

Oneness Pentecostalism

Oneness Pentecostalism(also known as **Apostolic** or **Jesus' Name Pentecostalism**) is a movement within the Christian family of churches known as Pentecostalism. It derives its distinctive name from its teaching on the Godhead, which is popularly referred to as the "Oneness doctrine," a form of Modalistic Monarchianism^[1] This doctrine states that there is one God, a *singular* divine Spirit, who manifests himself in many ways, including as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This stands in sharp contrast to the doctrine of three distinct and eternal persons posited by Trinitarian theology. Oneness believers baptise in the name of Jesus Christ, rather than using the Trinitarian formula.

The Oneness Pentecostal movement first emerged in America around 1914 as the result of doctrinal disputes within the nascent Pentecostal movement and claims an estimated 24 million adherents today.^[1] It was often pejoratively referred to as the "Jesus Only" movement in its early days.^[2] For a list of denominations in this movement, see List of Oneness Pentecostal denominations

Besides their beliefs about the Godhead, Oneness Pentecostals differ significantly from most other Pentecostal and Evangelical Christians in matters of soteriology. Whereas most Pentecostals and evangelicals believe that only faith in Jesus Christ is the essential element for salvation, Oneness Pentecostalism defines salvation as repentance, full-submersion water baptism (in the name of Jesus Christ) and baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues.^[3] Many also tend to emphasize strict "holiness standards" in dress, grooming and other areas of personal conduct that are not necessarily shared by other Pentecostal groups, at least not to the degree that is generally found in some Oneness churches.

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The Oneness doctrine of God

Advocating a non-traditional view of God, Oneness Pentecostals find in modalistic monarchianism of the fourth century a historical predecessor that affirmed the two central aspects of their own convictions:

1. There is one indivisible God with no distinction of persons in God's eternal essence, and
2. Jesus Christ is the manifestation, human personification, or incarnation of the one God.^[4]

The Oneness doctrine differs from Sabellianism in that Oneness Pentecostals conceive of the "trimanifestation" of God as simultaneous instead of successive, as is the case with classical Modalism. They contend that, based on Colossians 2:9, the concept of God's personhood is reserved for the immanent and incarnate presence of Jesus only.^[5]

Characteristics of God

Oneness theology specifically maintains that God is absolutely and indivisibly one.^{[6][7][8]} It equally proclaims that God is not made of a physical body, but is an invisible spirit that can only be seen in theophanies (such as the burning bush) that he creates or manifests, or in the person of the incarnate Jesus Christ. In the person of Jesus, one sees the last, best, and complete theophany of God (Colossians 2:9 KJV: *"For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"*).

Oneness Pentecostalism rejects all concepts of a subordination, duality, trinity, pantheon, co-equality, co-eternity, or other versions of the Godhead that assert plural gods, plural beings, divine "persons", individuals, or multiple centers of consciousness within that Godhead. It equally denies all concepts of Jesus as anything other than fully God and fully man, together with all teachings that assert that he was merely a "good man," or only a sinless man, high priest or prophet, rather than God himself. Oneness doctrine declares that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, but that this happened only when he was born from Mary on Earth. It rejects the view that any person can "obtain" the status of God whether by works or by grace, maintaining that Jesus Christ did not "obtain" his status, but rather that he is the one, eternal God himself manifested in the flesh according to the Oneness Pentecostal interpretation of 1 Timothy 3:16, as is rendered in the King James Version.

Unlike Arians, who present the Son as a subordinate being to the Father, both Oneness and Trinitarians seek to establish an ontological oneness (union) between the Father and Son. Trinitarians do this by recognizing distinct consciousnesses (persons) within the Divine Nature. Oneness seeks to accomplish this by attributing the distinct consciousnesses to that of the true humanity of Christ – that is to say, in a union between a truly infinite person, and a truly finite person, there will of necessity be a distinction of consciousness – yet in this distinction of consciousness there is a shared Identity (Person).

So from the Oneness viewpoint the Son is both distinct from the Father while being essentially one with the Father by virtue of his ontological oneness with the Father. It should be noted that both views, Oneness and Trinitarianism, resolve the issues of distinction of consciousnesses to the principle of monotheism by attributing ontological oneness of being to the Father and the Son – the difference is in what way they are distinct and in what way they are one. The difference being that Oneness Pentecostals still maintain that the Father and Son are not actually distinct persons, but rather are distinct *modes* or *manifestations*.

Oneness Pentecostals reject the Trinity doctrine of distinct "co-equal and co-eternal persons in one triune Godhead" as a non-biblical distortion or an extra-Biblical invention, which dilutes true Biblical Monotheism, and also, in a sense, limits God. Oneness believers say that God can operate using an unlimited number of manifestations, not just three. However, they recognize that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the great and major roles that God has carried out in man's redemption.

Oneness Pentecostals believe that Trinitarian doctrine is a "tradition of men" and neither scriptural nor a teaching of God, and cite the absence of the word "Trinity" from the Bible as one evidence of this. They generally believe the doctrine is an invention of the fourth-century Council of Nicea, and later councils, which made it orthodox. The Oneness position on the Trinity places them at odds with the members of most other Christian churches, some of whom have accused Oneness Pentecostals of being Modalists and derided them as "cultists".^{[9][10]}

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Oneness teaching asserts that God is a singular spirit who is *one*, not three persons, individuals or minds. "Father", "Son" and "Holy Ghost" (also known as the Holy Spirit) are merely *titles* reflecting the different personal manifestations of the One True God in the universe. When Oneness believers speak of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, they see these as three personal manifestations of *one* being, one personal God:

Father: The title of God in parental relationship

Son of God: God incarnate in human flesh;^[1] "Son" refers to either the humanity and the deity of Jesus together, or to the humanity alone, but never to the *deity* alone.^[11]

Holy Spirit: The title of God in activity as Spirit

Oneness teachers often quote a phrase used by early pioneers of the movement – "God was manifested as the Father in creation, the Son in redemption, and the Holy Ghost in emanation."^[12]

Oneness theology sees that when the one and omnipresent God manifests or reveals himself, it is in a *personal* way. Oneness theology sees the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as one transcendent, personal, omnipresent God manifesting himself in three personal and distinct manifestations or forms to redeem and sanctify sinful and lost humanity, and also that all the fullness of the deity resides fully in the person of Christ (I Timothy 3:16).

