

## IS MONTANISM A HERETICAL SECT OR PENTECOSTAL ANTECEDENT?

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### 1. Introduction

In a Pentecostal circle, it is widely accepted that Montanism is one of the Pentecostal antecedents, and yet in fact it was condemned as a heresy by the early Christian writers and bishops such as Eusebius and Epiphanius.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the Synod of Iconium (A.D. 230) officially rejected the Montanist baptism and excommunicated the movement.<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, fiercely attacks Montanus and his enthusiastic followers by considering their “New Prophecy” movement as the work of the devil “having devised destruction against those that disobeyed the truth, and thus excessively honored by them, secretly stimulated and fired their understandings, already wrapped in insensibility, and wandering away from the truth.”<sup>3</sup>

The question must be raised in the mind of Pentecostals: Is our antecedent a heretical sect? It’s nothing to worry about. Let us be reminded that the early Pentecostals were also rejected by the Holiness movement and the Fundamentalists as well as traditional American Christianity,<sup>4</sup> even though they claimed to trace their roots from the Holiness movement, Fundamentalism, and the Keswick movement. Even Jesus the Messiah was rejected by the Jews who had been looking forward to the coming Messiah promised in the Old Testament. In the same way, Montanism was rejected by the Orthodox Church for some reason or other, although it was rooted mainly in Christianity.

In this essay, I would attempt to give a sound answer to the question given in the title by vindicating Montanism against the

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<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History*, trans. C. F. Cruse (Grand Rapids, MI: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 5.16.

<sup>2</sup> Howard A. Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989), 22.

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, 5.16.9.

<sup>4</sup> William W. Menzies, *Anointed to Serve: The Story of the Assemblies of God* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1971), 80.

oppositions to its system and examining into its positive impact on the Church in relation with Pentecostal emphases.

## 2. The Brief Description of Montanism

Montanism, the New Prophecy, is a renewal movement “with pentecostal-like traits,”<sup>5</sup> such as speaking in tongues, an uninterrupted gift of prophecy, the expectation of the imminent parousia, and emphasis on ascetic life, in distinction from a growing institutionalism and secularization of the Church. The founder, Montanus, appeared in Phrygia, Asia Minor, in about A.D. 155, and began prophesying in ecstatic language.<sup>6</sup> He was soon joined by two prophetesses, Maximilla and Priscilla, and they claimed to possess a similar gift of prophecy.<sup>7</sup>

Montanus believed that the New Jerusalem would soon be set up at Pepuza in Phrygia, and Priscilla also proclaimed in her prophecy that Christ revealed to her that Jerusalem would come down from heaven to the holy Pepuza.<sup>8</sup> The Montanists gave strong emphasis on ascetic life—a perfectionist lifestyle mainly driven by their imminent

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<sup>5</sup> Stanley M. Burgess, “Montanism,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds. Stanley M. Burgess et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 903.

<sup>6</sup> As for his conversion to Christianity, most of modern historians claim that he was a former priest of Cybele, a pagan religion, which emphasized ecstatic prophecy. However, the sources of the 2nd century say nothing about this matter. It is more likely that “this idea was born in the antiheretical polemic of a later age,” according to *The Westminster Dictionary of Church History*, s.v. “Montanism, Montanus.” Even though we assume that he was a priest of the pagan religion, we must not ascribe his ecstatic prophecy after conversion to the previous religious practice. Dennis E. Groh, “Montanism,” in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), 622, rightly says, “Christianity in Asia Minor had long treasured the Gospel of John, with its promise of the Paraclete, and was the setting of the eschatological prophecy of the Book of Revelation. The daughters of Philip had resided in Asia Minor and were held to be prophetesses. Such circles seem the best explanation for the backgrounds of the movement, rather than pagan ecstatic religion or Judaism.”

<sup>7</sup> Burgess, “Montanism,” 903-4; *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Montanism.”

