society and church. He promoted, with Fundamentalism, a Bible- and church-centered lifestyle for Christians, and, also with Fundamentalism, a reaction to Modernist social ethics.⁸ Several early pamphlets are devoted to this issue: *How to Think Right*; *Was God a Jew for Thirty-Three Years?*; *The Program of Jesus*; and, *The Man Nobody Knows*. These early pamphlets all contain sharp criticisms of the Modernist movement, especially in its effects on the churches and its inconsistencies. Hence a central part of the grace movement’s Fundamentalist origin, along with its unique doctrines, included separatist social attitudes brought by O’Hair from Fundamentalism into his early thought and ministry.

The Decisive Formative Event

More than two years before becoming pastor at Chicago’s North Shore Congregational Church, O’Hair held a series of evangelistic and teaching meetings at the Empire Theater in Indianapolis. At the time, Wheeler Rescue Mission (still in existence) used the theater for special events,⁹ and actually acquired it by 1920. O’Hair’s meetings were hosted and led by James Nipper, a converted railroad engineer and evangelist who became superintendent of Wheeler Mission in 1919; he had previously led a revival at the Empire Theater in which Paul Rader was the evangelist (1919),¹⁰ and seems to have traveled around

the Midwest rescue mission circuit. The nightly meetings lasted for a period of “several weeks” as O’Hair reports. This Indianapolis period was sandwiched between two parts of a nineteen-week stay in St. Louis some time during 1919–1921. The Indianapolis meetings probably occurred in early or middle 1920,¹¹ and were attended mostly by Nazarenes, Christian and Missionary Alliance people, and Pentecostals.

Nipper apparently knew O’Hair or about him, seems from O’Hair’s account to have been acquainted with his emphasis on grace, and knew something about his concerns over the Pentecostal revival of miracles—especially tongues and healing. At some point early in the nightly meetings, Nipper asked him to “get up a message and tell them why tongues are not God’s message and program for today.” O’Hair agreed and developed and delivered a message entitled, *Three Reasons* (he elsewhere says *Five Reasons*. . .) *Why Tongues Ceased When Paul Reached Rome*.¹² So far as has been determined up to this writing, the talk was never put into a pamphlet or booklet under this title; but some of its ideas appear in several early pamphlets datable to the mid- and late 1920s (see Appendix). The next evening, a Pentecostal minister approached him and said, by O’Hair’s own account, “I’m giving up Pentecostalism and tongues.” Two nights later the man returned, announced he had done some further thinking and raised the question to O’Hair whether “the same three reasons that you gave that prove that tongues ceased with the close of the book of Acts. . . [do not also prove]. . . that water baptism ceased at the same time.”¹³ O’Hair says he laughed and replied, “Oh, you’re mistaken.” In another, later account of this event, he says, “I dismissed the preacher, but I could not dismiss the question.”¹⁴ He returned to his hotel room and studied New Testament baptism texts far into the night, concluding finally that the man was right. In the early pamphlet, *The Accuser of the Brethren and the Brethren*, he recounts that “a few days later, [I] stated my conclusion to the congregation where I was teaching.”¹⁵

Continued on page 6

was a leader in this campaign. The article mentions a large crowd in 1919 and its enthusiastic singing and spirit. The article also mentions O’Hair’s friend and rescue mission leader, G. H. Meinardi, who had once been superintendent of A. B. Simpson’s New York City Mission, but more recently had gone to Chicago’s Pacific Garden Mission branch at North Shore Congregational Church! See O’Hair, “Message,” 8.

¹¹ O’Hair says the meetings were more than two years before July, 1923; Nipper died in September, 1920, so the meetings had to have been before that date (Indianapolis Star death notice, September 4, 1920).

¹² O’Hair, “Message,” 11.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ O’Hair, *Buried with Him by Baptism*, 21. Beside the typescript, “Message,” there are at least three other accounts—perhaps more—of this event, each told in a slightly different way, and each contributing a few varied details. These accounts are all based on memory, which accounts for the varied descriptions.

¹⁵ J. C. O’Hair, *The Accuser of the Brethren*, nd, 3.

⁸ G. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*.

⁹ I owe this information to Pastor Donald Sommer of Grace Church, Indianapolis (on-line discussion, December 3, 2012, about an Indianapolis Star article by M. Jesse, on the theater’s history).

¹⁰ An Indianapolis Star article, May 19, 1919, reported on this evangelistic crusade. It featured a parade for Rader from railroad station to hotel. Nipper

After this talk, another man handed him a pamphlet by A. E. Bishop entitled, *Tongues, Signs and Visions Not God's Order For Today*, adding a remark to the effect that O'Hair's teaching was similar to that of the pamphlet. Hence, the grace movement's views of miracles and baptism originated at roughly the same time—before and during the Indianapolis meetings; they arose from others' challenges, not from O'Hair's imagination or disposition toward radicalism.

The Indianapolis meetings of 1920 thus proved to be highly significant for O'Hair, and in the long term, for thousands of others. During these few weeks he (1) publicly preached his views opposing the Pentecostal revival of tongues, healing and other miracles; (2) publicly preached, certainly for the first time, his new view that water baptism ceased by the end of Acts along with tongues and healing; and (3) added to his own resources the significant pamphlet by A. E. Bishop on the cessation of miracles toward the close of the New Testament era. Because these views of miracles and baptism were intertwined from the first, due to their appearance together in Mark 16:15-18, the Bishop pamphlet was in one sense the most significant detail of the Indianapolis developments, not in terms of immediate outcomes, but because of the names associated with it. C. I. Scofield, the author of the famous Reference Bible (which O'Hair used during these years), endorsed the Bishop pamphlet in its preface; its publisher was Moody Bible Institute. These associations of the pamphlet delivered long-term fodder for O'Hair's debates over the next three decades; he returned to the pamphlet again and again in discussions of miracles and baptism stemming from Indianapolis. Moody Bible Institute was a major institutional representative of the millenarian renewal after the Niagara and Prophetic Conferences; echoes of both conferences stretched well into the twentieth century. Scofield's prestige came from his Reference Bible, and Bishop himself was a missionary with Scofield's Central America Mission.

