

Paul H. Dixon  
Pentecostalism: Its Past and Its Present  
1979

Unedited Transcript

Paul H. Dixon:

Some years ago, I had a buddy, I went through high school with, and I became a Christian when I was a senior in high school. He was not interested. I tried to talk to him about the Lord in every possible way, confront him with his need of Christ, but he just didn't express any interest at all. And then after he was out of school and working for several years, one day, he called up my mother and my mother said, "Boy, you couldn't believe how warm Chuck was." And he just wasn't that kind of an individual. So I later was to talk to him and boy, I found him to be warm and he said, "Paul, I got saved." And he told me how his wife started going to a lady's Bible study there in the community. He'd gone to a dead liberal Methodist church just about all of his life and gone every Sunday, but they didn't preach the gospel and he wasn't saved.

Paul H. Dixon:

He said she started going to this Bible study and boy, it just changed her life. And I started going and I received Christ as my savior. Then he went on to tell me, how did he started speaking in tongues. And I didn't say too much about it until he decided ... We used to fish together and he said, "Hey, Paul, let's go on a fishing trip." So we went to Florida on a fishing trip and we're together for a week. We talked about many things. He shared his experience with me. I cannot deny that Charles was a changed young man. I do not deny his salvation, not one bit. I believe God did a work of grace in his heart. But after he got home, he wrote me a letter and said this. "Paul, I believe you ought to get out of the ministry, that you ought to stop preaching until you get the nine gifts of the spirit."

Paul H. Dixon:

Well, I'll be honest with you, gang. I had never been confronted with anything like that. I'd never had anyone suggest that I ought to get out of the ministry, let alone have all these gifts. So I turned to the Bible and started a study on the nine gifts of the Spirit and tried to realize exactly what God had for me in this. And as a result, I wrote him about a four page letter that gave the results of my study. Today, the Pentecostal movement, Time Magazine says, is the fastest growing religious movement in America. Life Magazine calls the Pentecostal movement the third force. 25 years ago, a Pentecostal by the name of Brumback said, "Speaking in tongues is not acceptable anywhere except in the Pentecostal movement." That is not true today. Pentecostalism today is accepted in every main line denomination.

Paul H. Dixon:

You can't name a denomination, you can't name a movement that hasn't been touched by Pentecostalism. Every generation has a movement that somehow gets started within that particular day. The movement that we're facing today is Pentecostalism. I think we've witnessed it within the Jesus people and in the last 15 years, practically, every group has seen it. Now, what I want us to do today. And of course of this week, we're going to be looking at Pentecostalism, first of all, today it's past and it's present. In other words, the history of Pentecostalism. How did it get started? Where is it today? Tomorrow, we're going to look at Pentecostalism and its personality or the nature of it. What is it?

Paul H. Dixon:

The next day, we're going to look at Pentecostalism or tongues and their purpose as found in the Bible. How did God intend that tongues should be used, in Mark and Acts. The fourth day, we're going to look

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at Pentecostalism or tongues and their problems as found in the book of First Corinthians. Then the last day, we'll just see how we're coming. If we have time, I'd like to talk to you about Pentecostalism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, what the Bible has to say, and maybe just kind of draw it all together and possibly entertain some questions just to see if we can clarify it all in our minds.

Paul H. Dixon:

But today I want to just give you some facts. I'd encourage you to write some of these things down as far as the dates and some names. This perhaps will not be as exciting as some of the things that we'll be studying about in the course of the week. We can have a little more interaction, but I think this is very important. Many people are not aware as to how Pentecostalism got its start. So we're first of all, going to look at the past, the history of the Pentecostal movement. Actually, the Pentecostals themselves trace their history back to John Wesley and the Methodist movement. Now, many Methodists would not be too excited about this. They would not want to agree to it, but let me explain to you why they traced themselves by to John Wesley.

Paul H. Dixon:

The main characteristic, the thing that distinguished the Methodist and John Wesley from many other movements was their emphasis upon sanctification. You might just want to write down the word sanctification. Sanctification has taken on many meanings. The Methodists do not claim that they've taught sanctification as a sinless perfection. There are some holiness movements that have taught sanctification, where you had a special work of grace, and therefore you did not sin anymore. But John Wesley did not teach that, John Wesley did teach a second work. In other words, sanctification, as many of the Methodists taught and later the holiness movement taught it. Your first work of grace is when you got saved, but that was not enough. You needed to have a second movement, you needed to have a second act of grace, a second experience. And that was the experience of sanctification.