<sup>8</sup> David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 315-6.

eschatology.<sup>9</sup> Having a strong sense of a speedy return of Christ, they were willing to live an austere life according to the mandate of the Gospel. It also led them to a burning desire for martyrdom.<sup>10</sup>

The movement spread rapidly and widely to North Africa and Asia Minor, in spite of the orthodox opposition.<sup>11</sup> Around the year 207, it won a powerful advocate Tertullian, who was attracted by its asceticism and apocalypticism.<sup>12</sup> However, it was excommunicated by the Synod of Iconium and then deprived of their worship places by an edict of Constantine, and finally disappeared in the 6th century as Emperor Justinian massacred the remaining Montanists and their families.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. Reply to the Oppositions to Montanism

#### 3.1 The Violation of the Threefold Defense against the Heretical Attacks

As the early Christianity had been flooded with the numerous heretical teachings, the Orthodox Church developed a threefold defense, namely, creed, canon, and hierarchy, in order to effectively protect the orthodox Christianity from its perversions. The Montanists were of the same faith with the orthodoxy in terms of creed, but their perception of the Holy Spirit displeased the Orthodox Church, which was engaged in defining the process of canonization. The Orthodox Church thought that the recognition of the continuous revelation of the Spirit attacked the closed concept of canonicity because it seemed that, at any time, the list of the inspired books could be changed by anyone who claimed to receive the revelations from the Spirit of God.<sup>14</sup> On that score, the

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<sup>9</sup> Stanley M. Burgess, "Montanist & Patristic Perfectionism," in *Reaching Beyond: Chapters in the History of Perfectionism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1986), 123.

<sup>10</sup> Aune, 315-6.

<sup>11</sup> Snyder, 20-1.

<sup>12</sup> A Pentecostal scholar, Stanley M. Burgess, *The Holy Spirit: Ancient Christian Traditions* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984), 63, calls Tertullian "the Church's first important pentecostal theologian." For no primary sources of Montanism has almost been preserved, his writings are priceless.

<sup>13</sup> Burgess, "Montanism," 904.

<sup>14</sup> Balfour William Goree Jr., "The Cultural Bases of Montanism" (Ph.D. diss., Baylor University, 1980), 98.

Montanist prophets who insisted that the authority of the Church be put in “a succession of divinely inspired preacher prophets”<sup>15</sup> were unwelcome guests of church leaders.

Moreover, the Montanists deliberately attacked the hierarchy of the Church. Frend finds two types of ministry in the wake of Paul’s missionary journeys: the residential ministry of presbyter-bishops and the itinerant ministry of prophets and teachers.<sup>16</sup> It shows that “the flexible, more or less fluid New Testament pattern of team eldership evolved . . . into a three-part hierarchy of bishop, presbyter/priest, and deacon.”<sup>17</sup> Montanism emphasized a liberty in the presence of the Spirit,<sup>18</sup> in opposition “to this hardening of leadership categories and to the development of the concept of ‘office’ in the church.”<sup>19</sup> Liberty can be dangerous in a sense as seen in the problem of Corinthian Church, and yet it should be said that the church cannot be fully the church without freedom in the presence of the Spirit.

In short, the Orthodox Church seems quite likely to have opposed the Montanists for more practical reasons than doctrinal, in spite of their agreement on basic orthodoxy.<sup>20</sup>

### 3.2 The Excessiveness of the Ecstatic Prophecy

Now I will study prophecy in ecstasy by the help of Ronald Kydd’s admirable examination of three passages in Apolinarius’ refutation of Montanism, in which the Montanist prophecy is described as excessive ecstasy by harsh language.<sup>21</sup> First, Eusebius describes Montanus’ prophecy as “a certain kind of frenzy and irregular ecstasy, raving, and speaking, and uttering strange things.”<sup>22</sup> Secondly, we are told that Maximilla and Priscilla prophesied “in a kind of ecstatic

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<sup>15</sup> Maurice Barnett, *The Living Flame: Being a Study of the Gift of the Spirit in the New Testament* (London: The Epworth Press, 1953), 118.

<sup>16</sup> W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 139-40.

<sup>17</sup> Snyder, 18.

<sup>18</sup> Barnett, 113-4. He reinforces a liberty in the Spirit with Paul’s declaration: “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (2 Cor. 3:17 NASB).”

<sup>19</sup> Snyder, 18.

<sup>20</sup> Goree Jr., 97.

<sup>21</sup> Ronald A. N. Kydd, *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church: An Exploration into the Gifts of the Spirit During the First Three Centuries of the Christian Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984), 34-5.