The Indianapolis events of 1920 thus brought together in a local event several streams of evangelical thought flowing through American religious life in the period leading to the emergence of the Fundamentalist Movement of 1920-1960. O'Hair was in the center of this stream and quickly saw the implications of using Mark 16 as a source for further discussion of tongues, healing and baptism.

New Perspectives in Grand Rapids and Chicago

O'Hair did not suddenly embark on an aggressive crusade against water baptism; nor did he thereafter talk about nothing but baptism or issue harsh demands that his hearers change immediately. He did, however, begin to speak more widely and often about it. One place where he clearly says he expressed his new view of baptism was Grand Rapids. He does not say who his contacts were; but likely hosts would have been his friend Mel Trotter,

founder of City Rescue Mission, or Martin DeHaan, founder of Calvary Church. Of this visit to Grand Rapids he says:

Shortly after I was in Indianapolis, I went to Grand Rapids, Michigan, and taught there what I taught first in Indianapolis. I made many return trips to Grand Rapids and always taught no water baptism in the dispensation of grace.¹⁶

One of O'Hair's undated pamphlets of the twenties (perhaps 1924-1926) reflecting the extension of his new convictions on baptism is *Buried with Him by Baptism*. This piece was not a North Shore Church pulpit sermon. It reads more like a brief paper he may have read at a speaking engagement, perhaps during one of his trips to Grand Rapids. In it he speaks of his congregation in Chicago:

In the particular church where I am now serving as pastor, we have some very spiritual saints who believe in immersion and have been immersed. We have some just as spiritual who believe in pouring or sprinkling. And some of the most spiritual, practical, and useful members that we have—among our best Bible students—believe that the one baptism is the Holy Spirit baptism. . . . If any believers come to me concerned about water baptism, always, when it is with them a question of quantity [of water], I advise them to be immersed, provided they are sure that the Holy Spirit has given them light from the Scriptures on the question.¹⁷

Two pages later he reflects on the Indianapolis events, noting with remarkable candor, (of the Pentecostal minister and extending the quotation above):

I dismissed the preacher, but I could not dismiss his question, and I have not dismissed it yet; although I cannot say that I have God's final answer; and yet I will not force such a conclusion upon you, if you agree not to force your contrary opinion without ample scriptural proof.¹⁸

Again, in another self-reflective moment in the same pamphlet, he says:

Nor am I trying to start any new theory of water baptism, or upset any believer's faith in any Christian essential. I am simply seeking light for myself and for others who are interested in this subject. Many teachers have said to me, 'I believe with you, but deem it unwise to teach it.'¹⁹

These thoughts are cautious and sensitive about his new view of baptism. In his own congregation he may have been more forceful than these expressions suggest; but it would certainly be a mistake to think these are permanent and final

¹⁶ O'Hair, *Accuser of the Brethren*, 3.

¹⁷ O'Hair, *Buried with Him by Baptism*, 18-19.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

conclusions; they are not. He is being appropriately careful here since he was probably not very far away as yet from Indianapolis and continues to seek God's word on the matter. And yet, sometime during or shortly after 1924, a remark or question for the congregation's thought appeared in the North Shore Church bulletin about whether water baptism should be practiced.²⁰ In yet another pamphlet, O'Hair refers to his intensive study of Old Testament washings, which may relate to his comment in the third passage cited above about not yet having God's final answer on the issue. Thus, *Buried with Him by Baptism* seems to reflect an early date after Indianapolis; the tone here is not that of the more assertive pamphlet soon to follow (but before 1929), *Seven Questions Concerning Water Baptism*. Above all, O'Hair is clearly in transition here with his congregation and others. But he is also moving toward a more refined and firm position on water baptism's Jewish character and thus its questionable use in the church. In later pamphlets, signs, wonders, baptism, and many other rituals of Israel referred to in Paul's epistles are discussed together; often with the question of how one or two can be arbitrarily selected out for normal church practice in various denominations.



Pictured here is J. C. O'Hair after twenty years at North Shore Church, Chicago, IL.

Pamphlets of the 1920s Era

Slightly before and during the 1920s—his earliest years in itinerant evangelism and as pastor at North Shore Church—O'Hair published at least forty-eight pamphlets and several dispensational charts of which some pamphlets are explanations; this is more than those listed on the back cover of *Have Ye Received...* (about 1930). Only a few—perhaps nine—were likely written before he entered the pastorate of North Shore in the summer of 1923. These forty-eight pamphlets can be classified by general subject matter as follows, although the classification is not discrete since some titles and contents overlap the categories:

- 13 are on Christ, salvation, the Christian life, or the Second Coming;

- 13 are on dispensational themes; three of these are on baptism; four are on signs and wonders;
- 11 are on other Christian groups, cults, or Modernism;
- 8 are on miscellaneous subjects;
- 3 are on social issues.

This classification scheme gives an approximate picture of O'Hair's main themes and interests during the 1920s—approximate because the categories overlap and even more classifications are possible. In identifying interests and emphases, allowance was made for his dual roles as evangelist and teacher—a more or less atypical combination of gifts for evangelists of the 1920s. Within the general category of “dispensational themes,” the three pamphlets on baptism and four on miracles are notable. To service the limited scope of this study, we will isolate examples from each of the five classifications identified above in order to see O'Hair's rationale with regard to evangelism and premillennialism; signs and wonders; baptism; dispensational ideas; and the beginning of the Church—all important to the theology of the grace movement.

