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## Praying practices in Pentecostal environment: a universal multicultural model

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### Abstract

The paper examines religious communication vertically as having a universal character, regarding believers' multi-ethnic affiliation and potential situational applications, by the example of praying practices among Russian Pentecostals. The emphasis on praying practice ensures including integration mechanisms into the community of neophytes, excluding the initial communion of believers and the correlation of the new spiritual experience with religious tradition. Participation in the praying practice has an adapting function legitimizing the turn to religious experience of the new (nontraditional) type, reducing the state of psychological discomfort, as well as from the inclusion process to the followers of a non-titular religion.

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### 1. Introduction

Protestantism is one of the phenomena of religious space, defining confessional face of the world. The diversity of its member movements and the large number of followers compel us to speak about its importance for society and

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culture. To the greatest extent this applies to those denominations that are most popular at the moment and have a distinct transnational character. Peculiarities of teachings and religious practices are important factors in the effective translation and local adaptation of a series of teachings, which certainly include the Pentecostal movement (Christians of Evangelical Faith). The key to effective translation of Protestantism, especially since the XIX century, is the construction of universal mechanisms of inclusion of the individual into the community of believers regardless of their ethnicity and formal relatedness to other religious traditions. Protestantism separated from other branches of Christianity due to minimization of externals of the cult and peculiarities of everyday behavior of the believer in conjunction with the high intensity of the religious life of the individual - in the community and beyond.

Since the inclusion of the neophyte in the community of the teachings followers and his participation in the life of the Church is effected only through the establishment of relations with the subjects of the religious activities of various levels, it is worth talking about religious communication as one of the most important spheres of existence of Protestant communities. While the interest to the specifics of the philological discourse in religious environment (Fedorova, 2014; Bobyreva, 2007, 2013; Diachkova, 2013) and focus on the social dimension of the concept (intra- and inter-community interaction, as well as relations between states and confessions) (Zhelnovakova, 2013; Gavrilov, Gavrilov, 2015; Itzkovich, 2014) are the most popular themes of the research; the "vertical" component of this type of communication, which is understood as two-way communication between God and man (between the individual and the Absolute) (Fedorova, 2014, p. 231) is not to be considered yet. Prayers are the main action of the believers in such communication and they are obligatory upon religious practices of the believer.

The relevance of the choice of the research topic is determined not only by the enduring popularity and high frequency of use of this type of ritual activity, but also by the results of a social nature, which are entailed by the inclusion of the individual in the such practices. The popularity of Protestant churches around the world take part due to the specifics of the religious cult component of the system, forcing not only researchers, but also supporters of other teachings to raise the question about the basics of a successful competition between different doctrines.

## **2. Methodology**

The aim of this study is to determine the specifics of Pentecostal worship practices, as one of the most important features of a religious movement, its missionary potential, sustainability of the community boundaries and the ability to cross-cultural translation. The object of the study is Pentecostal prayer practices; the subject is their essential specificity which provides effective mechanisms for the formation and reproduction of believers communities. Following tasks were solved to confirm this position: classification of Pentecostal worship practices; singling out specific features of the implementation of the religious experience in the Pentecostal prayers; determination of the reasons why prayer is significant factor of communities' stabilization.

Considered cases are based on in-depth interviews and observations of the article authors in the community of classical Pentecostals in Tyumen and Perm regions, and among "new" (Charismatic) Pentecostals in the Churches "Word of life" (Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug — Yugra) and churches "New Testament" and "The Light of Truth» of the Perm Krai (2011-2015). In-depth interviews solved the problem of obtaining a deep and thorough examination of the phenomenon under study directly from the members of Pentecostal churches. The specificity of the method of in-depth interviews analysis allows to focus on interpretation of the meaning and evaluation of the content embedded in the concept of "prayer practice." The choice of two different Pentecostal movements was justified by different ritual forms of worship practices. Classical Pentecostals are characterized by quiet and calm form of prayer, while for "new" (Charismatic) it is ecstatic. Regardless of the variety of Pentecostalism, its distinctive feature is a set of devotional practices, which are one of the most significant religious communication means. Analysis of the interview does not include quantitative data (socio-demographic composition of the religious community, frequency of ritual activities). In accordance with the specifics of the study, the sample is not justified by the general population, by the involvement members, which differ in the level of their expertise: the religious community leader (pastor, elder), active believers, neophyte believers.

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