<sup>22</sup> Eusebius, 5.16.7.

frenzy, out of all season, and in a manner strange and novel.”<sup>23</sup> Lastly, he calls them *ametrophōnous* prophets. The Greek word is translated differently as “talkative” by Cruse, “chattering” by Lake, and “loquacious” by McGiffert.<sup>24</sup> Kydd comes up with his accurate, but rough, rendering: prophets “who speak in an indefinite number of what sounds like language.”<sup>25</sup> Summing up these observations, the Montanist prophets contained strangeness, ceaselessness, and frequency in their oracles, being fully possessed by a spirit leading them to speak. It was a prophecy in tongue speaking!<sup>26</sup> They indeed spoke in tongues and prophesied in ecstatic language in the divine invasion, in common with the prophetic ministry in the Early Church.<sup>27</sup>

In fact ecstasy itself is not something heretical. The Greek noun *ekstasis* referring to a “trance” is found only three times in the Bible (Acts 10:10, 11:5, 22:17).<sup>28</sup> In these instances, Peter and Paul received direction and guidance from God through ecstatic experience which included both visionary and auditory components.<sup>29</sup> In other words, man has “direct audible communication with God” in ecstatic experience.<sup>30</sup> In ancient Israel prophesying also contained an ecstatic component. Hebrew people thought that every kind of abnormal behavior of prophets was attributed to the invasion of the Spirit. The historical books also prove that the prophets were usually invaded by a certain force from outside when delivering the message of or from God. This force was the Spirit of God and it made them different.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, it is no wonder that the Montanists prophesied in a state of frenzy and ecstasy. The prophets could experience a revelatory trance in terms of divine possession or control.

Barnett says that “one of earliest ideas is that a man possessed by or invaded with *ruach* is no longer in control of his faculties.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Eusebius, 5.16.9.

<sup>24</sup> Kydd, 35.

<sup>25</sup> Kydd, 35.

<sup>26</sup> Kydd, 35; Barnett, 119; Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 1997), 128.

<sup>27</sup> *Oxford*, s.v. “Montanism.”

<sup>28</sup> Bernard L. Bresson, *Studies in Ecstasy* (New York: Vantage Press, 1966), 123.

<sup>29</sup> Cecil M. Robeck Jr., *Prophecy in Carthage: Perpetua, Tertullian, and Cyprian* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 1992), 102.

<sup>30</sup> Bresson, 123.

<sup>31</sup> Barnett, 46-7.

<sup>32</sup> Barnett, 40.

However, it doesn't mean that a prophet in the state of ecstasy prophesies in disorder. Tertullian understands that a prophet loses a certain amount of his mental faculties in the Spirit's invasion, but not to the full extent. He asserts, "Although the power to exercise these faculties may be dimmed in us, it is still not extinguished."<sup>33</sup> The Montanist prophets might perhaps look mad or less aware of oneself and surroundings in the state of ecstasy, but their prophecy was under the Spirit's control.

The adversaries judged that the Montanists were "proclaiming what was contrary to the institutions that had prevailed in the church, as handed down and preserved in succession from the earliest times."<sup>34</sup> However, ecstatic language and state in prophecy can be one of the manifestations of the experience of Spirit-possession. We must not identify their ecstatic prophecy with being possessed by false spirits. The opposition to the ecstatic prophecy of the Montanists seems, on the whole, to be unconvincing.

### 3.3 The First Person Oracles

The opponents of Montanism also pointed out the first person speech in a number of Montanist oracles. They argued that Montanus identified himself directly with the Holy Spirit or, according to Epiphanius, even God the Father, in his oracles.<sup>35</sup>

However, it should be noted that almost every Montanist oracle has been preserved in quotation made by the opponent writers of Montanism, whereas no statement of Montanus himself or his immediate followers themselves has survived unfortunately, whether they wrote or not.<sup>36</sup> It is likely that the adversaries quoted only fragments, with which they could denounce the Montanists for a heresy, from a longer prophetic speech.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, their argument against the first person speech is not acceptable for "the fragmentary nature of

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<sup>33</sup> Tertullian, "A Treatise on the Soul," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 3:224.

<sup>34</sup> Eusebius, 5.16. 7.

<sup>35</sup> Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church: Ante-Nicene Christianity*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, n.d.), 418.

<sup>36</sup> Aune, 314. Also, most of the extant records/sources of Montanism come from opponents according to Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 19-20.