Early Evangelistic and Millenarian Pamphlets

“Evangelistic” and “millenarian” are considered together because in this era Second Coming preaching usually had evangelistic intent. Two pamphlets, certainly predating 1923 and probably the 1920 Indianapolis meetings, are *At His Coming: Premillennialism*, and *The Christ Who Died for Us*. A small pamphlet of only twelve pages, *At His Coming* was written while he was living in Oak Park outside Chicago. In the author-line he calls himself, “Evangelist J. C. O'Hair,” indicating his activity of this period; after 1923, he calls himself, “Pastor.” The pamphlet contains the usual Niagara and Prophetic Conferences' and Scofield Reference Bible's form of premillennialism, along with the by-now (1917-1920) controversial pretribulation rapture teaching. It closes with a plea for salvation in light of Christ's return. *The Christ Who Died for Us* is a salvation pamphlet of thirty-seven pages. It urges personal faith by developing a picture of Jesus' divine identity, his fulfillment of prophecy, his unity with God the Father, his miracles and atoning death, and the glory and wonder of salvation. This pamphlet is full of the spirit of grace; it quotes texts of grace and speaks of Christ in all his works, names, deeds, and salvation sayings.

These pamphlets are noted because they come from very early in O'Hair's ministry and because they identify the priority in his thought and activity of evangelism and Second Advent premillennial preaching and teaching. Neither emphasis is distinctive to the grace movement; but with the whole of evangelical Christian orthodoxy, these two themes form a major theological basis for the more distinctive elements. This point emphasizes the widely recognized reality that any form of

²⁰ This detail is based on comments of John LaVier in an interview by Donald Sommer.

dispensational theology belongs to generic evangelical premillennialism. O'Hair's comments in the taped message suggest that the leader of the Indianapolis meetings of 1920, James Nipper, was acquainted with O'Hair's emphasis on God's grace in Christ and a completed salvation; he may have seen this salvation pamphlet. Nipper and O'Hair's common presence in rescue mission evangelism circles makes this more than likely.²¹ During this era Wheeler Mission, and many other rescue missions, were centers of evangelism and Second Coming preaching.

The Signs and Wonders Pamphlets

O'Hair reports that at the time of the Indianapolis meetings (1920) a story circulated about a Pentecostal minister who had died. The burial was postponed while the congregation prayed both in tongues and without tongues as another Pentecostal minister tried to raise the dead minister; the attempt failed. It also seems possible from the account that some holiness people in the meetings were resisting the Pentecostals' agitation for tongues and healings, and were wondering if their received holiness theology might be making them vulnerable to Pentecostalism—beyond their second blessing theology. These two dynamics seemed to concern Nipper and were among the reasons why he asked O'Hair to speak on the subject, and why O'Hair then developed and delivered his message, *Why Tongues and Signs and Visions Ceased after Paul Reached Rome*. That is, fraudulent claims to raising the dead, and pressure from Pentecostals for miracles, were part of the Indianapolis situation in 1920.

An early signs and wonders pamphlet is *Divine Healing: Does God Heal the Body?* The pamphlet discusses the current interest in healing, whether healing is in the atonement, the meaning of Jesus' miracles, and some inconsistencies among Pentecostal healers; it also points out the reality of sick or deformed and unhealed apostles (Paul) and their legates (Trophimus, Epaphroditus and Timothy), and the cessation of the sign-gifts by and after the time Paul reached Rome. This pamphlet too, like *At His Coming* and *The Christ Who Died for Us*, comes from his itinerant evangelist period, and perhaps before the Indianapolis meetings. Thus along with these two pamphlets, *Divine Healing...* illustrates two aspects of O'Hair's early theology: 1) the pre-Indianapolis emphasis on salvation as already complete by grace alone; and 2) the pre-Indianapolis engagement of Pentecostalism's healing and tongues practices. He sees these themes as coordinated: A full and complete salvation exists in relationship with Christ and does not need tongues or healings to complete it. Whatever remains to be completed

lies in the Christian's future resurrection at the Second Coming. Miracles were signs for Israel during its kingdom probation period (Gospels and at least early Acts), were declining after Acts 19, and ceased when Paul reached Rome.

It also seems likely that at least one of these pamphlets figured in James Nipper's prior awareness of O'Hair's concern about signs and wonders. That concern began before the decisive Indianapolis meetings, which were nonetheless an important step in his development on this subject, especially with his new awareness of the Bishop pamphlet [mentioned in Part One]. O'Hair may also have become aware of Graham Scroggie's 1919 pamphlet, *Speaking with Tongues: What Saith the Scriptures?*

In an apparent follow-on, O'Hair soon produced a pamphlet entitled *False—Fraudulent—Fanatical Healers*. Allusions in the pamphlet point to healing evangelist Bosworth who was conducting a tent revival in Chicago. Either Bosworth or other current healers were claiming it “an act of unbelief on the part of a Christian to engage a physician or use material remedies or medicine in times of sickness.”²² O'Hair wanted to know whether this was valid. He begins by stressing the kingdom in Jesus' mission to Israel where miracles were appropriate as seen in other periods of Israel's history (Moses; Elijah)—a pattern also visible in the later ministry of the twelve apostles to Israel.²³ He then makes the telling observation that even people supposing themselves to have been healed by a healer inevitably die. He denies that bodily healing was provided in the atonement, cites the parallel healing activities of Peter and Paul, explains that the healing powers of the twelve overlapped the new dispensation of grace, and again concludes that Epaphroditus, Trophimus and Timothy—all noted in Paul's later epistles—went unhealed, while Timothy is instructed to take some wine for his infirmities. The latter point returns to one aspect of his signs and wonders message at Indianapolis—the cessation of miracles when Paul reached Rome. This pamphlet of forty-one pages is a sequel to Indianapolis; but after how much of a time lapse cannot be determined—certainly not more than five to eight years at the most.

