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## THE NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

You cannot study the subject of “tongues” without considering the Pentecostals and Charismatics. It is the Pentecostals who have brought us the modern tongues movement and the Charismatics who have carried those tongues into almost every major denomination.

Pentecostal churches once enjoyed singing “The Old Time Religion.” The fact is, the Pentecostals and Charismatics are the “new kids on the block” as far as churches go.

The Lutherans are over 400 years old. The Presbyterians are over 400 years old. The Episcopalians are over 350 years old. The Methodists are over 250 years old. The Mormons are over 150 years old. The Churches of Christ are over 150 years old.

But. . .

The Pentecostals have yet to celebrate their 100th birthday and the Charismatics their 35th! Even the Jehovah’s Witness, the Christian Scientists, and the Seventh Day Adventists are older than the Pentecostals. As a matter of fact, no major church group in America is younger than the Pentecostals.

The history of the Charismatics and Pentecostals is very interesting. The Charismatics have their roots in Pentecostalism and they in turn find their roots in the Holiness churches. So, let’s take a look.

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The term "Holiness" is a title used to identify those who hold to the doctrine of entire sanctification as a second work of grace following sometime after regeneration. This teaching, also known by such terms as, "Christian perfection," "perfect love," "heart purity," "the baptism with the Holy Spirit," "the fullness of the blessing," "Christian holiness," etc., is that the experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit cleanses the sin nature from the heart so that the child of God no longer willfully transgresses the law of God.

Holiness churches include: the Church of the Nazarene, the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), the Free Methodists, the Salvation Army, the Wesleyan Church, and others. There are relatively few significant doctrinal differences between these churches. The groups are quite distinctive because of varying emphases and church structure. Most cooperate in the publication of Sunday School curriculum and other related materials.

Pentecostal churches, on the other hand, may or may not be "Holiness" and claim some or all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The foremost gift among these churches is usually "the gift of tongues," technically known as "glossolalia" (from the Greek word for "tongues").

Pentecostal churches would include Assemblies of God, Apostolic churches, the Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.), the Church of God in Christ, Foursquare Gospel churches, United Pentecostal churches, some churches simply called Pentecostal, and others.

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### THE HOLINESS MOVEMENT

John Wesley, founder of Methodism, taught the possibility of “perfection” but by the early 1800’s the teaching had all but died out. Wesley’s writings reveal that he believed that entire sanctification was experienced instantaneously when the believer exercised faith in Christ. The Holiness movement that began in 1835 taught sanctification as a second work of grace, a spiritual crisis as radical as the conversion experience. Sarah Lankford, Phoebe Palmer, Charles G. Finney and William B. Osborn are all recognized as leaders in this movement.

In the formative years large “Holiness” camp meetings were held around the country. These camp meetings were attended by those from established churches as there were no “Holiness” churches at the time. As these people tried to transfer the mood and message of the camp meetings to their churches, resistance began to develop. Soon there was little place in the established churches for holiness advocates. For some reason the movement splintered and between 1893 and 1900, twenty-three holiness denominations began. It has been estimated that if all the holiness groups had combined to form one denomination, there might have been as many as one million members.

### THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

Charles F. Parham, a former Methodist evangelist,

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had opened a Bible School in Topeka, Kansas. In this school, the Bethel Bible College, he taught the doctrine of divine healing. Toward the end of 1900, Parham left the school for a brief field ministry. Upon his return he found that his students, who had been studying the Book of Acts, had come to the conviction that the scriptural evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost should be speaking with tongues. Once this decision was reached, seeking or tarrying meetings were held. On January 1, 1901, Agnes N. Ozman was "filled with the Holy Spirit" and spoke with tongues for the greater part of three days. Encouraged by Miss Ozman's experience, one student after another began to talk in languages which they themselves could not understand. After the majority of the students had received the Pentecostal experience, they launched out from Topeka to hold evangelistic meetings.