<sup>37</sup> Aune, 314-5.

these oracles provides only the most tentative glimpse into the prophetic activity of the Montanist prophets.”<sup>38</sup>

Rather, it seems to me more likely that they delivered God’s message directly word by word, as biblical prophets in the Old and New Testaments used the first person oracles in a good number of cases.<sup>39</sup> For instance, the Old Testament prophets Ezekiel and Amos frequently begin prophetic speech with the so-called messenger formula “thus says Yahweh,” then deliver the revelatory message by direct discourse. They recognize that it is always Yahweh who speaks in the first person in their oracles following the messenger formula.<sup>40</sup>

### 3.4 Extravagant Weight and Materialistic Coloring<sup>41</sup>

As described, Montanus and Priscilla prophesied of the New Jerusalem to come at Pepuza. Schaff argues that this extravagant prophecy was most vulnerable to criticism among the controversial pretensions of Montanism, and, as things turned out, its failure obviously incurred the wholesale condemnation of the adversaries to its system.<sup>42</sup> In other words, the Montanist imminent eschatology was deteriorated by extravagant weight and materialistic coloring given to their eschatological oracles.

However, we need to carefully observe whether the prediction that the New Jerusalem would descend at Pepuza came from an authentic origin. Even though scholars have often recognized it as one of the authentic Montanist oracles,<sup>43</sup> Lipsius suspects its origin whether oral tradition or the early source Epiphanius has employed in *Panarion haer.* 48.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, Voigt clearly proves that it has been drawn from

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<sup>38</sup> Aune, 316.

<sup>39</sup> Burgess, “Montanist & Patristic Perfectionism,” 120.

<sup>40</sup> Aune, 89.

<sup>41</sup> This title is borrowed from Schaff, 424. His term “materialistic coloring” suggests that the Montanist prediction visualized the end time by employing the concept of the New Jerusalem that would descend from heaven to Pepuza.

<sup>42</sup> Schaff, 425.

<sup>43</sup> In K. Aland, “Bemerkungen zum Montanismus und zur frühchristlichen Eschatologie,” in *Kirchengeschichtliche Entwürfe* (Gütersloh, 1960), 143-8; quoted in Aune, 439, Aland divides the Montanist oracles into three categories: genuine oracles, oracles of doubtful authenticity, and remnants of the contents of oracles. He regards the prediction of the last day as genuine.

<sup>44</sup> D. Richard Adelbert Lipsius, *Zur Quellenkritik des Epiphanius* (Wien: Braumüller, 1865), 230; quoted in Dennis E. Groh, “Utterance and Exegesis: Biblical Interpretation in the Montanist Crisis,” in *The Living Text: Essays in*

a later and inferior source, excluding *Panarion haer.* 49.1.2-3 where the prediction is preserved from the original source.<sup>45</sup> We should not hastily jump to a conclusion at this point of time because no one can judge a historical movement heretical by unreliable sources.

Furthermore, apart from the authenticity and integrity of the source, we need to look again into the Priscilla's oracle that predicts the descending of the New Jerusalem.

(Quintilla or Priscilla says:) In the form of a woman, says she, arrayed in shining garments, came Christ to me and set wisdom upon me and revealed to me that this place (= Pepuza) is holy and that Jerusalem will come down hither from heaven. (Epiphanius, *Haer.* 49. I. 2-3.)<sup>46</sup>

Priscilla is describing the revelatory vision from God. The concept of the "New Jerusalem" gleaned from the Apocalypse of John should be understood as a symbol of the saints themselves, not the geographical place in which the selected people reside.<sup>47</sup> The expressions "this place" and "hither" in her oracle evidently refer to Pepuza where she is standing. However, it is nowhere to be found that she insists that the New Jerusalem come down exclusively at Pepuza. What if a preacher should say to you that the second coming of Christ would soon take place here? There is nothing wrong. The Montanists, along with John, believed a space-transcendental parousia. Our Lord Jesus Christ will come to all the people on earth whether they are in the wilderness or in a back room, simultaneously and momentarily in a twinkling, as the Bible says, "For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man (Matthew 24:27 NIV)."<sup>48</sup>

#### 4. The Impact of Montanism

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*Honor of Ernest W. Saunders*, eds. Dennis E. Groh and Robert Jewett (New York: University Press of America, 1985), 80-1.

