

Paul H. Dixon
Pentecostalism: Its Personality and Nature
circa 1979

Transcript

Paul H. Dixon:

Today, we're going to study Pentecostalism and its personality. Or, in other words, Pentecostalism and its nature. Somebody asked yesterday, what do you mean by speaking in tongues, and I think we'll answer that today. Beginning today, our emphasis will shift now to one main facet of Pentecostalism, and that is the speaking in tongues.

We could spend time on healing and some other things, but tongue speaking is the thing that has especially characterized the Pentecostal movement. That's what makes them different. They teach that you have not been baptized with the Holy Spirit, unless you speak in tongues. And so we're going to be looking at tongues now for the rest of the week.

The nature of Pentecostalism, its personality. I think we can outline it like this. We're going to look at who, in other words, who is speaking in tongues today? We're going to look at where, where they're doing it. Why, why they're doing it. What, in other words, what is it, what are they doing, speaking in tongues? And then we're going to look about on the matter of, from whom, where does this come from? Who causes them to speak in tongues?

All right, let's start with who. Speaking in tongues is not unique to Christian religions. A man by the name of H. J. Stoley reports that ecstatic speech, or what would be called tongue speaking, in Mohammedanism and many pagan religions. So we have to recognize that this thing of speaking in something that's not understandable, ecstatic speech, is not confined just to Christianity. Many pagan religions have also practiced it.

It's interesting that the Mormons believe in speaking in tongues. Mormons, who deny salvation by grace, who deny the Trinity, who deny the absolute authority of the scriptures, who deny hell. Yet their seventh article states, we believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, et cetera.

As we said yesterday, all classes today are speaking in tongues in America, not just the poor but the rich, not just those from the lower class, but doctors and lawyers. They're speaking in tongues. Some characteristics that are different though, the new Pentecostal movement, and I trust you're seeing this, that this movement that we're having today is new. It's different from the old Pentecostal movement. This that we've witnessed in the last 15 years is different, in many respects, not only because of the people that it's reaching, not only because of it's touching all the different churches, also, it's less emotional.

There's far less emotion involved today in the tongue speaking than there used to be. I think that has to do, again, with the kind of people they're reaching. I think you're going to find your doctors and your lawyers and so forth, they're going to tend to dislike being called "holy rollers." They're not going to get involved in as much emotion as your old Pentecostals did.

It's more private today than public. It used to be the old Pentecostals, their tongue speaking was pretty much public meetings. Today it's more in private than it is in public. It's more Bible centered today than it was. Many of them tried to emphasize the Pauline teachings as to what they should go by as guidelines. Therefore, it's more orderly than it used to be. Seems like the old Pentecostals just kind of pushed aside what Paul had to say in Corinthians in chapter 14, as to the guidelines. New Pentecostals are very concerned about going by those guidelines.

It is not a separatist movement. The old Pentecostals were very separatist. In other words, they didn't want anything to do with liberalism. They took a stand against it. They would not be classified in the

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neo-evangelical ranks, but the new Pentecostals very definitely are. They'll cooperate, associate, with anybody to spread their doctrine of tongues. So this is who.

Now let's look at where. They're speaking in tongues, of course, in church services. But they're doing more speaking in tongues in homes, private homes, at banquets and retreats. As I said yesterday, one church I was in, some people who did not belong to that church started a prayer meeting in town. And this is generally how it starts. Many times, at least my experience has been, a lady will come in. Women have had a great part in the leadership in this. A woman will come into a church and she'll seemingly be very spiritual and a woman who emphasizes prayer and godly living. And she'll want to start prayer meetings in her home.

And many times people, not knowing what the main motivation will be, will go there. And for a while they'll just be praying for the lost and really concerned about prayer. And then the next thing you know, tongues starts creeping in. And before long people get caught up in it. And as I said, I've had preachers, Baptist preachers, Bible believing church just like yours, get involved in this.

For instance, this one man I know, he felt like he just didn't have everything God wanted him to have. And he was searching and he was wide open for this thing of tongues. He walked right into it, and boy, he blew his ministry. This happens many times. Like I said, this friend of mine, I started out yesterday with the illustration, who thought I ought to get the nine gifts of the spirit. He was saved through a prayer meeting held in homes.

