

I'm not a robot





























concerned primarily with the experience of the working of the Holy Spirit and the practice of spiritual gifts. Pentecostal worship is often characterized by its vitality and spontaneity. Pentecostals believe in expressing their love for God through singing, dancing, clapping, and raising their hands. Pentecostals also believe in the importance of

corporate worship. They believe that when believers come together to worship, they experience a unique sense of unity and fellowship. Pentecostals also place a strong emphasis on evangelism and mission work. Many Pentecostal churches are actively involved in outreach to their communities and other parts of the world. This focus on evangelism is rooted in the belief that all people need to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ in order to be saved. While it may not seem that speaking in tongues is related to missions or evangelism, for early Pentecostals, it was. Many early Pentecostals believed in missionary tongues, meaning that the language they spoke after being baptized with the Spirit was the language of the people God had called them to reach. There are stories reporting that this was sometimes successful, though they are perhaps hagiographic. In later forms of Pentecostalism this so-called distinguishing doctrine is given less prominence—in fact, the insistence on tongues is often absent and certainly of relatively minor significance. In any case, many contemporary pentecostal [sic] churches seldom use speaking in tongues in public worship. In my work, I suggest that tongues should be understood as “the means by which one participates in trans-rational communication with God, communication that conveys mysteries to God (1 Cor 14:2) while simultaneously building up the speaker.” For a deeper dive into tongues, see my article, “What Is Speaking in Tongues? Should You Do It? Bible Answers.” Unfortunately, Pentecostalism often bears a negative reputation. There are various reasons, some very well-founded, depending on the region and the reputation. One critique of Pentecostals is that they are strict and legalistic. This stems from the origin of some classically Pentecostal denominations in Holiness Movements, which were very focused on the lives of their congregants. While those holiness movements were not inherently legalistic, it’s easy to see how an individual church might drift in that direction over time. In general, this critique is no more accurate of Pentecostals than it is of any other large Christian groups. Another critique is that Pentecostals are not educated, are overly rural, and, in some cases, are associated with snake handling. Hailing from Appalachia and growing up in Pentecostal churches, I can attest that these types of Pentecostals exist, but I also insist that they are quite rare. Again, Pentecostals are no more or less intelligent, educated, and cultured than any other group of Christians. Finally, perhaps the most common critique of Pentecostals is that they are overly emotional and consequently anti-rational. Again, as with many stereotypes, there is some truth to this. There are plenty of areas in Pentecostalism that might fit this portrayal. However, as an employee of a classically Pentecostal university, I have to protest. While numbers of Pentecostals reject rationalism, that is not to say that they are opposed to the existence or use of reason itself. There are courses in history and philosophy where I teach, and we are quite clear about the importance of rational thinking, even as we emphasize our classically Pentecostal heritage. As Anderson helpfully illustrates, Pentecostalism remains challenging to define. In his words, In the multidisciplinary study of global Pentecostalism, a broad taxonomy must use the family resemblance analogy to include its historical links and its theological and sociological foci. Pentecostalism continues to renew and reinvigorate itself in countless new forms of expression. Seen from this perspective, it is not a movement that has a distinct beginning in America or anywhere else, or a movement based on a particular theology; it is instead a series of movements that emerged after several years and several different formative ideas and events. In seeking a working definition of Pentecostalism we need to acknowledge that such a definition might prove elusive and always depends on the paradigms and criteria of the individual attempting to make it. Recommended articles Tagged ascharismaticchurch historypentecostalpentecostalism