Paul H. Dixon:

We do not believe this. We believe today that when you are saved, you are sanctified all in the same experience, that you don't need some special work to take place later on in life. But the Methodist, John Wesley, was the first one to really start emphasizing. There were others who later emphasized it like Peter Cartwright, Charles Finney, and a man by the name of Francis Asbury. Francis Asbury was the father of the Methodist movement within the United States of America. And that's what we were especially focusing our attention this week on Pentecostalism within the United States.

Paul H. Dixon:

So Francis Asbury started emphasizing bringing Methodism to this country and they then were emphasizing special social reforms, like the abolition of slavery. They were talking about women's rights, anti-masonry, prohibition. All these things came out of the Methodist movement. The Methodist movement then grew into what was called the National Holiness movement. In other words, back during the 1880s, with the rise of Darwinism and secularism and materialism, after the Civil War, many groups said, we need to combat all these false-isms and they formed the National Holiness movement. Many people, it's very interesting, and I think we see this today. Many of the very people that the social reformers were trying to help, they were picking up their cause joined the National Holiness movement, who in reality were against all that the social reformers were standing for.

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Paul H. Dixon:

And I think we even see that in America today. One of the groups that perhaps we're more familiar with that was part of the Holiness movement, was the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army, under the direction of General Booth, emphasized holiness and social work. The Quakers, the EUB, were part of this movement. Most of these people came from within the Methodist church. They grew tired of the worldliness and the coldness, as they said, and the formality that was in the Methodist church and so they started these new groups. In 1880, Daniel Warner started the Church of God in Anderson, Indiana. This is one of the first groups that was known as the Church of God. In 1887, A.B. Simpson started the Christian Missionary Alliance. This again was distinguished as having an emphasis upon holiness, godly living through living sanctification.

Paul H. Dixon:

From 1893 to 1900, there were 23 holiness denominations that came out of the Methodist church. You see, many times we fail to realize this today, back in that day, the Methodist church was the largest denomination. There were 4 million Methodist in America. Only 100,000 left the Methodist church to make up these holiness groups. So you see, it was just a small segment that came out of the Methodist church. In 1897, the Pilgrim Holiness Group was formed. In 1914, the Church of the Nazarene, which was a merger of many holiness groups. The Pilgrim Holiness and the Church of the Nazarene became the two largest of holiness churches within America.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now, between 1880 and 1923, no less than 200 groups adopted some form of the name Church of God, became very popular within the holiness movement to call your or church the Church of God. One of the groups back in that day called themselves, listen closely, this is very important, the Fire Baptized Holiness Church. Their leader was a man by the name of Benjamin Irwin. The reason this is important is that Benjamin Irwin started teaching that two experiences was not enough. You needed a third experience. And that third experience was the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Paul H. Dixon:

Let's bring ourselves up to date. Maybe it'll start to crystallize. John Wesley, the Methodist, taught two experiences, a salvation experience and a sanctification experience. This is a special thing that took place that made you holy. Many other groups were to follow this and to come out of the Methodist church when they felt like the Methodist church, back after the Civil War, wasn't emphasizing holiness enough and they felt that secularism and Darwinism was creeping into the church. And so many broke off and started the Church of the Nazarene and the Salvation Army and the Pilgrim Holiness and the Church of God in Anderson, Indiana. And all these things started coming in into existence. But up until this time, all of these groups were still emphasizing basically what John Wesley taught. Now, within this comes another group that starts saying, great, you ought to be saved and you ought to be sanctified, but you also ought to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Paul H. Dixon:

Two men back in that time in 1896, one by the name of W.F. Bryant, B-R-Y-A-N-T, and another by the name of Richard Spurling, S-P-U-R-L-I-N-G, a Baptist pastor starting leading in revivals. And the characteristic of those revivals was that when you were baptized by the Holy Spirit, you spoke in tongues. This was new, a new emphasis. Before this time, perhaps some had spoken tongues, but not on

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the scale that took place within these revivals. In those revivals was a man by the name of A.J. Tomlinson. Tomlinson was a Quaker who later became the leader of the Church of God in Cleveland, Tennessee, that is today one of the largest Churches of God's. And many people within the Church of God today will trace their beginnings back to this man. A.J. Tomlinson, a very important man in the history of the Pentecostal movement.