During the next half dozen years the new movement made little headway. The ministry of the leader and his students was confined to Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma. Two churches were established in Missouri and two in Kansas.

In 1905 this group opened a school in Houston, Texas. One of those who attended this school was a black Holiness preacher, William J. Seymour. Seymour was invited to preach in Los Angeles in a black Holiness church. After hearing him preach that anyone who did not speak in tongues was not baptized with the Holy Spirit, the woman pastor, Neelly Terry, put him out. Seymour was not easily discouraged and held meetings in the homes of the

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members of the congregation. On April 9, 1906 "the fire came down" at a prayer meeting in Bonnie Brae Street. The first to receive the baptism of the Spirit was an eight year old black boy.

Seymour then rented an old Methodist church building at 312 Azusa Street. This Azusa Street Mission is regarded by many Pentecostals as the beginning of the world-wide Pentecostal movement. For three years without interruption prayer meetings took place with speaking in tongues, singing in tongues and prophecy. Some had visions of heaven and hell. Others were led by the Spirit through the agonies of Calvary. These manifestations only increased the hunger and anticipation of other seekers. From these meetings in Los Angeles, news of the revival spread throughout the world in a matter of months. (It is interesting to note that this Azusa Street Mission was a racially mixed congregation up until 1908 when the whites withdrew.)

The early stages of the revival met bitter opposition from the Holiness and other churches. Holiness groups were forced to take a position on tongues. Some Holiness leaders went so far as to associate tongues with demon possession. Others went to investigate and came away converts to the Pentecostal movement.

The Holiness movement taught a two-stage salvation, conversion and sanctification. The Azusa Street Mission brought a third stage into Pentecostal teaching. First came conversion or regene-

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ration. The second stage was sanctification (not the Baptism of the Spirit), also called "second blessing" that occurred at a definite time after conversion. The third stage was the Baptism of the Spirit with speaking in tongues. There has been a disagreement among Pentecostals on the teachings of a two-stage and three-stage salvation.

Within ten years of the Azusa Street revival, Pentecostalism had become a worldwide movement with thriving Pentecostal communities in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It is estimated that there are between twelve and fourteen million Pentecostals, with four out of five outside of the United States.

### THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

The word "Charismatic" comes from the Greek word, *CHARISMA*, and means "gift, grace, or favor." This refers to the manifestation of a wide range of Spiritual "gifts" experienced by those in the movement. These gifts include the word of wisdom; the word of knowledge; faith; gifts of healing; working of miracles; prophecy; discernment of spirits; tongues; and the interpretation of tongues. All of these are regarded as supernatural spiritual manifestations of the activity of the Holy Spirit. These gifts are earnestly sought after and prayer for, not for the sake of display or novelty, but because it is believed that the Lord wants to express himself in these ways. The Charismatic movement lays strong emphasis on the experience described as "baptism in the Holy Spirit" and its frequent "speaking in tongues."

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The Charismatic movement is truly a movement and was not begun by an individual. The way was paved for the Charismatic movement by three theologians of ecumenical stature through their tributes to the long despised and largely ignored Pentecostal movement. The first of these was Lesslie Newbigin, missionary of the Church of Scotland, director of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches. In 1953, in his book *The Household of God*, he recognized Pentecostalism as a third stream of Christianity to be ranked alongside Protestantism and Catholicism. Newbigin praised Pentecostalism for its spiritual vitality and called upon Protestants and Catholics to extend the warmest kind of welcome to Pentecostal Christians.

The second man to help bolster the prestige of the Pentecostal movement was John A. Mackay, formerly a missionary in Latin America and president emeritus of Princeton Theological Seminary. In his 1957 keynote address as chairman of the International Missionary Council, Mackay referred to the Pentecostals as committed Christians and ardent missionaries.