The Father and the Holy Spirit are one and the same personal God, according to Oneness theology. They teach that the "Holy Spirit" is a descriptive title for God manifesting Himself through His church and in the world.^{[13][14]} These two titles (as well as others) do not reflect separate "persons" within the Godhead, but rather two different ways in which the one God reveals himself to his creatures. Thus, the Old Testament speaks of "The Lord God and his Spirit" in Isaiah 48:16, but this does not indicate two "persons" according to Oneness theology. Rather, "The Lord" indicates God in all of his glory and transcendence, while "his Spirit" refers to his own Spirit that moved upon and spoke to the prophet. This does not imply two "persons" any more than the numerous scriptural references to a man and his spirit or soul (such as in Luke 12:19) imply two "persons" existing within one body.^[15]

The ambiguity of the term "person" has been noted by both Oneness and Trinitarian proponents as a source of conflict.^[16] This issue is addressed by Trinitarian scholar and Christian apologist Alister McGrath

"The word 'person' has changed its meaning since the third century when it began to be used in connection with the 'threefoldness of God'. When we talk about God as a person, we naturally think of God as being one person. But theologians such as Tertullian, writing in the third century used the word 'person' with a different meaning. The word 'person' originally derives from the Latin word *persona*, meaning an actor's face-mask—and, by extension, the role which he takes in a play. By stating that there were three persons but only one God, Tertullian was asserting that all three major roles in the great drama of human redemption are played by the one and the same God. The three great roles in this drama are all played by the same actor: God. Each of these roles may reveal God in a somewhat different way, but it is the same God in every case. So when we talk about God as one person, we mean one person in the modern sense of the word, and when we talk about God as three persons, we mean three persons in the ancient sense of the word. ... Confusing these two senses of the word 'person' inevitably leads to the idea that God is actually a committee."^[17]

In contrast, according to Oneness Theology, the Son of God did not exist (in any substantial sense) prior to the incarnation of Jesus of Nazareth except as the Logos of God the Father. The humanity of Jesus did not exist before the incarnation, although Jesus (i.e. the Spirit of Jesus) preexisted in his deity as eternal God!^{[18][19]}

Oneness Pentecostals believe that the title "Son" only applied to Christ when he became flesh on earth, but that Christ was the Logos or Mind of the Father prior to his being made human, and not a separate person. In this theology, the Father embodies the divine attributes of the godhead and the Son embodies the human aspects. They believe that Jesus and the Father are one essential person, though operating as different modes.

Oneness author W. L. Vincent writes "The argument against the "Son being his own Father" is a red herring. It should be evident that Oneness theology acknowledges a clear distinction between the Father and Son – in fact this has never been disputed by any Christological view that I am aware of."^[20]

Scripture

Oneness Pentecostalism subscribes to the doctrine of Sola Scriptura. They view the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and as absolutely inerrant in its contents (though not necessarily in every translation). They specifically reject the conclusions of church councils such as the Council of Nicea and the Nicene Creed. They believe that mainstream Trinitarian Christians have been misled by long-held and unchallenged "traditions of men"^[21]

The Word

Oneness Theology holds that "the Word" in John 1:1 was the invisible God, or the Mind of God, being expressed to his creatures: first the angels, then man. Before the creation of the universe (seen and unseen), God alone existed in eternity; he had no need to manifest or express himself, as there was no one else to manifest or express himself *to*. However, once the angels and later man had been created, the immaterial and uncircumscribable God manifested himself in an angelic form that his creatures could relate to. This form – "the Word", in Oneness teaching – later took on human flesh as Jesus of Nazareth.^[22] Thus, the Word was never a second person in the Godhead, but rather the one singular personal God Himself manifesting Himself in a form that His creation could comprehend. However, with his Incarnation, God took on "the seed of Abraham" (Hebrews 2:6); this was something unique, as he had never taken on "the nature of angels" while previously manifesting himself as "the Word". Hence, Jesus' Incarnation from Mary is a singular event, unlike anything God has ever done prior to it or ever will do again.

Although the Oneness belief in the union of the divine and human into one person in Christ is similar to the Chalcedonian formula, Chalcedonians disagree sharply with them over their opposition to Trinitarian dogma. Chalcedonians see Jesus Christ as a single person uniting "God the Son", the eternal second person of the traditional Trinity, with human nature. Oneness believers, on the other hand, see Jesus as one single person uniting the one God himself with human nature as "the Son of God". They insist that their conception of the Godhead is true to early Christianity's strict monotheism, contrasting their views not only with Trinitarianism, but equally with the forms of Arianism espoused by the Latter-day Saints (who believe that Christ was a separate "god" from the Father and the Spirit) and Jehovah's Witnesses (who see him as the first-begotten Son of God, and as a subordinate deity to the Father). Oneness theology is similar to historical Modalism or Sabellianism, although it cannot be exactly characterized as such.^{[23][24]}

The name of Jesus

The overwhelming emphasis on the person of Jesus shapes the content of a theology based on experience among both Oneness and Trinitarian Pentecostals. In principle, the doctrinal emphasis on Jesus attributes all divine qualities and functions to Christ. What might therefore be called a 'Christological maximalism' in the Pentecostal doctrine of God leads among Oneness Pentecostals to a factual substitution of the three divine persons with the single person of Jesus, while trinitarian Pentecostals typically elevate Christ from the 'second' person of the Trinity to the central figure of Christian faith and worship.^[25]

Critics of Oneness theology commonly refer to its adherents as "Jesus Only", implying that they deny the existence of the Father and Holy Spirit.^[1] Most Oneness Pentecostals consider that term to be pejorative, and a misrepresentation of their true beliefs on the issue.^[26] Oneness believers insist that while they do indeed believe in baptism only in the name of Jesus Christ (in accordance with how all water baptisms in the Book of Acts were performed – Acts 2:38; 8:12; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5) – as opposed to the traditional Trinitarian baptism – to describe them as "Jesus-Only Pentecostals" implies a denial of the Father and Holy Spirit.