Paul H. Dixon:

One man is called the father of the Pentecostal movement. That man's name is Charles Parham, P-A-R-H-A-M. The reason he's called the father is because he established a Bible school. It was called Bethel Bible College. I don't have it down, I think it was located in Kansas. They had 40 students. These 40 students were challenged to make a study of the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. How could you tell whether you were baptized with the Holy Spirit or not? And the result of their findings was that the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongue. And in 1901, one of these students, a young lady by the name of Agnes Ozman, O-Z-M-A-N, spoke in tongues. Now, the thing that makes it important is not that this is the first time anybody spoke in tongues in America, but from this point on Parham and others started teaching for the first time that you had to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and you were not baptized with the Holy Spirit, unless you spoke in tongues. That was a new teaching in the Holiness movement. It had never been taught before.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now, that becomes one of the main characteristics of the Pentecostalism today. The Holiness taught that you needed the second experience, sanctification. Out of the Holiness movement now comes a group that says you need a third experience. You need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, and if you are baptized with the Holy Spirit, you will speak in tongue. So actually we can trace it back like this. The mother or the father of Pentecostalism is the Holiness movement. And the Holiness movement was bred within the Methodist movement. That's why we can say the Pentecostalism movement can trace its history back to John Wesley.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now, Parham decided to start another Bible school. He started this one in Houston, Texas. And one of his students was a Negro, a man by the name of W.J. Seymour. Write his name down, S-E-Y-M-O-U-R, because he's going to be very important within the Pentecostal movement. W.J. Seymour, he was a Holiness preacher, and in 1906, he was invited to come to California, Los Angeles and preach in a Nazarene church. He started preaching the baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and they kicked him out. They locked the door and wouldn't let him in. So he moved to a place called the Azusa Street Mission, very important, put an asterisk by it. A-Z-U-S-E. The Azusa Street Mission and he started preaching his doctrine.

Paul H. Dixon:

People started flooding to listen to this man preach and to experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. The congregation was made up about 50% Caucasians and 50% blacks. This is quite unusual back in that day to have so many black people and white people worshipping together. We'll point out the importance of this later on as we get into this study. Remember, this man is a black preacher, a Holiness preacher. During that time, he made a prediction. He said, if Los Angeles does not get right with God, Los Angeles is going to be destroyed. The next day, Los Angeles was not destroyed,

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but practically one third or one half of San Francisco was destroyed by the renowned San Francisco earthquake. When that hit the newspaper that this man had predicted this, though amazingly enough, in his prediction, he'd missed the city. He said it was going to happen in Los Angeles and it took place in San Francisco.

Paul H. Dixon:

It hit the newspapers and people from all over the world started coming to Azuse Street Mission. It spread all across America. People would travel in any way to get there and to watch and to listen. The thing that happened here was that now this emphasis that had been confined to just a few people now took on national notoriety and worldwide attention was caught up in this thing that a Christian ought to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and ought to speak in tongue. So now, instead of a few people just knowing about it, the whole world knows about it as a result of W.J. Seymour and the Azuse Street Mission.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now Parham, who taught Seymour said that tongues was one of the evidences. Seymour says it's not just one of the evidences, it's the only evidence. In 1908, Tomlinson received the baptism of the Spirit and said he spoke in 20 different languages. So the Church of God became quite Pentecostal as we know it today. As I said, Negroes, black folks have had a very important part in the history of Pentecostal movement. Number one, due to Seymour's leadership. Number two, because of the emotional nature of Pentecostalism that has always appealed to our black brethren. Number three, because Pentecostalism has always had a special place for the socially disinherited.

Paul H. Dixon:

In other words, if you've ever been at least in times past around the Pentecostal movement, you've found that many from the lower financial class of society have been drawn to Pentecostal groups. And of course, many black folks have been within this category. Number four, there were no educational standards for preachers within the Pentecostal movement. And many of our black brethren had not had the opportunity to go to school and prepare and so they were able to preach within the Pentecostal movement whereby they were not permitted to preach within the established churches. They were rejected as preachers in the Methodist churches and the Baptist churches and the Lutherans and so forth. The Pentecostals were willing to embrace them.

Paul H. Dixon:

Incidentally, the Pentecostals have always been very strong on the civil rights movement. In 1964, they became quite active in saying that the blacks ought to be supported in their drive for having recognition within civil rights. We'll point out the importance of this later on as we get into this study. Remember, this man is a black preacher, a Holiness preacher. During that time he made a prediction. He said, if Los Angeles does not get right with God, Los Angeles is going to be destroyed. The next day, Los Angeles was not destroyed, but practically one third or one half of San Francisco was destroyed by the renowned-

Paul H. Dixon:

Some of the characteristics of the Pentecost of movement have been snake handling. Not all Pentecostals now, but some Pentecostals, have emphasized the handling of snakes. It's interesting. I just came from Tennessee and we've probably had, I lived for about 15 years in Tennessee, we've probably

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had more snake handlers in Tennessee than in any other state in the country. And we've had one man to be bitten recently. What they do is they gather, for instance, on a given Sunday and they'll handle rattlesnakes. And they feel like that if you have faith, you're willing to reach down there and pick that rattlesnake up and put it around your neck and wrap it around your arms and so forth. And a man was bitten and died. See, they not only feel like that you should pick the snake up by faith, but if you're bitten by that snake, that you should not die and you're not supposed to go to a doctor and somebody died.

Paul H. Dixon:

And so now it's gone into the courts and the court has ruled there in Tennessee, that if that particular preacher, any preacher practices, the handling of snakes anymore, then he's to be thrown in jail. So there's quite a controversy going along within Pentecostalism and snake handlers right now in the state of Tennessee. Of course, tongues and healing have generally characterized the Pentecostal movement. I trust you see the difference between the Pentecostal movement and the Holiness movement. The Holiness movement today does not emphasize tongues. They still emphasize sanctification. But the Pentecostal movement has gone one step beyond, and they have said that you ought to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, have this third experience and speaking tongues. They've had the holy laugh and the holy dance.

Paul H. Dixon:

Women preachers, there are probably more women preachers within the Pentecostal movement than all the rest of the denominations put together. One name you ought to put down, in 1921, there was a woman preacher by the name of Amy Simple McPherson. She started what she called the Four Square Gospel Church. She emphasized salvation, the four emphasizing salvation, tongues, healing, and the second coming. She was very dramatic. Does anybody know of a woman preacher today within the Pentecostal movement who's quite dramatic, well known?

Speaker 2:

Kathryn Kuhlman.

Paul H. Dixon:

Kathryn Kuhlman. I was telling my wife, we were driving yesterday to our meeting in Lima, Ohio, and then driving to the airport. And Kathryn Kuhlman was preaching. How many of you ever heard Kathryn Kuhlman? She's very dramatic. That's an underestimate. You can't believe how dramatic she is. And I think somehow she must have patterned her ministry after Amy Simple McPherson. Amy Simple McPherson would draw 5,000 to every sermon she preached in. She had a tremendous following. I think this is important, you'll see why later.

Paul H. Dixon:

The Pentecostal steered clear of the fundamentalist controversy. Back when men were taking their stand against liberalism and modernism, back in the 1920s, the Pentecostal preachers considered themselves fundamentalists, but they didn't take part in it. Number one, the other men didn't want them to have any part in it. Most of these fundamentalists were Calvinistic in doctrine and the Pentecostals were Armenian in doctrine and so they didn't want the Pentecostals. Now, that's very important because you're going to see that those people who were fought by the fundamentalists have