Two more important pamphlets on signs and wonders belong to the mid- or later 1920s. In *The Former and Latter Rain* he engages the Pentecostal claim that the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2 together with the recent interest in reviving miracles are the fulfillment of Joel 2:23—a prophecy of a future early and latter rain. Instead, O'Hair takes the Joel text (with Zec 10:1 and Hos 6:3) in its natural sense of the two Palestinian rainy sea-

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²¹ In the transcript of his taped “Message,” p. 8, O'Hair refers to a tour of rescue missions which he made with Mel Trotter at Trotter's invitation. He says this tour lasted for two years (p. 8); it seems to have occupied part of his time during 1918–1919, the same period during which he pastored the Madison Street Church.

²² *False—Fraudulent—Fanatical Healers*, 4.

²³ The idea of three clusters of miracles in Israel's history sounds like B. Warfield, *Miracles: Today and Yesterday, True and False* (New York: Scribner's, 1918). O'Hair only infrequently cites sources directly.

sons—both to be renewed at the time of Israel’s future salvation and restoration to its land. The other piece of the 1920s, *What Is Holy Spirit Baptism?*, was not available at this writing, but is repeated with a brief summary in a later article in O’Hair’s periodical, *Bible Study for Bereans*, in January, 1937; in the summary O’Hair says Holy Spirit “baptism” is simply the baptizing work of the Spirit, by which believers are united with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection; the phrase does not relate to signs.

These pamphlets are further extensions—modest in size and argumentation—of the decisive moment in Indianapolis when Nipper asked O’Hair to prepare a talk on signs and wonders. O’Hair’s issues over renewed signs and wonders probably began before the Indianapolis event; but that event advanced the matter decisively in O’Hair’s thinking; on this subject, he was moving toward what became the theology of the grace movement.

The Baptism Pamphlets

The second stage of the decisive event at Indianapolis was the question asked of O’Hair by a Pentecostal minister: Do not your three reasons why tongues, signs and miracles ceased when Paul reached Rome also apply to water baptism? The evangelist answered the man that he was wrong about this and more or less quickly dismissed him. (O’Hair was still practicing or approving water baptism at the time.) It was about this exchange that O’Hair later said, “I dismissed the man, but I couldn’t dismiss the question.” At that moment in Indianapolis in 1920, the most distinctive, visible, and controversial feature of the grace movement’s theology had its beginning.

He does not seem to have embarked immediately on a sudden aggressive crusade against water baptism. But he does appear to have spoken more widely about it and probably quite frequently. He also likely began explaining the matter at North Shore Church soon after taking its pastorate. These early articulations were probably cautious in light of his newness there and the likely reality, as he reflects in the earlier quote, that there were people of diverse views and experience with baptism in his congregation. He does not define the time lapse between Indianapolis and Grand Rapids more exactly than “shortly after.” Within a three-year period is probably a safe rough estimate, but perhaps on the earlier side. In a reflection on the later controversies of the 1930s, stemming in part from his ongoing Grand Rapids teaching visits, he says, “I am not trying to start a new theory on water baptism, or upset any believers’ faith in any Christian essential. I am simply seeking for light for myself and for others who are interested in the subject.”²⁴

As disingenuous as this may sound at first, the *Buried with Him by Baptism* pamphlet, with its mild spirit and confession of lingering questions on baptism, is evidence that he meant this statement as written.²⁵ This early pamphlet argues simply that “buried with him by baptism” refers not to water baptism but to the work of the Spirit, in which union with Christ in his death and resurrection is created—a view of the phrase that, if adopted, might bring serious Christians into confrontation with historic denominational traditions. As noted above, this pamphlet is not a sermon for his North Shore congregation; it reads more like a paper or sermon manuscript for an uncommitted audience aware of heresy charges beginning to bubble up against him.

More assertive is the slightly later pamphlet, *Seven Questions about Water Baptism*, in which he seeks to engage a wider range of denominations on their baptizing practices—especially immersionists of various stripes. The pamphlet is a straightforward series of questions; it lacks the caution and reserve of *Buried with Him by Baptism*. The seven questions are:

1. Does “baptism” mean immersion? The answer is no: there is no clear evidence for immersion anywhere in Scripture.
2. Does John’s baptism belong to the body of Christ? The answer is no: it belongs to the law’s ritual washings for Israel and its anticipated kingdom, not to the body of Christ.
3. Which water-baptism belongs to the present day believer; that demanded by Peter on the day of Pentecost, or that granted to Cornelius the Gentile? The answer is the latter because the order of related baptism events alone—faith, then the Spirit, then baptism—is compatible with baptism in Paul’s practice; he may be thinking of Acts’ Pauline baptizing scenes here. He does not seem aware of a possible tension between this answer and that of question 2.
4. How about baptismal regeneration? Texts in John appealed to in support (4:14; 7:38) use water only as a symbol of something else. If Paul thought water baptism was regenerative, he would have baptized as many as he could find; he would not have said, “Christ sent me not to baptize. . . (1 Cor 1:17).
5. How about water baptism and the great commission? The commission includes signs and wonders along with baptism (Mk 16:15-18); all together belonged to Israel, the kingdom, and the ministry of the twelve apostles.
6. Have all who have been baptized with water by immersion put on Christ? The answer is no: traditional churches have many baptized members who do not know Christ personally.

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²⁴ *Buried with Him by Baptism*, 22.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 11-19.