When I was in Ohio, Northfield, Ohio, a Presbyterian pastor came out to the meetings one night. And this Presbyterian pastor, since he was nice enough to come out to our meetings, we decided to invite him out to have lunch with us the next day. The pastor and I, we took him out to lunch. And boy, he wanted to talk about tongues, and he wanted to talk about healing. And he got caught up, started having healing services at his Presbyterian church.

Now, see, this is an amazing thing. Here are churches that used to, they didn't even preach the gospel. They didn't even preach that people getting saved, and they started emphasizing tongues and started emphasizing healing. So they had some of their people gather in homes. And again, these were doctors and lawyers, and ritzy people. And one of the ladies in the church, even, where we were attending, started going to those meetings. And the pastor eventually left the ministry, and went to some commune to live and so forth. But again, the tongues started in the church, but also was in the home.

The question has been asked, why, why do these churches that seemingly were not interested before, why are these people caught up in tongues? Suddenly people who have not had anything to do with it, they've not been raised Pentecostal, but now they're associated with the Pentecostal movement. John Miles, who's an opponent of the Pentecostal movement, has given five reasons why he believes they're caught up, and I think they're quite good.

Number one, he says, because in most of these churches and in most of these lives, there's been a departure from systematic Bible study. Therefore they've been left wide open for the teaching of the Pentecostals.

Number two, the people in the liberal churches have been starved for the Word. I might just say, I used to attend liberal churches before I became a Christian. I didn't know the difference, but I went to churches that didn't preach the Bible. They were deader than four o'clock. I mean, I can't see why anybody, I didn't want to go to church. I can understand why people wouldn't want to go to church at places like that. They just didn't have anything, it was dead, they didn't have a message for us. They didn't preach from the Bible.

And so here are people who've been sitting in these churches and they've been starving, they're hungry. They want something. And so they gobble up something that gives them an experience. They're just

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longing for some kind of experience, and tongues gives that to them. The only thing is, I think you can see how Satan has used this for a counterfeit. Instead of them getting back to the truth, instead of them getting back to the gospel and salvation, the main things, they've completely missed that and jumped to this experience-centered emphasis, such as tongues.

Number three, because we have dead fundamental churches. It's not just the liberal churches that are dead, but we got a lot of Bible believing churches that are fundamental, but they're dead too. And that leaves them wide open to an experiential centered thing.

I believe that in our churches, we ought have life. I believe that our music ought have life. Now I'm not for jazzy music, and I'm not for music that doesn't have a message, but I thank God that God's given us a song. And I believe that Christians ought to be enthusiastic and excited about what we have. We ought be excited about soul winning, and get enthused about the things of the Lord. And when you're enthused about that, you don't have time for all this other stuff. But when you've got a dead church, I don't care how much Bible is preached, it's dead. That leaves you wide open for the tongues movement.

Number four, some people are looking for an easy way out. They think that some kind of spiritual experience will solve all their problems. Kind of like I said last night, we've got to be careful we don't preach a gospel that says get saved and you won't have any problems anymore. That's not true. You get saved and you're going to have some problems you never had before. We've been studying in James, if God, God purposes problems for us. God never planned for us to live lives without problems. Some people are looking for an easy way out and they think if they can have this experience and speak in tongues they won't have any problems anymore.

Number five, a desire to walk by sight, by experience, not by faith. That's always the natural inclination of man, if we can just see it. The guy says, "Well, I don't believe in God, if I could just see God, then I'd believe in Him. I don't believe in the Bible, if I could just see some of the miracles performed that they had performed, then I would believe it." Desire to walk by experience, by sight, not by faith, leaves you wide open for the Pentecostal movement.

All right, that's the why. Now let's look at the what. What is it? Well, naturally, it takes on different forms, even within the Pentecostal movement. They're not in total agreement as to what tongues is, but one thing they are in agreement in, that speaking in tongues is an indication of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that's number one. What is it? They teach an indication of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. If you're really baptized by the Holy Spirit, they say, you will speak in tongues.

Now I have read several of their books. In making this study I endeavored not only to read our position, but to study their position. And I'd like to quote from some of their men. I believe that I have read their leading men. One of their men, that is the leading spokesman within the Lutheran denomination is a man by the name of Larry Christenson, C-H-R-I-S-T-E-N-S-O-N. Incidentally, he has written one of the finest books on the home that you'll ever see. It's called The Family and Marriage. Gets into his Lutheran doctrine at the end of the book which isn't too good, but he had some good things on the marriage.