Accusations of Modalism and Arianism

Oneness believers are often accused of being Monistic or Modalistic.^[27] They have also occasionally been accused of Arianism or Semi-Arianism, usually by isolated individuals rather than church organizations.^[28] While Oneness theologian Dr. David Bernard indicates that Modalistic Monarchianism and Oneness are essentially the same, and that Sabellius was basically correct, (so long as one does not understand Modalism to be the same as patripassianism),^[29] and while Arius also believed that God is a singular Person, Bernard vehemently denies any connection to Arianism or Subordinationism in Oneness teaching.^[27]

Oneness soteriology

Oneness Theology does not represent a monolithic soteriological view; however, there are general characteristics that tend to be held in common by those who hold to a Oneness-view of God. In common with most Protestant denominations, Oneness Pentecostal soteriology maintains that all people are born with a sinful nature, and sin at a young age, and remain "lost" without hope of salvation, unless they embrace the Gospel; that Jesus Christ made a complete atonement for the sins of all people, which is the sole means of man's redemption; and that salvation comes solely by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.^{[1][30]} Oneness doctrine also teaches that true faith has the fruit of obedience, and that true salvation is not only to profess faith, but to demonstrate it as well in action.^{[31][32]} Oneness churches, while exhibiting variations, generally teach the following as the foundation of Christian conversion:

- repentance
- water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ
- baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues^[1]

Oneness Pentecostals generally accept that these are minimal requirements of conversion.

Grace and faith

Oneness Pentecostals maintain that no good works or obedience to law can save anyone, apart from God's grace. Furthermore, salvation comes solely through faith in Jesus Christ; there is no salvation through any name or work other than his (Acts 4:12). Oneness teaching rejects interpretations that hold that salvation is given automatically to the "elect"; all men are called to salvation, and "whosoever will, may come" (Revelation 22:17).^[3]

While salvation is indeed a gift in Oneness belief, it must be *received*.^[3] This reception of salvation is generally what is considered conversion, and is accepted in the majority of evangelical Churches. The first mandate is true faith in Jesus Christ, demonstrated by obedience to God's commands, and a determination to submit to his will in every aspect of one's life. Oneness adherents reject the notion that one may be saved through what they call "mental faith": mere belief in Christ, without life-changing repentance or obedience. Thus, they emphatically reject the idea that one is saved through praying a Sinner's Prayer, but rather the true saving faith and change of life declared in scripture. Oneness Pentecostals have no issue with the Sinner's Prayer itself, but deny that it alone represents "saving faith"; the Bible, accordingly mandated repentance, baptism by water and spirit with receipt of the Holy Spirit as the manifestation of the spirit part of the rebirth experience, this represents the *manifestations* of true, godly faith that was obeyed and done by the early Church believers not only in Jerusalem but also those who are in Samaria, in Europe, even in Asia and at one point to an Ethiopian Eunuch. Thus, one who has truly been saved will gladly submit to the biblical conditions for conversion. According to these believers, Jesus and the Apostles taught that the New Birth experience includes repentance (the true Sinner's Prayer), and baptism in both water and God's Spirit.^[33]

Repentance

Oneness Pentecostals maintain that salvation is not possible without repentance. While repentance is in part "godly sorrow" for sin, it is as much as complete change of heart and mind toward God and his word. This is why Oneness Churches expect a complete reformation of life in those who have become Christians.

Water baptism

Most Oneness Pentecostals believe that water baptism is essential to salvation, and not merely symbolic in nature, and because they believe that one must have faith and repent before being baptized, baptisms of infants or by compulsion are deemed unacceptable.^{[34][35][36]}

Oneness Pentecostal theology maintains the literal definition of baptism as being completely immersed in water. They believe that other modes either have no biblical basis or are based upon inexact Old Testament rituals, and that their mode is the only one described in the New Testament. The Articles of Faith of the largest Oneness Pentecostal religious organization states, "The scriptural mode of baptism is immersion... in obedience to the Word of God, and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the Acts of the Apostles 2:38, 8:16, 10:48, 19:5; thus obeying Matthew 28:19."^[37]

Baptismal Formula

Oneness believers believe that for water baptism to be valid, one must be baptized "**in the name of Jesus Christ**", rather than the mainstream baptismal formula "**in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit**". This follows the examples found in the Book of Acts. "**Jesus' Name**" is a description used to refer to Oneness Pentecostals and their baptismal beliefs.^[4]

This conviction is mainly centered around the baptismal formula mandated in Acts 2:38: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost". Oneness Pentecostals insist that there are no New Testament references to baptism by any other formula – save in Matthew 28:19 which most hold to be simply another reference to Jesus-name baptism.^[38] Although Matthew 28:19 seems to mandate a Trinitarian formula for baptism, Oneness theology avows that the "name" in that verse is actually *singular* and refers to Jesus, whose name they believe to be that of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.^[39] Oneness believers insist that all Bible's texts on the subject must be in full agreement with each other; thus, they say that either the Apostles disobeyed the command they had been given in Matthew 28:19 or they correctly fulfilled it by using the name of Jesus Christ.^[40]

Some Oneness believers consider that the text of Matthew 28:19 is not original, quoting the early Church historian Eusebius, who referred to this passage at least eighteen times in his works. Eusebius' text reads: "go and make disciples of all nations in my name, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." However, most Oneness believers do believe that Matthew 28:19 is authentic and original due to divine providence and preservation of the Scriptures.^{[41][42]}

Oneness Pentecostals assert that of the five mentions of baptism in the Book of Acts, all were performed in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:3-5; and 22:16), and that no Trinitarian formula is ever referred to therein.^[43] In addition, 1 Corinthians 1:13 is taken by Oneness Pentecostals to indicate baptism in Jesus' name, as well.^[44] Hence, Oneness believers claim that this constitutes proof that the "Jesus-name" formula was the original one, and that the Trinitarian invocation was erroneously substituted for it later.^{[44][45]}

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Oneness Pentecostals believe that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a free gift, commanded for all.^[46] The Holy Spirit is defined in Pentecostal doctrine as the Spirit of God (also known as the Spirit of Christ, Rom 8:9) dwelling within a person. It is further explained as the power of God to edify (build up) them, help them abstain from sin, and anoint them with power to exercise the Gifts of the Spirit for edification of the church by the Will of God. This differs substantially from the incarnation of God as Jesus Christ, for the Incarnation involved "the fullness of the Godhead" Col 2:9 uniting with human flesh, inseparably linking the deity and man to create the man, Christ Jesus. Believers, on the other hand, can only receive a *portion* of the Spirit and are not permanently bonded with God as Jesus is. Nor for that matter, can any believer ever become as Jesus is by nature: God and man.

The Pentecostal doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is most simply explained as God:

- dwelling within an individual
- communing with an individual
- working through that individual

Oneness doctrine maintains the Holy Spirit is the title of the one God in *action*, hence they maintain that the Holy Spirit within any individual is nothing more or less than God himself acting through that individual.