7. How about the expression, “buried with Him by baptism” (Rom 6:4)? If baptism here is water, then it effected a moral change in the recipient, since a moral change is what Romans 6:4 explains.

This pamphlet seeks to involve all immersionists; those who say baptism is not necessary to salvation, those who say it is necessary for salvation, and those who say any form of baptism is regenerative. Here O’Hair’s change from baptizing to non-baptizing reaches its more engaging expression. The Indianapolis moments are becoming a developed theology, capable, he thinks, of delivering the whole of Christendom from its massive baptism conflicts and the confusion these inflict on the whole church. He seems to be thinking now of a whole-church renewal that will once for all deliver Christendom from its awkward dilemma; millions of unsaved “saints” made such by reliance upon their baptisms. His view is strikingly reminiscent of Karl Barth and Paul King Jewett’s attacks on infant baptism.²⁶

The Dispensational Pamphlets

Early Dispensational Studies:

A Dispensational Study of the Bible—Genesis to Revelation, consists of a series of fifteen lessons on the seven dispensations. The lessons follow closely the Scofield Reference Bible’s outline of the seven dispensations, and Scofield’s theory that a dispensation consists of a new revelation with a test of man, man’s failure, and a judgment that ends each dispensation. The first seven lessons set the context: the Trinity and its functions in the dispensations. Lessons nine through fourteen are on the first six dispensations. Lesson fifteen is on the new covenant and the church. Lesson sixteen is on the last dispensation, the millennial kingdom. The segment on the new covenant is the most interesting and distinctive. He begins by noting that the new covenant includes the missions and messages of Peter to Israel and Paul to the Gentiles. The apostles and disciples of Jesus lived “. . . when the Holy Spirit made His official entrance to start His part in the building of the Church of Christ. . . . They lived in that early transition period when God was revealing step by step one of His dispensational changes; emerging from the kingdom and Israel to the Church and its mysteries.”²⁷

At this stage of O’Hair’s thought, he believed the whole of Acts was a transition period. Still, he goes on to say, “To give Peter’s message to Gentiles of this day is not to rightly divide the Word of truth. Peter still had Israel’s Messianic Kingdom

in mind on the day of Pentecost and for some time after. . . . The mysteries concerning the Body of Christ had not been revealed to him.”²⁸

He adds that the mystery was not made known to other ages and cites Ephesians 3 and Colossians 1:24-28 in support, following the Scofield Reference Bible’s teaching that “In [Paul’s] writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the church.”²⁹

These thoughts fit with the quotations above that sound like he is feeling his way toward the more thorough-going dispensational theology that emerged in the 1930s. His *A Dispensational Study*... follows Scofield entirely, except for his thoughts on the Peter-to-Paul movement of the Acts record. Surprisingly, the pamphlet does not discuss baptism as an element in the simple Peter-Paul contrasts he draws. Nor are there any controversies over baptism reflected here like those after 1930. The pamphlet probably dates from 1924-1926—the earlier stage of his pamphleteering between 1923 and 1930. This date is further suggested by the list of only about twenty-two pamphlets available compared to the forty-one available by about 1930.

Two other pamphlets of this period, which contain sharper distinctions, but cannot date later than 1928, are *Jesus Christ, a Minister of the Circumcision* and *The Twelve Apostles and Paul*. We know these pamphlets are early because in his book, *The Controversy*, C. R. Stam reports that these two pamphlets were instrumental in his family’s initial encounter with O’Hair’s thought.³⁰ The event was a visit to the Stam home (New Jersey, about 1926) by a family friend who spoke of the “one body” and “one baptism,” and later gave them copies of the two pamphlets. Thus these two pamphlets seem to come from about 1927-1928, since they are also alluded to in *Have Ye Received the Holy Spirit Since Ye Believed* (1929).

In *Jesus Christ, a Minister of the Circumcision* O’Hair argues that God had a special purpose for Israel and that Christ never did anything but participate in and confirm that purpose. He collects Old Testament and New Testament texts on this theme and argues for Paul’s difference from Jesus’ earthly mission to Israel by gathering texts on Paul’s Gentile mission. In *The Twelve Apostles and Paul*, O’Hair extends the thesis of *Jesus Christ, a Minister of the Circumcision* by collecting all Acts’ Israel texts, all Israel texts from Paul, and all Paul’s statements about his commission and mission to the Gentiles. This pamphlet produces a sharp contrast between Israel and its situation in unbelief, and

²⁶ K. Barth, *The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism*, trans. E. Payne (London: SCM Press, 1948); P. K. Jewett, *Infant Baptism and the Covenant of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978).

²⁷ J. C. O’Hair, *A Dispensational Study of the Bible*, nd, un-paginated; the quote comes from Lesson 15, 1.

²⁸ Ibid., Lesson 15, 2.

²⁹ Scofield Reference Bible, 1252.

³⁰ C. R. Stam, *The Controversy* (Chicago: Berean Bible Society, 1963).

the Pauline Gentile mission. The pamphlet shows O'Hair moving toward a view—of the Pauline revelation of the Church and the time of its beginning—more like that of the 1930s and after; but he is not there yet.

