

Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement

Disclaimer: The history of the charismatic movement is pretty crazy. But this does not mean that everyone who holds to the “sign gifts” (tongues, prophecy, etc.) today does so for the same reasons as the movement’s founders. This lesson is only meant to cover the history, and not the biblical arguments, for things such as tongues and prophecy.

Intro: Where do the following ideas come from (historically): speaking in tongues, being slain in the Spirit, holy laughter, declaring things “in Jesus’ name,” name it and claim it, the Word of Faith movement, the prosperity gospel, hearing God speak in your heart, etc.?

1. Religious movements that come out of America tend to be bad.

G. Campbell Morgan, an evangelist, called the Pentecostal movement “the last vomit of hell.”

2. The Charismatic Movement is enormous.

-In 1970 it had about 67 million adherents

-In 2011 there were 584 million people who identified as Pentecostal or Charismatic.
(That’s 26.7% of Christianity)

-In 2016 the number was 656 million Charismatics/Pentecostals.

What is Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement?

Pentecostalism is a Christian denomination that emphasizes using the “sign-gifts,” such as speaking in tongues and modern prophecy, today. They believe the experiences in the book of acts are *normative and necessary* for full Christian sanctification.

(Pentecostals are not heretics. However, there are *some* Pentecostal groups that have literally abandoned Christian orthodoxy. One such group is called the United Pentecostal Church and they deny the Trinity; they are modalistic and baptize in Jesus’ name only.)

The Charismatic Movement (also called “Neo-Pentecostalism,” “Continuationism,” and “Continualism”) is the international spread of certain Pentecostal doctrines into other Christian denominations.

A forerunner of Pentecostalism

Edward Irving (1792-1834) was a minister in the church of Scotland who had been run off due to his heterodox views. He founded the “Holy Catholic Apostolic Church” which combined end-times fervor with attempts to make the gifts of the first century church normative for today.

One of his followers, Mary Campbell, taught that regeneration (at salvation) was *different from* the “baptism of the Spirit” which was evidenced by speaking in tongues.

Where did Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement come from?

1. It has its beginning in the Methodist church. Some of the followers of John Wesley popularized what was called the “holiness movement.” They taught that one did not experience only one work of grace (at conversion) but rather two works of grace – one at conversion and then a “second-blessing” or “second-baptism” of the Holy Spirit which was evidenced by living a perfect life. They believed that one would no longer sin intentionally after this second blessing.
2. Though the holiness movement began in 1867, in 1894 the holiness movement became its own denomination. 13 Methodist ministers met to try to recover that camp-meeting fervor that you saw during the Second Great Awakening. The Church of the Nazarene and the Church of God (C.O.G.) all come from this collaboration. But at this time the primary issue is holiness, not sign gifts.
3. A man sympathetic to the holiness movement named Charles Fox Parham, a rumored homosexual, taught at Bethel Bible College in Topeka, KS and challenged his students to be open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit described in the book of Acts.



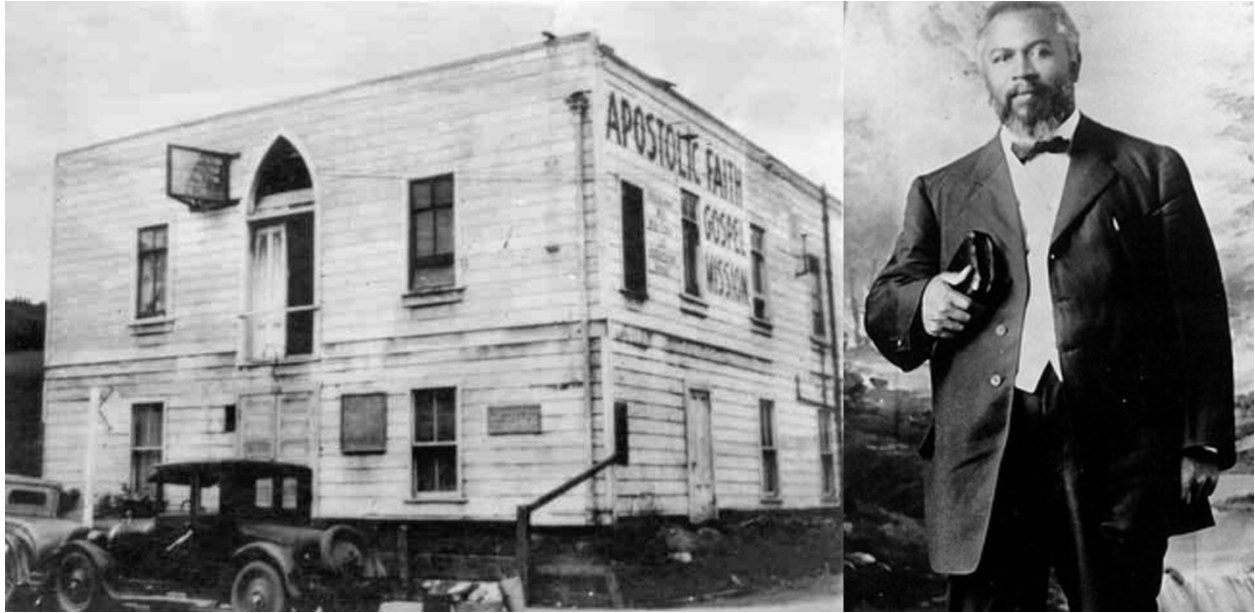
3. The first person on record to “speak in tongues” in the modern era was a woman named Agnus Ozman, one of Parham’s students, on January 1, 1901 in Topeka, KS.



