

Cooke, TonyMiracles and the Supernatural Throughout Church History

24. Expansion, Recognition, and Integration

This chapter traces how Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity moved from being mocked and rejected to becoming a major global force. It documents the movement's explosive worldwide growth, the rise of the Charismatic Movement within mainline denominations around 1960, and holds up the friendship of Billy Graham and Oral Roberts as a model of unity across differing streams of faith.

Key takeaways

- Early Pentecostals faced heavy opposition—from the press, from scholars like B.B. Warfield (who argued the gifts ceased with the apostles), and from fundamentalist bodies that formally denounced them.
- Despite the opposition, the movement grew explosively. Today roughly 693 million people—over 27% of all Christians—identify as Pentecostal or charismatic, with most growth in the 'majority world' (Africa, Asia, Latin America).
- Around 1960 the Charismatic Movement spread the Pentecostal experience into Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and other mainline churches; some stayed, many started independent charismatic congregations.

- Paul did not shut down the misused gifts in Corinth—he coached believers to use them with love and maturity, prioritizing edifying others over self.
- Billy Graham (Evangelical, not Pentecostal) and Oral Roberts (healing evangelist) differed on healing and tongues yet modeled genuine friendship and mutual respect centered on Christ.
- The core lesson: keep Jesus—not any spiritual gift—as the uniter. Gifts should never breed pride, superiority, or division.

Passages worth keeping

“A gift of the Spirit is not our uniter, but Christ himself!”

Oral Roberts' warning against spiritual pride, capturing the chapter's central theme of unity.

“I did not finish my message today, but the Holy Spirit did.”

Graham's humble response after a tongues-and-interpretation at Evangel College matched his unfinished sermon points—an example of grace across traditions.

How it connects

The chapter frames the whole modern movement through Jesus' prayer in John 17: real spiritual power is meant to coexist with humility and unity, so that different gifts and traditions glorify one Christ rather than compete.

Scripture referenced

- **1 Corinthians 14:4** -- Speaking in a tongue edifies oneself—personal enrichment.
- **1 Corinthians 14:12** -- Seek gifts that build up the church, not just self.
- **1 Corinthians 14:18-19** -- Paul values understandable words for others over many words in tongues.
- **John 17:21-23** -- Jesus' prayer for the unity of His followers, the chapter's guiding text.
- **Acts 2:4** -- The Pentecostal experience charismatics identified with.