Pauline Revelation and Beginning of the Church Pamphlets:

In another pamphlet of the 1920s, *Unscriptural Cathedrals*, O'Hair makes this statement, which might surprise more recent believers of grace movement conviction:

I have always believed and taught that the Church began at Pentecost, and... I know with that view there arise many questions and problems; the same is true, if we postpone the beginning of the Body of Christ to the time that Paul reached Rome.³¹

The author-line of the pamphlet says "J. C. O'Hair, 1011 Wilson Avenue, Chicago, Ill."; so, it comes from no earlier than the beginning of his pastorate at North Shore Church (1923). The pamphlet shows movement toward the "mid-Acts view" of the Church's beginning; he is almost, but not quite there. In the same paragraph cited above from *Unscriptural Cathedrals*, he only thinks of two views of the Church's origin—Acts 2 (a traditional view) and after Acts 28 (E. W. Bullinger's view, which O'Hair rejects). In *The Program of Jesus*, dating from about the same time, O'Hair expresses—although only once—a similar view of the origin of the Church (pp. 7-8). Otherwise this pamphlet is filled with contrasts between Jesus' mission to Israel and Paul's mission to the Gentiles, and the beginning of the otherwise unknown but newly revealed Church. He does not try to reconcile the Pauline revelation of the Church with its beginning at Pentecost. He rather draws forceful contrasts between the Sermon on the Mount in Jesus' "program," which he sees as an extension of the Mosaic law and a remarkable ethics, and the equally forceful atonement-and-salvation-grace preaching of Paul. But again, perhaps surprisingly to later grace believers, the Sermon on the Mount is seen as an ethic that becomes possible in believers once they have experienced regeneration by grace and the resurrection power of Christ working in them.³²

In *The Twelve Apostles and Paul* cited above, he is even closer to the Church as a Pauline revelation and its implied origin with Paul at a point later in Acts—well beyond Acts 2. The section of the pamphlet where this thinking appears most forcefully is "WHEN DID THE CHURCH BEGIN?" The question shows he is searching and open, even though there is not yet a direct and formally stated answer beyond Acts 2. So it is nothing less than stunning to consider the last two paragraphs under this heading:

[Jesus'] second promise is now being fulfilled—'I will build my church.' When did Christ begin to build that church? If

he began on the day of Pentecost, the minds of those Jewish disciples were so saturated with Israel's kingdom hope that there is no evidence of any knowledge on their part of the Body of Christ, made up of members who were raised up to sit with Him in the heavenlies. ... All who were being added at that time were Jews. ... Peter, the minister to the circumcision gave them the promise and assurance of a place in the kingdom, but if he himself was in the Body of Christ he was ignorant of the fact. ... Before the close of the book of Acts we know that Jews and Gentiles had been baptized in the Holy Spirit into the one body. ... God never confuses the kingdom and Israel with the Body of Christ. Israel is altogether different from the New Testament Church. They have some things in common, but many things are peculiar to each.³³

In these observations, O'Hair is only a "half-step" from the obvious conclusion. At this point, however, he still believes the Church began at Pentecost. Instead of going where his distinctions point, he resolves the hesitation by two related ideas: 1) the whole of Acts is a changing kaleidoscope of transition(s) and overlaps; and 2) Acts presents us with a Jewish church and a Gentile church, apparently coexisting side by side in parallel throughout the whole book. He continues to speak of "the beginning of the church at Jerusalem," distinguishing chiefly between its ethnic makeup and practices (Jewish), and the Gentile churches which do not practice Jewish ordinances—at least not by apostolic order. These distinctions are discussed even more fully under the next heading, "THE JEW CHURCH—THE GENTILE CHURCH." This kind of contrast continues from page 22 to the pamphlet's end at page 31. Some contrasts may be slightly overdrawn, but on the whole the differences between Peter and Paul's ministries are substantial and biblically based. One contrast which could be viewed as questionable, but is in fact biblical, is that certain works of the Holy Spirit—baptizing and sealing into Christ or his Body—do not appear in the Peter-to-Israel portions of Acts (chapters 1-8).

In this pamphlet, O'Hair has virtually moved into believing that the beginning of the Church was not until Paul and the Gentile mission; nonetheless he is not quite sure as yet, since he continues to assume and even state that the Church began at Pentecost. The "mid-Acts" view would have to wait a bit longer for its full realization. Nonetheless, the Indianapolis insights were gradually working their way toward final conclusions—conclusions which became the distinctive theology of the grace movement on matters dispensational. O'Hair's views in the 1920s represent his thinking in transition. The pamphlets of the 1930s would solidify the mid-Acts origin of the Church.

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³¹ *Unscriptural Cathedrals*, nd, 26. Cf. similarly, *The League of Nations* (1919), 21.

³² *The Program of Jesus*, 12-14; this may seem reminiscent of the paradoxical in something like Karl Barth's sense. O'Hair resolves this by pointing out that the

Sermon on the Mount belongs to the old covenant of law, while the atonement-salvation of Christ belongs to the new covenant (*Program of Jesus*, 12-16).

³³ *The Twelve Apostles and Paul*, 22.

Pamphlets Addressing Two New Testament Gospels:

O'Hair's theological ideas discussed above led by logical extension to the thought that two different gospels were preached by Peter and Paul respectively—Peter preaching the “gospel of the circumcision” in his continuing mission to Israel, and Paul preaching “the gospel of the uncircumcision” in his ministry to Gentiles. Galatians 2:7, where these phrases are found, attracted O'Hair's attention since it contained a rather sharp Peter-Paul difference. This distinction thickened his growing sense of discontinuities between Israel, kingdom, Jewish legal and ritual practice, and prophecy on one side, versus the Gentiles, Church, freedom from law, and mystery revelation on the other. Two early expressions of this idea are *The Twelve Apostles and Paul* and, only slightly later, *The Great Blunder of the Church*. The first appeared in 1927-1928, while the latter appeared slightly later, perhaps in 1929.

In *The Twelve Apostles and Paul*, this distinction belongs to a much larger set of sharp contrasts drawn between the twelve apostles and Paul. In this pamphlet the two-gospels difference is present in concept, but is not developed with much detailed explanation.

