

Pentecostalism (Assemblies of God)

Pentecostalism is a Christian religion and denomination of the Protestant Church. Its name was influenced from the day of Pentecost referenced in Acts 2 which many consider as the start of Christianity. Assemblies of God in particular was formally founded by several Pentecostal groups out of Arkansas, in 1914, although the grassroots movement for Pentecostalism started in the late 19th Century as demand for a revivalist church catering to the middle and lower class became apparent.

As of 2024, there are more than 86 million members worldwide and at least 10 million members in the United States. The religion focuses on the Bible as the primary source of all knowledge, and they believe that nothing should be added or taken away from it. The focus of the church is active prayer, fasting, scripture study, and preaching. Pastors are very forward and resolute about sharing the Word of God with their congregations, conducting energized and passionate sermons about Jesus Christ as the only way to God and salvation.

The movement emphasizes the importance of feeling the Holy Spirit which often manifests itself by having its members speak in tongues which has been a source of controversy amongst more traditional Christian communities. The Pentecostal movement actively proselyted throughout Europe and Latin America in the early 20th Century, leading to a relatively large number of believers in various parts of the world.

More info: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Assemblies-of-God>

Core Beliefs: Pentecostalism holds a view of the Holy Spirit as a physical being that actively manifests Himself in believers of the faith, often in the form of dramatic experiences or causing individuals to speak in tongues. It is believed that having such an experience is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit or being Baptized by the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals also believe many of the core beliefs as many other Christians, namely belief in the Trinity, the divinity, death and resurrection of Jesus, and the forgiveness of sins through Him. They also believe in baptism by immersion as a sign of conversion and celebrate the Last Supper by holding communion.

More info: <https://www.logos.com/grow/what-is-pentecostalism/>

How they Worship: Pentecostals hold a strong view that everyone should read and interpret the Bible for themselves being directed by the Holy Spirit. They also hold revival services where the Holy Spirit can work openly and actively with members of the congregation. Singing, dancing, and raising hands with shouts of joy are all common practices during a worship service.

General Counsel Statements: Specifically relating to the Assemblies of God, there are many stances the General Counsel has outlined related to controversial issues, titled position papers, and other statements. These include denouncing homosexual relationships, abortions, and domestic violence. It also clearly states its beliefs about the great tribulation and rapture preceding the second coming, assurance of salvation through the grace of God, and their embracing of women as ordained ministers.

More info: <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers>