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A table of contents for *Canadian Journal of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_cjpc 01.php

Herbert E. Randall: A Canadian Holiness Missionary in Egypt and his Quest for More of the Holy Spirit

Dan Sheffield

Introduction

Rev. Herbert Edward Randall (1865-1938)¹ served as the founding missionary of the Holiness Movement Church² in Egypt (1899-1906), participated in the early stages of the Pentecostal movement in Canada (1907-1911), and then returned to Egypt as a Pentecostal missionary (1912-1938). This article will particularly explore Randall's ministry within the Holiness Movement Church (HMC), his motivation for mission as he left rural eastern Ontario to get on a ship and travel "to the ends of the earth," his years of ministry in Egypt at the turn of the twentieth century, and the transition period between his Holiness

¹ Born July 26, 1865, Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada; original baptism record, Methodist Church, Barnston, Quebec.

² In its earliest written documentation, the Holiness Movement Church, organized in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, often referred to itself as "The Holiness Movement (or Church)," perhaps suggesting dissatisfaction with limiting itself to an institutional form of organization, as many members were Methodists seeking a greater vitality in their Christian life.

Movement ‘second blessing’ and his Pentecostal ‘baptism in the Holy Spirit.’³

The first record of Randall’s missionary inclination is found in the minutes of a “Special Conference of The Holiness Movement (or Church)” held in Ottawa, Canada, April 28, 1896. Randall was 30 years old and unmarried. The record indicates, “Brother Randall feels called to foreign work.”⁴ It was at this conference of the fledgling Holiness Movement Church that a Missionary Committee was initially formed to send him.

From this simple beginning, Herbert Randall’s life proceeds through a series of uniquely inter-connecting occurrences on the international stage. From rural eastern Ontario in the newly-minted Dominion of Canada (1867), to the churning spiritual environment within the worldwide holiness/higher-life/Keswick movement (1870s-1920s), the triumphalistic period of the British Empire following the Second Anglo-Sudan War (1896-98), and then eight years of pioneering village ministry during the British occupation of Ottoman Egypt (1899-1906).

Randall and his later HMC missionary colleagues were simply educated, with limited worldviews, but with a profound belief in the power of God to bring lives ‘from

³ The author’s connection with Herbert Randall’s story emerged after living in Asyut, Egypt in the late 1980s working with the *Nahadet Al-Khadessah* churches, one stream of Randall’s legacy in Egypt.

⁴ *Minutes of Special Conference of The Holiness Movement (or Church)*, Ottawa, Canada, April 28, 1896. Various Holiness Movement Church archives including *Minutes*, and *The Holiness Era* (magazine) documents are located at the Free Methodist Church in Canada, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada; they are in an unorganized state.

darkness to light,' and of the Holy Spirit to provide the resources to sustain that light. It was Randall's own quest for a greater 'portion' of the Holy Spirit that eventually led him back to Canada in 1906 where, in early 1907, he received a Pentecostal 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' at the Hebden Mission in Toronto, Ontario.⁵ Leaving behind the Holiness Movement Church, Randall went on to play, firstly, an instrumental role in the 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' of Aimee Kennedy (1907) [later, Aimee Semple McPherson, flamboyant founder of the International Foursquare Church], secondly, serving as a ministry colleague alongside the founders of Canadian Pentecostalism and finally, returning to Egypt to serve out his ministry life as one of the founders of the Pentecostal movement in that country.

The Holiness Movement Church

In the early 1890s Herbert Randall came to be a part of an emerging holiness movement in eastern Ontario led by Rev. Ralph C. Horner. This phenomenon was seated within the larger holiness movement sweeping Britain, North America, and the world, via missionaries impacted by its teachings. Holiness advocates insisted on the necessity of a second conversion-like experience following their initial conversion: 'the fullness of the Holy Spirit', or in some

⁵ See Adam Stewart, "A Canadian Azusa? The Implications of the Hebden Mission for Pentecostal Historiography" in Michael Wilkinson and Peter Althouse, eds. *Winds from the North: Canadian Contributions to the Pentecostal Movement*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2010), 17-37.

circles, ‘entire sanctification.’⁶ Horner, along with other radical holiness groups called for a “third blessing,” that was regarded as a “baptism with fire.”⁷ They “yearned for the reestablishment of the ancient Pentecost, a conception of history that put them out of step with the progressive, historicist millennialism embedded in the late nineteenth century discourse of ‘civilization’.”⁸

Randall’s compass was set on Horner, an ordained clergyman in the Methodist Church of Canada, who declared in his memoirs, “I was born in a revival.”⁹ Shortly after his conversion in 1872 Horner experienced a ‘second work of grace,’ the characteristic doctrine of Methodism. This second blessing “caused him to cry, laugh, and shout.”¹⁰ Horner struggled, however, with the ministerial constrictions of the Methodist Church; he did not want to be limited to a single pastoral charge. He was officially designated as a Conference Evangelist and spent several

⁶ Jay R Case, ‘And Ever the Twain Shall Meet: The Holiness Missionary Movement and the Birth of World Pentecostalism, 1870-1920,’ *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, Vol 16:2 (2006), 130.

⁷ See Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 95-100.

⁸ Case, 131; see also Grant Wacker, “Travail of a Broken Family: Radical Evangelical Responses to the Emergence of Pentecostalism in America, 1906-16” in *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism* edited by Edith Blumhofer (University of Illinois Press, 1999), 25-26.

⁹ Ralph C Horner, *Ralph C Horner, Evangelist: reminiscences from his own pen.* (Brockville: AE Horner, 1926), 11.

¹⁰ Brian R. Ross, “Ralph Cecil Horner, A Methodist Sectarian Deposed (1887-1895)” *Canadian Church Historical Society Journal* Vol 19 (1977), 94.

years preaching and conducting revival services throughout the rural communities and urban centres of the Ottawa Valley and eastern Ontario.

Those who responded to Horner's message of a radical conversion and deeper spiritual work "were normally farmers or workers who were facing rural depopulation or economic decline. They also felt threatened by aggressive Roman Catholicism and, like other conservative Protestants, they mistrusted liberal theological modernism."¹¹ Ultimately Horner's highly successful ministry began to be a concern for local Methodist ministers as well as district and conference leaders. There were reports of doctrinal extremes and emotional excess in his meetings. Seeing the writing on the wall, Horner drew a group together to purchase a building in Ottawa for their own purposes. In July 1895 he was finally deposed from ministry in the Methodist Church.¹² Within months this loose fellowship was, firstly, in December 1895, entertaining relationship with the US-based, Wesleyan Methodist Connection, and then by April 1896 recording the founding of The Holiness Movement (or Church).¹³ Horner did not waste time in the organizing of a movement of people with sympathetic concerns.

Herbert Randall, a Methodist like Horner, was an early convert to this new movement, seeking after the vi-

¹¹ Neil Semple, "Ralph C Horner," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=7820&interval=25&&PHPSESSID=197r517cbsima4nfbvj55d492 (accessed August 2009).

¹² Ross, "Ralph Cecil Horner," 101.

¹³ *Minutes*, April 28, 1896.

tality and manifestations exhibited in Horner's preaching engagements and holiness teaching.¹⁴ In fact, Randall's call to 'foreign work' is mentioned in one of the first sets of minutes in this new body, The Holiness Movement (or Church), suggesting a connection of some period of time with Horner's holiness/revival ministry and his followers. He was also listed as a ministerial probationer, and active participant in early movement deliberations. Conference Minutes note that Randall was engaged to be married but set this aside when it was unclear whether his fiancé was suited for ministerial appointment.¹⁵ It was a full year, however, May 1897, before the newly organized Missionary Committee met and recommended that Randall be sent to Africa, "provided that the Conference decide to send him there."¹⁶

It seems that Bishop Horner "had been in touch with a returned missionary from Africa who desired our church to share responsibility with him there."¹⁷ In the meantime the committee "contacted the Wesleyan Methodist Connection in the United States, and others, to re-

¹⁴ Randall is listed as a Methodist, living in Ottawa in the 1891 *Census of Canada*.

¹⁵ *Minutes*, April 28, 1896.

¹⁶ Report in *Minutes of Annual Conference*, The Holiness Movement (or Church), Ottawa, December 3, 1897.

¹⁷ Nettie M. Hill and Norma A. Eves (eds.), *A Brief History of Holiness Movement Missions*, (Ottawa: Holiness Movement Church in Canada, 1949), p.3; this document gives no indication of 'where' in Africa this missionary was serving.

ceive all the necessary information concerning the sending of a Missionary to Africa.”¹⁸

At Annual Conference, December 1897, in Ottawa, Herbert Randall was approved as a missionary to Africa, and was likewise ordained ‘Deacon’ during the same conference.¹⁹ Shortly following the conference Randall set out for Africa via Northern Ireland where the HMC had several new ministries developing. The records do not indicate any manner of orientation given to the young man from rural Eastern Canada as he set out for ‘foreign work in Africa.’ This new work in Egypt was to become one of the most significant contributions of the small Holiness Movement Church to global Christianity.²⁰

Travelling to Africa and the Second Anglo-Sudan War

Leaving from Portland, Maine in January 1898, Randall arrived in Belfast in February via Liverpool. Along the way he reports that his faith had been tested by things “various and subtle” aboard ship, “that the enemy tried to

¹⁸ *Minutes of Annual Conference*, The Holiness Movement (or Church), December 3, 1897.

¹⁹ *Minutes*, (December 2, 1897)

²⁰ At the time of its merger with the Free Methodist Church of North America in 1959, the Holiness Movement Church in Canada had 632 members, while the Church in Egypt brought in more than 8,000 members; R W Kleinsteuber, *Coming of Age: the making of a Canadian Free Methodist Church*, (Toronto: Light & Life Press, 1980), pp.49-50; by 2000 the Holiness Movement Church in Egypt had reached 19,500 members; D L Crawford (ed) *Yearbook 2002: Personnel, Organization and Statistics of The Free Methodist Church*, (Indianapolis: Free Methodist Communications, 2002), 54.

use to overthrow me, but I can say I have the victory through Christ and your prayers, and the fire still burns in Pentecostal flame.”²¹ One wonders about the nature of such testings, but Randall’s language of ‘victory’ and ‘Pentecostal flame’ is typical of holiness literature of this period. He spent time visiting homes in several areas in Northern Ireland where HMC halls were making some impact.

Up to this point in the primary records, Randall was being sent as a missionary to ‘Africa.’ But one wonders to which ‘Africa’ was he being sent? Did the HMC have no clear idea of where they were sending Randall? Was he to choose his own location as options became apparent? Even at this time Africa was known to be a vast and varied continent. This period under discussion (1896-1899), however, has particular significance in the history of the British Empire, of which Canada and Northern Ireland were key players. It is very likely that Canadians of British heritage (most of the residents of rural eastern Ontario) would be following, with great interest, news of “the war in the Soudan,” and that, in fact, this may have been Randall’s ‘Africa’ all along.²²

The Second Anglo-Sudan War was fought when the British Government ordered the re-taking of Sudan in 1896. In 1883 Sudanese forces had massacred a British

²¹ Randall, ‘Correspondence,’ *The Holiness Era*, Feb 23, 1898, 30.

²² “The Nile Advance,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, March 21, 1896, 3. For a further note on the significance of the Anglo-Sudan War and Christian mission see, Heather Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an Age of Empire*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 50.

general and troops who were seeking to evacuate the region. This defeat was a significant wound in the Victorian imperialist psyche. As a variety of other nations were scrambling for territory in Africa, the British government felt a need to re-establish its presence in the region.