In *Great Blunder...*, more space (twenty-five of seventy pages) is devoted to it. Several observations on context and explanation can be made. 1) The distinction between Peter and Paul's respective gospels closely parallels the same distinction found in W. R. Newell's pamphlet, *Paul vs. Peter: Or, Remarks on Galatians 1 and 2* (1930). Who learned from whom or even whether either one learned from the other is not clear—not, at least, until we know more about the details of the obscure relations of the two men. Especially crucial is the meaning of the phrase “the gospel of the circumcision.” 2) In O'Hair's discussion in *The Great Blunder of the Church*, his usual sense is that “the circumcision” refers to the Jews, but especially as the people descended from Abraham after circumcision was added (Gn 17) to the earlier promises (Gn 12:1-3) and justification by faith (Gn 15:6). That is, “the circumcision” refers to the people, Israel, and their identifying physical ritual. 3) Exactly what the content of “the gospel” is in this phrase is not clear until he finally says on page 50:

In the gospel of the circumcision, Peter preached concerning Jesus of Nazareth and His doings on earth [Acts 2:22]. He preached the same message to Cornelius and his household [Acts 10:38-40]. Paul never preached the ministry of reconciliation for all the world, concerning 'Jesus of Nazareth.' He made no reference to what he did on earth, except the Lord's Supper, which exception is one proof that Supper is for the observance of members of the Body of Christ. The reconciliation ministry took in the human race as related to Adam and not to circumcised Abraham and his seed after the flesh. Therefore Paul, in his writings to Gentiles never once referred to the

parables, the sermon on the mount, miracles, or kingdom teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. He never referred to Jesus of Nazareth in writing to Gentiles, but to the Christ Who was reconciling the world unto God by His death.

These generalizing contrasts used to explain the “gospel of the circumcision” are partly due to the fact that there is no parallel to the Galatians 2:7 phrase outside the passage—nowhere to look for help on the exact sense. New Testament parallels do exist for the phrase “the circumcision,” quite a few in fact. But in the New Testament these usually refer to Israel/the Jews collectively—the recipients of the gospel, not the preached content—as many of O'Hair's comments recognize when citing the passages with “the” before “circumcision.” But still, no passage parallels the whole phrase. Whether originating with Newell, O'Hair, or one of the British dispensationalists, his explanation of the phrase encouraged many of his followers to repeat the point and sometimes to elaborate in more detail.

Conclusion

The grace movement emerged from J. C. O'Hair's experience during evangelism and teaching meetings in Indianapolis in 1921. Along with his prior evangelical millenarian Christianity, O'Hair brought with him dispensational insights, and gained from the Indianapolis encounter a negative view of both the new Pentecostalism and water baptism for the church age, and new forms of the distinction between the Church and Israel; this thinking came mainly from the teaching of C. I. Scofield. Into this type of biblical theology he introduced the major refinement—also based on the Scofield Reference Bible—that Paul was the apostle of a newly revealed church age, and the added inference from the exegesis of Ephesians 2-3 and Colossians 1, that the Church of the dispensation of grace began not with Jesus or the twelve apostles at Pentecost, but later in Acts in conjunction with Paul's mission to the Gentiles. □

Appendix

Pamphlet Titles of the 1920s by Alphabetical Order

O'Hair seldom included copyright or publication dates. Therefore, pamphlet dates have to be inferred from their appearance on back page advertisements—under the assumption that pamphlets being offered were already in existence; this method of dating has limitations. Some dates can be identified from allusions to events or times of O'Hair's life. Where dates are clear the pamphlet is considered a benchmark from which to work backward or forward—to what was already published, or had not yet been published. Where dating information was available or probable it appears as annotations

in the entry; to save space. Annotations are frequently incomplete sentences to conserve space. Limitations on dating information make this first attempt to date pamphlets in O'Hair's ministry open to further study and corrections. — D. DeWitt

Pamphlets of 1917-1923

The first nine pamphlets date to before the beginning of O'Hair's pastorate at North Shore Congregational Church (July, 1923; name changed to North Shore Church in January, 1929). During this period he pastored a church in Oak Park (a western suburb of Chicago) and held evangelistic and teaching meetings across the northeast quadrant of the country. During this early period, he gave his publication address as 313 Kenilworth Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois. From July, 1923- onward, the publication address was the same as the North Shore Church address—1011 Wilson Avenue, Chicago.

At His Coming: Premillennialism

- The author-line says "Evangelist J. C. O'Hair." He lived at the time at 313 Kenilworth Ave., Oak Park, IL. Thus the pamphlet came from his evangelist period (1917-1923), and well before 1923.
- It assembles New Testament texts to support the Second Coming and premillennialism.

Christ Who Died for Us, The

- A long salvation tract stressing the unity of Father and Son in the Gospel of John. O'Hair lived in Oak Park at publication.
- Five other pamphlets and three charts are offered for purchase.

Cross We Forget, The

- O'Hair lived in Oak Park at the time of publication. The pamphlet is pre-1923; an extended atonement-salvation tract.

Divine Healing: Does God Heal the Body?

- This pamphlet also says he lives in Oak Park. It offers *At His Coming*, and so post-dates that pamphlet (see above), but could pre-date the 1920 Indianapolis meetings, since his Indianapolis host seems to have been aware of his views of Pentecostal miracle claims.

How to Think Right

- Perhaps published shortly after the appearance of J. H. Robinson's *Mind in the Making* (1921). O'Hair is critical of Robinson's view that humanity's problems can be solved only by more creative minds, without regard to the gospel.
- The pamphlet mentions J. W. McCarrell. Apparently O'Hair and McCarrell shared an office at 1620 Manhattan Building in downtown Chicago during this period.

New Testament Mysteries

- The pamphlet refers to the League of Nations and the Federal Council of Churches.
- The brief discussion of the mystery of the Church (on Eph 3:5)

is undeveloped in its implications. He does identify the Church as a Pauline revelation, but comments on it are limited.