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now accepted the Pentecostals. Today, the Pentecostals have done a great deal to further the ecumenical movement. Those that the fundamentalists still oppose have tended to embrace the Pentecostals. Their basic theology has been Arminianism, perfectionism, emphasizing the charismatic aspect of it, speaking in tongues and they're pre-millennial in the second coming position of Christ.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now, they have not been without their critics. G. Campbell Morgan, who was part probably the greatest, best known preacher of that day said the Pentecostal movement. I almost hate to quote him, but this is what he said, is the last vomit of Satan. That's what he said about it. R.A. Tory said again, one of the G. Campbell Morgan, the supposedly the best known Bible teacher in England said that RA Tory was the best known Bible teacher in America. And he said, Pentecostalism is emphatically not of God. It's founded by a Sodomite. They didn't bar their words. Harry Ironside wrote the book that was to be the text book for the anti-holiness theology. The book is entitled Holiness: The True and The False. The Church of the Nazarene became very anti-Pentecostal. The Wesleyan Methodist, free Methodist, Salvation Army, and Pilgrim Holiness today oppose the Pentecostal movement.

Paul H. Dixon:

So just to take a quick review, we would look at the past and see how John Wesley emphasized sanctification. The Methodists emphasized sanctification. Out of this, came the Holiness movement and the Holiness churches who emphasize sanctification. But within these Holiness people, there came a group of people who said, this isn't enough. You need to have a charismatic experience. You need to be baptized by the Holy Spirit. You need to speak in tongues. We've looked at some of how that got started. And so before long, we find these Pentecostal churches breaking off. And so the Church of God in Anderson, Indiana, as we know it today, the Assembly of God as we know it today, many of the other Churches of God that emphasized tongues came out of the Holiness movement.

Paul H. Dixon:

There was a split within Pentecostalism. Some of the people decided that we do not need that second work of grace anymore. You don't need sanctification. That all took place in salvation like we teach today. So you just need two works, you need to be saved and to be baptized by the Holy Spirit. The Assemblies of God teach that today. The Southern Church of God, people like the Church of God in Cleveland, Tennessee still teach three experiences. So today within the Pentecostalism, about half of them teach two experiences and the other half teaches three. But that brings us up to date.

Paul H. Dixon:

Where does Pentecostalism stand today? 15 years ago, if I'd have been bringing this, I could have just talked about the Church of God. I could have just talked about the Assembly of God. We could have talked about speaking in tongues and that would've been all there is to it, but that's not so today. The catalyst for the modern day Pentecostal movement, was April the third, 1960 when in Van Nuys, California, the rector of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, a man by the name of Dennis Bennett, announced from the pulpit that he had spoken in tongues. It hit the wire services, the newspapers, the magazines, and this was unbelievable that an Episcopalian had spoken in tongues. From there it spread in not only to the Episcopalian churches, but into the Methodist churches, into these mainline denominations, many of them liberal, many of them not preaching salvation, many of them who were dead. All of a sudden they started emphasizing healing and speaking in tongues.

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Paul H. Dixon:

Today, practically, as I said, every main line denomination is experiencing this. The American Baptist, the Southern Baptist. I'm not saying that all within it, but within there will be some who are speaking in tongues. The GRV, the conservative Baptist, the independents. Listen, I have been in churches where the church has been split. A Baptist church that breaks the Bible over this thing of speaking in tongues. A group of people get together in a home, they start studying the Bible. Someone emphasizes tongues. They start speaking in tongues. The pastor has gone. He's spoken in tongues and it split the church right down the middle. They voted the pastor out of the church. I've had that happen in two churches in the last five years that I've been in. So we can see that this thing is really spreading across this country.

Paul H. Dixon:

One group that is contributing to the spread of the speaking in tongues in the Pentecostal movement is the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship. Now what they have done is they have bridged the gap between Pentecostalism and the established church. Whereas many of the people in the main line denominations would not attend an old line Church of God service, they will go to a Full Gospel Men's meeting, where men are there in their suits and ties, and it takes on more dignity. And there may be speaking in tongues at that banquet. There may be speaking in tongues by someone who gives a testimony and it's made it much more acceptable within these mainline churches.

Paul H. Dixon:

Write down this name, David J. Duplessis, D-U-P-L-E-S-S-I-S. This man is in African, he's from South Africa, who believes he's been called to take the message of Pentecostalism to the ecumenical leaders. He has great inroads within the National Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches, and he's been used greatly to get these people interested in Pentecostalism. Another man is a man by the name of David Wilkerson. His book, *The Cross and the Switchblade* made a great contribution to the spread and the emphasis upon speaking in tongues in the main line denominations. Some other famous personalities today who are known for the Pentecostal emphasis, Pat Boone. He's written books. He's written, had his movie. He's been on many talk shows.