After a three-year campaign, well publicized throughout the British Empire, British forces under General Kitchener overwhelmed the Sudanese resistance at the Battle of Omdurman in early September 1898. Sudanese forces suffered more than 26,000 dead and wounded whilst British losses amounted only to forty-eight dead and three hundred and eighty-two wounded. Consequently, Sudan was re-occupied, officially ruled by the Khedive of Egypt, who was solely a figurehead of the British presence. In practice it stayed under British control and from January 1899 became known as Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, the last colonial and occupying act of the Victorian age.²³

In September 1898, following on the news of the British triumph in Sudan, William J Roome, of the British and Foreign Bible Society, wrote a booklet promoting the work of the Egypt Mission Band. This newly formed group of missionaries from Belfast, Ireland had initiated ministry in Egypt at the urging of Annie Van Sommer, founder of the Nile Mission Press and the Fellowship of Faith for Muslims,²⁴ through meeting with her at the 1897

²³ See William L Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (4th ed.) (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2008), 103-108.

²⁴ Lyle Vander Werff, *Christian Mission to Muslims*, (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1977), 170.

Keswick Convention.²⁵ Roome communicates a particular version of affairs, perhaps indicative of the general public mood:

Within the past few weeks this work of “healing” has been commenced before the eyes of the whole world by the over-throw of the Khalifa and his legions of oppressors, and thus the Central Soudan and Upper Egypt, for more than 2,000 miles down the course of the Nile from the shores of the Mediterranean, have been opened to the Gospel as never before in the history of that ancient land.

The flag of a Christian nation now floats over that vast region. HOW LONG SHALL IT BE ERE THE BANNER OF THE CROSS WAVE WITH EVERY BREEZE OVER THAT ONCE DESOLATE LAND?²⁶ [quotes and capitals, Roome]

In November, 1898, Randall is found in London, England writing to the Conference of the Holiness Movement Church where he seems to have caught the mood: “With regard to the foreign field it seems plain that a great and effectual door is opening and we may move

²⁵ W J Roome, *Blessed Be Egypt: a missionary story*, (London: Marshall Brothers, 1898), 37.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

forward at once towards the heathen... Things are taking such definite form that any workers who are ready to start for the foreign field at once, may move forward without delay. We ought to have some to leave England for Egypt and the Soudan by the first of the year."²⁷

Temple Gairdner, British Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionary, scholar and apologist, arrived in Egypt in 1899 as well, with Sudan on his mind.²⁸ In a departure letter to his father Gairdner writes: "Cairo is my destination for the present and perhaps for the good. Though I am ready to go further, I have an idea that I shall not go. I believe that Cairo is the important centre: good work done there could certainly be felt in the Sudan."²⁹

Randall's sea voyage from England to Egypt prompted these thoughts:

God's heart is burning with desire to have the salvation of Jesus going on all of these ships on the seas, and reaching every land, penetrating every nook and crevice, wherever a human soul can be found. Let us all do

²⁷ Herbert Randall, 'Correspondence,' *The Holiness Era*, Dec 14, 1898, 199.

²⁸ Others with this view included Ian Keith-Falconer and Douglas Thornton; see Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire: British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700-1914*, (Manchester University Press, 2004), 223.

²⁹ In Constance Padwick, *Temple Gairdner of Cairo*, (London: SPCK, 1929), 72.

our best for this through the Pentecostal flame.³⁰

Village Ministry in Egypt

Randall's arrival in Alexandria, April 18, 1899 must have provided for a profound encounter between the young man from rural eastern Ontario and the bustling Mediterranean port city. Randall was able to make early contact with the Egypt Mission Band³¹, a small group of university-educated, Keswick-inspired, Irish missionaries. It seems likely that Randall's recent stay in Ballymena, Ireland may have provided contact connections with these missionaries, mostly all from Belfast. These men, some of whom had already spent a year in Alexandria, were able to help him get settled and supplied him with information about the state of Christian ministry in the country.³² Randall became aware of several other churches and mission groups working in the country already: American United Presbyterians, Church Missionary Society (Anglican), the

³⁰ Randall, 'Correspondence,' *The Holiness Era*, May 17, 1899, 79.

³¹ The Egypt Mission Band changed their name to Egypt General Mission in 1903, then Middle East General Mission in 1957, merging with several other missions as Middle East Christian Outreach (MECO) in 1976. See also a note regarding EGM in Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt*, 82. The Holiness Movement missionaries maintained a decades-long relationship with this mission and its workers, eventually ceding retreat property in Cyprus to MECO in the 1980s.

³² Randall, 'Correspondence,' *The Holiness Era*, June 14, 1899, 92.

North Africa Mission, and the Pentecostal Prayer League (another new British holiness society).³³

Randall came to recognize, very quickly, that “the country is open, as it has never been before, the people are ready to hear ... everything points to the greatest opportunity that has ever been offered to the Church of God to seize this citadel of Mohammedism for Christ.”³⁴ After two weeks on the ground in Egypt, he was also convinced that

the only kind of workers who will be successful here are those who are living in the experience of full salvation as Moslems will not readily give up their religion in which they have great confidence and veneration. They ask the question: ‘Have you anything to offer us better than what we have?’ Answer: ‘We offer a salvation from all sin, outward and inward – the very destruction of sin from the heart, to be engaged in this present world, through Christ Jesus.’³⁵

³³ Ibid., p.92; seven years later American Presbyterian leader in Egypt, Andrew Watson, when speaking of mission work in Egypt did not reference The Holiness Movement Church, although he would certainly have been aware of their ministry in Asyut; “Islam in Egypt,” *The Mohammedan World of Today*, editors S M Zwemer and E M Wherry, (New York: Fleming Revell, 1906), 21-30.

³⁴ Randall, ‘Correspondence,’ *The Holiness Era*, June 14, 1899, 92.

³⁵ Ibid., 92.

And, of course, Randall says: "To this purity must be added the experience of Pentecostal power through the blessed Holy Ghost, and then we shall see signs and wonders in the name of Jesus."³⁶

While most of the extant record of Herbert Randall's ministry in Egypt comes from his own hand, a small booklet, *A Brief History of the Holiness Movement Mission* (1949) relates how Randall moved on from the Mediterranean coast to Upper Egypt.