Sabbath or First Day of the Week; Which for the Christian?, The

- The pamphlet belongs to the years of O'Hair's Oak Park residence.
- The pamphlet offers for sale ten pieces—the same ones as *The Christ Who Died for Us* but two more beside—thus dating toward the end of this period, perhaps 1921-1922.
- It engages "seventh-day" Christians, perhaps both Adventists and Seventh-Day Baptists. It argues that Sabbath-keeping belongs to the Old Covenant; Christians rather live under the New Covenant.

What is Holy Spirit Baptism?

- Listed with five other pamphlets for sale when *How to Think Right* was published; thus earlier than that pamphlet (see above).

Pamphlets of 1923-1930

Buried with Him by Baptism

- This important pamphlet is witness to the transitional nature of O'Hair's thinking in the 1920s; it dates between 1923 and 1928.
- Discusses the meaning of this biblical phrase, and includes some autobiographical information on events of his life along with a brief account of the 1920 Indianapolis meetings that led to his new views on the relation of baptism and miracles.

Christian Life, The

- One of O'Hair's longest and most widely distributed booklets of the 1920s.
- Outlines major aspects of the Christian life.

Christian's Relation to the Ten Commandments, The Dispensational Study of the Bible, A

- Surveys the seven dispensations following the *Scofield Reference Bible*, with comments differentiating the Church, Israel, and the kingdom.

Divine Sonship

Eddyism Called Christian Science

- One of several studies of cults in this period. Note others below.

False—Fraudulent—and Fanatic Healers

- Opposes faith-healers he perceives as fraudulent and cites a case in Chicago.

Former and Latter Rain, The

- Opposes Pentecostal claims that the "latter rain" of Joel 2:23 refers to the recent revival of signs and wonders.

Free Trip from Chicago to Heaven, A

Continued on page 14

Great Blunder of the Church, The

- This large, important pamphlet dates from 1929-1930.
- Argues that the church has missed Paul's teaching on the mystery of the church.

Have Ye Received the Holy Spirit Since Ye Believed?

- Bryan Ross has shown that this pamphlet dates from before *Unscriptural Cathedrals*, perhaps early 1930.

He that Should Come and He That Shall Come

Jesus Christ a Minister of the Circumcision

- 1927.
- An early pamphlet on Jesus' mission to Israel—an early pamphlet since C. R. Stam refers to it in *The Controversy* as part of his reading about 1930. Dispensationally, an important pamphlet.

K. K. K. and the Jew, The

- Discusses the Ku Klux Klan's activities in the 1920s.

Light on the Roman Catholic Church from the Catholic Bible

Man Nobody Knows but Believers, The

- A reaction to Bruce Barton's *The Man Nobody Knows*, referring to Jesus.

Millennial Dawinism or Millions Now Living Will Never Die

- Another study of a cult.

Modernism—Ritualism—Fanaticism

- Isolates what for O'Hair were the three most troubling elements in American Christianity at the time. He sometimes uses "fanaticism" when he means Pentecostalism.

Program of Jesus, The

- A sermon of July 1, 1924.
- Its target is Modernist ministers who exalt the Sermon on the Mount's ethics as the essence of Christianity and oppose the atonement salvation of the gospel.
- Sharp contrasts between Jesus' "program" and the later gospel of the apostles' preaching, especially Paul's.

Questionnaire on Baptism

- 1929-1930.
- Questions for thought.

***Salvation: The Elect or Whosoever Which?* [sic]**

- A sermon given at Grand Rapids City Mission, December 3, 1924—only six months after beginning his North Shore pastorate.

Saved from the Great Tribulation

- Explains why O'Hair is a pretribulation premillennialist. Gathers texts supporting the rapture, Great Tribulation, Second Coming and kingdom.

Savior Which Is Christ the Lord; The Disfigured and the Transfigured Christ, A

- Seasonal sermons.

Second Coming of Christ, The

Second Things of the Bible, The

Seven Questions on Water Baptism

- About 1928-1929.
- A very assertive pamphlet intended to engage all kinds of immersionists on baptismal beliefs and practices.

Seventh-Day Adventism

- An early pamphlet on the cults;
- O'Hair's interest in the cults continued in articles in his periodical *Bible Study for Bereans* (1935-1937), and then in a large booklet, *Isms and Schisms* in the late 1930s (note other titles on cults in this bibliography).

Should the U. S. Prepare for War?

Spiritualism Exposed

Another early cult study published first in a separate pamphlet.

Twelve Apostles and Paul, The

Gathers Pauline texts to illustrate his distinctive apostleship to the Gentiles and dispensational differences between Paul and Peter's ministries.

Unpardonable Sin, The

Unscriptural Cathedrals

- Bryan Ross has proved that this booklet dates between late 1930 and December, 1931.
- The booklet mostly examines covenant theology and infant baptism.

Was God a Jew for Thirty-Three Years?

- The date is roughly 1925-1926. Refers to *Truth Seeker* article in *The Freethinker* journal, May 2, 1925.
- A fierce attack on liberalism in mainline churches, which atheists and freethinkers rightly see aligned with themselves. An important pamphlet in the growing Fundamentalist disgust with Modernism.
- About sixteen pamphlets for are offered for sale.

What about the Heathen?

What is the Eucharist?

Where are the Dead?

Where Did Cain Get his Wife?

Why Did God Create Evil?

Will Jesus Christ Come Again?

- Probably dates from about 1923-1925.
- Offers twelve pamphlets for sale, including *The League of Nations*.

Will the Jews Crown Jesus King?

WPCC

- The title contains the call letters of O'Hair's radio station built in North Shore Church in the later 1920s.

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