

# glossolalia

Rene Noorbergen

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### **CHAPTER 1-section 1**

#### **The Sanctifying Tongue**

"Medi alukan— ala— du aru— shamma shamma. Solama sulama sumala tamaku abada da da kumi sala sala mili amatala shamma shamma balu—"

"Ama tala manga diekam oh sila sila aboda take shamma shamma—"

A strange sound engulfed me as I quietly entered the 30-odd-pew church nestled peacefully somewhere in a staid old residential section of Memphis, Tennessee. In search for information on the manifestation of the gift of tongues, which had now begun to seep through the cracks in the thus far impenetrable doctrinal walls protecting the country's main-line religions, I had been directed to this solemn looking building.

The fortress-like image of the church had for years safeguarded its traditional heritage. Yet, somehow this was now changing.

The December wind howled threateningly about the church's lone spire, and wet whirly fingers of rain tugged at me as I made my way to the door of the church. Holding the dripping brim of my rain hat with one hand and attempting with the other to keep my trenchcoat closed, I climbed the crumbling concrete steps and leaned my wet weight against the aging door.

Within seconds the squeaks of the rusty hinges mingled with a strange, melodious sound, a hint of which had reached out for me while I had slushed past the church's dimly lit windows moments before.

"Shamma shamma oh amatala taka aboda shamma shamma— I lake tiki sala aboda— shamma takala takala shimmi—"

A language? It was most certainly a sound I had never before encountered. One moment pleading, the next instant jubilant and triumphant, it was a solitary voice with a shimmering background of subdued cries of ecstasy. It implored, cried with a pulsating chain of sounds that became insistent and captivating in the dark as I continued to shuffle across the foot-worn marble slabs that led to the sanctuary doors.

Hat under my arm, coat still dripping, I squeezed through the narrow crack in the door and joined the congregation, taking an outside seat on one of the back pews.

The entire congregation—young and old alike—listened with rapt attention to the flood of mysterious sounds that poured forth from the mouth of a young man standing on one of the front pews. He had turned around when I entered, and across the uneven sea of heads I watched him from my vantage point of self-imposed impartiality.

He was young—no doubt about that—perhaps 21 or 22 years of age. His supernatural performance, however, more than replaced his obvious immaturity. There he stood, speaking, talking, uttering sounds definitely not from this part of the world. His wet hair framed a pockmarked face lost in rapture. Slender hands raised skyward as if reaching for God, he talked on and on, praying in sounds that seemed to have no resemblance to a known language—but that no one but me seemed to notice.

Internally fused with an unknown power, his hands caressed the air, pleading, pulling, begging for something from on high, and with each passing second, my initial impression that something unearthly had taken possession of his innermost being gained strength.

**An aging woman seated up front ... suddenly arose**

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### **CHAPTER 1-section 2**

An aging woman seated up front, who up until that point had managed to exclude herself from the mainstream of excitement developing around her, suddenly arose. Instantly the eyes of all the congregation focused on her.

Resolutely grasping hold of her skirt, she climbed up on the narrow seat of her pew and motioned to the believers.

"Stop-hear? Stop! He is praying!" she cried, completely lost in her words, tears running down her withered red cheeks. "He is thanking God for all His blessings." And raising her arms in the air, she continued, "I know his tongue! It's ancient Indian!" Her task completed, she quickly slipped down and quietly shriveled up in her pew, mingling once again with the ecstatic believers.

To me it seemed a strange meeting—in fact one of the most unusual I had ever witnessed. In my career as a journalist I had covered a variety of assignments and had been exposed to many diverse languages ranging from Albanian to Zulu, but this was different—very different indeed.

With a critical eye I began to scan the congregation. There weren't many people, perhaps 35 or 40 of them.

By this time the supernatural power had turned the religious meeting into a climax of praise, as all hands reached high in a pleading gesture.

With his hands pronouncing blessings left and right, a middle-aged man, evidently the minister, separated himself from a small group of praying individuals, and walked to the pulpit.

"Listen, my people," he exclaimed, his face beaming with joy. "This is the Lord you're listening to. He's here. This is the Holy Spirit. This is Pentecost all over again! Praise God! Praise the Lord! Hallelujah!" Then he hurried down from the rostrum again to rejoin his praying people.

A sudden jarring motion at my shoulder made me turn my head.

My neighbor showed me the reason.

Standing up in his full height of perhaps five feet, two inches, he too had felt the spirit and was joining the experience with his own ecstatic tongue.

"Oh si si kalini— idi ma talu uno— ta kala—" His voice faltered, then picked up speed and clarity. "Ini tola tola muni— taka ka takaka—"

I had occupied a seat at the end of one of the back pews. At last I stood up and walked out, head bowed. None noticed.

"I wonder—" I muttered more to myself than to anyone else. "Is this what happened at Pentecost?"

Sudden bursts of "hallelujah," with clapping of hands and exclamations of pure joy, pierced the flimsy access doors to the church's sanctuary. It was in answer to one of the exuberant shouts that I turned in the hallway and cast one last peek through the small spy window in the door.

By now the entire congregation was separating into several small prayer groups, and high-spirited prayers were filling the air. In every corner tongues-speakers and their interpreters poured forth their unique messages. The usher in the back row had joined in. "I too want the spirit—I want the spirit—"

**... I had often pondered the question of the gift of tongues.**

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## CHAPTER 1-section 3

Because of my previous studies in the world of the psychic and the supernatural, I had often pondered the question of the gift of tongues. This is called thus because its believers and practitioners maintain that through the Holy Spirit they have received the same gift of tongues—the power to speak "other" tongues and languages—as was granted to the disciples at Pentecost, when tongues of fire descended upon them, signifying that they were filled with the Holy Spirit. It was this promised baptism with God-power and the accompanying ability to speak foreign languages that enabled them to carry out Christ's command to "preach the gospel into all the world," reaching nonbelievers in surrounding nations in *their own tongues*.

For many years known as a key doctrine of the Pentecostal church, the ability to speak "other tongues" has penetrated the doctrinal walls of other Christian churches since the early 1960's under the name of "Charismatic (also Neo-Pentecostal) Movement." It was Dennis J. Bennett, pastor of the sophisticated St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California, who changed the direction of the tongues. For a long time he had fought a deep emotional battle affecting his personal religious life, and on Sunday morning, April 3, 1960, looking tense, he faced his expectant congregation. Some who remember that day say that it gave them a foreboding of a dire announcement. He did not disappoint them.

Addressing his audience with utmost sincerity, he confessed reluctantly that he had received the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" in October of the previous year.

Reporting on this, *The Nation*, September 28, 1963, quoted him as saying, "The Holy Spirit did take my lips and tongue and form a new and powerful language of praise and power that I myself could not understand." In the resulting chaos that sprang up in the sanctuary, one of the associate priests removed his ecclesiastical robe, resigned amid great pandemonium, and angrily walked out of the church.

The end result of Father Bennett's shocking announcement was the submission of his resignation to the 2,500-member church. Later on in the following year, he transferred to St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Seattle, where today he is one of the foremost spokesmen for the Charismatic Movement and a frequent speaker at charismatic meetings. In the twelve years that have passed since that dramatic confession, many theologians and historians have begun to rate the influence of the tongues in present-day Christianity on

equal par with the Protestant Reformation, for in these short years its impact on the Christian world has been of such magnitude that it can never again be forgotten.

Charismatic's two leading components, *speaking in tongues* and *faith healing*, are largely responsible for this, and even such major secular publications as *Time* and *Life* have recognized the relentless force of these two elements.

Said *Time*, "It is the fastest growing church in the Hemisphere."—*Time*, Nov. 2, 1962, p. 56. *Life Magazine* called it "the Third Force—a development as important as was the birth of Catholicism and Protestantism." "The Third Force in Christendom," *Life*, June 9, 1958, p. 113. Still others have labeled it the "New Revival Movement," the "Wielding Ax of God," the "New Penetration," or simply "The Return of God's Own Church."

Recent figures (1973) reveal that the Charismatic Movement has quietly invaded over 40 different Protestant denominations, and no less than 2,000 clergymen of churches affiliated with the National Council of Churches now practice the "gift of tongues" with or without the spiritual participation of their congregations. In fact, in many cases the parishioners or congregations have no knowledge of these "subversive" activities of their spiritual shepherds. Once ultraconservative, the Methodist Church now harbors tongues speaking laymembers and clergymen. The Episcopalians have embraced its principles so strongly that their leaders and those of the Assemblies of God (one of the original Pentecostal groups) have already met in conference to discuss their mutual problems associated with the growing "ministry of the Holy Spirit."

The Baptists, too, speak in tongues. The Southern Baptist Convention, the American Baptist Convention, and the Baptist Bible Fellowship have within their ranks theologians who practice their new-found spiritual gifts. Many Presbyterians also speak in tongues, while almost 10 percent of America's Lutheran congregations boast of active glossolalia cells in their midst. Even the once staunch Dutch Reformed and Christian Dutch Reformed churches have been infiltrated with remarkable success.

Exact figures concerning this movement are difficult to obtain, and of those available, not all are accurate, though based on "reliable estimates."

Opinions as to the number of Catholics who practice the Pentecostal phenomenon around the world vary greatly. Most recent figures show that up to 250,000 Roman Catholics in the United States are convincingly involved, according to William Willoughby, "Neo-Pentecostal Parishes; Boom or Bane?" *Washington Evening Star*, March 11, 1972, p. a-8. Their Directory of Charismatic Prayer Groups listed 350 active groups in the United States and abroad in 1971, a figure which soared to 625 just a year later. A similar growth was evident at the International Conference on Charismatic Revival. These meetings, held at Notre Dame University, had an attendance of 1,250 in 1970; 5,500 in 1971; 11,500 in 1972, and in a recent interview with Auxiliary Bishop Joseph McKinney of Grand Rapids, Michigan, the leading figure in the Catholic Charismatic Movement, I was informed that this rate of growth is not declining. "It is certainly one of the most significant developments in the church today, and most of my colleagues look approvingly on these

pentecostals," he told me. I asked him whether he personally spoke in tongues.

"I have always told people I haven't," he replied. "But recently a couple of times I think that I have had a kind of an induced form that I really hesitated to do. But somehow or other, being with the people and noticing their freedom, I have suddenly become conscious of the fact that I have restricted myself in places where I shouldn't because of my background and orientation. So for this reason once in a while I do that when others are doing it just to permit myself to say—to utter *syllables* that are not words, this with the intention and the resolve and the attempt to open myself up and praise God in the best way I can, because this is what real tongues are." This statement, coming from the man recently appointed by the nation's bishops to oversee the movement, is significant.

Tongues speakers are not limited to the United States, but are also numerous in Latin America and Europe. Alan Walker, who discussed the issue with many leaders on both of these continents, relates this in his book, *Breakthrough—Rediscovery of the Holy Spirit*. (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1964.)

"The Pentecostal Church in South America has become the fastest growing church in the world," he says. "In Chile since 1930 Pentecostalism has doubled itself every ten years. On the continent as a whole there could be five or six million people linked to the movement."—*Breakthrough*, page 10. This was true in 1964, and if the rate of growth has continued on the scale mentioned, which is a realistic possibility, then today, 1973, the number may well have mushroomed to ten million.

In Brazil, a dramatic change in religious emphasis has also taken place. Whereas in 1930 only 9.5 percent of the Protestant segment of the population admitted belief in Pentecostalism, by 1964, according to Waldo A. Cesar, *they comprised 73.6 percent of all Protestants. Protestantismo e Imperialismo na America Latina* (Rio de Janeiro: Vozes, 1968), page 105.

And Europe? It is no different there, as a recent fact-finding tour indicated. Europe is indeed in a spiritual turmoil, and no single group will admit this as readily as the Europeans!

While traveling in Europe in late 1972, I spent several days in The Netherlands and had numerous encounters with the Navigators, members of the Youth for Christ movement, and the Campus Crusade. With its 13 million inhabitants quite equally divided between the Catholic Church and Protestant denominations, not to mention the large number of political parties closely aligned with these churches, this age-old bastion of liberty and free speech was overripe for a change. This change, it appears, now, is in the making.

What is happening in this industrious little country behind the dikes is tremendous. Christ-centered coffee bars scattered throughout the country attract hundreds of youth every night. Dutch Reformed pastors, admitting that their churches are dying if not *already* dead, beg Youth for Christ leaders to "take over" in their neighborhoods. One television commentator smilingly told me of the American ambassador and his wife and their widely

reported conversion to Christ. The Bible study groups, meeting in their private quarters, were recently featured on Dutch national television. Everywhere I went I heard of the revolutionary changes taking place. Old barges, abandoned windmills, World War II airplane hangars, and even out-of-the-way stables are used by the zealous converts in their attempts to organize new meeting places and form new groups. The Jesus People, many of whom share an enthusiasm for tongues with the American charismatics, have vowed to introduce the Holy Spirit to every major population center in the Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg). Judging from their actions and reactions, they are well on their way. Are their leaders perhaps too young and too inexperienced to lead whole nations to Christ?

*Christianity Today* asked the same question on *its* European investigative mission. The answer it reported is one that typifies the European Charismatics. "Jesus is in a hurry to reach the world," voiced one of the leaders. "Therefore we must be in a hurry too."—*Christianity Today*, Oct. 13, 1972, p. 24.

Everywhere I traveled—Germany, England, Belgium, France, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland—I met with the same reaction.

"Jesus People, you say? Charismatics? Tongues? They're all over! They're upsetting our formal religious life," one Swedish clergyman reacted. "We'd just as well pack up and go home. They're beginning to take over our churches." Nightclub dates for musical presentations about their supernatural experiences are common occurrences with Scandinavian charismatics. Jesus concerts, Jesus Day festivals, door-to-door witnessing campaigns, and organized attempts to reach the socially downtrodden as well as the upper strata of society are the order of the day.

"YWAM [Youth With a Mission] also sponsors a center at Christiana, a run-down former army base in Copenhagen that is one of the worst hell holes on earth," it says, relating to the activities of one of the groups. "More than 1,000 hippies, junkies, pushers, sex freaks, witches, Satan worshipers and mental cases from all over the world live there in assorted communal arrangements—amid disease and absence of the law. There are overdose deaths nearly every month.... *Despite the depravity, some have come to Christ.* 'God is scooping up the scum of the earth and making something beautiful out of it,' reflected a repentant alumnus of Christiana."—*Christianity Today*, op. cit. (Italics supplied.)

As in Europe, the same thing is happening in the British Isles and also in Communist Eastern Europe. Even the traditional gypsies in Southern Europe are now engaged in the movement, for it has been estimated that at least 25,000 of them are presently evangelizing all over the Riviera and the Costa Brava with their strange new tongues, thereby not only transforming their traditional image but their *modus operandi* as well.

All these groups may be operating under different names, but their goals are the same. They want to reach people for Christ before it is too late. It's only *love* they're after—to receive and to spread. "We need the Spirit's manifestations now!" one young crusader

pointed out to me. "Once that happens, everything else will fall into place."

Although there are similarities between the Pentecostals and the charismatics, the latter have seemingly divorced themselves from any *official* connection with the Pentecostal founding fathers. No study of the charismatic movement, however, can be considered complete without examining the modern foundation supporting the tongues-speaking movements.

**How it all began ...**

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## CHAPTER 1-section 4

It all began around the turn of the century when Charles F. Parham, a young Methodist minister, dissatisfied with his spiritual condition, determined to do something about it. Reasoning that only a true rebirth and a rediscovery of the "gifts of the spirit" would bring him into absolute harmony with God, he set out to establish a Bible school in an abandoned mansion in Topeka, Kansas, to be utilized as a "spiritual discovery center."

The building chosen for the school was sarcastically known as Stone's Folly, so named because the builder ran out of money halfway through its construction. This stigma, however, did not hamper Parham's zeal. With forty students, he initiated a study into the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, with the hope of discovering whether there might be one *specific element* common to all of those who had received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Biblical times.

In December, 1900, Parham was scheduled to embark on a three-day trip, and he decided that in the interim his students should undertake an intense study of the book of Acts.

"Study every account in Acts where the baptism of the Spirit is received," he charged them, "and find out whether there was a common denominator." Returning three days later, he found his school buzzing with excitement, for "on five occasions where the Holy Ghost was received," he was told, "it was followed by the phenomenon of speaking in tongues. Could this perhaps be what we're looking for?" A methodical comparison of the texts showed that there had indeed been a connection between the Holy Spirit and tongues, and in order to test its validity in modern times, they decided upon a marathon prayer session. Beginning at daybreak the following morning, they sent up prayers for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The morning passed, and so did the afternoon, yet the Spirit did not come. Early that evening, at about 7:00, one of the students, Agnes N. Ozman remembered something important.

"Wasn't it true that many of the baptisms described in Acts were accompanied by an action, as well as prayer? Didn't the person offering the prayer often put his hands on the one who wished to receive the baptism? In the Bible she found the reference she remembered. There it was: at Samaria, at Damascus, at Ephesus, always the word 'hands.' 'Putting his hands on him.' Then laid they their hands on them.'

"Miss Ozman went to find Charles Parham and told him about her new thought.

"'Would you pray for me this way?' she asked.

"Parham hesitated just long enough to utter a short prayer about the rightness of what they were doing. Then, gently he placed his two hands on Miss Ozman's head. Immediately, quietly, there came from her lips a flow of syllables which neither of them could understand.

"The Pentecostals look back on this hour—7:00 p.m, New Year's Eve, 1900, as one of the key dates in their history. They point to it as the first time since the days of the early church that the baptism of the Holy Spirit had been sought, where speaking in tongues was expected as the initial evidence."—John L. Sherrill, *They Speak With Other Tongues* (A Spire Book), page 38.

Once the discovery of the common denominator had been established, the news spread throughout America. Fighting fierce opposition from both clergy and laymembers, Parham in blunt desperation took to the street corners to propagate his teachings. When subsequently informed that Stone's Folly would be sold from under him, he moved his operations to Houston, Texas.

By this time, his efforts had begun to receive serious recognition, for his preaching was dynamic. He proclaimed that only the "full gospel" could save; that is, the gospel in its entirety, *complete with tongues, faith healing and other gifts as promised to accompany the reception of the Holy Spirit*. Consequently, faith healing was soon added to the list of Pentecostal manifestations.

One of Parham's Houston students, W.J. Seymour, exported the full gospel to the West Coast, linking his name permanently to 312 Azusa Street, Los Angeles, an address that was to become a Pentecostal mecca for years to come.

An ordained Negro minister, Seymour had arrived in Los Angeles to take over the congregation of a small Black church. But as soon as he opened his series of sermons and announced his intention to preach on the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues, the church elders, who had previously heard of his new ideas, protested vehemently. When Seymour returned for his second sermon, he found the church doors barred. His congregation had formally rejected him.

Accepting the invitation of a dissenting church member, Seymour soon found himself presenting the remainder of the series in her home. For three days he preached there, expounding on the Holy Spirit. On the evening of the third day it happened. As he was talking, his listeners suddenly began to speak in tongues, speaking, laughing, and singing, using syllables they never knew existed. It caused such enthusiasm that when the shouts of Hallelujah and the clapping had reached a deafening crescendo, the roof caved in, and the rafters crashed down. This signaled the end of the meeting.

Having now substantiated the validity of his claims in the eyes of his followers, Seymour had no trouble finding a suitable meeting place. This time it was an abandoned livery stable on Azusa Street, wedged in between a stable and a tombstone factory.

Some who witnessed the scenes that took place there for the next 1,000 days called it a true spiritual revival. Often with more praying than preaching, Seymour led out, but allowed others to take over whenever possible. His believers came from everywhere: New England, Canada, Great Britain. No one was sent away. Old-time Pentecostals, when asked to identify the place where the movement received its greatest thrust, usually agree:

"It was in Stone's Folly that the movement was born," they say. "But it would have died a quiet and painless death if it had not been for the Azusa Street Mission."

**Much has changed since the early days of Pentecostalism.**

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### **CHAPTER 1-section 5**

Much has changed since the early days of Pentecostalism. The early movement was marked by the low educational level of its converts. It generally consisted of those who did not feel at home in main-line churches, partly because of class distinction found there.

One student of Pentecostalism wrote:

"The appeal of Pentecostalism is limited quite clearly to the naive and gullible mind which will accept things without investigation. The great majority of the followers of the healers are old people, shallow people—people cast aside by society and forgotten by the proud 'established churches,' to our eternal discredit."—Carroll Stegall, Jr., *The Modern Tongues and Healing Movement*.

Not only were all class barriers absent in the Pentecostal circles, but racial barriers were also almost nonexistent. Today the social and organizational structure of the early pioneer Pentecostal churches has changed. The semi-educated and unskilled are still welcome, but a new breed, the intellectuals, have taken control of its once loosely knit congregations. Their full gospel emphasis, however, has remained.

While there is little basic difference between the old-time Pentecostals and the charismatics, the latter prefer this new name. It distinguishes them from a movement which was once believed to consist of the ignorant and the emotionally unstable. As a rule, the charismatics try to involve themselves in the phenomenon of speaking in tongues and spiritual healing practices without entering into the other kinds of ecstatic behavior so characteristic of some of the Pentecostal churches. Another difference is in the social makeup of most of their groups. In marked contrast to their heritage builders, the charismatic groups appeal mainly to the educated, and this thrust, together with their rather sophisticated use of tongues, has gained them thousands of converts in the upper stratum of society. Today doctors, lawyers, educators, and businessmen find that they can combine their desire for a "new birth" with a tongues experience—without becoming the topic of ridicule from their friends and neighbors.

Mrs. Jeane Stone, board member of the Blessed Trinity Society, a group formed by Harold Bredesen, a Dutch Reformed minister and avid tongues enthusiast, says of these tongues:

"Their private use is more important than public, more oriented to clergy and professional

classes, more Bible-centered as against experience, not separatist, more orderly meetings with strict adherence to Pauline directives, less emphasis on tongues."—As quoted by Frank Farrell, "Outburst of Tongues: The New Penetration," *Christianity Today*, September 13, 1963, p. 6.

The question as to whether the charismatic movement is *strictly a spontaneous outlet* for emotional ecstasy, leading to a sense of spiritual fulfillment, can be answered in the negative. There are undoubtedly those who feel themselves attracted to the movement and join on their own initiative, but the majority of converts are sought out through a conscientious missionary endeavor. Converts are won by individual church members, and also by organizations such as the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, a California-based enterprise led by Demos Shakarian. A wealthy businessman, he formed his organization after having been encouraged in the idea by the spiritual activist, Oral Roberts. Members of the Shakarian family are no newcomer to the Pentecostal experience. They proudly point out that one of the first Pentecostal churches in North America was established in their California home in 1905 as a result of their interest in the Azusa Street Mission. However, their experience with the supernatural was evident long before this. *The Shakarian Story*, by Thomas Nickel, reveals that members of the family have been involved in direct revelations, visions, speaking in tongues, and miraculous healings for over 100 years, predating by many years their first arrival in America.

The chief purpose of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI) is to implant within the narrow boundaries of the traditional churches the manifestations of Pentecostalism. To accomplish this, the organization sponsors banquets, conventions, and breakfasts on a local, national, and international level. Being both astute businessmen and Full Gospel Pentecostals, the Shakarians do not leave a stone unturned to attain their goal. Says Russel T. Hitt, "The most polished of public relations techniques have been enrolled to advance the movement. While there is certainly nothing wrong with using modern techniques, *the neo-Pentecostalism cannot claim complete spontaneity.*"—Russel T. Hitt, "The New Pentecostalism, an Appraisal," *Eternity*, July, 1963, p. 16. (Italics supplied.)