He was studying Arabic in Alexandria in preparation for going to the Sudan when the Wissa brothers from Asyut met him and were impressed by his spirituality. They were adherents of the Presbyterian Mission work but were hungering for experiences of grace not attained and were classed as reformers.³⁷ They invited Mr. Randall to go to Asyut to hold meetings. This he did. As the Presbyterian Mission had built a new church, they allowed the company of men who sought Mr. Randall's leadership to use their vacated church for Sabbath services. This group also secured another meeting place more centrally located where they

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

³⁷ Sharkey notes that "the American Presbyterians frowned upon other Americans who trickled into Egypt as members of independent faith missions, including those who later became associated with Pentecostal movements;" Heather Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt*, 42.

conducted services nightly. Mr. Randall had all freedom in preaching to them the doctrines of the Holiness Movement Church. He was well received by the Egyptian people and was zealous to see the church organized and reaching out to the villages. This desire he later realized.³⁸

A report from an Egyptian Christian describes Randall's ministry approach:

A tall, rather slender young Canadian, clothed in black apparel from head to foot, with a brown beard, walked the streets of Assiout with Bible and song book under his arm, holding meetings. These meetings were mostly attended by children sitting down on spread mats brought from their homes for the occasion, and ladies looking down from their attics.³⁹

By the end of 1899, the Holiness Movement Church had sent along three lady missionaries, Cora Van Camp, Edith Burke and Carrie Reynolds. These women also carried with them a zeal for souls that constructed their first months in Egypt as follows:

³⁸ A Brief History of Holiness Movement Missions. 5.

³⁹ Salib Boulos, "A Tribute to H E Randall, Master Builder on the Nile," *The Pentecostal Evangel*, June 1938, 7.

There are very few missionaries to carry the Gospel to these benighted millions, who know nothing of the living Christ. The Roman Catholics are pressing into the country. Large churches are being built, even while there are few or no members. To arms! To arms! Ye children of God. "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." O, for a Church in Egypt as terrible as an army with banners! Believe! God will speed the day, for we feel with Jeremiah "the Lord is with me as a mighty, terrible one." Hallelujah to our King!⁴⁰

Within a few short months this mission team in Asyut was reporting that besides language study, they were holding twenty public services and three 'class meetings' each week. They had initiated a school for girls with one hundred and fifty students and three 'native' teachers for them to oversee and direct. They were also conducting evangelistic meetings with male youth numbering from 30-60 persons, among those "who called themselves Christians in name."⁴¹

Randall comments specifically regarding the involvement of the three women in active ministry:

One special thing which speaks of advancement, is that these dear people have so lost

⁴⁰ Cora Van Camp, *The Holiness Era*, April 18, 1900, 64.

⁴¹ Van Camp, *ibid.*, 64.

sight of customs, which bind the east, that they have invited our sister missionaries to take their share in preaching in the public services, which had hitherto been withheld.⁴²

Reporting to his home conference after 18 months in Egypt, Randall expresses a few moments of self-awareness regarding their mission practice and his own frailties, as well as his ongoing spiritual search, in the midst of reporting the forward movement of their work:

I can honestly say that I have kept the interests of the Movement (which is one and the same as God's cause) at heart and did the best I could during the year: I think I could do better in some ways, if I had it to do over again. My experience was never as good as it is this moment. I am exploring in things Pentecostal under the third blessing, and I seem to realize human frailty more than ever, both in myself and in others, but the power comes sweeping over all and I see that the glory belongs to God above. We have this treasure in earthen vessels. We expect a revival to burst on us; things are now ready for it. Calls are now coming from other towns and villages for us to go and preach... I must tell you that on Sunday, Oct. 7th [1900], we had the Lord's supper,

⁴² Randall, 'Letter,' *The Holiness Era*, July 11, 1900, 108.

which I administered in the Arabic language for the first time and the power attending it was testified to by many and by some who were only witnesses.⁴³

In reports to his Canadian bishop in 1901, Randall wrestled with issues of financial support for national workers, whether they should purchase a building or land, relationships with the local Coptic Church authorities, and receiving believers who wanted to join the Holiness Movement Church away from the Presbyterian work in Asyut.⁴⁴ Randall personally desired more “endowment” and “soul saving power” so that he could accomplish more work; he reported on small, house prayer meetings with Egyptian believers that “seem something like in Canada especially when they would all be at it together.”⁴⁵

Randall reported their team’s increased use of Arabic. Even though other missionaries normally needed four to five years of language study before preaching, Randall said, “the kind of sermons we would preach now would scarcely reach the standard of other missionaries, but if we can get the people blessed this is the main thing, and the more we preach the quicker we will learn the language.”⁴⁶ In the midst of newsletters couched in spiritual or ‘holiness’ language that would appeal to his readers

⁴³ Randall, ‘Missionary Report,’ *The Holiness Era*, December 26, 1900, 206.

⁴⁴ Randall, ‘Letter from Egypt,’ *The Holiness Era*, February 6, 1901, 24.

⁴⁵ Randall, ‘Letter,’ *The Holiness Era*, June 12, 1901, 92.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 93.

back in rural eastern Ontario, Randall reflected continuing self-awareness: “the experience of our work has been to advance a few notches and then something occurs to bring us down a notch and then go forward again, but we shall gain the victory.”⁴⁷

As new missionaries arrived from Canada, Randall seems to have been the worker who moved out from their base in Asyut to other villages, and reports of his ministry came from other workers, rather than his own hand. At the end of 1902 a call was sent back to Canada for more workers: “we need another man, as we cannot let Bro. R. go yet, and his soul is burning to press on to regions beyond.”⁴⁸ However, Randall did find the time to comment on the upsurge of interest in the doctrine of pre-millennialism: “Many who drink in this bad doctrine have never heard the other side. When one sees what his work is, not to call only a few to be the bride of Christ, but to *save the world*, he buckles on the armour and goes to work in earnest.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Randall, ‘Letter,’ *The Holiness Era*, September 4, 1901, 140

⁴⁸ W C Trotter, ‘Letters,’ *The Holiness Era*, December 10, 1902, 200

⁴⁹ Randall, ‘Letter,’ *The Holiness Era*, December 10, 1902, 198.