Pentecostals, both Oneness and Trinitarian, maintain that the Holy Spirit experience denotes the genuine Christian Church, and that he carries with him power for the believer to accomplish God's will. As do most Pentecostals, Oneness believers maintain that the initial sign of the infilling Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues, and that the New Testament mandates this as a minimal requirement. They equally recognize that speaking in tongues is a sign to unbelievers of the Holy Spirit's power, and is to be actively sought after and utilized, most especially in prayer. However, this initial manifestation of the Holy Spirit 1 Corinthians 12:7 is seen as distinct from the "gift of tongues" mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:10, which is given to selected spirit-filled believers as the Holy Spirit desires.^{[47][48]} Oneness adherents assert that receipt of the Holy Spirit, manifested by speaking in tongues, is *necessary* for salvation.^{[46][49]}

Practices

Worship

In common with other Pentecostals, Oneness believers are known for their charismatic style of worship. They believe that the spiritual gifts found in the New Testament are still active in the church; hence, services are often spontaneous, being punctuated at times with acts of speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophetic messages and the laying on of hands for the purposes of healing. Oneness believers, like all Pentecostals, are characterized by their practice of speaking in other tongues. In such ecstatic experiences a Oneness believer may vocalize fluent unintelligible utterances (glossolalia), or articulate a natural language previously unknown to them (xenoglossy).

Some Oneness Pentecostals practice foot washing, often in conjunction with their celebration of Holy Communion, as Jesus Christ did with his disciples at the Last Supper

Holiness standards

Oneness Pentecostals believe that a Christian's lifestyle should be characterized by holiness.^[1] This holiness begins at baptism, when the blood of Christ washes away all sin and a person stands before God truly holy for the first time in his or her life. After this, a separation from the world in both practical and moral areas is essential to spiritual life.^[50] Moral or inward holiness consists of righteous living, guided and powered by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Practical or outward holiness for many Oneness believers involves certain "holiness standards" that dictate, among other things, modest apparel and gender distinction. Oneness Pentecostals believe wholeheartedly in dressing modestly (with restraints and limits). They believe that there is a distinct deference in Modesty (being aware of one's limitations, or shunning indecency,) and Moderation (avoiding excesses or extremes while suggesting more than usual). Modesty carries the connotation of something being off-limits. They justify this belief by using the Biblical scripture in 1 Timothy 2:9 "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in *modest* apparel..." Some Oneness organizations, considering current social trends in fashion and dress to be immoral, have established "dress codes" for their members. These guidelines are similar to those used by all Pentecostal denominations for much of the first half of the 20th century.^[1] According to UPCI standards written in the late-1990s, generally, women are expected not to wear pants, make-up, form fitting clothing, jewelry, or to cut their hair; men are expected to be clean-shaven, short-haired, and are expected to wear long sleeve shirts,(women are also expected to wear long sleeve shirts) long-legged pants, as opposed to shorts.^[50] Additionally, some Oneness organizations strongly admonish their members not to watch secular movies or television. Many of these views on "standards" have roots in the larger Holiness movement. However, the precise degree to which these standards are enforced varies from church to church and even from individual to individual within the movement. However, in the early days of the oneness movement standards, or "holiness", was not a held belief nor required bylaw for congregants. In fact, holiness or sanctification was actually shared with that of the Wesleyan viewpoint!^[51]

Due to the comparative strictness of their standards, Oneness Pentecostals are often accused of legalism by other Christians.^[52] Many Oneness denominations respond by saying that holiness is commanded by God in Hebrews 12:14–17 and that it *follows* salvation, rather than causes it.^[50] "Holiness living", for Oneness Pentecostals, proceeds from *love* rather than duty, and is motivated

by the holy nature imparted by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.^[50] While the Christian life is indeed one of liberty from rules and laws, that liberty does not negate one's responsibility to follow scriptural teachings on moral issues,^[50] many of which were established by the Apostles themselves.^[50]

History

Overview

The Oneness Pentecostal movement in America is considered to have begun in 1914,^[53] as the result of doctrinal disputes within the nascent Pentecostal movement. In 1913 a Canadian Pentecostal Robert T. McAlister preached at a Pentecostal camp in Los Angeles that the "Jesus only" baptismal formula found in Acts 2:38 was to be preferred over the three part formula "Father, Son and Holy Ghost", found in Matthew 28:19, leading to a group to rebaptize themselves and form a new Pentecostal movement.^[54]

During these formative years, doctrinal division developed and widened over traditional Trinitarian theology and over the formula used at baptism, with some Pentecostal leaders claiming revelation or other insights pointing them toward the Oneness concept. Pentecostals quickly split along these doctrinal lines. Those who held to belief in the Trinity and in the Trinitarian baptismal formula condemned the Oneness teaching as heresy.^[55] On the other hand, those who rejected the Trinity as being contrary to the Bible and as a form of polytheism (by dividing God into three separate beings, according to their interpretation), formed their own denominations and institutions, which ultimately developed into the Oneness churches of today

Scholars within the movement differ in their views on church history. Some church historians, such as Dr. Curtis Ward, Marvin Arnold, and William Chalfant, hold to a Successionist view, arguing that their movement has existed in every generation from the original day of Pentecost to the present day.^{[56][57][58][59]} Ward has proposed a theory of an unbroken Pentecostal Church lineage, claiming to have chronologically traced its perpetuity throughout the church's history.^{[60][57]}

Others hold to a Restorationist view, believing that while the Apostles and their church clearly taught Oneness doctrine and the Pentecostal experience, the Apostolic church went into apostasy and ultimately evolved into the Catholic Church. For them, the contemporary Oneness Pentecostal movement came into existence in America in the early 20th century, during the latter days of the Azusa Street Revival. Restorationists such as David K. Bernard deny any direct link between the Apostolic church and the current Oneness movement, believing that modern Pentecostalism is a total restoration originating from a step-by-step separation within Protestantism, and culminating in the final restoration of the early Apostolic church.