An important instrument in this all-out effort is their monthly publication, VOICE, which enthusiastically publicizes such happenings as testimonies, "baptisms in the spirit," and other related topics. One of the most recent thrusts (Jan. 1973) of the FGBMFI concerns the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Regarding the church as spiritually impoverished because of its reluctance to join or endorse the charismatic movement, they have decided to "enrich" it with the "gift of tongues" by mailing a copy of their monthly VOICE to those Adventists that have been placed on their mailing list, hoping to repeat the impact a similar effort had on another major denomination in the United States.

**Read Chapter 2 — Tongues in History**



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### CHAPTER 2-section 1

#### Tongues in History

Throughout recorded history there have been many occasions where religious people have spoken in unknown tongues—glossolalia. Most of the known accounts predating the Pentecostal experience are of non-Christian origin. Therefore most Christians would hardly take the position that every occurrence of glossolalia must be an expression of the will of God. Yet there are glossolalists who subscribe to this view. As a rule, the charismatics allude to Pentecost as the supreme example of supernatural tongues; however, the recorded cases of glossolalia go back as far as 1100 B.C. At that time a young Amen worshiper made ancient headlines and attracted historical notoriety when he suddenly became possessed by a god and began to emit sounds in a strange ecstatic "tongue." In the "Report of Wenamon," a text giving the oldest account of glossolalia known to man (originating in Byblos, a temple city in historical Lebanon), we find the scanty details:

"Now, when he sacrificed to his gods, the gods seized one of his noble youths, making him frenzied, so that he said, 'Bring the god hither! Bring the messenger of Amen who hath him. Send him and let him go.'"—George A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible* (Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1916), page 353.

Seven hundred years later, the Greek philosopher Plato also made mention of the "gift" in his time. In his *Phaedrus*, he demonstrated that he was well acquainted with the phenomenon, for he referred to several families who, according to him, practiced ecstatic speech, praying, and utterings while possessed. Continuing further, he pointed out that these practices even brought physical healing to those who engaged in them. Plato, together with most of his contemporaries, asserted that these occurrences were caused by divine inspiration. To support this view, he suggested (in *Timaeus*) that God takes possession of the mind while man sleeps or is possessed, and that during this state, God inspires him with utterances and/or visions which he can neither understand nor interpret.

Virgil, too, during the last century before Christ, described in *Aeneid* the activities of the Sybilline priestess on the Island of Delos. He attributed her ecstatic tongues to the result of her being unified with the god Apollo, a state that enveloped her while she meditated in a haunted cave amidst the eerie sounds of the wind playing strange music through the narrow crevices in the rocks.

In speaking of the Pythoness of Delphi, Chrysostom, a church father, wrote: "This same Pythoness then is said, being a female, to sit at times upon the tripod of Appolo astride, and thus the evil spirit ascending from beneath and entering the lower part of her body, fills the woman with madness, and she with disheveled hair begins to play the bacchanal and to foam at the mouth, and thus being in a frenzy to utter the words of her madness."—Chrysostom, "Homilies on First Corinthians." (Italics supplied.)

Many of the mystery religions of the Graeco-Roman world undoubtedly included the same phenomenon. Among those most often listed are the Osiris cult originating in the land of the Pharaohs; the Mithra cult of the Persians, and the lesser known Eulusinian, Dionysian, and Orphic cults cradled in Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece. The basis for this opinion is that their entire system of belief and rituals centered around spirit possessions. Another indication comes from Lucian of Samosata (A.D. 120-198) who in *De Dea Syria* describes an example of glossolalia as exhibited by an itinerant believer of June, the Syrian goddess, stationed at Hierapolis in Syria.\* (Interestingly, the term glossolalia, so widely used today, comes from the Greek vernacular which was in existence long before the day of Pentecost.)

Moffatt's *New Testament Commentary* says of these manifestations: "Oracles of the great 'lord' at the Shrine of Delphi, as Heraclitus put it, were revelations of the god's will through ecstasy, not through sensible words. So were the Sybil's unintelligible cries. A priest or priestess, seized by sudden trances of the spirit, uttered mystic sayings, which were held to be all the more divine as they were least rational or articulate. [Italics supplied.] Philo in Alexandria had taken over the Greek notion, arguing that such ecstasy, when the mind or unconscious reason was superseded, was the highest reach of the human soul in its quest for God."—Commentary on 1 Cor. 14, p. 214.

It was into this suffocating world of heathen superstitions, pagan rituals—besides Jewish indifference—that Christ was born.

For a short while the world seemed to be on the road to spiritual restoration, but then it happened. The Jewish hierarchy decided on a series of countermoves. Aided by one of His own disciples and using the Roman power as executioners, they quickly moved in and bloodily erased their only Way to salvation, killing the King of the universe on the one world He loved most.

Confusion reigned, and His disciples spent anxious hours. Encouraged by His resurrection, they were greatly strengthened by Christ's promise to send them the Holy Spirit.

\*Ira J. Martin III, "Glossolalie in the Apostolic Church," (Berea, Ky: Berea College Press, 1960, page 80); cited by Robert G. Gromacki, "The Modern Tongue Movement" (Philadelphia, Pa.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company), 1967, page 8. ([return to text](#))

**[But ye shall receive power ...](#)**

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# glossolalia

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### CHAPTER 2-section 2

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth," He pledged. Acts 1:8.

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:18-20.

Not until a full fifty days after His death did the disciples begin to see the significance of His promise.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts 2:1-4.

What happened here was the speaking of real languages—not unknown sounds. The Bible record is quite clear on this.

The term "tongues" (Greek *glossais*) as used here, refers to both the physical organ used in the art of speaking as well as to the sound produced by that organ. Also, the word "other" (Greek *heterais*) signifies that the speech produced by the vocal organs of the apostles consisted of sounds different from those they normally produced. Verse 6 of the same chapter furthermore

identifies these *heterais* sounds as distinct languages. The very wording, "*ekouon heis hekastos te idia dialekto lalounton auton* (they kept on hearing them speaking every one in his own language)," is evidence in itself.

This passage in Acts marks the earliest example of glossolalia as a Christian phenomenon, and the original Greek supplies the foundation for the viewpoint that these sounds were indeed real languages. What is more, the remainder of the chapter supports

this:

"And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?" Acts 2:5-12.

This very question indicates that they had no conception of the basic philosophy of Christianity, of its power, or of the relationship of this unusual manifestation to the mission Christ had entrusted to His disciples. Acts 2:5 brings their question into true perspective.

According to law, every devout male Jew living within a 20-mile radius of Jerusalem was bound to attend the three great yearly Jewish festivals; Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. The word Pentecost indicates that it fell on the fiftieth day after Passover. Since that holiday had already been celebrated in April of that year, Pentecost fell at the beginning of June, one of the nicest months in Palestine.

Whereas only the male Jews living within the required distance normally attended the Passover feast, Pentecost, on the other hand, attracted many more celebrants because of the better traveling conditions which prevailed at that time of year. There were undoubtedly thousands of Jews, together with those of Jewish ancestry who had been dispersed throughout the world, who returned to Jerusalem to attend the yearly thanksgiving feast, regarding it as a special highlight. Because of their sojourn in far distant countries, many spoke in languages not native to the Holy Land.

Filled with amazement, the foreign travelers now heard these strange Galileans address them in their own language, telling them of the miraculous power of Christ. Relatively unnoticed, unlearned, and born in a part of the world not necessarily known for its great philosophers, these day laborers and fishermen had suddenly turned into eloquent speakers, conversing with their listeners about the majesty of Christ, reasoning with heavenly wisdom and divinely inspired thoughts. It was indeed an international gathering that surrounded the exuberant apostles who, by now, were convinced of the awesome power of the Holy Spirit.

If this was not a miracle, nothing was, and the impression it etched on the minds of the crowd was ineradicable.

The second example of glossolalia in connection with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was

equally as impressive, but on this occasion it was given to the Gentiles, not to the Jews. This signified for the first time that Christ's gospel was not reserved exclusively as a saving gesture to the Jewish race but was intended for the Gentiles as well.

It happened at the house of Cornelius in Caesarea to which Peter had traveled under divine mandate (See Acts 10:17-20).

"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God." Acts 10:44-46.

That these men also used actual languages and not a collection of unintelligible sounds is indicated by the words of Peter when he said that they heard them "magnify God."

Referring back to this same event, in Chapter 11:15 he relates: "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning." So this statement identifies their tongue experience with the original one at Pentecost.

The third time tongues are mentioned in the New Testament is in Acts 19:1-6, where Paul had an encounter at Ephesus with twelve disciples of John the Baptist.

"He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

This experience also is similar to Pentecost, as was the previous one. Taking into consideration the use of the word *glossa* in this text, which is the very same word given to describe the other two accounts, we may conclude that this was also a manifestation of speaking in actual languages, not unknown sounds.

As far as these three examples of glossolalia are concerned, therefore, we are dealing with the supernaturally supplied, God-given ability to speak foreign languages. Because of His gift of glossolalia they were now able to preach the gospel to the known world, providing them with the ultimate means of communication. And the apostles and converts embraced it with enthusiasm.

**Read Chapter 3—What Really happened at Corinth?**



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### **CHAPTER 3-section 1**

#### **What really happened at Corinth?**

If the passages in Acts were the only Bible references alluding to tongues, there would be little ground for controversy or for the glossolalists to speak in unknown sounds. In that case their practice, as generally manifested today, would be clearly out of harmony with the Biblical guidelines. But Paul's letter to the Corinthians contains passages that have given rise to serious misunderstandings.

#### **What really happened at Corinth?**

Let's quickly glance back at the first century and take a look at the background of the church that created the controversy.

An ancient trading city, Corinth was refounded by Julius Caesar as a Roman colony in 46 B.C. Situated between the Ionian and the Aegean Seas, on the isthmus connecting Greece with the Peloponnesus, and supported by its renowned ports of Lechaemum on the west and Cenchreae on the east, it soon became a major crossroads of Mediterranean commerce. It is no wonder that the emperor selected it to be the Roman capital of the province of Achaia, establishing it as the seat of the Roman proconsul.

As a colony of Rome, its citizens were also Roman, but other nations were equally well represented—witness the fact that foreign deities such as Isis and Serapis were highly revered, with temples nearly as impressive as those of the famed Apollo and Aphrodite. Devil worship and sexual licentiousness were so prevalent that Aphrodite's temple alone was staffed by more than 1,000 female slaves dedicated to satisfy the lusts of the goddess's earthly subjects.

Realizing all of this, Paul's efforts to evangelize Corinth could certainly not have been an easy task. Upon his arrival in Corinth, Paul first lived with Aquila and Priscilla. Acts 18:2. From here he preached to both heathens and Jews In answer to opposition initiated by two Macedonian visitors, Silas and Timotheus, Paul left and moved in with Justus, a Jewish man whose house was located next to the synagogue. Verses 4-7. His ensuing friendship with Crispus, chief ruler of the synagogue, resulted in his converting the ruler's entire household, in addition to many other Corinthians.

"Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them." Acts 18:9-11.

For eighteen difficult months Paul labored there; then he left for Syria, leaving behind him the nucleus of a Christian church that was to continue his missionary work among the multitude of nationalities represented in the city.

While he was at Philippi, the first inklings of trouble among his newly created congregation reached him.

Chloe was the first one to break the distressing news to him. 1 Corinthians 1:11. Soon after, it was also reported to him by mail. 1 Corinthians 7:1. Then came the personal visits—with even more bad news. Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus undoubtedly felt that Paul had either not reacted in due haste or that the information supplied him had not been adequate. At any rate, they felt obligated to add their personal testimony to the already sordid reports. 1 Corinthians 16:17.

Listening to them, Paul became convinced that the church, formed during his second missionary journey and composed chiefly of former pagans, had fallen into a bad state of spiritual decomposition. The record of flagrant abuses of Christian living submitted to him were indeed horrifying—not just in number but more so in degree.

Paul must have been shocked when confronted with the reports.

There was, for example, gross division among the Christians; envying; strife (1 Corinthians 3:3); fornication; incest (1 Cor. 6:6); fraud (verse 8); association with drunkards, extortioners, and idolators (1 Cor. 5:11); heresies (1 Cor. 11:19); attending church in state of intoxication (verses 1&21); ignorance of natural and spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:1); denial of the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15:12); and abuses of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:27-30).

**Is it any wonder that Paul shuddered?**

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### CHAPTER 3-section 2

His beloved church had managed to blend almost fully once again with those Corinthian citizens who had made the city famous for its debauchery: To "Corinthianize" had become a byword in the ancient world. And now, instead of being a bright beacon in this idolatrous outpost of the Roman Empire, the Corinthian Christian church had practically rejoined them, mocking the power of Christianity.

While all of these violations are duly noted and rebuked in his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul devotes what seems an almost excessive amount of attention to the improper handling of the gift of speaking in tongues. It must be stated, however, that nowhere in Corinthians does Paul speak out against the tongues or suggest that they (the Corinthians) were engaged in practicing a counterfeit manifestation. In fact, Paul wants all the believers in Corinth to speak in tongues (1 Cor. 14: 5), saying expressly that he does not forbid speaking in tongues. Verse 39. He also thanked God, stating: "I speak with tongues more than ye all." Verse 18.

This combination of statements by Paul shows that he held the Corinthian tongues to be valid manifestations of godly glossolalia, not a counterfeit. Otherwise, would he, a man of God, have uttered the wish that all speak in tongues? Would he have counseled them not to forbid speaking in tongues or admit that he speaks "with tongues more than ye all"?

It would have been most incongruous indeed!

Parts of chapters 12 and 13, and all of chapter 14 of his first letter to the Corinthians deal with tongues and the orderly use of this gift of the Spirit. Paul does not condemn the basic experience.

But a study of this New Testament phenomenon does *not* furnish us with indications that the gift of tongues had undergone a modification and had been changed with God's sanction from a manifestation of speaking real languages (as in Acts 2: 1-4) to an unintelligible tongue by the time the Corinthians were using it. To the contrary, it is reasonable to assume that inasmuch as Corinth was a city with a cosmopolitan population, as it was the political and commercial hub of the province of Achaia, its citizenry was undoubtedly comprised of a great variety of nationalities, with a constant influx of commercial travelers. When Paul established the church at Corinth, it is quite possible that its members received the gift of tongues so that they would be able to reach

out to these resident aliens and foreigners in their own language.

Paul admits as much.

"That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge," he points out in his letter; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: "so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. " 1 Cor. 1:5-7.

After listing in the first eleven chapters of his letter the problems that infiltrated the Corinthian church, Paul finally arrives at the problem area.

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." 1 Cor. 12:1.

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." Verse 4.

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of *wisdom*; to another the word of *knowledge* by the same Spirit; to another *faith* by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of *healing* by the same Spirit; to another the working of *miracles*; to another *prophecy*; to another *discerning of spirits*; to another divers *kinds of tongues*; to another the *interpretation of tongues*." Verses 8-10. (Italics supplied.)

It is apparent from the outset that Paul recognized that the Corinthians possessed unwholesome views concerning the gifts of the Spirit. He compares it to ignorance. The entire list of complaints he had received indicated that the church had reverted into heathenism, and the fact that Paul devotes three chapters to tongues proves that the use of this godly gift had especially fallen into disrepute. It would have been remarkable indeed if the church, having already reverted in part to paganism, and having ignored God's guidance in almost everything else, had in some way managed to preserve the gift of tongues unblemished. Most of these Christians had a heathen background, where speaking in tongues was held in high esteem and regarded as a token of favor from the gods.

Commenting on this, Edward Schweizer wrote:

"In Corinth a conception of the Spirit of God was predominant which mixed up Holy Spirit and enthusiasm. To the Corinthians, an utterance seemed to be more godly the more miraculous it appeared. Thus glossolalia was the highest degree of spiritual maturity, just because it showed itself depending on a mysterious power which would not be identified with any natural faculty of man."—"The Service of Worship," *Interpretation*, October, 1959, p. 403.

**The ability to speak other languages ...**



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## CHAPTER 3-section 3

The ability to speak other languages had been bestowed by God as an express means to evangelize the world, and the emphasis Paul gives it shows that it had become a subject of controversy.

Setting himself squarely in the center of the conflict, he deflates the importance the Corinthians had placed on the gift. To them it had become the supreme proof of godliness, and because of its role in early Christianity, it attracted many converts. To believers in mystery religions, a new faith having a God who was really three gods in one, who gave His followers power to heal the sick, cast out demons, and speak in mysterious tongues, Paul's message must have seemed to be the ultimate. Many joined because of faith in Christ, but most assuredly others joined because of its supernatural appeal. It is presumably due to this that the gift of tongues had begun to occupy such a prominent position in the church—but now Paul moves in and gives it an entirely different place.

Twice in his admonishing letter to the Corinthians, Paul lists the various spiritual gifts, both times ending it with tongues and interpretation, which was understandably a shock to the Corinthians.

In 1 Cor. 12:8-10, he mentions seven gifts, and then, almost as an afterthought, he adds the gifts of *tongues* and *interpretation*. That this was no mistake, but done intentionally, is obvious when comparing it to the second list in verses 28-30. Here he also lists seven gifts, and once again tongues and interpretation of tongues come last of all. In the lists of spiritual gifts given in Romans 12:3-8 and Ephesians 4:7-11, they are not mentioned at all. Therefore, it was not a manifestation revealing the doctrines and power of God as were the other gifts, but only a *communications medium* to help make clear that which the new converts were to know *in their own tongue*. The very nature of these two gifts is to *communicate* something—and by ranking the other gifts of the Spirit before those of *tongues* and *interpretation*, Paul practically says that the knowledge of and about God revealed through the first five gifts is to be relayed to others through the last two gifts; for without divine thoughts and ideas to communicate, the gifts of tongues and interpretation have no value.

It is worthy of note that in three of the four listings of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:8-10; 28-30; Rom. 12:3-8; and Eph. 4:7-11), the gift of prophecy—that of "speaking for God," is listed among the top two. The references to the gifts of the Spirit in Romans and

Ephesians do not even mention tongues and interpretation.

When Paul therefore asked, "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" (1 Cor. 12:29, 30), he clearly had a reason for this repetitious text.

In the final verse of the chapter he gives the answer.

"But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way." 1 Cor. 12:31.

In Paul's opinion, the gifts so highly revered by the Corinthians, tongues and their interpretation, were not really so important. Plainly he advises them here to seek the gift with the greatest value for the church—that *of prophecy*, "speaking for God." Verse 5 of chapter 14 substantiates this: "I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying."

Thus the Corinthians had indeed placed the wrong emphasis on tongues. Rather than seeking a gift that would edify the church, they sought for a manifestation that would edify themselves (1 Cor. 14:4), and in so doing they were destroying the church.

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### **CHAPTER 3-section 4**

It became necessary for Paul to give some hard counsel, and he did not hesitate to do so. Realizing that their gift of tongues had become a communication medium without substance—for how would they be able to transmit the beauty of the gospel and the immense love of Christ if they themselves had lost the concept of its very meaning and were living in open violation of supreme love—he gave them a straightforward lecture.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal," he pointedly advised them in Chapter 13: 1, and continued, "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." 1 Cor. 13: 4-7. "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." 1 Cor. 14: 1.

Several Bible translators have throughout the years substituted the word "love" for "charity," but in either case, Paul is advising the Corinthians to reach out for those qualities that would make it impossible for them to tolerate the conditions they had brought into the church; the very ones which caused him to write the letter.

Contrary to the interpretation advanced by the charismatics, in chapter 13:1 Paul does not claim that he speaks with the tongues of men and angels. Dr. Gerhard F. Hasel of Andrews University suggests that, "Paul seems to say with hyperbole that if all linguistic possibilities including divine speech were at his disposal and he lacked love, it would mean nothing. 1 Cor. 13:1 does not provide the key to Paul's idea of 'speaking in tongues.'"

The Living Bible paraphrases 1 Cor. 13: 1 as follows: "If I had the gift of being able to speak in other languages without learning them, and could speak in every language there is in all of heaven and earth, but didn't love others, I would only be making noise."

At this point it would be well for us to recognize the subtle changes the translators have brought about in the Bible. Throughout Paul's discussion of the manifestation of tongues in Chapters 12, 13 and 14, he has used the word "tongue" or "tongues" twenty-three times. But even though in 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4, 14, 19, and 27 the adjective "unknown"

precedes the "tongue" or "tongues," nowhere can this be found in the original text! The translators who prepared the King James Version merely added it to the texts with the hope that it would help clarify the meaning. This is signified in some editions by printing it in italics.

It appears that they have accomplished just the opposite!

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## **CHAPTER 3-section 5**

Chapter 14 provides most of the statements used by glossolalists in their attempts to form a sound basis for their position, beginning with the first verse and continuing almost uninterruptedly through to verse 40. (Words supplied by the King James translators are shown within brackets here and in the following pages.) "For he that speaketh in an [unknown] tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth [him], howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an [unknown] tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying." 1 Corinthians 14:2-5.

Considering the many languages spoken in Corinth because of its cosmopolitan nature, certain members of the congregation undoubtedly were able to converse fluently in more than one "tongue" due to their association with the foreigners. Also, there must have been many who had received the "gift of tongues" supernaturally.

"Do you speak a language?" is a question often asked Americans of foreign extraction, not with the intent of inquiring into their ability to speak English, but rather to inquire if they can speak a foreign language or a foreign tongue. When someone queries, "How many languages do you speak?" they most certainly do not want to know whether the subject speaks English; that's pretty obvious. They want to know how many other languages, and this is precisely the issue in Corinthians.

When Paul states, "He that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto men but unto God," he is simply saying that if you speak with a tongue or an intelligent foreign language in church (that he is speaking of activities within the church is indicated in the remainder of the chapter), you really only speak to God, for no one else understands it. In other words, he is saying, "in the spirit he speaketh mysteries."

Prophecy! Speak for God! Paul exclaims. At least that edifies the church. The speaker in tongues, on the other hand, only edifies himself, that is, makes himself look important since he himself is his only listener.

Somewhat attempting to soften his approach, but not without failing to reemphasize his

position, Paul counsels, I wish you would all speak in languages, but I'd prefer that you'd prophesy, for that is far superior to speaking in languages unless you have it interpreted so that it may benefit the church. See 1 Cor. 14:2-5. Clearly Paul does not forbid foreigners to use their languages in the church; but he strongly desires their comments to be translated for the good of the church. Here Paul is specifically speaking to people who were employing the gift of glossolalia incorrectly within the church instead of using it to evangelize Corinth, or to those who were using a learned language within the church to make it appear that they too had received a gift from the Spirit, or lastly to those who used their native (foreign) tongue in worship services. Inasmuch as they had a common language, there was no apparent need for "tongues" within the church—hence Paul's admonition.

In verse 6 Paul goes a step further: "Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?"

Simple but straightforward counsel! Paul undoubtedly used many diverse languages on his missionary journeys. But how would it benefit the church if he should come to them speaking in tongues they were unable to understand? And then Paul makes a comparison intended to erase all possible misconceptions.

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### **CHAPTER 3-section 6**

"And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air." Verses 7-9.

His reference to trumpet sounds during battle is especially meaningful, as even in recent times military commands to retreat or attack were given via the trumpet or bugle. Only when these sounds were distinct and clear could their true meaning be understood by the armies. Confusing sounds would meet with disastrous results. Once again Paul cautions against the use of sounds other than those normally used. "For ye shall speak into the air."

