

## **Oneness Pentecostalism**

The Pentecostal movement in the United States of America had its beginning in 1906, during a revival meeting in Los Angeles. This meeting was called “The Azusa Street Revival.” The preacher for this revival was William Seymour, a one eyed black man from Houston, TX, who was a disciple of Charles Parham, a then well-known preacher in the fledgling Pentecostal movement. This movement was seemingly an attempt to replicate the Welsh Revival.<sup>1</sup> The message preached was that speaking in tongues is the first evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

From its beginning during the Azusa Street Revival, Pentecostalism has had many women preachers and pastors contrary to the Scriptural command for women to be submissive to their husbands, keeping silence and learning in silence, as well as contrary to the prohibition of women preaching. One Julia Hutchins had a church in Los Angeles, and she lent her church and influence to this so-called revival.<sup>2</sup>

As people began to speak in their version of tongues, news spread and the meetings and number of those purportedly speaking in tongues grew. These meetings eventually were moved to a building in a black ghetto on Azusa Street, and they named it “The Apostolic Faith Mission.” Soon there were hundreds in attendance.<sup>3</sup>

Initial responses among the general public were not kind. Even Charles Parham is reported to have called some of the occurrences in their meetings, “freak imitation of Pentecost.”<sup>4</sup> “Among first-hand accounts were reports of the blind having their sight restored, diseases cured instantly, and immigrants speaking in German, Yiddish, and Spanish all being spoken to in their native language by uneducated black members, who translated the languages into English by “supernatural ability”. Singing was sporadic and in *a cappella* or occasionally in tongues. There were periods of extended silence. Attenders were occasionally slain in the Spirit. Visitors gave their testimony, and members read aloud testimonies that were sent to the mission by mail. There was prayer for the gift of tongues. There was prayer in tongues for the sick, for missionaries, and whatever requests were given by attenders or mailed in. There was spontaneous preaching and altar calls for salvation, sanctification and baptism of the Holy Spirit. Lawrence Catley, whose family attended the revival, said that in most services preaching consisted of Seymour opening a Bible and worshippers coming forward to preach or testify as they were led by the Holy Spirit. Many people would continually shout throughout the meetings. The members of the mission never took an offering, but there was a receptacle near the door for anyone that wanted to support the revival. The core membership of the Azusa Street Mission was never much more than 50–60 individuals with hundreds and thousands of people visiting or staying temporarily over the years.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.apostolicarchives.com/articles/article/8801925/173190.htm> (Accessed May 09, 2025)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.apostolicarchives.com/articles/article/8801925/173190.htm> (Accessed May 9, 2025)

From this point forward, the Pentecostal movement grew both in the United States and abroad. Seymour began publishing a newspaper, “The Apostolic Faith,” which soon had a circulation of twenty thousand. “Today millions of Pentecostals and Charismatics trace their beginnings to Azusa Street...”<sup>6</sup>

## **Organizations**

It would be difficult to trace and describe all the organizations that adhere to Oneness Pentecostal doctrines. There are many independent congregations who declare they are only under the headship of Christ and give no allegiance at all to any organization. There are two large organizations which profess the so-called Apostolic or Oneness Pentecostal faith: “The United Pentecostal Church International”<sup>7</sup> and “The Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ.”<sup>8</sup>

It is interesting to note that the ACJC has roots in Houston, TX as did the William Seymour. In fact, they are explicit in linking themselves to Azusa Street.<sup>9</sup> The UPCI also traces their roots in the Azusa Street Revival.

## **Beliefs**

1. The absolute Oneness of God. Oneness Pentecostals are not Trinitarians but are adamantly opposed to the doctrine of the Trinity.

“There is one God, who has revealed Himself as Father; through His Son, in redemption; and as the Holy Spirit, by emanation. Jesus Christ is God manifested in flesh. He is both God and man. (See Deuteronomy 6:4; Ephesians 4:4-6; Colossians 2:9; I Timothy 3:16.)<sup>10</sup>”

“The beautiful message of Scripture is that our Creator became our Savior. The God against whom we sinned is the One who forgives us. God loved us so much that He came in flesh to save us. He gave of Himself; He did not send someone else. Moreover, our Creator-Savior is also the indwelling Spirit who is ever-present to help us. God told us how to live and then came to live among us. He showed us how to live in the flesh and laid down His human life to purchase our salvation. Now He abides within us and enables us to live according to His will. Jesus Christ is the one God incarnate, and in Him we have everything we need: healing, deliverance, victory, and salvation (Colossians 2:9-10). By recognizing the almighty God in Jesus Christ, we restore correct biblical belief and experience apostolic power.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <https://revival-library.org/histories/1906-azusa-street-revival/> (Accessed May 9, 2025)

<sup>7</sup> <https://upci.org/about-the-upci/> (Accessed May 9, 2025)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.acjci.org/history> (Accessed May 9, 2025)

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.acjci.org/files/ugd/25c9f2\\_d8ab576449c344a381617f5e0f9bfac3.pdf](https://www.acjci.org/files/ugd/25c9f2_d8ab576449c344a381617f5e0f9bfac3.pdf) (Accessed May 9, 2025)

<sup>10</sup> <https://upci.org/our-beliefs/> (Accessed May 9, 2025)

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

“Uncompromising monotheism is one of the clearest themes of Scripture. Simply stated, God is absolutely and indivisibly one. “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deuteronomy 6:4). There are no essential distinctions in His eternal nature. All names and titles of the Deity—such as God (Elohim), Jehovah (Yahweh), Lord, Father, Word, and Holy Spirit—refer to one and the same being. Any plurality associated with God merely relates to attributes, titles, roles, manifestations, or aspects of God’s self-revelation to humans.<sup>12</sup>”

## 2. Baptism is necessary to salvation.

“There is only one way to become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ: “Ye must be born again of water and of the Spirit” (John 3:5). “Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins,” as in Acts 2:38, “and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,” with the signs following as in Acts 2:4. We enter into the Body of Christ, the true Church, by baptism or birth of water and Spirit. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13). See also 1 Corinthians 12:27-28, John 3:5-8.<sup>13</sup>

“The saving gospel is the good news that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. We obey the gospel (II Thessalonians 1:8; I Peter 4:17) by repentance (death to sin), water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ (burial), and the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the initial sign of speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance (resurrection). (See I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 2:4, 37-39; Romans 6:3-4.)<sup>14</sup>”

“the application of grace and the expression of faith come as a person obeys Acts 2:38, thereby receiving the new birth promised by Jesus.<sup>15</sup>”

“This new creation is accomplished by the new birth of water and the Spirit as described in John 3:5-6: “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Thus in the New Testament, man’s holiness is God’s character inborn into his or her nature by the infilling presence of the Spirit of God. The birth of the Spirit makes a person a new creature.<sup>16</sup>”

“To be saved by water baptism, it must be administered by burial in water, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved. The life of the blood of Jesus Christ is connected with water baptism when it is administered in His name.<sup>17</sup>”

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<sup>12</sup> [https://upci.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/The\\_True\\_Humanity\\_of\\_Jesus\\_Christ.pdf](https://upci.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/The_True_Humanity_of_Jesus_Christ.pdf) (Accessed May 9, 2025)

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.acjii.org/\\_files/ugd/25c9f2\\_d8ab576449c344a381617f5e0f9bfae3.pdf](https://www.acjii.org/_files/ugd/25c9f2_d8ab576449c344a381617f5e0f9bfae3.pdf) (Accessed May 9, 2025)

<sup>14</sup> <https://upci.org/our-beliefs/> (Accessed May 9, 2025)

<sup>15</sup> <https://upci.org/oneness-pentecostalism/> (Accessed May 9, 2025)

<sup>16</sup> <https://upci.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Holiness.pdf> (Accessed May 9, 2025)