<sup>45</sup> Heinrich Gisbert Voigt, *Eine Verschollene Urkunde des Antimontanistischen Kampfes. Die Berichte des Epiphanius über die Kataphryger und Quintillianer* (Leipzig: Fr. Richter, 1891), 130-1; quoted in Groh, "Utterance and Exegesis," 80-1.

<sup>46</sup> The translation is dependent on Edgar Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 2, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, trans. R. McL. Wilson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965), 687.

<sup>47</sup> R. H. Gundry, "The New Jerusalem: People as Place, not Place for People," *Novum Testamentum* 29, no. 3 (1987): 256.

<sup>48</sup> Sungdo Kim, *The Reformed Evangelical Theology of Pentecostalism* (Seoul, Korea: The Korea A/G 50-Year History Compilation Committee, 2008), 537.

#### 4.1 The Challenge to the Secularism of the Church

The God-designed primitive Church was filled with vitality that the Holy Spirit breathed into it. There was no static and artificial organization in the Church; everything was led by the inspiration of the Spirit.<sup>49</sup> However, as prophets and apostles who were appointed in *direct endowment by the Spirit* was gradually superseded by the episcopate, the Church became a fixed and rigid hierarchical structure, in which the office was qualified by *outward ordination and episcopal succession*.<sup>50</sup> Barnett listed the abuses of the imperial system in the Church as follows:

. . . the entire nature of Christianity was in danger of undergoing a complete change. The fellowship of believers became a rigid ecclesiastical organization. Faith which had been inward trust and immediate response to a living Christ became “the faith”—a fixed and often lifeless dogma of orthodoxy. The simple remembrances became magical celebrations. The free and spontaneous exercise of spiritual gifts gave place to an inflexible system of form and ritual.<sup>51</sup>

In this context, the New Prophecy movement emerged. It was representative of a renewal movement provoking spiritual vitality of the primitive Church into a growing institutionalism of the Church. Additionally, it promoted the revival of Church interest in asceticism, which had been already “advocated by Greek and Judaeo-Hellenic philosophers and popular among many first-century Christians.”<sup>52</sup> The Montanists didn’t introduce new doctrines or professions. They diligently attempted to raise a passion for purity and holiness in the people of God. In this respect, John Wesley comments that Montanus, who “appeared (without bringing any new doctrine) for reviving what was decayed, and reforming what might be amiss,”<sup>53</sup> was “not only a truly good man, but one of the best men then upon earth.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Barnett, 114.

<sup>50</sup> Barnett, 114, 117. Italics are Schaff’s (424).

<sup>51</sup> Barnett, 117.

<sup>52</sup> Burgess, “Montanist & Patristic Perfectionism,” 138.

<sup>53</sup> John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978), 11:485.

<sup>54</sup> Wesley, 11:485.

#### 4.2 The Continuance of the Gifts of the Spirit

*The Passion of St. Perpetua* begins by quoting Acts 2:17 and adds, “We who recognize and honour equally the prophecies and the new visions which were alike promised, deem the other powers of the Holy Spirit to be for the equipment of the Church, to whom He has been sent administering all gifts to all, according as the Lord hath allotted to each....”<sup>55</sup>

Having recognized the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, particularly the gift of prophecy, the Montanists sought to restore the spiritual dynamic of the primitive Church in which prophecy and speaking in tongues were considered as “a regular gift to be looked for wherever the Spirit came upon men.”<sup>56</sup> Generally speaking, the Christian Church in the first two centuries was charismatic. The Montanists believed that the Holy Spirit still revealed God’s will without cease and that their ecstatic prophecy was the medium of divine revelation.<sup>57</sup> Their sensitivity to the Spirit helped the second century Christians stick to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in contrast to a dying spirituality in the Orthodox Church.

#### 4.3 The Apostolic Expectation of the Imminent Parousia

The expectation of the imminent parousia characterized the first century church. As years went by, this characteristic was progressively forgotten by the second century Christians who felt that the present stability of the Church would be lasting.<sup>58</sup> Montanism sprang up in this context to revive the Christian anticipation of the imminent return of Christ to earth, tracing the apostolic expectation from Jesus and the Apostles. Jesus’ saying in Mark 9:1 led people to expect that the Second Advent would take place within their own lifetime. Many disciples gave up their jobs and preached the Gospel with a strong sense of the last days.<sup>59</sup>

Even though some scholars have argued that the Montanists committed a serious error in the predictions of the last days, their

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<sup>55</sup> *The Passion of St. Perpetua*, in T. Herbert Bindley, *The Epistle of the Gallican Churches Lugdunum and Vienna* (London: SPCK, 1900), 62; quoted in Snyder, 16.

<sup>56</sup> Barnett, 113.

<sup>57</sup> Goree Jr., 217-8.

<sup>58</sup> Goree Jr., 126.

<sup>59</sup> Goree Jr., 129.

eschatological earnestness should not be neglected. They were the fanatic millenarians who held to the speedy return of Christ in glory, “all the more as this hope began to give way to the feeling of a long settlement of the church on earth, and to a corresponding zeal for a compact, solid episcopal organization.”<sup>60</sup> Maximilla’s oracle clearly reflects an imminent eschatological perspective: “After me there will be no longer a prophet, but the consummation.”<sup>61</sup> It is not a false prophecy, but should be understood as a succession of the apostolic expectation of a speedy return of Christ.

In short, Montanism was “a millenarian movement similar to the many millenarian movements in early Judaism including that of Jesus himself,”<sup>62</sup> and Pentecostal eschatology holds its millenarianism with a desire for the soon-coming Christ.

## 5. Summary

Most of the reasons of the opposition to Montanism are not laid on its doctrine or contents. The movement had no new doctrine at all.<sup>63</sup> Frend notes that “prophecy, asceticism, and martyrdom, the hallmarks of Montanism, all belong to the second century Christian tradition.”<sup>64</sup> It was “rooted neither, like Ebionism, in Judaism, nor, like Gnosticism, in heathenism, but in Christianity.”<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, the Orthodox Church was very wary of this renewal movement because the Montanists were thought to attack the ecclesiastical authority in terms of canonization and hierarchy.

The ecstatic frenzy and the first person speech in the Montanist oracles also seem to be hardly problematic on the basis of two reasons. Firstly, prophecy in an ecstatic experience often appeared in the Old Testament prophets.<sup>66</sup> Secondly, the first person speech was popular among the Old and New Testament prophets.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, it is most probable that the Orthodox opponents intentionally *paganized* the

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<sup>60</sup> Schaff, 424-5.

<sup>61</sup> Aune, 315-6.

<sup>62</sup> Aune, 313.

<sup>63</sup> Barnett, 118, 122.

<sup>64</sup> Frend, 254.

<sup>65</sup> Schaff, 421.

<sup>66</sup> Robeck Jr., 101.

<sup>67</sup> Burgess, “Montanist & Patristic Perfectionism,” 120.

Montanists in terms of the mechanics of prophecy for the sake of self-protection of their institution.<sup>68</sup>

The impact of Montanism was to revive the spiritual vitality of the primitive Church God had designed, in opposition to a growing worldliness of the Church. Whereas the opponents of the Montanists at that time considered the New Prophecy movement as the work of *evil*, Montanism indeed was obviously the work of the Spirit to help the contemporary Christians overcome various *evils* which had brought worldliness into the Church.

## 6. Conclusion

Throughout church history, there have been many church renewal movements under various names and forms by way of resistance against corrupted church authorities. Montanism was one of these efforts to attempt to return to the vitality of the primitive Church, being fully led by the Spirit, in spite of being considered a heresy and expelled by the institutional Church. The elements of the primitive Church, such as millenarianism, speaking in tongues, ecstatic prophecy, and the fanatical extremes, still remain just as they were via Pentecostal antecedents like Montanism in modern Pentecostalism.

Is Montanism a Pentecostal antecedent? Yes, definitely. Montanism, the New Prophecy movement, can be recognized as a healthy renewal movement, not containing any heretical doctrine or practice, being aware of the eschatological imminence and the continuance of the work of the Holy Spirit, and in particular the gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues upon which modern Pentecostals give emphasis. The Montanist contribution to the church, not only in its time but also today, is great in terms of the strong conviction that the Holy Spirit is always at work and that greater manifestation, not lesser, has been promised for the last days.

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<sup>68</sup> Aune, 313. To “paganize” is Aune’s term.