Having pointed to the trumpet sound as an example to some-ex-warriors perhaps who had been converted to Christianity and who now were practicing tongues within the congregation-Paul continues by relating another example.

"There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me." Verses 10, 11.

Many Bible translations—RSV, NASB, TEV, Phillips, Weymouth, Goodspeed, Moffatt—have translated the original word used for "voices" to "languages," a meaning generally endorsed by New Testament scholars. Consequently, what Paul is referring to is that there are many languages in the world, but without knowing what the speaker is saying, both speaker and hearer will be as strangers to one another. By saying this he attempts to point out once more the absurdity of their actions, but this time he directed his counsel to those in the church who had the ability to speak either supernaturally supplied or intellectually learned languages. He continues, "wherefore let him that speaketh in an [unknown] tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in an [unknown] tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." Verses 13-15.

Different meanings may be attached to verse 13. Possibly he means that someone who

speaks in a language should pray that someone else in the congregation would receive the ability to interpret for him, or it could mean that he should pray that someone else might receive the power to explain what he had just been saying. Verse 14 points to the first conclusion, for Paul compares it to a prayer uttered in a language and continues to state that in such case the spirit prays, but the action of the mind produces no results, no fruits, and is thus "unfruitful."

In corporate worship, public prayer is offered to God as an expression of the love and devotion of the entire congregation. If spoken, however, in a "foreign" language, its function as part of the corporate worship ceases. Then in verse 15, Paul ties both the "spirit" and the "understanding" together. Dr. Waiter Specht, a New Testament theologian at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan offers this comment: "He who preaches the sermon in a worship service is speaking for God to the people. He who offers the prayer is speaking for the people to God. It requires an intelligent exercise of the mind as well as the spirit to meet this sacred responsibility."

Both spirit and understanding are a necessity for an intelligent communication in praying and in singing. Paul adds that if one prays with the spirit alone while in the company of the "unlearned" it won't give them a reason to say Amen, because they will not be able to understand the meaning of the sound they heard. Public response to a prayer has always been important. The word "Amen," Hebrew for "so be it," is a standard ending to a Christian prayer, and when members of a congregation join in a corporate prayer and make it their own, they signify this by repeating this word. Yet how could this be done if the language used in the prayer was unintelligible?

Says Paul, speaking of this type of prayer, "For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified." Verse 17.

Glossolalists invariably quote verse 18 of Chapter 14 to prove that Paul himself spoke in unknown tongues: "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." But Paul adds in the following verse: "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that [by my voice] I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an [unknown] tongue." Verse 19.

# glossolalia

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## CHAPTER 3-section 7

Paul was a world traveler. Especially endowed with the Holy Spirit, leader of a God-directed missionary movement, he journeyed from country to country, conversing with other nationalities in their native tongues. Would God limit Paul's gift of tongues to only one foreign language? Knowing Christ's desire to spread the gospel to all the world, no doubt Paul really meant that he had the ability to speak with more languages than all the others. His God entrusted him with a commission unequalled in scope and importance, and He would definitely not confine this great task to only one foreign-language area. To say that verse 18 means that Paul spoke in many different kinds of untranslatable sounds—is this not to depart from the sense of the verses that precede it?

Furthermore, in verse 19 Paul explains that (even though he speaks many languages) he would rather speak five words with understanding than ten thousand in a language. Following this, in verse 22, he makes a clear distinction between the roles tongues and prophecy are to play in the church.

"Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying [serveth] not for them that believe not, but for them which believe." Don't demonstrate your language ability to fellow believers, he counsels here, but reserve them for the unbelievers to show them that God has given you a special blessing which enables you to preach to them in their own language. Don't bring your tongues into the church, but prophecy instead, for that is given for the benefit of the believers!

He thus continued, discussing a point which no doubt had been in the center of the controversy: "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?" Verse 23.

"How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying." Verse 26.

Imagine the chaos that must have prevailed within the Corinthian church. One group speaking foreign languages, other members vying for attention to propagate a new doctrine, others claiming to have a revelation or to interpret tongues while perhaps a few true Christians prayed in quiet meditation. It is no wonder that Paul questioned, "Will they

not say that ye are mad?" A spiritual chaos such as this can never be edifying, and his admonishment, "let all things be done unto edifying" was more than necessary! The situation confronting Paul unquestionably turned unbelievers away from the church, and this he wanted to avoid at all cost.

Deeply troubled, Paul established guidelines under which the Corinthian church would be allowed to practice their spiritual gifts. Normally this counsel would not be needed, as mature Christians would not consciously misuse a gift of God. The Corinthians' immaturity in spiritual matters, however, necessitated some strict rules, and these Paul proceeded to provide.

"If any man speak in an [unknown] tongue, [let it be] by two, or at the most [by] three, and [that] by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If [anything] be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." Verses 27-31.

# **glossolalia**

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## **CHAPTER 3-section 8**

Paul does not forbid speaking in tongues, nor does he prohibit prophesying. He does insist, however, that if there are those who speak in a language, then let them do it one at a time and only then if an interpreter is present. If this is not the case, then let them speak only to God, that is, without involving the congregation. He laid down basically the same rules for the prophets. Prophesying was to be done one by one to teach and to comfort. This sounds reasonable, doesn't it? Speak in tongues one by one only if there is someone who can translate; prophesy one by one and let the others judge, using it to teach and comfort the church. Nowhere does Paul advocate that tongues are to be spoken within the church nor that prophesying was to be proclaimed outside of the church, neither does he give any indication that the tongues he was describing had undergone a change in linguistic structure since Pentecost.

In his entire letter, Paul spoke as the voice of God to an erring church. To those who still questioned his authority he warned: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order." Verses 37-40.

And with those final two adverbial qualifications Paul gave his closing exhortation to the members whose indecent behavior had brought discredit upon the church and whose disorderly conduct had greatly impeded its growth.

During the centuries following the death of Christ, the Pentecostal experience of the apostles as recorded in the book of Acts became less and less needful. In the beginning the apostles needed the gift of tongues to reach people of other languages. Next, their converts continued to carry the gospel to far-distant lands. In later years whole countries learned of the revolutionary message of love, either by missionaries or by believers who relayed the story of Christ to their home countries. As a result, the need for glossolalia greatly diminished, for the language barrier was slowly coming down. An obstacle to the spreading of the gospel had been surmounted. The gift of tongues had been given to humanity to do a specific job, and this was accomplished. Now it was up to mankind to act and to improvise.

In the earlier writings of the church fathers, tongues speaking is mentioned. Irenaeus (A.

D. 120-202), a scholar of stature, studied under Polycarp of Smyrna, who is reported to have been a personal protégé of the apostle John. Irenaeus, in "*Against Heresies*" (chapter VI, sec. 1), wrote this commentary on 1 Corinthians 2:6: "Termining those persons 'perfect' who have received the Spirit of God, and who through the Spirit of God do speak in all languages, as he used Himself also to speak. In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the Church who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God." [1](#)

The Christian apologist, Justin Martyr (A.D. 110-165) supports this in *Dialogue With Trypho*, chapter LXXXVIII, where he states: "Now it is possible to see amongst us women and men who possess gifts of the Spirit of God." [2](#)

Even Tertullian (A.D. 160-220), in his "*Against Marcion*," Book V, chapter VIII, writes concerning his acquaintanceship with the gift. In his argument with Marcion, he penned the following statement: "Let Marcion then exhibit, as gifts of his god, some prophets, such as have not spoken by human sense, but with the Spirit of God, such as have both predicted things to come, and have made manifest the secrets of the heart; let him produce a psalm, a vision, a prayer—only let it be by the Spirit, in an ecstasy that is, in a rapture, whenever an interpretation of tongues has occurred to him.... Now all these signs (of spiritual gifts) are forthcoming from my side without any difficulty, and they agree, too, with the rules, and the dispensations, and the instructions of the Creator; therefore without doubt the Christ, and the Spirit, and the apostle, belong severally to my God." [3](#)

There was every reason in heaven—and on earth—to keep glossolalia active so long as the gospel had not reached the strategic locations of the known world. Once this was accomplished and considerable inroads had been made, the gift of tongues quickly diminished.

Not until the third century after Christ did scholars and historians begin to question the whereabouts of the preaching tongues.

# glossolalia

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## CHAPTER 3-section 10

*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, in describing her "Lingua Ignota," a manuscript relaying her experiences, states: "The manuscript in eleven folios, which gives a list of nine hundred words of an unknown language, mostly nouns and only a few adjectives, a Latin, and in a few cases a German, explanation, together with an unknown alphabet of twenty-three letters, printed in Pitra." [6](#) If this was a continuation of the Pentecostal experience, then a drastic transformation must have taken place over the centuries of silence, for her sounds were strange and weird, without any comparison to either a known language or a language structure. It has received careful scrutiny from various linguists, but no one has been able to make it "fit." In fact, no one has been able to make it match certain norms to which all languages—if they are to be mediums of communication—must conform.

Much of modern glossolalia had its beginnings in the post-Reformation era. Martin Luther did not practice the gift personally in any form, but the many cults and sects which spawned from his reformatory movement soon felt the need for "exclusive" experiences and unique methods which would guarantee them their continuing contact with God on a highly personal level. The uncertainty which prevailed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was undoubtedly a major reason for this search for exclusivity and spiritual superiority.

Together with the more formal doctrines, speaking in strange, untranslatable tongues crept in and became an accepted rite in many worship services of the new sects. Again, the start was rather slow, but once the strange utterances had been judged to be of divine origin, they occurred in the weirdest places.

William Howitt in *History of the Supernatural* wrote of a happening in Amsterdam in 1566, as follows: "They climbed up the walls and over roofs like cats, made the most horrible grimaces, and spoke in foreign languages.... Sometimes they became cataleptic, were stiff as trunks of trees and might be carried about in the same manner." A scant 150 years later, the practice presented itself again, this time combined with prophesying. G. B. Cutten mentions this incident in his *The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity*. Citing an unusual phenomenon that had suddenly affected the mental ability of a large group of children belonging to the French Huguenots, he writes: "They would first swoon and become insensible to all sense impressions. Then, although they did not know French, children of three years of age and older would preach sermons three-quarters of an hour long, in correct French....They could not be stopped when once started, and they

continued in this abnormal state until they finished." Page 56.

Researcher Kelsey adds to this: "The first occurrence of (their) tongues grew out of the prophetic utterance of a ten-year-old, Isabeau Vincent, who had fled from the mistreatment of her father and had seen the king's soldiers bayonet women and children worshipping together in their own church. In an ecstatic experience, she called for repentance."—Morton T. Kelsey, *Tongue Speaking* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1964), pages 52, 53.

The Jansenists, named after their founder Cornelius Jansen, were a seventeenth century Catholic Reform movement known also for their ecstatic behavior. They also exhibited ecstatic glossolalia, usually while meditating at the tomb of the Archdeacon of Paris, a staunch defender of Jansenism. Convulsive movements, speaking in tongues, and other physical signs which resulted from their meditative actions convinced them that the Spirit of God was with them. Significant is that they believed—as do modern glossolalists—that an outside power controlled their speech organs and compelled them to utter words and convulsive signs over which they had no control.

The case of "Mother" Ann Lee (1736-1784), founder of the Shakers, focused the attention of the religious world of the eighteenth century on a renewed emphasis of the tongues. Even prior to her coming to the United States, Mother Lee had already experienced her share of trouble in England because of her high-spirited, erratic behavior. Accused of blasphemy, she was summoned to explain her actions before a group of clergymen-linguists of the Church of England. While appearing before them, she received her "gift" of the spirit and proceeded to speak to the assembled clergymen in no less than 72 different languages. At least, that is what they claimed. A number of them went even further to state that she spoke many of these languages fluently. The big question here, of course, is Where did the Church of England manage to find four ministers expertly qualified to judge the grammatical accuracy of 72 distinct languages? George W. Dollar, in referring to the Shakers' other expressions of spiritual ecstasy, writes, "The gift of tongues was also accompanied by times of unspeakable joy and dancing during which many of the hymns of the movement were composed, although made up of unintelligible and unheard-of words."—"*Church History of the Tongues Movement*," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, October-December, 1963, p. 320.