Oneness views on the early church

Both Successionists and Restorationists among Oneness Pentecostals assert that the Apostolic Church believed in the Oneness and Jesus-Name baptism doctrines. Oneness theologian David K. Bernard claims to trace Oneness adherents back to the first converted Jews of the Apostolic Age. He asserts that there is no evidence of these converts having any difficulty comprehending the Church's teachings, and integrating them with their existing strict Judaistic monotheistic beliefs. In the Post-apostolic Age, he claims that Hermas, Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Polycrates and Ignatius, who lived between 90 and 140 A.D., and Irenaeus, who died about 200 A.D., were either Oneness, modalist, or at most a follower of an "economic Trinity", that is, a temporary Trinity and not an eternal one.^[61]

Bernard theorizes that the majority of all believers were Oneness adherents until the time of Tertullian, who died circa 225, and was the first notable Church figure to use the term *Trinity* to describe God. In support of his allegation, Bernard quotes Tertullian as writing against Praxeas: "The simple, indeed (I will not call them unwise or unlearned), who always constitute the majority of believers, are startled at the dispensation (of the Three in One), on the very ground that their very Rule of Faith withdraws them from the world's plurality of gods to the one only true God; not understanding that, although He is the one only God, He must yet be believed in with His own economy. The numerical order and distribution of the Trinity, they assume to be a division of the Unity."^[62]

Beginnings of the Oneness movement

In April 1913, at the "Apostolic Faith World-Wide Camp-Meeting" held in Arroyo Seco, California and conducted by Maria Woodworth-Etter, organizers promised that God would "deal with them, giving them a unity and power that we have not yet known."^{[63][64][65]} Canadian R. E. McAlister preached a message about water baptism just prior to a baptismal service that was about to be conducted. His message defended the "single immersion" method and preached "that apostolic baptism was administered as a single immersion in a single name, Jesus Christ, " saying: "The words Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were never used in Christian baptism". This immediately caused controversy when Frank Denny, a Pentecostal missionary to China, jumped on the platform and tried to censor McAlister. Oneness Pentecostals mark this occasion as the initial "spark" in the Oneness revival movement.

John G. Schaepe, a young minister, was so moved by McAlister's revelation that, after praying and reading the Bible all night, he ran through the camp the following morning shouting that he'd received a "revelation" on baptism, that the "name" of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was "Lord Jesus Christ".^{[66][67][68][69][70]} Schaepe (whose name is often misspelled Scheppe in a number of sources) claimed during this camp-meeting that the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost was the name "Lord Jesus Christ" which name was later part of the baptismal command posited by Peter in Acts 2:38 – i.e., baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" – was the fulfillment and counterpart of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19 constituting baptism "in the name (singular) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (which "name" Oneness believers hold to be that of Jesus)." This conclusion was accepted by several others in the camp and given further theological development by a minister named Frank Ewart.

On April 15, 1914, Ewart and Glenn Cook publicly baptized each other in "the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, but as the one name of Jesus, not as a Trinitarian formula." This is considered to be the historical point when Oneness Pentecostalism emerged as a distinct movement.^[1] A number of ministers claimed they were baptized "in the Name of Jesus Christ" before 1914, including Frank Small and Andrew D. Urshan. Urshan claims to have baptized others in Jesus Christ's name as early as 1910.^{[71][72][73][74]} Even Charles Parham himself, founder of the modern Pentecostal movement, baptized using a Christological formula prior to Azusa Street.^[75]

However, it was not the Oneness baptismal formula which proved the divisive issue between Oneness advocates and other Pentecostals, but rather their rejection of the Trinity. In the Assemblies of God the re-baptisms in Jesus' name caused a backlash from many Trinitarians in that organization, who feared the direction that their church might be heading toward. J. Roswell Flower initiated a resolution on the subject, which caused many Oneness baptizers to withdraw from the organization. In October 1916 at the Fourth General Council of the Assemblies of God, the issue finally came to a head. The mostly-Trinitarian leadership, fearing that the new issue of Oneness might overtake their organization, drew up a doctrinal statement affirming the truth of Trinitarian dogma, among other issues. When this Statement of Fundamental Truths was adopted, a third of the fellowship's ministers left to form Oneness fellowships.^[76] After this separation, most Oneness believers became relatively isolated from other Pentecostals.^[1]

Forming Oneness organizations

Having separated themselves from the Trinitarians within the new Pentecostal movement, Oneness Pentecostals felt a need to come together and form an association of churches of "like precious faith." This led in January 1917 to the formation of the General Assembly of the Apostolic Assemblies in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, which merged by 1918 with a second Oneness body, the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (sometimes referred to simply as the "AW").^[77]

Several small Oneness ministerial groups formed after 1914. Many of these were ultimately merged into the PAW, while others remained independent, like AFM Church of God. Divisions occurred within the PAW over the role of women in ministry, usage of wine or grape juice for communion, divorce and remarriage, and the proper mode of water baptism. There were also reports of racial tension in the organization. African Americans were joining the church in great numbers, and many held significant leadership positions.^[78] In particular, the African-American pastor G. T. Haywood served as the church's General Secretary, and signed all ministerial credentials. In 1925, three new organizations were formed: The Apostolic Churches of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel's Church in Jesus Christ and The Pentecostal Ministerial Alliance. The first two later merged to become The Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ.^[77]

In 1945 a merger of two predominantly-white Oneness groups, the Pentecostal Church Incorporated and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ, resulted in the formation of the United Pentecostal Church International, or UPCI. Beginning with 1, 800 ministers and 900 churches, it has become the largest and most influential Oneness organization today through its evangelism and publishing efforts.^[79] This church added "International" to its title in 1972.

Notable adherents

- David K. Bernard – minister, theologian, general superintendent of the United Pentecostal Church International and founding president of Urshan College and Urshan Graduate School of Theology
- Irvin Baxter Jr. – minister, founder and president of Endtime Ministries, seen on various Christian television channels^[80]
- Kim Davis – clerk of Rowan County, Kentucky who gained national media attention after defying a federal court order requiring that she issue same-sex marriage licenses following the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Obergefell v Hodges^[81]
- Garfield Thomas Haywood – first presiding bishop of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (1925–31); also the author of many tracts and composer of many gospel songs^[82]
- Bishop Robert C. Lawson – protege of Bishop G. T. Haywood and founder of the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith from 1919 to his death in 1961^[83]
- Bishop Sherrod C. Johnson – founder and chief apostle of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith^{[83][84]}
- Hailemariam Desalegn – Prime Minister of Ethiopia^[85]
- Tommy Tenney – a minister and best-selling author^[86]
- Vicki Yohe – a gospel singer, songwriter, and worship leader
- Dottie Rambo – gospel singer-songwriter of more than 2,500 songs
- Tauren Wells - gospel singer

See also

- Apostolic School of Theology
- Second blessing
- William M. Branham
- United Pentecostal Church International

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United Pentecostal Church International

The **United Pentecostal Church International** (or **UPCI**) is the world's largest Apostolic (Oneness) Pentecostal Christian denomination, headquartered in Weldon Spring, Missouri.^[1] The church adheres to the non-trinitarian theology of Oneness, and was formed in 1945 by a merger of the former Pentecostal Church and the Incorporated and Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ.

The UPCI began with 521 churches and has grown, according to their own figures, to more than 42,000 churches (including daughter works and preaching points), 41,000 credentialed ministers, and a total worldwide constituency of around 5.1 million.^[2] The international fellowship consists of national organizations that are united as the Global Council of the UPCI, which is chaired by the general superintendent of the UPCI, David K. Bernard.

The UPCI emphasizes holy living in all aspects of one's life. It derives its soteriology in part from Acts 2:37-39 and John 3:3–5 (Other key texts include Acts 2:4; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17) It believes that in order to receive biblical salvation, a person must obey the gospel by being spiritually born again. This is accomplished through repentance (death to sin), water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ (burial), and receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the initial sign of speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance (resurrection). Thus, the UPCI does not share the soteriology advanced by most Evangelical Protestants, namely that belief or faith in Christ alone is the sole requirement for salvation.

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United Pentecostal Church International	
Classification	Pentecostal
Orientation	Holiness Oneness Pentecostalism
Polity	Congregational Presbyterian
Leader	David K. Bernard (General Superintendent)
Region	Worldwide
Origin	1945
Merger of	Pentecostal Church Incorporated and Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ
Separations	Worldwide Pentecostal Fellowship Kingdom of Jesus Christ
Congregations	42,000
Members	4,900,000
Official website	upci.org (http://www.w.upci.org/home)

History

The UPCI emerged from the Pentecostal Movement, which traces its origins to the teachings of Charles Parham in Topeka, Kansas, and the Azusa Street Revival led by William J. Seymour in 1906. The UPCI traces its organizational roots to 1916, when a large group of Pentecostal ministers began to unite around the teaching of the oneness of God and water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.^[3] Several Oneness ministers met in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, and on January 2, 1917, formed a Oneness Pentecostal organization called the General Assembly of the Apostolic Assemblies.

The General Assembly of the Apostolic Assemblies merged with another church, the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW) and accepted the leadership of G. T. Haywood, an African-American. This group held the first meeting in Eureka Springs in 1918. This interracial organization adopted the PAW name and remained the only Oneness Pentecostal body until late 1924. Southern Jim Crow laws and racial hatred resulted in many white leaders withdrawing from the PAW rather than remaining under African-American leadership. Many local congregations in the South, however, remained integrated while attempting to comply with local segregation laws.

In 1925, three new Oneness churches were formed: the Apostolic Churches of Jesus Christ, the Pentecostal Ministerial Alliance, and Emmanuel's Church in Jesus Christ. In 1927, steps were taken toward reunifying these organizations. Meeting in a joint convention in Guthrie, Oklahoma, Emmanuel's Church in Jesus Christ and the Apostolic Churches of Jesus Christ merged, taking the name the Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ. This merger united about 400 Oneness Pentecostal ministers. In 1931, a unity conference with representatives from four Oneness organizations met in Columbus, Ohio attempting to bring all Oneness Pentecostals together. The Pentecostal Ministerial Alliance voted to merge with the Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ, but the terms of the proposed merger were rejected by that body. Nevertheless, a union between the Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and the PAW was consummated in November 1931. The new body retained the name of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World.

In 1932, the Pentecostal Ministerial Alliance changed its name to the Pentecostal Church, Incorporated to reflect its organizational structure. In 1936, Pentecostal Church, Incorporated ministers voted to work toward an amalgamation with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ. Final union, however, proved elusive until 1945 when these two Oneness Pentecostal organizations combined to form the United Pentecostal Church International. The merger of these two Oneness Pentecostal bodies brought together 521 churches.^[4]

In global missions the UPCI has long followed a dual strategy of inclusion and targeted outreach. Consequently, the UPCI has believers in 212 nations and territories, and the vast majority of its total constituency is nonwhite. It has multicultural, multiracial churches in large cities around the world.

In the U.S. and Canada the UPCI has traditionally reflected the majority culture with the majority of its constituency being Caucasian and Anglo-American. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, however, the UPCI became more intentional about the inclusion of every race and culture in North America. Consequently, over the years the UPCI of the U.S. and Canada has established several important ministries that focus on the evangelism of minority groups. As of 2013 these ministries have made significant progress and are led by representatives of the various ethnicities. Spanish Evangelism Ministry reported over 700 Spanish-speaking ministers and about 350 Spanish-language congregations. Building the Bridge Ministry develops strategies for cross-cultural ministry, urban ministry, and particularly evangelism into the African-American community. Its leaders estimated that the UPCI had about 500 Black ministers and 250 Black pastors. Multicultural Ministries coordinates outreach to eighteen language and ethnic groups, encompassing 186 ministers and 195 works. Based on these statistics in 2013 about 1,400 ministers were from minority groups, or fifteen percent of the total, and about 800 churches were ministering primarily to ethnic minorities, or eighteen percent of the total. In addition, most UPCI churches have significant involvement by ethnic minorities, especially larger churches, growing churches, and churches in urban areas. This involvement was an estimated ten to fifteen percent of constituency. In sum, as of 2013 an estimated twenty-five to thirty percent of UPCI constituency in the U.S. and Canada was nonwhite.^[5]

This diversity is increasingly reflected in leadership. For example, according to a 2012 survey of the fifty-five districts in the U.S. and Canada, thirty-one had minorities as department heads and thirty-nine had minorities in some leadership position. Of these, eleven had African-American or black board members; five had Asian, Pacific Island, or Native American board members; and five had Hispanic board members. The Board of General Presbyters (General Board), which is the governing body under the General Conference, has African-American or black, Hispanic, and Asian members. The work of the organization is conducted by eight general divisions (major ministries), and each of them has minority representation on its general committee or board. For several divisions such as Youth, Sunday School, and North American Missions, the participation is twenty percent or more. Significantly, these leaders were not chosen on the basis of ethnicity, but they have risen through the ranks and have been elected by their peers based on involvement, qualifications, and abilities.^[5]

Beliefs

Godhead

The UPCI adheres to a "oneness" concept of the Godhead, in contrast to orthodox belief in the Trinity. Hence, an understanding of Oneness doctrine over against Trinitarian doctrine is critical in any analysis of UPCI beliefs.

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity defines God as three consubstantial persons,^[6] or *hypostases*^[7]—the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit; "one God in three persons". The three persons are distinct, yet are one "substance, essence or nature".^[8] In this context, a "nature" is *what* one is, while a "person" is *who* one is.^{[9][10][11]}

Oneness believers, by contrast, hold that God is absolutely and indivisibly one. (Deuteronomy 6:4) This verse, as oneness believers believe, confirms that there is NO TRINITY, the Lord is one. They also affirm that in Jesus dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and that Jesus is the only name given for salvation (Colossians 2:9). The Father was revealed to the world in the name of Jesus, the Son was given the name of Jesus at birth, and the Holy Spirit comes to believers in the name of Jesus. Thus they believe the apostles correctly fulfilled Christ's command to baptize "in the name [singular] of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" by baptizing all converts with the invocation of the name of Jesus (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16).^[12]

Oneness believers affirm that God has revealed Himself as Father (in parental relationship to humanity), in the Son (in human flesh), and as the Holy Spirit (in spiritual action). They acknowledge that the one God existed as Father, Word, and Holy Spirit before His incarnation as Jesus Christ, the Son of God; and that while Jesus walked on earth as God Himself incarnate, the Spirit of God continued to be omnipresent.^[13]

Soteriology

The UPCI derives its soteriology in part from Acts 2:37-39 and John 3:3-5 (Other key texts include Acts 2:4; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17).^[14] Defining the gospel as "the good news that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again,"^[14] it believes that in order to receive biblical salvation, a person must obey the gospel by being spiritually born again. This is accomplished through repentance (death to sin), water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ (burial), and receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the initial sign of speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance (resurrection).^[14]

Thus, the UPCI does not share the soteriology advanced by most Evangelical Protestants, namely that belief or faith in Christ alone is the sole requirement for salvation. Although many Evangelicals would characterize this as "works salvation",^[15] the UPCI insists that "salvation comes by grace through faith based on the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ."^[14]

Repentance

The UPCI believes that repentance is essential to salvation, as indicated in Luke 13:5 and Acts 2:38. Repentance is defined as a complete turning away from sin and toward God. According to the UPCI, repentance requires the repentant sinner to take the next biblical steps toward forgiveness and reconciliation to God: water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Ghost.^[16] Furthermore, repentance must be accompanied by "Godly sorrow". This is not merely regret, but a genuine inward taste of God's displeasure over one's sinful lifestyle, we are all sinners and come short of the glory of God Romans 3:23, which in turn breaks his or her heart and leads to a determination to utterly forsake sin with no regrets or second thoughts.^[17]

Repentance is also a prerequisite for receiving the Holy Ghost. UPCI sources emphasize that no one can repent on his or her own power; it requires a supernatural gift of God's grace.^[18] It does not bring by itself the full power of salvation, and unless it is followed up with baptism in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and baptism of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of tongues, it may be lost. Also, a child may not be baptized until the child knows right from wrong, because the child can not repent of the sins they have as a baby. Being that all are born into sin, we all have sin when we are born.^[19] Furthermore, the ability to repent is temporary and may only be accomplished while one is alive.^[20] Luke 13:3

Jesus' Name Baptism

Baptism is a second essential component of UPCI doctrine. Members of the UPCI affirm an indispensable need for baptism, citing John 3:5, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38 and Matthew 28:19. They point to Matthew 3:13–16 as evidence that even Jesus himself was baptized. The UPCI mode of baptism is complete immersion in water, completed in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

This Jesus' Name doctrine is a point of contention between the UPCI and Trinitarian Christians. Like other Oneness believers, the UPCI baptizes "in the Name of Jesus Christ", while Trinitarians use "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit". Both sides utilize Matthew 28:19 to support their claims, with the UPCI holding that the *name* of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is Jesus. They insist that the word *name* in the scripture is singular, and that implies all three titles refer to Jesus. Other Oneness believers assert that Matthew 28:19 was changed to the traditional Triune formula by the Catholic Church in 325 AD in the counsel of Nicaea. The Jesus' Name belief originates from Acts 2:38, and members also stress Acts 8:16, Acts 10:48, Acts 19:5, and Acts 22:16, and 1 John 2:12, claiming that these are the only scriptures showing how the early Church performed baptisms, and that there is no scripture in the Word that shows anyone ever being baptized in the titles of God, and that the Bible authorizes no departure from that formula.^[21] Even that the early priest state that the early church only baptized in Jesus name and the latter formula was applied after 325AD by the Catholic church.

Speaking in tongues

The UPCI embraces the view that speaking in tongues is the immediate, outward, observable, and audible evidence of the initial infilling of the Holy Ghost (spirit), 1 Cor. 14:22, Acts 2:33, and is the fulfillment of Jesus' commandment to be "born of the Spirit" in John 3:5. As defined by the church, speaking in tongues constitutes speaking in a language that one has never learned before, as the spirit gives them utterance, Acts 2:4,^[22] UPCI beliefs on this subject are derived from Acts 2:4, 17, 38–39; 10:46; 19:6; and I Corinthians 12:13, Mark 16:17, 1 Cor. 14:18, 1 Cor. 14:22.

In UPCI theology, the tongue becomes the device of expression for the Holy Ghost (James 3), and symbolizes God's complete control over the believer. Joel 2:28, Isa. 28:11. UPCI doctrine distinguishes between the initial act of speaking in tongues that accompanies one's baptism in the Spirit, and the gift of "divers kinds of tongues" spoken of by Paul. While the former is considered indispensable evidence of one's baptism by the Holy Ghost (as spoken of in Isaiah 28:11, John 3:5; also Matthew 3:11, Acts 1:5, 2:4, 10:45–46 and 19:6, according to UPCI doctrine), the latter gift is not necessarily held by all believers once they have initially spoken in tongues, it is the interpretation of tongues.^[23] The incidents of tongues speaking described in Acts, are different in operation and purpose than the tongues spoken of in I Corinthians 12–14. The latter are given to selected believers as the Spirit decides. Acts 2:3, Acts 2:11, 1 Cor. 12:10, 12:28, 1 Cor. 14:21, James 3:8.