Paul H. Dixon:

A young woman was interviewed on the Johnny Carson Show last week, movie actress. And Johnny said, I didn't see this, my wife did. Johnny said, "Say, I understand you're getting married." She said, "That's right. It's an answer to prayer." He was taken aback. He said, "What do you mean?" She said, "I'm a new Christian." She said, "I've been involved in many things, but I've been empty. And so I knew that Pat Boone had something I didn't have. And I went to him and he led me to Christ."

Paul H. Dixon:

And then she went on to talk about speaking in tongues and how he baptized her in his camp swimming, not the camp swimming pool, but in his own swimming pool there at the house. And she was saying her life had been changed. Now, I do not doubt that this person knows Christ as savior. My wife says, really, a clear cut testimony. That's great. But she emphasized the speaking in tongues. And Pat Boone has done a great deal to spread the emphasis today upon the charismatic movement. And you see the thing is, whereas before you thought of people who were poor, people who were very emotional, and folks who didn't have much training speaking in tongues. Today, doctors are speaking in tongues. Lawyers are speaking in tongues. Actors are speaking in tongues. It's taken on a completely different complexion.



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The old Church of God and so forth would be known as the classic Pentecostals, the old line Pentecostals, but the new Pentecostals are in the Methodist church. They're from different facets of society. And it's completely different.

Paul H. Dixon:

Another man you ought to write down as a man by the name of Oral Roberts. Oral Roberts, of course, who started Oral Roberts University in Oklahoma. Before he was, of course, associated with the old line Pentecostals. Billy Graham preached the dedication sermon of his new university. And this gave Pentecostalism an acceptance in America. In all aspects of Christianity, when a man like Billy Graham would come and embrace Oral Roberts and in essence saying, I'm at least not against your emphasis upon the charismatic movement and tongues and so forth. And then Oral Roberts really threw him for a loop when he left the Pentecostal church and joined the Methodist church.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now, when he joined the Methodist church, he did not denounce his position that he'd always held. He said, I still believe the same I always believed. And the Methodist church said, that's okay, you can be one of our preachers. He renounced his ordination vows in the Pentecostal church and took new ordination vows in the Methodist church. So again, here's the Methodist church embracing the charismatic movement. So you could see how this thing is spread. One well known magazine now sets forth in a positive fashion, speaking in tongues or charismatic movement. It's Christian Life Magazine edited by Robert Walker. And again, this has given it a great acceptance.

Paul H. Dixon:

One of the amazing things is that the Catholics have now embraced the Pentecostal movement. If I might give you just a little background of the Catholics, this started back in 1966, in 1967, and it started on a college campus, Duke University. It started among professors, teachers, and students. From Duke University, it spread to Notre Dame University where it really caught on, and again, hit the wire services and received national notoriety. From Notre Dame University, it spread to Michigan State. So within the Catholics, it started on their schools. They formed 200 different prayer groups across America. Today, it's estimated that at least 10,000 Catholics are involved with speaking in tongues in the charismatic movement. This involves nuns and priests, teachers, lay people.

Paul H. Dixon:

I read one of their books called The Pentecostal Movement Within The Catholic Church written by a Catholic priest just to see what was going on. And I thought it was very interesting that the Catholics say are saying they're Hail Marys in tongues. And basically they are not changing their doctrine. Some are, but most of them are keeping the same doctrine that they've always had. They're just adding the emphasis of tongues. They're staying in the Catholic church and most of them are not leaving the church.

Paul H. Dixon:

Now to show you how much the Pentecostal movement has taken the world today, they estimate that three fourths of all Latin Americans who are Protestants are Pentecostals. Now, that is unbelievable. Three fourths of all Protestant Latin Americans are Pentecostal. Two thirds of all non-Catholics in Italy are Pentecostal. The majority of South African Christians are Pentecostal. They estimate four million

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Pentecostals in the United States and 13 million Pentecostals in the world. That lets us know where Pentecostalism stands today.