While many in the Keswick stream of holiness missionaries were influenced by pre-millennialism eschatology, Randall and the HMC leaders, as former Methodists, may have been reflecting a revivalist postmillennialist view, or perhaps a ‘restorationist’ perspective; see Andrew Porter, “Evangelicalism, Islam and Millennial Expectation in the Nineteenth Century,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 24:3 (2000), 111-118; and Steven Ware, *Restoration in the Holiness Movement in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, Edwin Mellen Press, (2004).

His own sporadic notes often have a tone of seeking after a deeper experience of the Holy Spirit in his life and how that might impact his ministry: "Personally I feel that I am better equipped for this work spiritually, and in every way than I have ever been, and I look for success only by the pouring out upon me of the all powerful Spirit, and this I experience from day to day. I shout, I leap, I laugh, I sing, I pray and by this process the victory is mine. Hallelujah! Others are beginning to understand these mysterious things, praise God in the highest."⁵⁰

Randall's colleagues noted his spiritual expressions as well: "Truly the hand of the Lord is with us. A week ago I was taking charge of a service, but I fell under the glory of God. Brother Randall was present, and he leaped as an hart. The old time power is coming down."⁵¹

Over the years Randall seemed to develop his understanding of the historical context of the HMC mission in Egypt. In one long letter to his supporters in 1905 he commented on the history of Egypt and the Coptic people ("amongst whom we are specially labouring"), the Muslim conquest of Egypt and the subsequent hardship imposed on the Coptic people, the economic status of the Copts, the influx of Europeans which had drastically impacted the cost of living, the generosity and kindness of "the poor," and the realization that "the entrance of the English in 1882, made a great change for the Copts, which literally meant their deliverance from bondage, and

⁵⁰ Randall, 'Letter,' *The Holiness Era*, December 26, 1902, 207.

⁵¹ Trotter, 'Report,' *The Holiness Era*, January 7, 1903, 212.

they are not slow in expressing their thankfulness to their deliverers.”⁵²

In 1906 Randall was preparing for his return to Canada for a time of furlough, while still commenting on the dynamic spiritual work that was going on in village after village:

a visiting brother who is noted as a wrestler in prayer, was relieving himself of the explosives which were tearing his insides: his arms flying, and body swaying, and amidst the general roar, I could distinguish words to the effect: ‘We have prayed that God will send a revival to Akhmim, that He will shake the city; we came here to work for this end. God has heard our cries, and seen our tears; He has given the assurance that it shall be done. The revival is coming, brethren! It may be after we go to our homes, but we shall hear that a mighty revival has visited and burst upon Akhmim!’ I was impressed by the faith evinced in this hurricane testimony.⁵³

In the same issue of *The Holiness Era*, an Egyptian Christian, Ghali Hanna, wrote a letter which offers some insight into how the Egyptians viewed Randall. Ghali noted that when visiting the church in Nekhaila, “Bro. Randall

⁵² Randall, ‘From Egypt,’ *The Holiness Era*, October 25, 1905, 339.

⁵³ Randall, ‘Letters,’ *The Holiness Era*, February 21, 1906, 64.

is not dancing alone.” Randall was known as a particular ‘character:’ “When Bro. Motta gets the blessing he often dances, -- he might be like Bro. Randall some day. Bro. Henein, who used to say: -- ‘Randall no doubt is beside himself and should go to his country soon,’ is now the noisiest and nearly the hottest of all. Hallelujah!”⁵⁴

Randall must be placed in the historical context of the holiness-oriented missionary movement of his day. Holiness missionaries, in their initial conversion saw themselves as “converting from ‘the world’ to a new spiritual state, a state linked to a particular body of believers in their community” – their own fellowships of radical holiness believers.⁵⁵ They were not converting from one culture’s worldview to another (as in African to Western), but leaving behind the darkness of their own sin, while finding gospel light within their existing cultural frame. Thus the holiness missionaries did not see themselves so much as agents of civilization, as agents for introducing ‘gospel light’ to individuals, within ‘whatever’ culture.⁵⁶

Case suggests “radical holiness missionaries from America, in fact, can be distinguished from their fellow Westerners in their complete disregard for the discourse of civilization.”⁵⁷ To Minnie Abrams, a holiness missionary contemporary of Randall, associate of India’s Pandita Ramabai, and author of *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire* (1906), “these intellectual, social and cultural

⁵⁴ Ghali Hanna, ‘Letters,’ *The Holiness Era*, June 13, 1906, 188.

⁵⁵ Case, “And ever the twain shall meet,” 129.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 128-129.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

issues simply were not as important as the supernatural actions of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in bringing about world evangelism.”⁵⁸

As modernity was influencing the Western world, holiness preachers in Canada were having successful ministry amongst those who lived on the rural periphery of the industrializing, materially-oriented world – among those resistant to or, at best, ambivalent to modernity. As Randall, the backwoods preacher, then, left rural Eastern Ontario for Egypt, his belief in supernaturalism, embedded in his spirituality and theology, may have given him ready acceptance among many Egyptians.

The erudite, university-educated Protestant missionary of this era, influenced by technology, historicism, Darwinism, the claims of social science, bureaucracy, etc., tended to be more skeptical of traditional religious systems. Holiness missionaries were not. In *The Bridegroom’s Messenger*, a Pentecostal missionary in China (1909) wrote: “one thing is of great help to us, the people believe and know that the Devil is real, not imagination (as so many in the homeland would like to have it).”⁵⁹

Temple Gairdner, one of those erudite Protestant missionaries, however, though well-versed in the social sciences, was also convinced of the demonic forces obstructing the kingdom of God. “Some of the surface causes I know, but the psychological history of the whole matter I cannot even imagine. It is Satanic. I never felt as I have this week the fact of the hideous existence of a king-

⁵⁸ Ibid., 133.