Begging for attention are two other examples of untranslatable utterings—those of the Irvingites and the Mormons. The former, operating in Britain as followers of the Scotch Presbyterian Edward Irving, evidenced a strong apocalyptic interest and became convinced that before the soon second coming of Christ the gift of tongues would return to His church. Strange sounds began to emanate from the mouths of the worshipers. Interpretations and evaluations that followed classified it as both languages and gibberish. In the opinion of R. A. Knox, its linguistic value was indeed questionable. He writes in *Enthusiasm* (London: 1950), page 553, that "specimens of Irvingite glossolaly which have been preserved to us are beyond the reach of any lexicon. Such utterances of 'Hippo gerossto niparos boorastin farini O faster sungor boorinos epoongos menati'... hardly bear out the claim that 'the languages are distinct,

well-inflected, well-compacted languages.' The philology of another world does not abide our question, but if we are to judge these results by merely human standards, we must admit that a child prattles no less convincingly."

As for the Mormons, founded by Joseph Smith (1805-1844), the principle of speaking in tongues was first introduced by him into his church in 1833 and reaffirmed in a declaration of Mormon doctrines eleven years later. It must be said, however, that the early Mormons never claimed that what was spoken was indeed a language. They did declare though that God would shape the various sounds into a language and make it meaningful.

Referring to one of those meetings, it has been reported that "it would be advertised that at a certain meeting someone would speak with tongues. When the meeting was well under way, Father Smith would call upon some illiterate brother to rise and speak in tongues in the name of Jesus Christ.

"The order was given, 'Arise upon your feet, speak or make some sound, continue to make sounds of some kind and the Lord will make a tongue or language of it.'"—C. B. Cutten, *Speaking in Tongues*, page 68.

The truth is that glossolalia did not start with Pentecost—nor did it end there! The true gift of

languages apparently disappeared when God failed to see a further necessity for its use, but the pre-Christian Satanic tongues persisted. History speaks eloquently and plainly when it comes to supplying examples of pagan glossolalia in pre-Christian times. The introduction of a true gift of languages in Acts only furnished the counterfeit with a new impetus. This now made it possible for its practitioners to confuse the issue by comparing their gift to the God-given ability, thus shedding wherever possible its heathen heritage and enshrouding its post-Christian continuation of the phenomenon with a cloak of Christian respectability.

## References

1. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950), Vol. 1, p. 531. ([return to text](#))
2. *Ibid.*, p. 243. ([return to text](#))
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, pp. 446, 447. ([return to text](#))
4. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Philip Schaff, ed. (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1898), Vol. 12, p. 168. ([return to text](#))

5. *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, pp. 497, 498. ([return to text](#))

6. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1910 ed., article "Hildegard," Vol. 7, p. 352. ([return to text](#))

# glossolalia

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### CHAPTER 3-section 9

Discussing the spiritual gifts as found in 1 Corinthians, John Chrysostom (A.D. 345-407) begins his "Homily XXIX" (on 1 Corinthians 12: 1, 2) thus: "This whole place is very obscure [referring to 1 Cor. 12:1, 2], but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place." [4](#)

Was this perhaps the crucial point where glossolalia had done its work and was no longer given? There is no reason to doubt the validity of Chrysostom's statement, especially since Augustine (A.D. 354-430) reaches practically the same conclusion. In his "*Ten Homilies on the First Epistle of St. John*," Homily VI, section 10, he writes: "In the earliest time, 'the Holy Ghost fell upon them that believed: and they spake with tongues,' which they had not learned, 'as the Spirit gave them utterance.' These were signs adapted to the times. For there behooved to be that betokening of the Holy Spirit in all tongues, to shew that the Gospel of God was to run through all tongues over the whole earth. That thing was done for a betokening, and it passed away." [5](#)

Some theologians have tried to build a case for a continuation of the supernatural languages on the basis of an isolated questionable example (Montanus), but after having been manifested in strength in the apostolic age and possibly up into the third century, it faded from the scene, and no historian since that time has ever uncovered concrete evidence to the contrary. If it had remained within the church, the writings of other church fathers of those early centuries surely would have referred to this "gift of the spirit" in glowing terms, as it was a major manifestation of God-power. The gift was so controversial and so clearly supernatural from its inception that a continuation of it could hardly have gone unnoticed.

True glossolalia disappeared because of its decreasing need-but what about the other "gift of tongues," the gibberish, the senseless syllables that resembled the devil worship of the pagans?

Occult practitioners maintain that it has never disappeared, but has remained active within the coves of the witches, the magicians' caves, and the seance rooms of the mediums. Theirs is a satanic counterfeit, for God would never manifest Himself in this manner within their circles. Even then their gift lay semidormant until a full thousand years after Christ, when a woman, Hildegard, Prophet of the Rhine, (A.D. 1098-1179)

forced it back into the limelight.

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### Chapter 1, Section 1

#### Deepening Furrows

The charismatic movement is beginning to deepen the furrows it has plowed into the smug complacency of the main-line churches, and indications are that the furrows will remain. With more than 40 different denominations actively involved, with millions of dissatisfied Christians longing for a deeper personal experience with Christ, and with the ever expanding circles of influence flowing out from the thousands of prayer groups that dot the world, we seem to be standing on the threshold of an uncontrollable emotional high that could change the total image of Christianity.

Only yesterday, major national publications compared the movement in importance to the activities surrounding the Protestant Reformation. (See *Time*, Nov. 2, 1962; *Life*, June 9, 1958.) But perhaps without realizing it, they were speaking prophetically; for its influence has breached the dikes of human intellect and is tearing at the seams of every church.

What's so different about that? Hasn't every major modification in doctrine had this effect on organized religious life?

Certainly it has—but the charismatic movement has pointedly deviated from the established ways and has based its *reason* on *feeling*, not its emotion on intellect, and the result is a development that some find frightening.

At issue in any typical discussion you may have with any charismatic is the question of whether or not the "uncommitted" has received the Holy Spirit.

"If you don't speak in tongues, you don't have the Spirit," is a common assertion. "Only when you can exhibit the language of the Holy Spirit can you be sure that the Spirit resides within you."

This is official doctrine, notwithstanding the disclaimers issued by some.

The Assemblies of God, the Pentecostal group par excellence, have gone on record with the following statement of doctrine:

"Resolved, That this Council considers it a serious disagreement with Fundamentals for any minister among us to teach contrary to our distinctive testimony that the baptism in the Holy Ghost is regularly accomplished by the initial, physical sign of speaking in other tongues."—Cited by Carl Brumback, *Suddenly From Heaven* (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1961), page 223.

What they are actually doing is this. They are claiming that you must test your Christian experience by whether or not you have the gift of tongues. At least you have to be able to exhibit something supernatural or spectacular to prove your Holy connection. What does the Bible say to this?

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we *live* in the Spirit, let us also *walk* in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Galatians 5:22-26. (Italics supplied.)

According to Luke 11:13, the Holy Spirit will be granted to everyone who will ask for it. "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Jesus says. This is sound Christian doctrine, for if we were required to do something in order to receive the Spirit, then we would have salvation by works. But it is also plain that someone would not or should not be asking for the Spirit unless he really meant to live in such a manner as a life in Christ would indicate.

In the charismatics' experience, love is to be the supreme experience. Naturally they call upon the Holy Spirit with sincerity—but theirs is basically a doctrine of love, and to them nothing is to surpass this.

Since God is the embodiment of Love, one has to assume that love includes a deep fellowship with God the Son—not just in words but also in deeds. But discussing with a charismatic the relationship of love to sincerity is much like playing a game of spiritual poker.

[Are we playing spiritual poker?](#)

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## Chapter 1, Section 2

### Are we playing Spiritual Poker?

The religious writer, Ellen G. White, questioned this attitude in her book *The Great Controversy*: "The sanctification now gaining prominence in the religious world carries with it a spirit of self-exaltation and a disregard for the law of God that mark it as foreign to the religion of the Bible. Its advocates teach that sanctification is an instantaneous work, by which, through faith alone, they attain to perfect holiness. 'Only believe,' they say, 'and the blessing is yours.' No further effort on the part of the receiver is supposed to be required. At the same time they deny the authority of the law of God, urging that they are released from obligation to keep the commandments. But is it possible for men to be holy, in accord with the will and character of God, without coming into harmony with the principles which are an expression of His nature and will, and which show what is well pleasing to Him?"—Page 471.

Her reasoning is fully supported by the Bible.

"If a man love me, he will keep my words," Jesus said: "and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" John 14:23.

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." Verse 21.

"He that loveth me not *keepeth not my sayings*: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." Verse 24. (Italics supplied.)

Spiritual charades are of no consequence in the face of such evidence of God's requirements. Love, according to Christ, results in willing adherence to God's commandments, and the fact that one doesn't keep His commandments indicates that love toward God may be lacking. A super intellect is not needed to absorb the meaning of those texts. Proclaiming faith in love without exhibiting a love for Christ expressed in keeping all his laws is a useless exercise in verbal banality.

There is, however, one more Bible text which should be heard, inasmuch as it shows the connection between true love and the Holy Spirit.

In Christ's own words (John 14:15-17), He explains this relationship.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the *Spirit of truth*; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (Italics supplied.)

Even though the Holy Spirit will be granted to those who ask for His presence, the gift is dependent on *believing* in Christ and *keeping* His commandments. Christ finally honors this trust and faith in Him with the bestowing of the Holy Spirit, whom He calls the "Spirit of truth."

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." John 16:13.

**[Sanctification is a continuous process](#)**

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## Chapter 1, Section 3

### **Sanctification is a continuous process**

Sanctification is a continuous process also known as growing in truth. This cannot be accomplished without conscientious Bible study, yet, once a glossolalist has received the "Spirit," all further development of truth in him is usually ended. He is convinced that through his experience he has received Heaven's approval and that additional spiritual development will be a spontaneous act of God—not the result of his growing toward perfection through following the "Spirit of truth."

It is not the spectacular that proves godliness. Even in His own life, Christ used His miracles mostly for the purpose of service to humanity. When King Herod wanted Him to perform a miracle, Christ refused even to speak a word to him, least of all to demonstrate His supernatural powers. They wanted Him to come down from the cross to prove His divinity, but again He refused; for Christ did not involve Himself in the spectacular for the sake of vanity.

The opposite, however, is often true of the charismatics today. In a recent discussion, Gary Patterson, pastor of the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists, enlarged on this:

"As things become less spectacular, they tend to become more significant. Being overawed with the spectacular is not exactly the way to build a personal relationship with someone," he pointed out. "God seeks a personal relationship with His people, and that is what salvation is all about; to restore us to a face-to-face relationship with God.

"It may sometimes be necessary for God to use the supernatural to reach us, but after He has done that, He desires to teach us with His own wisdom. Jesus came to us in a spectacular manner, but it would have been impossible for Him to do an effective work in that fashion. It became necessary for Him to go away and send the Holy Spirit, which admittedly is less spectacular, that He might teach us and lead us into all truth.

"The Christian who wishes to stay with the spectacular and never moves on to an understanding will never really know God. The spectacular can be counterfeited, and a mind that never moves on to a higher plane of thinking will be taken in."

Another point easy to ignore is that none of the great men of the Old Testament are reported to have spoken in tongues in their endeavor for God. Spiritual giants such as Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Elijah, Samuel, and David can certainly be ranked among God's own men. No exercise of glossolalia is recorded of any of them. Michael contended with the devil for the body of Moses, and Moses was subsequently taken to heaven; he was certainly filled with the Spirit, but again, no gift of tongues! Isaiah was one of the greatest of prophets; Samuel was a man who spoke for God in a most difficult time, but here, too, the gift of tongues was nowhere to be found. And even King David, a poet and songwriter, and a "man after God's own heart" lacked tongues but certainly not the Spirit.

