

PENTECOSTAL AND CHARISMATIC MOVEMENTS

According to David B. Barrett, compiler of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, the total number of Christians in the world is approximately 2.2 billion. The Roman Catholic Church has just over 1.1 billion members. Pentecostal/Charismatics number around 600,000,000.¹

I. The Wesleyan-Holiness Tradition

A. Definition

The holiness movement began in the 1700s with John Wesley (founder of the Methodists). The movement emphasized two distinct events in the Christian life: (a.) conversion and (b.) sanctification (or the second blessing).

B. Methodist and Holiness Groups

1. The Free Methodists (founded 1860; e.g., Azusa Pacific University)
2. The Wesleyan Church (1968)
3. The Metropolitan Church (post-Civil War; aka The Burning Bush)
4. The Pillar of Fire (1901; key evangelist: Alma Bridewell White)
5. Evening Light Saints (1880 by Daniel S. Warner; influenced William Seymour, Sandi Patty, and the Gaithers)
6. Christian and Missionary Alliance (1897; A.B. Simpson) – taught that Jesus was Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King.
7. The Peniel Mission (1886; T.P. and Manie Ferguson)
8. The Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene (1895; Phineas F. Bresee)

II. Sanctification and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The perfectionists Charles G. Finney, Asa Mahan, and others viewed sanctification as a gradual experience. Most Wesleyan-Holiness groups viewed sanctification as a crisis experience, an instantaneous work of grace. Some groups limited the notion to a work of purification; others believed that it was a work of empowerment. Some began using the phrase “baptism in the Holy Spirit” to indicate this empowerment. There soon began a quest for evidences for these experiences, perhaps in light of the prevailing scientific principles of the time.

¹ David B. Barrett, “Missiometrics 2007: Creating Your Own Analysis of Global Data,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 31:1 (January 2007), “Global Table 5: Status of global mission, presence and activities, AD 1800-2025,” page 32.

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III. American Pentecostalism

A. Charles Fox Parham (1873-1929)

Parham was a Methodist minister who began a Bible school in Topeka, KS. In 1900, he posed the question to a group of his students: “What proof or evidence is there in Scripture that shows that the apostles received the baptism with the Holy Spirit?” The response: the apostles had spoken in tongues (Acts 2:4). The group prayed for the same evidence on New Year’s Eve and reportedly began the new century speaking in other tongues.

B. William J. Seymour (1870-1922)

Parham began a Bible school in Houston, TX in 1905, which was attended by the African-American preacher William J. Seymour. Seymour embraced tongues-speaking as evidence of Spirit baptism. He was invited to pastor in LA, but his views on tongues were rejected by the local Holiness Association. He later was invited to lead a prayer meeting at the home of Richard and Ruth Asberry on 216 Bonnie Brae Street. Several members of the group received the gift of tongues. The Bible study began to grow and was moved to 312 Azusa Street, thus beginning the Azusa Street revival and laying the foundation for the Pentecostal/Charismatic traditions.

IV. Three Streams of Pentecostalism

A. Holiness Pentecostalism

This is the earliest stream of Pentecostalism. Holiness Pentecostals articulated three distinct and sequential works of grace: conversion, sanctification, and baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. Several examples of these churches include:

1. Apostolic Faith Mission (Baxter Springs, KS)
2. The Apostolic Faith Mission (Portland, OR)
3. The Church of God (Cleveland, TN) – boasts 6,000,000 members worldwide
4. The Pentecostal Holiness Church (Oklahoma City, OK)
5. The Church of God in Christ (Memphis, TN) [COGIC] is the largest Pentecostal denomination in the United States with a largely African-American membership. It was founded in 1897 by Charles Price Jones and Charles Harrison Mason. The denomination became Pentecostal following Mason’s visit to the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles in early 1907.

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B. “Finished Work” Pentecostalism

These Pentecostals rejected the idea of a “crisis” experience of sanctification as well as the idea that entire sanctification included the eradication of the sin nature. Several examples of these churches include:

1. The General Council of the Assemblies of God (Springfield, MO). This denomination was originally a part of the Church of God in Christ. Today the Assemblies of God Fellowship is the world’s largest Pentecostal body with 65,000,000 members, although in the United States, with 3 million members, it comes in second to the Church of God in Christ (6.5 million members).
2. The International Church of the Foursquare Gospel – formed by Aimee Semple McPherson in 1923.
3. The Open Bible [Standard] Churches (Des Moines, IA)

C. Oneness Pentecostalism

These Pentecostals have a modalistic view of God and reject the Trinitarian Formula for baptism. Two examples include:

1. The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (Indianapolis, IN)
2. The United Pentecostal Church (Hazelwood, MO)

V. Rapid International Growth of the Pentecostal Movement

Those who became part of the Pentecostal Movement understood it to have profound missionary implications. The movement soon spread to Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe. The largest numbers of Pentecostals today are found in Sub-Saharan Africa (approx. 44 percent), the Americas (approx. 37 percent) and Asia and the Pacific (approx. 16 percent).

VI. Ecumenical Impulses of the Movement

- A. Early Pentecostal leaders such as Parham and Seymour prayed for unity.
- B. Some early Pentecostals joined the National Association of Evangelicals.
- C. The first Pentecostal World Conference was convened in Basel, Switzerland in 1947. In May 2001 it was renamed the Pentecostal World Fellowship.
- D. The Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA) was formed in 1943. It denied membership to African Americans. In 1994 it voted itself out of existence and re-emerged as the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America. The first topic on the agenda was racial reconciliation.

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VII. The Rise of the Charismatic Renewal

- A. The Latter Rain Revival (1948-1952)
- B. Demos Shakarian (1913-1993) – founded the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International (FGBMFI)
- C. David Du Plessis (1905-1987) – ecumenist; secretary of Pentecostal World Conference
- D. Dennis Bennett – served as pastor of Saint Mark’s Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, CA. He announced to his congregation on Passion Sunday, 1960 that he had spoken in tongues. He was dismissed as pastor and moved to Olympia, Washington. This marks the beginning of the Charismatic Renewal. Many leaders turned to Shakarian and Du Plessis for counsel and safe space to fellowship among like-minded individuals.
- E. David Wilkerson – author of *The Cross and the Switchblade* (1962).
- F. John Thomas Nichol - author *Pentecostalism* (1966).
- G. The Catholic Charismatic Movement begins ca. 1966-7.
- H. Many Evangelicals and Pentecostals were suspicious of Charismatics.

VIII. The Third Wave Movement

- A. Chuck Smith – founder of Calvary Chapel
- B. John Wimber – founder of the Vineyard Movement

IX. The “New Apostolic Churches”

Peter Wagner employed this term to describe certain mega-churches that believe in the restoration of the apostolic office.

X. Prosperity Churches (Neo-Pentecostalism)

These churches believe that there is a simple and direct cause and effect relationship between giving and receiving.