⁵⁹ *The Bridegroom’s Messenger*, February 15, 1909, 1.

dom of darkness and of evil. It has come down on us like night.”⁶⁰

It would seem that Randall did not have a clear picture of the direction of his ‘call to Africa.’ While upon arrival he was initially taken up with the notion of reaching Muslims, it appears that he soon diverted his mission to “the low-hanging fruit” of Coptic Christians who wanted a new experience of the spiritual life.⁶¹ On the other hand, his contemporary, Temple Gairdner, clearly articulated his own missionary vision: “It is to Islam that I go.”⁶²

Back to Canada, the birth of Canadian Pentecostalism and new work in Egypt

During Randall’s 1906 mid-year return journey to Canada he stopped in England and Northern Ireland. He contrasts this visit with his outgoing (1898-99) when he had been disappointed with the preaching in the Methodist chapel in Bristol, as well as various holiness churches. In a meeting in one of the HMC chapels in Belfast, however, he was inspired by the music, and the preaching: “it is good

⁶⁰ Padwick, *Temple Gairdner*, 93.

⁶¹ Randall, “From Egypt,” *The Holiness Era*, October 25, 1905, 339. See also Case, “a brief survey of holiness missionaries in the late nineteenth century suggests that the movement fared best among societies where modernity had already begun to erode cultural differentiation and weaken traditional religious authority but not among traditional societies where religious identity was strongly tied to a strong religious establishment or systems of deference and kinship structures,” 146.

⁶² Padwick, *Temple Gairdner*, 72.

old Methodist doctrine and it is never finished for the living stones down the latter end in shouts of praise, the glory comes down from above, pours in the sides, and the human is lost in the Divine.”⁶³

In late October 1906, returned missionary Randall sat as a member of the Annual Convention of the Holiness Movement Church in Ottawa, where he was called, among others ‘to be examined and have his character passed.’ The conference report states that:

Our missionary (Bro. Randall) when being examined proved to all that he had not lost the real equipment for service, “The Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire.” Those who had the illumination of the Holy Spirit could see the real crown of Holy Fire upon his head. Some of his words were “I have not flinched in the nine years I have been away, from anything God wanted me to do.” Three times he could be seen somewhere between earth and heaven, with arms extended, and mouth wide open shouting the praises of God. His missionary address Friday night of Conference was very interesting and inspiring to all. The crowded congregation listened with rapt attention while he sang in the Arabic language, and rehearsed many interesting

⁶³ Randall, ‘Letters,’ *The Holiness Era*, August 22, 1906, 269.

adventures during his labour in the foreign field.⁶⁴

At the conference Randall was ordained to the ministry of 'Elder' within the Holiness Movement Church. A year later (1907) the Annual Conference minutes report Randall's attendance at the roll call, but he did not participate in any of the proceedings and tendered his resignation at the close of the conference.⁶⁵ In fact, aside from one small reference⁶⁶ in a later HMC history, Herbert E Randall disappears from their records.

To continue this examination of the unique combination of events in Herbert Randall's life, one must turn to another stream of information, that of the birth and growth of the Canadian Pentecostal movement in 1906 and following. In an early Canadian Pentecostal magazine Randall recorded his spiritual state in this manner: "my last year in Egypt was one of heart longings for something, I couldn't tell what, and I think that it was due to this more than anything else that I came back to my native land."⁶⁷

Following the amazing occurrences at Azusa Street, Los Angeles, in the spring of 1906, the Pentecostal message and experience of the "baptism of the Holy Spir-

⁶⁴ "Conference Report," *The Holiness Era*, Nov 28, 1906, p.382.

⁶⁵ Minutes of Annual Conference of The Holiness Movement Church, Ottawa, October 31, 1907.

⁶⁶ "Randall came back to Canada in 1906, where he later married. He and his wife affiliated with the Pentecostal Church and returned to Egypt under their auspices," in *A Brief History*, (1949), 8.

⁶⁷ Randall, *The Promise*, June 1907, 1.

it” was accepted first in Canada at the Hebden Mission on 651 Queen St E, Toronto, in the fall of 1906.⁶⁸ Soon Anglicans, Mennonites, Roman Catholics and Methodists were joining those from evangelical and holiness denominations in affirming that they had spoken in other, unlearned languages, as evidence of this “second blessing.”⁶⁹ Randall arrived at the Hebden Mission in March 1907 [41 years old, just months after his glorious welcome home by HMC leaders], having read reports of revival in Los Angeles,⁷⁰ and he received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Three weeks later, he attempted to describe his new experience:

I feel like I have really lived 24 days, or since the 6th of March, when I was baptized with the Holy Ghost. Before that time I enjoyed much of God’s grace, but now I am simply amazed, the difference is so great, and all I can do is exclaim with wonder and delight, ‘The Comforter has come.’... and I saw that hitherto I had been cleansed from all sin, and had received many outpourings, or anointings of the Spirit, but had not re-

⁶⁸ Adam Stewart, “A Canadian Azusa?...,” 19.

⁶⁹ “Pentecostal Movement,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0006206> (accessed August 27, 2009).

⁷⁰ Randall, “How I Received the Baptism,” *The Pentecostal Evangel*, Jan 30, 1932, 8.

ceived the real baptism with the Holy Ghost.⁷¹

Several weeks later Randall was present at the April 7, 1907 opening of the Union Gospel Mission in Stratford, Ontario. Randall, “a returned missionary from Egypt who attended the Hebden Mission and received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, was the speaker for the opening of the church.”⁷² He “opened up a work” in Wingham and Simcoe during the course of this itinerancy as well.⁷³

In the fall of 1907 (shortly after his resignation from the Holiness Movement Church⁷⁴) Pentecostal meetings were begun in the town of Ingersoll, Ontario “when missionary and itinerant evangelist Herbert Randall had come through the city.”⁷⁵ It was during these meetings over the winter of 1907-08 that 17-year-old Aimee Kennedy had her experience of baptism in the Spirit. Randall had brought along a fellow evangelist, Robert Semple,

⁷¹ Randall, *The Promise*, June 1907, 1-2; and Edith Blumhofer, *Aimee Semple McPherson: Everybody's Sister*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 75.