The New Testament relates basically the same story about many of its great men of God. John the Baptist, the "voice crying in the wilderness," was sent by God to prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah without the use of glossolalia. John Mark, the author of the book of Mark, does not mention the phenomenon in his Gospel. Lazarus, the resurrected friend of Jesus did not have the ability. James, the author of the epistle of James has nothing to say about the gift-and he was the brother of Christ!

Can we honestly believe that all these men of God lacked the Holy Spirit in their lives? It is a conclusion I find hard to accept.

[Read Chapter 2 - The Mysterious Tongue](#)

# glossolalia

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### Chapter 2, Section 1

#### THE MYSTERIOUS TONGUE

Are the "tongues" of the glossolalists real languages, as they claim? The problem is to establish the exact meaning of the word.

*Webster's New International Dictionary*, Second edition, gives the following definitions for the word "language":

1.a. "Audible articulate human speech as produced by the action of the tongue and adjacent vocal organs, *b*. The body of words and methods of combining words used and understood by a considerable community, esp. when fixed and elaborated by long usage.... 2. In the usual sense, *language* means a system of conventionalized signs, esp. words or gestures having fixed meanings."

Based on this standard definition, it becomes obvious that no matter where a language is spoken, to be classified as such it must be understood by a large number of people; it has to be of such uniformity that it can be learned; and consequently, it cannot be gibberish. "Not so!" says Howard M. Ervin of the Graduate School of Theology of the Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

"'When we speak our native tongue, we speak the words that are in our minds, words that in choice, inflection, nuance, and color manifest our personalities. When we speak in 'tongues,' as the Holy Spirit gives utterance, we speak those words that are in the mind of the Spirit, words that manifest his personality unfettered by the censorship of the human ego. These words are, therefore, an exquisitely personal self-manifestation of the Holy Spirit.'"—Howard M. Ervin, "As the Spirit Gives Utterance," *Christianity Today*, April 11, 1969.

Harold Horton, a British tongues advocate, makes this emphatic statement:

"Then there is the notion abroad that tongues are a kind of gibberish, incoherent and unintelligible, a series of uninterpretable glossal noises. No, tongues were and are languages. They are mostly unknown to the hearers and always to the speakers. But they might on occasion be known to the hearers, as at Pentecost, where the tongues were unknown as they were spoken and known as they were heard."—*The Gifts of the Spirit*

(Bedfordshire, England: Redemption Tidings Bookroom, 1946), pages 159, 160.

In other words, glossolalists are thought to speak the language of the Holy Spirit; the language of heaven; or, as the charismatics like to express it, "the language of angels—the language used by the Holy Spirit for communication with God." Imagine! A holy language of such complicated nature that the human mind cannot grasp its syntax, grammar, or meaning; furthermore, a language granted only to those who are worthy of receiving it. Being a spiritual language of the high celestial beings, it is thought to be international—in fact, *intergalactic*, and therefore able to cross all known and unknown boundaries.

It is no wonder that the charismatics feel closer to God when using their unknown tongue, for the very idea of being a confidant of the Holy Spirit, having the chance to speak a language thus far reserved for the Spirit to communicate with God and the angels, is sufficient to put most people into a spiritual high.

What is ignored here by the charismatic enthusiasts is that the human questions regarding the unusual and confusing structure of these "tongues" remain unanswered.

Most Pentecostals and charismatics, when asked to describe their "tongue," term it "beautiful" and "exquisite." To them, it is not just an emotional experience but also an esthetic one. Because of this, judging it without having solid evidence to the contrary becomes a futile undertaking.

It is this "beautiful" and "exquisite" tongue that has become the subject of numerous investigations by prominent linguists, psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, and others; and even though their professional approach usually differs, the overwhelming consensus of opinion is that the sounds that reach us via the charismatics are not languages at all.

[Comparing voice samples](#)

# glossolalia

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## Chapter 2, Section 2

### Comparing Voice Samples

After comparing many different voice samples recorded under controlled conditions while charismatics exhibited their "gift of the spirit," Eugene Nida, renowned linguist of the American Bible Society, describing one specific recording, gives this report:

"The types of inventory and distribution would indicate clearly that this recording bears little resemblance to any actual language, which has ever been treated by linguists.... If then, it is not a human language, what is it? One can only say that it is a form of 'ecstatic speech.'... On the basis of what I have learned about this type of phenomena of 'tongues' in other parts of the world, apparently there is the same tendency to employ one's own inventory of sounds, in nonsense combinations, but with simulated 'foreign' features. At least in West Africa and Latin America, the types of glossolalia employed seemed to fit into this description."—Cited by V. R. Edman, chancellor of Wheaton College in "Divine or Devilish?" *Christian Herald*, May, 1964.

William Welmes, professor of African languages at the University of California at Los Angeles, speaks out even more frankly. Here is his statement: "And I must report without reservation that my sample does not sound like a language structurally. There can be no more than two contrasting vowel sounds, and a most peculiarly restricted set of consonant sounds; these combine into a very few syllable clusters which recur many times in various orders. The consonants and vowels do not all sound like English (the glossolaliac's native language), but the intonation patterns are so completely American English that the total effect is a bit ludicrous." *Christianity Today*, Nov. 8, 1963.

Among linguists, there are few men who are so eminently qualified to evaluate glossolalia as William Samarin, professor of anthropology and linguistics at the University of Toronto. After extensive research in this field for the first comprehensive study of speaking in tongues, he has presented a linguistic analysis unequalled in its thoroughness.

Says Samarin, after comparing all phases of the phenomena: "There is no mystery about glossolalia. Tape-recorded samples are easy to obtain and to analyze. They always turn out to be the same thing; strings of syllables, made up of sounds taken from among all those that the speaker knows, put together more or less haphazardly but which nevertheless emerge as word-like and sentence-like units because of realistic, language-

like rhythm and melody. Glossolalia is indeed like language in some ways, but this is only because the speaker [unconsciously] wants it to be like language. Yet in spite of superficial similarities, glossolalia is fundamentally *not* language. All specimens of glossolalia that have ever been studied have produced no features that would even suggest that they reflect some kind of communicative system."-William J. Samarin, *Tongues of Men and Angels* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), page 227.

Samarin also maintains that, based on his all-inclusive investigation, he has ascertained that glossolalia has no grammar because it is a *phenomenon* operating without a set of rules which would enable another person to "learn" the "language." What's more—and here he is in agreement with other scholars—"these transcriptions will always expose the linguistic deviant nature of a glossolaliac's discourse, notwithstanding the charismatist's claim that glossolalia is neither repetitious nor meaningless banality."-*Ibid.*, p. 78. Significant is his comment on the fact that a person's own linguistic background influences the sounds he utters while speaking the "language of the Holy Spirit."

"What is interesting about these similarities as far as linguists and other social scientists are concerned," he says, "is the all-pervasive influence of one's linguistic knowledge. A human being simply cannot avoid being influenced by the patterns of language once he has acquired its use."—*Ibid.*, p. 121.

[Is heaven really so complicated?](#)

# glossolalia

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## Chapter 2, Section 3

### Is heaven really so complicated?

The "language" produced by a Russian charismatic, for example, looks and sounds entirely different from that emanating from the mouth of a Latin American, and the Chinese utterances are so unlike those of their Norwegian spiritual counterparts that to speak of "a language" of the Holy Spirit would seem absurd. How can one justify the belief that heaven is so complicated that even the Holy Spirit needs several thousand languages to communicate with God? A Trinity of which He Himself is a part!

There are Pentecostalists and charismatics who hold the position that no one can know all of the 3,000 languages in use today, and that a rule which seems valid for one group of languages does not necessarily apply to another group. To this, William E. Welmens is opposed.

"We do know something about representative languages of every known language family in the world," Welmens writes in his letter, previously mentioned, in *Christianity Today*. "I am by no means unique among descriptive linguists in having had direct, personal contact with well over a hundred languages representing a majority of the world's language families, and in having studied descriptions of languages of virtually every reported type. If a glossolalic were speaking in any of the thousand languages of Africa, there is about a 90 percent chance that I would know it in a minute."

The allegation that tongues are indeed languages—regardless of contrasting expert opinion—has reverberated up into the highest echelons in the land. As a result, the Federal government financed a scientific study into these claims and uncovered not only valuable pertinent information but also indications of noteworthy side effects.

The research project, initiated in 1965 at the Lutheran Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York, by Dr. John P. Kildahl and Dr. Paul A. Qualben, reached some valuable conclusions. One of importance is that there is undoubtedly a tendency of the tongues speakers to be more submissive, more suggestive and dependent in the presence of "authority figures." It was also stated that it was not necessarily the speaking in tongues that made them feel "better" than those around them, but that it was the submission to the authority of the leader in the prayer group that brought about the much desired state of euphoria.

William Samarin, who assisted in the inquiry, related in *Christianity Today* that where certain prominent tongues speakers had visited, entire groups of glossolalists would speak in his style. Regarding this, the report continues, "So again, the leader was important not only in inducement of the experience, but also in the way in which it was carried out."—Nov. 24, 1967, p. 39.

In the opinion of the researchers—and again we glean our information from this report—the ability to yield ego in the presence of the one with authority is indispensable to speaking in tongues. Of the accompanying gift of interpretation, the report said, "There was no similarity in the interpretation of the various 'interpreters.' One interpreter said the tongues speaker was praying for the health of his children; another interpreter would report the same speech to be an expression of gratitude to God for a recently successful church fund-raising effort. The most common interpretations were general statements that the speaker was thanking and praising God for many blessings."

Questions, anyone?

**Information is ignored**

# glossolalia

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### Chapter 2, Section 4

#### Information is generally known, but ignored

Much of the above material is known to many charismatics, but largely ignored. To them a personal contact with the "Holy Ghost" shrinks to insignificance all evidence not in harmony with their gift. The real meaning of the work of the true Spirit to lead men "into the truth" has been reduced to allowing it to operate the spectacular phenomena of the tongues speakers. To them, a personal contact with "something" unseen, resulting in an uncontrollable manifestation vaguely reminiscent of the events of Pentecost, is superior to a prayer contact with the everlasting God of the universe.

The advances of the "Holy Spirit" on the minds of humanity are widely heralded through organizations such as the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, the Blessed Trinity Society, and the many Protestant and Catholic charismatic groups. The approach or method by which the Spirit is introduced to the uncommitted does not appear to be as important as the ultimate results. Because of this, many of the nation's top tongues advocates advise the use of proven methods to "guarantee" a direct voice-contact with the "Holy Spirit."

Dutch Reformed minister Harold Bredesen, chairman of the board of the Blessed Trinity Society and one of the outspoken leaders in the tongues movement, advised the students at Yale University to adhere to the following guidelines:

"(1) To think visually and concretely, rather than abstractly: for example to try to visualize Jesus as a person; (2) consciously to yield their voices and organs of speech to the Holy Spirit; (3) to repeat certain elementary sounds which he told them, such as 'bah-bah bah' or something similar. He then laid his hands on the head of each seeker, prayed for him and *the seeker did actually speak in tongues*."—Cited by Stanley D. Walters, "Speaking in Tongues," *Youth in Action*, May, 1964. (Italics supplied.)

Was it effective? Not everyone really thinks so.

"Of the students involved, some later became unsure that the outbreak was a genuine work of the Spirit. I talked to one who had spoken in tongues when Mr. Bredesen first visited the campus, could do so later whenever he wished, and on his own initiative *did so in my presence*, yet doubted that it was a work of the Spirit. A devout Christian, he was

genuinely perplexed."—Waiters, *op. cit.*, p. 10. I cannot help thinking of the early Mormon example, when Joseph Smith told his followers, "Arise upon your feet, speak or make some sound, continue to make sounds of some kind, and the Lord will make a tongue or language out of it."