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.acjii.org/\\_files/ugd/25c9f2\\_d8ab576449c344a381617f5e0f9bfae3.pdf](https://www.acjii.org/_files/ugd/25c9f2_d8ab576449c344a381617f5e0f9bfae3.pdf) (Accessed May 9, 2025)

3. The possibility of a believer losing his salvation.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, whosoever hath sinned against me, him I will blot out of my book” (Exodus 32:33). In Revelation 3:5 it is written, “He that overcometh ... I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.”<sup>18</sup>

“One must be thoroughly saved from sin, wholly sanctified, and filled with the Holy Ghost to escape the judgments of God and to have the hope of enjoying the glory of eternal life.”<sup>19</sup>

“Issues of holiness are not salvation issues in and of themselves; rather, they are Christian maturity (“sanctification”) issues. “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:14) However, if we choose not to obey God in these areas, our willful disobedience will eventually become a salvation issue. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 2 Corinthians 6:17 - 7:1)”<sup>20</sup>

4. Speaking in tongues is the evidence of salvation.

“Speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:4-19, 9:17-18 with 1 Corinthians 14:18, Acts 10:44, 19:6).”<sup>21</sup>

“Why did God choose speaking in tongues as a sign? We cannot be absolutely sure, but we must accept His plan by faith.”<sup>22</sup>

### **Why Call Oneness Pentecostals A Cult?**

The first mark of a cult seen in Oneness Pentecostals is their aberrant belief concerning the nature and person(s) of God. Instead of believing the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity, they are adamantly anti-Trinitarian, often declaring the Trinity to be a belief in three gods. This is very problematic because the god of Oneness Pentecostalism is not the same as the Triune God of Scripture; neither is their Jesus the Christ of the Scripture.

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<sup>18</sup> [https://www.acjcii.org/\\_files/ugd/25c9f2\\_d8ab576449c344a381617f5e0f9bfae3.pdf](https://www.acjcii.org/_files/ugd/25c9f2_d8ab576449c344a381617f5e0f9bfae3.pdf) (Accessed May 9, 2025)

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*

<sup>20</sup> [https://globaltracts.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/ENG-LIFECClass\\_Salvation101Adapted.pdf](https://globaltracts.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/ENG-LIFECClass_Salvation101Adapted.pdf) (Accessed May 9, 2025)

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.acjcii.org/\\_files/ugd/25c9f2\\_d8ab576449c344a381617f5e0f9bfae3.pdf](https://www.acjcii.org/_files/ugd/25c9f2_d8ab576449c344a381617f5e0f9bfae3.pdf) (Accessed May 9, 2025)

<sup>22</sup> [https://globaltracts.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/ENG-LIFECClass\\_Salvation101Adapted.pdf](https://globaltracts.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/ENG-LIFECClass_Salvation101Adapted.pdf) (Accessed May 9, 2025)

Then their doctrine of salvation is very much a works-based doctrine. It even demands works in order for one to remain saved, although they do not use those words. Instead, they declare one can lose his salvation by failing to be holy.

In many cases, Oneness Pentecostals are often led by a dynamic and authoritarian leader in the pulpit. Often the authority of such a pastor is nearly absolute, which is a characteristic of a cult.

We can also notice the way many Oneness Pentecostals withdraw from their friends and family members who disagree with them on these issues. There is often an “us against them” mentality which leads many to even withdraw or even fully separate from one’s closest family members. In my experience, some Oneness Pentecostals will openly declare their beliefs and openly pronounce as apostate or condemned all who have not been baptized in Jesus’ Name and who have not spoken in tongues. This, too, is a mark of a cult.

**Further reading:**

Marks of A Cult: <https://thebaptistsentinel.com/2025/03/07/marks-of-a-cult-2/>

The Heresy of Absolute Oneness: <https://thebaptistsentinel.com/2025/05/03/the-heresy-of-modalism-absolute-oneness/>

Articles on The Trinity: <https://thebaptistsentinel.com/theology-proper-the-doctrine-of-god/>