⁷² Douglas Rudd, *When the Spirit Came Upon Them*, (Burlington, ON: Antioch Books, 1982), 254.

⁷³ In the inaugural issue of *The Promise*, which also recorded the beginnings of the Pentecostal phenomenon in Toronto, May 1907, 4; see also, Edith Blumhofer, “Canada's Gift to the Sawdust Trail,” in George Rawlyk, ed., *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, (McGill-Queens University Press, 1997), 397, 401.

⁷⁴ Randall knew that his experience would not be welcomed in HMC circles as “the new movement had been turned down as unsound doctrine;” “How I Received the Baptism,” *The Pentecostal Evangel*, Jan 30, 1932, 8.

⁷⁵ Blumhofer, *Aimee*, 61.

who would marry Aimee (1908) before their departure as missionaries to China, sent out by the Hebden Mission in 1910.⁷⁶

Following the death of Robert in Hong Kong, shortly after their arrival there, and the birth of her first child, Aimee Semple moved to New York City to live with her mother, a Salvation Army worker. Soon she married John McPherson. Within a few short years Aimee Semple McPherson became a household name across North America. A preaching mission at Victoria Hall, Los Angeles in 1918 became the launching point for her ministry and the eventual founding of the International Four-square Church. The invitation to preach at Victoria Hall may have been facilitated by Randall who was believed to have connections with leadership at this venue.⁷⁷

In the fall of 1908 Randall showed up in cottage prayer meetings back in downtown Ottawa, not far from the mother church of the Holiness Movement Church. He reported, "Pentecost has truly begun in this city in connection with an undenominational mission. Praise the Lord. A young brother received his baptism last night so beautifully, speaking in tongues, who was, three years ago, dealing out liquor over the bar in Belfast, Ireland. He will no doubt become a flaming evangelist. So you see how we intermingle and touch one another in this glorious work. Hallelujah!"⁷⁸ This early beginning and a further

⁷⁶ Ibid., 61-66

⁷⁷ Ibid., 141.

⁷⁸ Randall, *Confidence: a Pentecostal Paper for Great Britain*, Oct 15, 1908, 19.

convention at Queen's Hall in March 1911, in which Randall ministered along with R E McAlister,⁷⁹ led eventually to the founding of present day Bethel Pentecostal Church, in Ottawa.⁸⁰

From 1907 until his departure for Egypt in late 1911, Randall became a close associate of the leading figures of early Pentecostalism in Canada, such as James and Ellen Hebden, Robert Semple, Charles Chawner (missionary to South Africa), R E McAlister, Arthur Atter and H L Lawler (both missionaries to China), Mr and Mrs C E Baker, George Chambers, Frank Bartleman, and A H Argue.⁸¹ During this time period he travelled to Los Angeles with McAlister and Lawler, with extended stays in Portland, Oregon, Seattle, Washington, Vancouver, British Columbia, and Winnipeg, Manitoba, all early centres in the spread of Pentecostalism.⁸²

⁷⁹ McAlister was one of the founding pastors of Bethel Pentecostal Church in Ottawa (1911-1915); is regarded as the instigator of Oneness Pentecostalism, see David Reed, "Oneness Seed on Canadian Soil," in Michael Wilkinson and Peter Althouse, eds. *Winds from the North: Canadian Contributions to the Pentecostal Movement*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2010), 191-213; was a charter member of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada at their inaugural meetings in 1917-1919, and the first editor of *The Pentecostal Testimony* (1920).

⁸⁰ <http://www.bethel.ca/ourChurch/history.cfm>; *The Good Report*, May 1911, 1-4.

⁸¹ In his early 40s at this point, and an ordained and experienced Christian worker, Randall may have been regarded as a fellow exuberant advocate of the 'baptism' and an encouraging older "brother in the Lord" by many of these younger men (McAlister being only in his late 20s).

⁸² *The Good Report*, May 1911, p.1-8; Randall, along with H L Lawler were in charge of revival meetings in Kinburn, Ontario, [site of first Pentecostal church building] a few months earlier; Gloria Kul-

Having found the “something” that he was looking for, Herbert Randall arrived back in Cairo, Egypt in 1912 as an independent Pentecostal missionary.⁸³ The Pentecostal Church (also known in early years as “Apostolic Faith Mission”) was founded by Randall in cooperation with, among others, C W Doney (a former Canadian colleague in the HMC), George Brelsford⁸⁴ and A H Post (one of the original group at Azusa St in 1906,⁸⁵ and a former missionary to India⁸⁶).⁸⁷ The most well known connection of The Pentecostal Church in Egypt is Lillian Trasher’s Orphanage in Asyut, established in 1911 by American Pen-

beck, *What God Hath Wrought: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, (Toronto: PAOC, 1958), 113-114.

⁸³ Randall, *Word and Witness*, Feb 20, 1913, 2

⁸⁴ American G. Brelsford and his wife are the earliest known Pentecostal missionaries in Egypt, arriving in March 22, 1909 and serving for just a year before returning to the USA to recruit more workers; “The Name of Jesus Honored in the Land of the Pharoahs,” *The Latter Rain Evangel*, Nov, 1910, 7-11. Brelsford returned to Egypt for another period beginning in early 1912, just months before Randall’s return. Brelsford notes Randall as an “experienced missionary in Egypt” in “Encouraging News from Egypt,” *The Latter Rain Evangel*, May 1912, 10-11.

⁸⁵ William J Seymour, “News,” *The Apostolic Faith*, December 1906, 3.