Next week. I'll be speaking on the home in the elective for the adult, careers, and college kids. And I used his book a lot, it's quite good, and he's a good thinker. But Larry Christenson also believes in speaking in tongues. And he says this, quote, "All other gifts are in the Old Testament or the Gospels. Tongues is peculiar to the church age." So Larry Christenson says that tongues are an indication of the baptism of the Holy Spirit for the church age.

This David Du Plessis that I told you about is their leading spokesman within the ecumenical movement, within the liberal churches. I think this is interesting. Quote, he says, "A good Pentecostal witness is one who can tell how he was saved, how he was healed, and how he was baptized by the Holy Spirit." That's a good Pentecostal witness. You testify, "I was saved." You testify, "I was healed," and testify, "I was

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baptized by the Holy Spirit" and spoke in tongues. Du Plessis also says, "Tongues is the evidence of the baptism of the Spirit."

Now I think this is an interesting confession, I'm quoting him. He said, "It is not in scripture, but is truth according to Acts." In other words, he says that you can't find a verse that says if you're baptized by the Holy Spirit, you speak in tongues. But he says, if you study the book of Acts, you will see that those who are baptized with the Holy Spirit did speak in tongues. I'm quoting their position.

Oral Robert says, "Power to be a witness of Jesus Christ is the basic purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This baptism provides an inner power that becomes an outward force to bring the reality of Christ to others. To help release the power the Spirit gives the believer a new tongue."

I realize you can't write all that down. But the point is, Oral Roberts is saying, God gives the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, to give us power. And the thing that releases that power is when God gives you speaking in tongues. He gives you a gift of tongues that you never had before. You can do something with your tongue. You can speak with your tongue, say something with your tongue in a language that you never had before.

There's a man by the name of Erwin, I probably have his whole name written down someplace, I hope I do for you. But this man is probably, I think his name is Howard Erwin, E-R-W-I-N, he is probably their best scholar. I read his book and I couldn't believe how much Greek this man knows. This man was a Baptist and became a Pentecostal, and he now teaches at Oral Roberts University.

Erwin says, "A baptism of the Holy Spirit without tongues is not biblical." A baptism of the Holy Spirit without tongues is not biblical. He's probably done the best job of studying in the original languages and setting forth the Pentecostal position of tongues to be found any place. So the first thing we've noted is that they teach, all of them, that tongues is an indication of the baptism of the spirit.

Secondly, we're talking about what it is. Tongues is used in public gatherings, that is in church services, and in other gatherings of groups of people. I'm quoting Christenson again, I wouldn't try to write all this down. Maybe just a few thoughts if you want to. But Christenson said, "Tongues were not given as a means of communicating the Gospel, but as a supernatural sign that God was in the midst of their believers. The speaker does not know what he is saying. It is addressed to God, and the question of whether people understand it is irrelevant."

See what he said? He said that when a person speaks in tongues, his purpose in speaking in tongues in that assembly, in that church, like if somebody would stand up and start speaking now, it is not to communicate the Gospel, but rather it is to demonstrate the power of God, that God is in the midst. He said the person does not have to understand what he is saying. It's irrelevant whether he understands it or not, or whether anybody understands it. Now that's their position.

I'm going to answer these things as we get into what the Bible teaches. But I want you to see what it is, what they are saying. Like somebody said yesterday, I don't understand what speaking in tongues is, and I think this helps us to understand it. But he does say this, "It has limited value in public meetings." Most of your new Pentecostals do not encourage the speaking in tongues in church, nor do they encourage it to be done in public gatherings.

Oral Robert says, "Tongues has a fourfold function. Devotions, personal edification and release, to edify the body of Christ, and as a sign to unbelievers." I'll give it again. He says, "the fourfold function of tongues is devotional, personal edification and release, to edify the body of Christ, and as a sign to unbelievers." He goes on to say that simple tongues is prayer. The gift of tongues is public. He says simple tongues is for everybody, but the gift of tongues is not for everybody. Now, that's important to remember, what he says there.

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In other words, what he's saying, and I'm going to get into this the next point, that everybody should pray in tongues, but everybody should not speak in tongues in a public gathering. Erwin says about the same thing. He says, "Paul, thanked God for tongues in private and urged restraint in public."

So the new Pentecostal says tongues has its place in public gatherings, but not a very big place. The main emphasis today is private prayer. And this comes as a shock to many people. That's the third teaching of the Pentecostals on the use of tongues. The first teaching is that it's an indication of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The second teaching is that it's to be used in public gatherings, in church.

But their third teaching is, and this is the thing that has changed. With the old Pentecostals, all of their tongues speaking practically was confined to the public gatherings, to the church services. That's no longer true. Your new Pentecostals are using tongues mainly in private for their own devotions, for their own prayer life.

Christenson says, "Tongues brings to one's private devotions the special blessing of praying in the Spirit, as distinguished from praying in the understanding." And he uses some references, you might want to jot these references down, we'll study them in our study. 1 Corinthians 14:2, 14, and 28. He says that when you pray in tongues, it bypasses your intellect, and that our intellect is limited because of sin. And therefore you're able to pray more effectively when you pray in tongues rather than when you pray with your understanding. That's what they teach.

Du Plessis says, "Paul conceded all tongues as prayer to God and never to men. Interpretation is also prayer. It's when you understand what you are praying." In other words, this is interesting, Du Plessis says that when you are praying in tongues you can be given the gift of interpretation to understand what you are praying yourself. If you don't understand it, you just didn't have the gift of interpretation. But that doesn't make any difference, whether you understand it or not. The Spirit's in it, and God understands it, you don't have to understand it.

Oral Roberts says, "Praying in tongues gets our mind out of the way." I'm going to answer all this, but I want you to remember what they're saying. Praying in tongues gets our mind out of the way. How does that affect you? He said, "Before I enter a healing line, I often speak in tongues until I'm edified or released." Of course, Oral Roberts is known for his divine healing, as he claims to be a divine healer. And he says, "Before that line comes by me, I always pray in tongues, or many times do." He says, "We may speak in tongues at will." This is what they teach. They teach that once you've been baptized with the Holy Spirit, you can pray in tongues anytime you want to.

And I think this is interesting. He says, "I could have spoken in tongues a long time before, had someone instructed me." I wish we had time to give your reactions on this. He said, if somebody would've instructed me, if somebody would've taught me, I could have prayed in tongues a long time before I ever did. He said I just didn't have proper instruction.

Now I will say this, Oral Roberts made a statement in his book, Oral Roberts book does a pretty good job of setting forth their positions, it's just a paperback. But Roberts says, "Through more than 27 years of preaching, I have yet to see a substitute for preaching and teaching the Word. Not tongues, hymns, entertainment, not anything." I like that. He says, "Even tongues does not take the place of the preaching of the Word of God." I appreciate that he said that.

There are many people today who emphasize speaking in tongues and they want it to take the place of the preaching of the Word of God. Erwin says, "Devotional tongues is the abiding evidence of the Spirit's fullness." I think you'd be interested in this. He said, "If most worshipers at a given worship would pray 10,000 words in a tongue before they went to church, they would need only five words in the vernacular from the preacher to get the job done." In other words, he says if you'd pray in tongues, 10,000 words

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before you went to church, the preacher would only have to say five words that you can understand to really get something out of it.

Does it begin to shape up, do you begin to see what they're teaching as far as devotional tongues? They teach that tongues is an evidence of the baptism of the Spirit. They speak that tongues can be used in public services, though there are definite restrictions that they should be governed by. But the main emphasis today is that tongues should be used in your own private praying. Tongues is for your own devotions.

Now, another characteristic that I think we ought to see about tongues is the ecumenical nature of tongues. Christenson said, "One of the chief impressions is the ecumenical disposition of the Pentecostal movement." This was not true 15 years ago, but today Pentecostalism has permeated the ecumenical movement, this movement that says let's unite all the churches, the Methodists and the Baptists and the Catholics. And let's everybody get together and have one world church.

Du Plessis says, no, someone said of David Du Plessis, who is supposed to be the man to take Pentecostalism to the ecumenicals, "Only those of us who serve in fellowship in churches that are members of the National Council of Churches, on the World Council of Churches, can appreciate this man's ministry."

I thought this was interesting. Du Plessis said, "How can Pentecostal unity be of God, and Protestant unity be of the devil?" In other words, he said, how is it that the Pentecostals can get together and agree, and that be said to be of God, but as soon as the liberals and the Bible believers and the Lutherans and the Catholics, and all start getting together, we say that's of the devil? He says, I don't agree. In other words, he says, all unity must be of God. Well, I thoroughly disagree.