(Note: Throughout 2,000 years of church history almost no one had claimed to speak in tongues or receive prophecy with a few notable exceptions. There was a cult in the 2nd century lead by a guy named Montanus. His followers believed he was the Holy Spirit and some were even baptized “into the name of the Father, the Son, and Montanus!” There was a cult in Germany during the Reformation called the “Zwickau Prophets” who believed in modern prophecy, reinstated polygamy, and had to be killed by the German government because of their heretical beliefs).

Notice that you now had three “blessings” of the Holy Spirit. The first was at conversion, the second would be marked by holiness, and the third would be evidenced by speaking in tongues.

4. Parham opened another school in Houston, TX and, under the influence of Parham, a man named William Seymour (who was illiterate) moved to Los Angeles to promote Parham’s ideas.
5. Seymour was a black preacher with one eye. He used to put a shoe box on his head to hide the “glory” and then pull the shoe box off before preaching. In 1906 Seymour lead the Azusa Street Revival at an abandoned Methodist church at 312 Azusa St. in Los Angeles. This movement is where Pentecostalism took off in the United States. Seymour had proclaimed that God would judge sinners right around the time that California experienced the largest earthquake in U.S. history, thus leading people to think that Seymour’s message was correct. The meetings on Azusa Street went on daily for three years. It was marked by spontaneous prayer, preaching, and an unprecedented cooperation between whites, blacks, and women.



6. The denomination, Assemblies of God (A.O.G.), began as a split away from Pentecostalism in 1914 in Hot Springs, AR. They taught that there was not three blessings of the Spirit but two (though many would say there was only one work of grace, but that one work was further empowered or evidenced by tongues). Notice how the holiness element began to fade away.

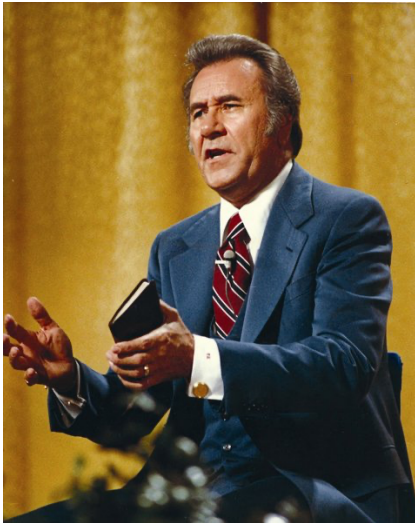
7. One of the earliest promoters of these doctrines was a woman named Aimee Semple McPherson



-She was the first, mainstream female preacher in the Pentecostal movement. (Pentecostalism generally frowned upon female pastors up to that point).

- Her middle name, “Semple,” was from her first husband (who died) and her last name, “McPherson,” was from her second husband, hence “Aimee Semple McPherson.”
- She promoted what was called the “foresquare gospel” movement. The four elements of her “gospel” refer to: salvation, the second coming, healing, and speaking in tongues.
- She put on a show! She would wear long, white robes to preach. She sometimes entered the church on a white horse. Other times she entered the church on guide-wires so she could fly in. She started the “Salvation Navy” (not the Salvation Army) with a gospel evangelistic ship. In addition to being a divorcee, she was an adulteress. There was a rumor that she had been kidnapped, but she had actually been having an affair with actor Milton Berle (Mr. Television, Uncle Miltie).
- She died of an overdose, and Bennie Hinn visits her grave regularly.

8. Oral Roberts, a man from Oklahoma, founded ORU and promoted charismatic doctrine through large crusades (similar to what Billy Graham would do).



9. Kenneth Hagin, born right here in McKinney, TX, would promote the Word of Faith movement which taught that you could change reality just through your speech.

10. Hagin’s disciple was a man you might have heard of named Kenneth Copeland.



- Copeland was a nightclub singer who actually had a gold record. He once got the opportunity to lay hands on and pray for none other than Johnny Cash.
- His wife, Gloria Copeland, was a cheerleader in high school whose mascot was, ironically, the red devils.
- His net worth is estimated as high as \$760 million, though he claims to be a billionaire.
- He owns a \$6 million mansion in Ft. Worth with a boathouse, tennis court, swimming pool, zen garden, and movie theatre, a \$20 million Cessna Citation jet, a second jet (Gulfstream V) – estimated at about 36 million, his own private airstrip, his own airplane hangar, an \$18,000 Rolex, an Escalade, a \$500,000 Mercedes, and a Rolls Royce Phantom.
- During COVID he spit at the disease and “blew the wind of God” on it, yet for some reason COVID didn’t go away.

11. Other crazies include Creflo Dollar (who said humans are gods), Benny Hinn (who said there are 9 members of the Trinity and that he would like to kill his critics with a “Holy Ghost machine gun”), Suzanne Hinn (who famously said that you need a “Holy Spirit enema”), Pat Robertson (who famously told a man to divorce his wife because she had Alzheimers), Jimmy Swaggart (who was often involved in scandals with prostitutes), T.D. Jakes (who denies the Trinity), Joyce Meyer (who said Jesus stopped being the Son of God on the cross), Robert Tilton, Jesse Duplantis, John Hagee, Paul and Jan Crouch, Joel Osteen, Jim and Tammy Bakker, Paula White, or anyone who runs a church called something like “flaming dove fire full gospel Spirit tabernacle holiness church.”



Three waves of the Charismatic Movement

-The first wave was in 1906 at the Azusa Street Revival – The movement stayed primarily in Pentecostalism. It was denominational and focused on tongues.

-The second wave was in 1960's – The sign gifts started permeating mainline denominations including the Roman Catholic Church (1967). The movement became less concerned about a “second baptism” and it became more interdenominational.

-The third wave was in 1980 – The emphasis became seeing “signs and wonders” as in the New Testament. This third wave saw charismaticism spread quickly both nationally and abroad. This includes movements like the Vineyard Movement, “Catch the Fire,” and the spread of Calvary Chapel churches. The Vineyard Movement said there was only one baptism of the Spirit but that there could be continual “fillings” after that. The third wave also downplayed the tongues issue which was central in the first wave.

The Charismatic Movement is now most-pronounced in South America, Asia, and Africa.

Why did the Charismatic Movement spread so quickly?

1. It dropped the Pentecostal “baggage.” In early Pentecostalism women couldn’t cut their hair or wear makeup. You couldn’t be rich. You had a lot of legalism and attempts at piety. The charismatic movement dropped all of that; you could be rich, pretty, in-shape, and culturally affluent. In fact, Oral Roberts eventually went back to being a Methodist because it was more socially acceptable.
2. It weaponized modern forms of media: TV, radio, podcast, books, etc.
3. It emphasized American values, especially wealth and success.
4. It dropped the emphasis on holiness.

	1st Blessing	2nd Blessing	3rd Blessing
Holiness Movement	Conversion	Holiness	N/A
Pentecostalism	Conversion	Holiness	Tongues
Charismatic and A.O.G.	Conversion	Tongues	N/A

5. It offered “microwave spirituality.”
6. Because it lacks a strong doctrinal statement, it was easily accepted by different denominations.
7. In poorer countries, it spread because it promised people in need relief from their suffering. Messages about health and wealth are very attractive to those in need.
8. It produced very popular and, sometimes, well done music (Hillsong, Bethel, etc.).

What are some common concerns about the Charismatic Movement?

1. Some teachers and adherents are actually heretical. Some do not hold to the traditional views of the Trinity or the doctrine of Christ.

2. They promote greed and a love of money.
3. They are anti-intellectual (the focus is on feelings and not doctrine).
4. They are really bad at interpreting just about every part of scripture.
5. They believe that what you see in Acts is normative.

- Miracles are given with Moses to prove the law is from God.

- Miracles are given by Elijah and Elisha to prove their prophetic office.

- Miracles are done by Jesus to prove his ministry.

- Miracles are done by the disciples to show that the gospel is true.

- But what you see in acts is not normative.

 - Tongues is showing that the gospel is going to the nations (which is a reversal of the tower of Babel and judgement on Israel).

 - Prophecy is happening because the apostles cannot be everywhere and the Bible isn't done being written.

 - Miracles are happening to prove the disciples' message.

6. They re-define the spiritual gifts.
7. They take advantage of the poor.
8. They can be very legalistic, and they are predominantly Arminian.
9. Some are very immoral (especially related to sex and embezzlement).
10. They often trust what they think God is telling them in their heart more than what he has said in scripture.
11. Extreme pride. They create two levels of Christians (Varsity and J.V.). Traditionally, the differences between Christians are horizontal (we have different gifts and help each other). But they create a vertical difference. An historic Charismatic believes that they are literally on a higher spiritual plane than you are.

Are there some good things about the Charismatic Movement?

1. Many charismatics really do love God and have a deep, personal relationship with him.
2. They caused bible scholars to go back and see what the New Testament really said about spiritual gifts.
3. They trust God to move and are open to the Spirit's leading in their life.

4. Many people have been saved because of their evangelistic influence. The largest Protestant denomination (and the second largest denomination after Roman Catholicism) in the world are those associated with the charismatic movement.
5. The movement has done a better job at racial reconciliation than other denominations.
6. They have used modern technology and media channels more effectively than other Christian groups.