

10 Things You Didn't Know About Pentecostals

1. Islam is not the fastest-growing faith family in the world. Pentecostalism is. While Islam has gone from zero in 610 AD to 1.6 billion today (1,403 years), Pentecostalism went from zero to (about) a billion from 1906 to the present day (107 years).
2. Pentecostalism is quintessentially American. It began (although there were pre-shocks for centuries) in the multi-ethnic Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, Calif. It is arguably our most influential export of any kind.
3. The churches planted by American mainline denominations (Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, UCC, etc) in the global South are overwhelmingly Pentecostal/Charismatic in their piety. For instance, a Lutheran from Ethiopia (Mekane Yesus) would certainly be considered Pentecostal if visiting here in the U.S.
4. Pentecostals/Charismatics are diverse. They run the spectrum range from Oxford/Cambridge blue bloods in the Kensington neighborhood of London to snake handlers in Appalachia. The current Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, is a product of the largest congregation in the Church of England, Holy Trinity Brompton, which is one of the most influential charismatic congregations in the world. And not just economically diverse. If you find yourself in a multi-cultural congregation in the . on a Sunday morning, the overwhelming probability is that you are sitting in a Pentecostal worship service.
5. Pentecostals are not anti-intellectual. The unofficial "Pentecostal Pope," Jack Hayford of Los Angeles, is a Bible-scholar's Bible scholar. Oral Roberts University, Regent Seminary (Virginia Beach) and Southeastern University

(Lakeland, Florida) are some of the key centers of higher learning for the movement. The largest seminary in the Church of England (and perhaps the entire Anglican communion) is St. Mellitus Colleg/St. Paul's Theological Center in London, spiritually godfathered by (Charismatic) Holy Trinity Brompton Church. They are now opening branches throughout the world.

6. Pentecostals were the leaders in the ordination of women. Because they are less bureaucratic and more "gifting driven," Pentecostals were the first (not liberal Protestants) to ordain women. Aimee Semple Macpherson was one of the first American mega-church senior pastors (Angelus Temple in L.A. seated 5,000 a service in its prime).

7. Most all U.S. mainline denominations and also Roman Catholics have large Charismatic minorities. In fact, there are more Charismatic Roman Catholics than there are total members in most all other denominations. Lutherans and Episcopalians were pioneers in the Charismatic movement (Larry Christenson and Dennis Bennet).

8. The Jesus Movement ("Jesus Freaks") led by Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, Calif., more or less invented CCM (Christian Contemporary Music). As Calvary Chapel was (and is) a "small c" charismatic congregation, Pentecostal piety has been carried into virtually every congregation in the country that has ever sung a praise song or had someone raise a hand in worship.

9. Latinos are not overwhelmingly Roman Catholic. A very large minority is Pentecostal. When Latinos leave the Roman Catholic church, which they do in large numbers, the two directions are secular or Pentecostal. There are almost certainly Pentecostal Latinos in your zip code.

10. A word about the "Word of Faith" (also Word Faith, or just Faith) movement. This is the segment of Pentecostalism which is most prone to excesses (name it/claim it). However, this

movement is also quite diverse and driven by the central concept of “faith makes a difference.” Thus, they tend to take biblical promises about prayers of faith literally. This drives a rather sophisticated systematic theology first explicated in depth by Kenneth Hagin (the elder one) and continuing to be unfolded by Joseph Prince (Singapore) and others.

Books to get you familiar with the movement: *Light your Church on Fire without Burning it Down* by David Housholder. Super-basic primer on the movement; *Fire from Heaven* by Harvey Cox; and *Sober Intoxication of the Spirit* by Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher to the pope during the term of John Paul II.

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