UPCI doctrine also distinguishes between the fruit of the Spirit, as mentioned in Galatians 5:22–23, and the initial act of speaking in tongues. The fruit of the Spirit takes time to develop or cultivate and therefore does not qualify as an immediate, outward and identifiable sign of receiving the Holy Ghost. Speaking in other tongues, on the other hand, does serve as that sign and is therefore considered an indispensable part of any person's salvation process. Acts 10:44-48, they knew they had the Holy Ghost because they could hear them speak with tongues. 1 Cor. 14:22, tongues is for a sign, not to them that believe but to them that believe not.

Holiness living

The UPCI emphasizes that salvation is accomplished by grace through faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9). This faith is coupled with obedience to his command to be "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5). Even though no amount of obedience to laws saves anyone (Ephesians 2:8–9, Titus 3:5), the Scriptures also state that those who are saved have been created in order to do good works (Ephesians 2:10).^[24]

Given this Scriptural principle, the UPCI teaches that one should live a life that demonstrates Christ's attributes.^[25] Inward holiness, such as demonstration of the fruits of the Spirit in the Christian's life, is to be accompanied by outward signs of holiness, according to the UPCI. The UPCI also maintains the teaching of gender roles, including a belief that women should not cut their hair (1 Corinthians 11:3-15) or wear pants. Inward and outward modesty applies to women and men alike, though UPCI men have fewer dress codes than their female counterparts. Members are discouraged from adorning themselves outwardly with cosmetics or jewelry, biblically defined as "gold, or pearls, or costly array," and should instead show their beauty by their actions (1 Timothy 2:8-10).

Organization

The basic governmental structure of the UPCI is congregational at the local church level and presbyterian at higher organizational levels. Local churches are autonomous, electing their own pastors and other leaders, owning their own property, deciding their own budgets, establishing their membership, and conducting all necessary local business.^[26] The central organization embraces a modified presbyterian system: ministers meet in sectional, district, and general conferences to elect officers and to conduct the church's affairs. The annual General Conference is the highest authority in the UPCI, with power to determine articles of faith, elect officers and determine policy. A General Superintendent is elected to preside over the church as a whole. On October 1, 2009, David K. Bernard was announced as the new General Superintendent.^[27]

According to the UPCI, in the United States and Canada it has grown from 521 member churches in 1945 to 4,819 churches (including daughter works and preaching points) 10,627 ministers, and 750,000 constituents in the United States and Canada in 2019. Outside the U.S. and Canada it has 34,779 churches and preaching points, 25,292 licensed ministers, 970 missionaries, and a constituency of 3.25 million in 195 nations and 35 territories. The international fellowship consists of national organizations that are united as the Global Council of the UPCI, which is chaired by the general superintendent of the UPCI, David K. Bernard. Total worldwide membership, including North America, is at more than 5 million.^[28]

Ministers at all levels are allowed to marry and have children. Homosexuality is considered contrary to biblical teaching and the UPCI opposes homosexual acts and homosexual marriage just as it opposes unbiblical heterosexual conduct such as adultery and fornication.^[29] The UPCI has made it clear, however, that it affirms the worth and dignity of every human being and opposes bigotry and hatred.^[30]

General Conference

At the annual conference of the United Pentecostal Church International, attendees conduct business, receive training, network with colleagues, participate in worship sessions, and raise funds for various ministries.^[31]

North American Youth Congress (NAYC)

NAYC is a church gathering primarily for the youth of the UPCI, held every other year since 1979, in various locations around North America.

The latest Congress was held in Lucas Oil Stadium in 2017, in the city of Indianapolis, IN. The meeting was one of the largest to date, with over 34,000 youths attending. This is the first time NAYC has been held in a football stadium. The meeting was given the title "This is That, stylized as **THIS THAT**. The meeting did not garner much attention from the local news in the city, but the meeting did, however receive a letter from Vice President of the United States of America, Michael Pence, who was also the former governor of Indiana. The letter encouraged the meeting, and assured the congregation that Vice President Pence and President Trump would continue to fight for the continued right of religious expression for Christians.

NAYC 2019 took place from July 31 to August 2, 2019 in The Dome at America's Center in St. Louis, Missouri. More than 36,000 people were in attendance.^[32]

Educational institutions

The UPCI operates the only Oneness Pentecostal seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools:^[33] Urshan Graduate School of Theology was granted the status of Candidate for Accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission in June 2018.^[34]

- Urshan Graduate School of Theology in Wentzville, Missouri

The UPCI launched a Christian liberal arts college in Fall of 2012. Urshan College was granted the status of Candidate for Accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission in June 2018.^[34]

- Urshan College (<http://www.urshancollege.org/>) in Wentzville, Missouri (formerly known as Gateway College of Evangelism)

In addition, the UPCI endorses several unaccredited bible college type institutions:^[35]


- Apostolic Bible Institute (<http://www.apostolic.org/>) in St. Paul, Minnesota
- Centro Teologico Ministerial (<http://www.centroteologico.net/>) in Pasadena, Texas
- Christian Service Training Institute (<http://www.cstisandiego.com/>) in San Diego, California (also offering online distance learning as well satellite campuses in California, Georgia, and Florida)
- Indiana Bible College in Indianapolis, Indiana
- Northeast Christian College (<http://www.northeastchristiancollege.com/>) in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada
- Purpose Institute (<http://www.purposeinstitute.com/>) based in Canton, Ohio (see Campus Directory (<http://www.purposeinstitute.com/locations-campusdirectory.aspx>))
- Texas Bible College (<http://www.tbcnow.com/>) in Lufkin, Texas

Currently, there is only one accredited college that is endorsed by the UPCI:

- Christian Life College, in Stockton, CA^[36]

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- Official website of the United Pentecostal Church in Australia (<http://www.upca.org.au/>)
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- Official website of the United Pentecostal Church in France (<http://epufrance.org/>)
- Official website of the United Pentecostal Church in Great Britain and Ireland (<http://www.upcgbi.org/>)
- Official website of the United Pentecostal Church in India (<http://www.upcindia.org/>)
- Official website of the United Pentecostal Church in New Zealand (<http://www.upci.org.nz/>)
- Official website of the United Pentecostal Church in Peru - Radiante (<http://www.radiante.org/>)
- Official website of the United Pentecostal Church in Peru (<http://www.leolee3215.wix.com/pastor-web/>)
- Official website of the United Pentecostal Church in the Philippines (<http://upcphils.org/>)
- Official website for Ministers of the United Pentecostal Church (<http://www.upciministers.com/>)
- United Pentecostal Church International Directory of Churches (<http://www.upci.org/resources/locate-a-church/>)

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