In the June 6, 1958 issue of *Life*, there appeared an article entitled "The Third Force in Christendom," by Henry P. Van Dusen, past president of Union Theological Seminary in New York City. In this article he highlighted what he saw as some of the cardinal characteristics of Pentecostalism: simpli-

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city of message; emphasis upon a life-transforming experience; aggressive evangelism; spiritual ardor; careful nurture of converts; dependence upon the Holy Spirit; and, an untiring, seven-day-a-week Christianity.

In the early 1960s Van Dusen called the Pentecostal movement "a revolution comparable in importance with the establishment of the original Apostolic church and with the Protestant Reformation." There can be little doubt that these three men contributed significantly to the movement's growth.

Another leader, this time from within the Pentecostal group, was David du Plessis. Born in South Africa in 1905, du Plessis was converted at eleven and "baptized in the Spirit" at thirteen. In 1951 he began sharing the Pentecostal faith and experience in ecumenical circles, especially within the framework of the World Council of Churches. He expected his message to be rejected but was amazed at the warm reception accorded him. He received warm welcomes in meetings of the International Missionary Council, the World Council of Churches and in churches of all denominations. He has lectured at Princeton Theological Seminary, Yale University Divinity School, Union Theological Seminary in New York City, Southern Methodist University, Colgate Rochester Divinity School and Fuller Theological Seminary. His counsel was for people to stay in their own churches. He said: "Be not conformed to Pentecostalism, but be ye transformed by the renewal of your mind in your own churches."



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The Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International and its founder, Demos Shakarian, have also been instrumental in the promotion of the Charismatic movement. Shakarian had a desire to begin a fellowship of Pentecostal businessmen but was unable to make it a reality. Early one morning, after hours of agonizing prayer, he saw a vision of millions of men with hands raised magnifying God. In 1953 the FGBMFI was organized with Shararian as president. This group sponsors interdenominational prayer breakfasts or dinners in ballrooms of hotels in large cities around the world. Because it is a laymen's organization, the officers of the fellowship are confined to laymen. Members are encouraged to be active in and loyal to their own churches. Early in 1960, Dennis Bennett, rector of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California, received the baptism of the Spirit with the manifestation of speaking in tongues. On April 3, 1960 he brought everything out in the open in a sermon to his congregation. That day he was asked to resign, to which he agreed. *Time* and *Newsweek* picked up the story and it was published around the world. Up until this time most of Christendom had never heard of Neo-Pentecostalism (New-Pentecostal) or a Charismatic movement.

Bennett became rector of a small, struggling church in Seattle, Washington. His Charismatic interpretation of the gospel brought new life to the church and it soon became the largest Episcopal

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church in the diocese and a showcase for Neo-Pentecostalism.

The TV broadcasts of Oral Roberts in the 1950s helped to prepare the ground for the Charismatic movement. In 1968 Roberts left the Pentecostal Holiness Church to join the United Methodists, which brought him and his Pentecostal teaching into mainstream historic Christianity.

The Charismatic movement's permeation of Catholicism is also spectacular. In the fall of 1966 four Catholic laymen, all members of the faculty of Dequesne University of Pittsburg, began to meet together. The four read and discussed David Wilkerson's *The Cross and the Switchblade* and John Sherrill's *They Speak with Other Tongues*. It was their desire to have the kind of spiritual experience depicted in these books. This led to their seeking out a Charismatic prayer group which introduced them to the Charismatic renewal. In February of 1967 a small group of students spent a weekend with these four faculty members in prayer, meditation and study of the first four chapters of Acts. That weekend was the beginning of the rapid spread of the Charismatic movement within Roman Catholicism. In less than nine years it came to involve as many as 200,000 Catholics. The International Conference on the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church, held at Notre Dame, Indiana, had its first meeting in 1967. By 1974 the attendance had swelled to 30,000.

Pentecostalism, in the form of the Charismatic

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movement, has crossed every denominational boundary and has penetrated almost every Christian denomination. People sincerely seeking closer fellowship with the Lord, or perhaps a greater spiritual experience, all within the security of their denomination, has no doubt made the Charismatic experience so attractive.