⁸⁶ Allan Anderson, “Pandita Ramabai, the Mukti Mission and Global Pentecostalism,” *Transformation: An international journal of holistic mission studies*, 23:1, (2006), 40.

⁸⁷ Stanley Burgess and E M van der Maas, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 6-7. Pentecostal literature of the era 1910-1912, note numerous other small groups of workers in Egypt variously associated with different strands of the Pentecostal movement; *The Pentecost*, (Sep-Oct 1910), *Confidence*, (Aug 1910), *The Latter Rain Evangel*, (Feb 1911), *Word & Witness* (Aug 1912).

tecostal missionary, Lillian Trasher.⁸⁸ These works became associated with the Assemblies of God (AoG) when this American denomination formed in 1914.

With the advent of WWI (1914-1918), many missionaries were encouraged to evacuate Egypt as they were seen as foreign targets of protest against the British action of unilaterally cutting Egypt off from its place in the Ottoman Empire (supporters of the German initiative) and making it a British Protectorate in December 1914.⁸⁹ At that moment Randall was in Palestine, visiting Pentecostal work there, when communication was cut off with colleagues in Egypt.⁹⁰ Returning to Canada in 1915, Randall, at age 50, married Faith Proudfoot in Ottawa, Ontario, in a service conducted by his friend Rev R E McAlister in September.⁹¹ There is some indication that Randall was active in Pentecostal revival work in the United States for a number of years before returning to Egypt with Faith in 1922.⁹²

⁸⁸ Otto Meinardus, *Christians in Egypt*, (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2006), 113-114; Trasher originally went out to Egypt under the auspices of A J Tomlinson's Church of God (Cleveland), Edith Blumhofer, "Women in Pentecostalism," in Rosemary Kellner and Rosemary R Ruether, *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 405.

⁸⁹ Charles Leonard, "Egypt," *The Christian Evangel*, Dec 26, 1914, p.4; and C W Doney, "Egypt," *The Christian Evangel*, Jan 23, 1915, 4.

⁹⁰ C W Doney, "Egypt," *The Christian Evangel*, Dec 19, 1914, 4.

⁹¹ Rev R E McAlister is identified as an Assembly of God minister on the marriage certificate of HE and Faith Randall, September 2, 1915.

⁹² *The Pentecostal Evangel*, Dec 11, 1943, 10.

Although associated with the AoG in Egypt, Randall is recorded in early documents as a missionary supported in an ad hoc manner by the various independent Canadian Pentecostal churches that would, in 1919, form the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC).⁹³ Between 1920 and 1937, H E and Faith Randall wrote numerous reports for both *The Pentecostal Testimony* (PAOC) and *The Pentecostal Evangel*, (AOG). Together they published an Arabic magazine, *The Morning Star*, (originally initiated in Canada by McAlister) all over North Africa, and the Levant. Randall died at 72 years of age, in Cairo, Egypt, March 11, 1938.⁹⁴

Conclusion

Having experienced a profound conversion and ‘second blessing’ via Horner’s Holiness Movement Church, Herbert Randall was continually seeking for ‘more of the Pentecostal flame.’ While this article has focused on Randall’s personal journey and spiritual self-awareness, the faith communities among whom he lived, interacted and ministered must likewise be noted. The group of disaffected Methodists in the Ottawa Valley who formed the radical Holiness Movement Church, seeking after a deeper spiritual reality; the HMC group of missionary colleagues in Egypt, struggling to apply the significance of

⁹³ “The Morning Star,” *The Pentecostal Testimony*, December 1922, 8.

⁹⁴ Salib Boulos, “Tribute...,” *The Pentecostal Evangel*, June 1938, 7 & 11. Randall’s wife Faith, remained in Egypt until her own death, November 17, 1943; *The Pentecostal Evangel*, Dec 11, 1943, 10.

their radical holiness ‘toolbox’ in a cross-cultural mission context; and the new community of fellow-travelers birthed by the embryonic Toronto-strand of Canadian Pentecostalism.

The precise moment of Randall’s departure for Egypt was certainly precipitated by the results of the Anglo-Sudan War; in his mind, however, this was not an imperialistic impulse, but a heart conviction. This is the experience and the message that he had to offer to Coptic Christians in Egypt. Perhaps lacking real theological and missiological resources for engaging with Muslims, he quickly moved to focus his ministry among those who were Christian ‘in name only.’ This, in fact, was the preparation he had received in the HMC work back in rural Canada; the ability to communicate a conversion and holiness message to people with some degree of Christian literacy and cultural frame.

At the same time Randall’s continual seeking for ‘more’ appears to have been realized in his 1907 Pentecostal experience of ‘baptism in the Spirit with speaking in other tongues.’ This took him on a completely new life trajectory, leaving behind the now ‘limited’ experience of the HMC message. One notes the strange lack of mention or hint of controversy in any public documents regarding Randall’s departure from the HMC, although the loss of their celebrated missionary to Egypt must have been cause for concern.⁹⁵ As Randall contributed to the birth

⁹⁵ In reflections, years later, Randall articulated his concern, at the time, to not disturb the HMC with his own journey, although he notes that other HMC ministers were sampling the new movement and at

and spread of early Pentecostalism in Canada, his ministry in the life of a small-town, teenage-girl for a number of months, also initiated a whole new life trajectory for Aimee Semple McPherson. Eventually, however, Randall's experience and motivation to ministry took him back to Egypt where he contributed to the growth of evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity⁹⁶ for the rest of his life.

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least one HMC colleague who got "the baptism" at Hebden Mission shortly after himself, also went on to many years of Pentecostal ministry; "How I Received the Baptism," *The Pentecostal Evangel*, Jan 30, 1932, 8.

⁹⁶ The Pentecostal Church in Egypt presently has 134 churches; cf. Meinardus, *Christians in Egypt*, 113-114. The Holiness Movement Church [affiliated with The Free Methodist Church, internationally] has roughly the same number of congregations (author's information).

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