He says, "There's no mistake, I am not evangelical, I am not fundamental, but I am Pentecostal." And Du Plessis says this, "The ecumenical movement is now basically Pentecostal." I'm going to give you a chance to ask some questions. I'm sure that's the main thing you're interested in the nature of it, what it is. But I got one more thing I want to cover and we'll come back to it then.

And that is, for those of us who do not believe in speaking in tongues, we have to decide from whom this tongues come. Of course, the Pentecostals, number one, would teach that tongues come from God. That is a possibility. I don't believe it, but they teach tongues come from God. It's divine.

The second possibility is that tongues come from Satan, that Satan is causing these people to speak in tongues. We recognize you might put some verses down, in Exodus 7, verses 10 through chapter 8, verse 7, under Satanic influence the magicians of Egypt were able to duplicate divine miracles, right? Under Satanic power they did the same miracles that God was doing through Moses. In the great tribulation the antichrist will be able to duplicate 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 9.

Do you remember what Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-23, "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, in Thy name done many wonderful miracles? Then will I say unto you, 'I never knew you.'" They performed miracles in the name of Jesus but they weren't saved, evidently were doing it under Satanic power.

A lady was from Scotland, and I was in this meeting in Ohio. I told you about that Presbyterian man who came to that meeting. The next time I went back, though, I found that this lady was from Scotland, who had been in that Presbyterian church and then come over to this Baptist church, had been attending some of those prayer meetings and started speaking in tongues. She said, "Paul, I would come home from one of those meetings," she said, "When I spoke in tongues, I'd never spoke in tongues with my voice, it was always a different voice that came out of me." She said, "It was even a different pitch."

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Now you'd have to know this woman. First of all, Scottish women, European women, are not the emotional type. She was just different. I mean, she's not the kind that I would generally classify as being sucked into the Pentecostal movement. But like I say, it's appealing to all people today. And I wouldn't have believed this from many people, but she said, "Paul, until I got victory on this thing, sometimes I would be sitting on the couch and my husband would be at work, I would not open my mouth, and a voice would start talking and it would be coming out of me." She said, "I could not control it. It was another voice. It was another person speaking right through me. I didn't even have to open my lips." She said, "It was horrifying."

So we have to admit that there certainly are indications that Satan does get involved in this matter of speaking in tongues. That's also quite evident from the fact that the Mormons would speak in tongues, who do not believe it, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God or that we're saved through faith in Christ.

We would have to admit, even the Pentecostal would have to admit, these people in Mohammedanism and then pagan religions who would speak in tongues, they wouldn't say that's of God. They would agree, they'd say that's of the devil. I think they would probably agree with us this afternoon, or this morning if they were here, that some speaking in tongues must be Satanic.

The other third possibility is that it comes from self. It comes from God, it comes from Satan, or does it come from self? In other words, it's possible for a person to be so made up psychologically that they can artificially think that they're speaking in tongues. It becomes something psychological.

Now this is amazing. I went forward in a Pentecostal meeting when I was a teenager. I was not saved. I attended a Pentecostal revival meeting and they had us come forward, they invited people to come forward. I didn't know what they had us coming forward for, but I went forward. I had a need. I wasn't even saved. They got us in a room like this and they got us all down, and I don't remember everything that's too many years to remember everything. But I got down on my knees and other people did. And they came by and they kept putting their hands upon us, and they kept trying to get us to speak in tongues. They kept trying to induce us to speak in tongues.

There was a man by the name of Harold Brediston who went to Yale University. And all of the students at Yale who wanted to speak in tongues, this is what he told them to do. Number one, he said, "I want you to think visually and concretely, rather than abstractly. I want you to try and visualize Jesus." So he gets you to close your eyes and start thinking about Jesus, visualize Jesus. "Number two, consciously yield your voices and your organs of speech to the Spirit. Just start thinking, Holy Spirit, I want you to take this voice. Holy Spirit, I want you to take my mouth, my vocal chords. I want you to take this speech. Number three, repeat certain elementary sounds like ba, ba and just keep saying it over. Ba, ba, ba, ba."

He then laid his hands on them, prayed, and supposedly they spoke in tongues. So it seems that many people are speaking in tongues after being induced to, after being instructed how to do it. And I think you can see how the psychological aspect would enter into this matter.