The Reverend Christensen, a Lutheran minister and a tongues speaker, advised the following: "In order to speak in tongues, you have to quit praying in English. You simply lapse into silence and resolve to speak not a syllable of any language you have ever learned. Your thoughts are focused on Christ, and then you simply lift up your voice and speak out confidently, in the faith that the Lord will take the sound you give him and shape it into a language. You take no thought of what you are saying: as far as you are concerned, it is just a series of sounds. The first sounds will sound strange and unnatural to your ear, and they may be halting and inarticulate (have you ever heard a baby learning to talk?)."—Cited by John Miles, "Tongues," *Voice*, February, 1965.

[The Prescription is Given](#)

# glossolalia

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## Chapter 2, Section 5

### God will never force His way into a human life.

So here is the prescription and a simple one at that. To receive the "Holy Ghost," the charismatics say, just empty your mind and think of Jesus; focus your thoughts on Christ. Yes, but even the devil does this. Thus, that in itself is no guarantee of a direct contact with Christ. But next, while in a mental void, bypassing the intellect, begin to utter sounds, perhaps "strange and unnatural to your ear"; but be confident, for they say, "this is the beginning of your speaking the language of heaven." Another prayer instruction urges its participants to repeat the same words over and over and over again until after approximately ten or more minutes the supplicant starts to stumble over his words. "Talk faster than you normally would," they exhort, "this will help you to reach the stage where the Holy Spirit takes over." In relation to these activities, Raymond Frame, a former missionary, justly warns: "Evil spirits can easily find opportunity to operate in the believer's emotional life—especially when the believer is persuaded to suspend all intellectual activity and to yield his will over to an invisible intelligence (whom the Christian, of course, is persuaded to regard as being the Holy Spirit Himself). For this reason the child of God who becomes preoccupied with that least of all gifts, tongues, places himself in a particularly vulnerable position in relation to the danger of demon depression, obsession, or actual possession."—Raymond Frame, "Something Unusual," *His*, December, 1963, p. 26.

To this view every true Christian will agree: God will never force His way into a human life; but Satan, seeing a void mind eagerly begging for a manifestation of the supernatural, will gladly move in and create within him a counterfeit experience, reputedly caused by the Holy Spirit. Would it be presumptuous to think that Satan might direct tempting power to those who are eagerly reaching beyond Christ for a "shortcut" to salvation?

To what extent a number of tongues speakers will go to make themselves available to the influx of their "Holy Spirit" is quoted by Samarin: "Keeping one's hands lifted seems to be (or to have been) one of the traditional Pentecostal practices. Several of my respondents refer to instructions about how one was to hold his mouth and breathe."—Samarin, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

J.E. Styles may have been the propagator of this form of inducement. He writes:

"Recently I have discovered, through observation of a number of people, that those people who will open their mouths up wide will break forth speaking with tongues more clearly and easily than those who do not. Opening the mouth and breathing in constitutes a step of faith that God will honor."

Others claim still different experiences while pleading for the Spirit. It has been reported that Cho Yonggi, a converted Buddhist and presently a minister in Seoul, Korea, tells the following story in connection with his prayer for Divine intervention: "I saw the Lord ... and I said to Him, 'Yes, Jesus, I will preach your gospel.' I tried to touch His feet. As soon as I touched His clothes, what seemed to be a thousand volts of electricity flowed into me and I began to shake. Then strange words came to my mouth and I began to speak in other tongues." Quoted by Gromacki, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

At this point more examples of the unusual behavior and phenomena associated with many of the tongues advocates and speakers can be furnished; their often exorbitant claims are simply too overwhelming. It may, however, be more appropriate to compare today's desperate attempts with the original Pentecostal experience and see where or if the two harmonize.

[So, what are the facts?](#)

### Chapter 2, Section 6

#### What are the Facts?

Let's enumerate the basic facts as found in the story of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

1. The apostles were in Jerusalem.
2. They were waiting for Jesus to fulfill His promise.
3. They were all with one accord in one place.
4. They heard a sound as of a mighty rushing wind.
5. It filled all the house.
6. They were sitting when it occurred.
7. The Holy Ghost filled them.
8. Cloven tongues as of fire descended upon them.
9. They received the ability to speak with other tongues, which were understood as foreign languages by the hearers.

In this first example of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit found in the New Testament, there is no indication that the disciples (a) prayed specifically to get the Holy Spirit, (b) prayed for one another to receive the Holy Spirit, (c) laid hands upon one another at that time to receive the Holy Spirit, (d) were assembled to witness to one another with tongues, or (e) went through spiritual practice sessions to ready themselves for the reception of the Holy Spirit.

In the second example, Acts 10:44-46, the Holy Ghost fell on Peter's listeners *while he was still preaching*, and they began to speak in tongues. Again, no desperate prayers, no repetition of disconnected syllables, no laying on of hands, no practice sessions.

The third example is again different, for Acts 19:2-6 shows us that the Holy Ghost was received after true repentance (baptism), and for the first time the laying on of hands, manifesting itself in the ability to speak with tongues. But here too, we have no indication that they either prayed for themselves or that Paul prayed for them, thereby preparing the way for the Holy Spirit.

Again the question, Why do the charismatics use the Pentecostal experience of the disciples as their prime example? If their reception of the Holy Spirit is to equal this all-

important outpouring, then why are so many essential elements missing?

1. They are not patiently waiting for Jesus to fulfill His promise.
2. They do have an uncontrollable desire to produce the spectacular.
3. The "spirit" is not accompanied by the sound of a mighty rushing wind.
4. The phenomenon of cloven tongues as of fire descending upon them is strangely absent.

So the charismatics' experience cannot be based on Pentecost; it does not run parallel to Acts 10:44-46; and it certainly cannot be based on Acts 19:2-6, as that has been eliminated too.

This leaves only one conclusion: The claim that their gift of tongues is founded on, or equated with, New Testament experiences is erroneous. Their ability to speak untranslatable gibberish is real, and goes unchallenged—the linguists testify to that—but that this should be placed on a high spiritual level and be the result of the workings of the Holy Spirit seems unsupportable from the Biblical record. We do not question anyone's sincerity; just the source.

**[The spurious tongues are not \*Biblical\*](#)**

# glossolalia

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### Chapter 2, Section 7

#### **Spurious tongues are not *Biblical***

So, the spurious tongues are not *Biblical*; they are not *Godly*, and they are not the result of the presence of the Holy Spirit. This does not imply, however, that somewhere, today, God may not see the need to supply one of His people with actual foreign-language ability in order to allow them to bring the gospel into a spiritually dark area. This always remains God's prerogative. But the gift of tongues as manifested in the charismatic movement today can certainly not be ranked in this category.

Being a socioreligious phenomenon, glossolalia has aroused the interest of many social scientists; and being quite outspoken, many of these investigators have made no attempt to conceal their feelings or conclusions.

George B. Cutten, often criticized for his blunt views, maintains that "whatever may be predicted of the psychological conditions of speaking in tongues in the New Testament, it is evident that the experience since then may be classified as ecstasy or allied phenomena. In ecstasy there is a condition of emotional exaltation, in which the one who experiences it is more or less oblivious to the external world, and loses to some extent his self-consciousness and his power of rational thought and self-control. —*Speaking with Tongues Historically and Psychologically Considered*, page 157.

A study conducted by J.N. Lapsley and J.H. Simpson of Princetown Seminary supports Cutten in this. In their research they noted among the tongues speakers the presence of "uncommonly troubled people," who exhibited "more anxiety and personality instability than non-Pentecostals of the same socioeconomic backgrounds."—"Speaking in Tongues," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, LXIII, 1965, pp. 3-18.

Dr. Samarin's research has provided him with the scientifically supported conviction that anyone can acquire glossolalia. According to him it is simply for the asking.

"The only necessary, and perhaps sufficient requirement for becoming a glossolalist," Samarin concludes, "seems to be a profound desire on the part of an individual for a new or better religious experience." "Glossolalia as Learned Behavior," *Canadian Journal of Theology*, 15, 1969, pp. 60-64.

Throughout all the opinions advanced by scholars, one common thought pervades—that of attributing the strange tongues to an emotional disturbance, usually excluding the probability of an outside supernatural catalyst.

Says Robert R. Gustafson, "In fact, the phenomenon called tongues today appears to provide not only a psychic release from emotional disturbances, but it also appears to provide an emotional high by which one is able to escape momentarily from inward problems and conflicts."—Eiobert R. Gustafson, *Authors of Confusion* (Tampa, Fla.: Grace Publishing Company, 1971), page 80. Attributing this disturbance to religious emotionalism, others express it in more ecclesiastical tones.

"When an unstable or eccentric person, in his search for light or for power, hears of some mysterious experiences of this man or that, he almost invariably hopes that such strange things also may happen to him, " says Dr. Stolee. "His heart is set on this; his prayers center on it. The beatific 'visions,' the 'being in the Spirit' that others claim as their lot he must have at whatever cost. He can and will not take refuge in the plain promises of Christ, but must have some external sign of some inward ecstasy as proof of the 'spirit baptism.'

"If then, he knows no rivers of living waters flowing out from his life, if no thrill grips him, if no token appears, he is disappointed even unto despair. He envelops spirit fever. All because the mysterious 'baptism' on which he had set his heart is missing."—H. J. Stolee, *Speaking in Tongues* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), page 81.

If you have ever witnessed a committed charismatic in action, then you have no difficulty in accepting Dr. Stolee's argument, for once set on receiving the Holy Spirit, the aspirant tongues speaker will stop at nothing to reach the desired state of spiritual bliss.

[The Super-emotional State](#)

# glossolalia

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## Chapter 2, Section 8

### The Super-emotional State

Studying and comparing examples of tongues and the descriptions of those who uttered them at the very peak of their ecstatic experience have supplied me with sufficient indications that one can speak of a super-emotional state during which the subject appears to be entirely out of reach from his surroundings. Dr. Goodman has observed the same behavior and writes, "The glossolalist does indeed behave differently from ordinary language speakers. ... We may now suggest that glossolalia be defined as an event of vocalization while the speaker is in a state of disassociation termed TRANCE."—"Phonetic Analysis of Glossolalia in Four Cultural Settings," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, VIII, 1969, pp. 227-239.

There have been many religious reasons given for the sudden growth of the charismatic movement, but with atomic regularity many researchers keep coming back to the emotional instability as being one of the most dominant factors. Perhaps they have a case, for our society is less sane than it used to be.

Dr. Gordon B. Hamilton, a Washington, D.C., psychiatrist, concurs. "In the past decade, and particularly in the past five years, the general level of sanity has gone down. Conversely, cases of inferiority complex, melancholia, neurasthenia, and psychoneurosis have increased sharply."—Associated Press Dispatch as quoted in *Speaking in Tongues*, by H. J. Stolee, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

Dr. Hamilton has touched upon a sensitive area, for it has long been known to researchers that mental instability is indeed one of the recognized avenues to the Pentecostal experience. There is little doubt in their mind that the charismatic movement is just as much psychological as spiritual. It has been said that when speaking in tongues, the subjects enter a "pathological condition which is a perversion of the God-intended function of the brain. It is toying with this delicate precision instrument with which God has gifted us. It is transforming the seat of rationality into an irrational machine. In doing so," Donald W. Burdick comments, "a person contravenes God's purpose for man as a rational being."—*Tongues—To Speak or Not to Speak*, (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1969), pages 84, 85.

At this point, we must become very selective. While many social scientists blame mental

aberrations *alone* for a person's interest in Pentecostalism—and it must be admitted honestly that in a number of instances there is a close connection—speaking in tongues is not always the result of a sick state of mind. But here, too, the researchers hold contrasting views. The verbal barrage of disconnected vocal sounds, emitted under great stress, is, irrespective of what triggers the phenomenon, made up of sounds stored in the subject's mind; and, according to psychiatrist Stuart Bergsma, there is a close relationship between this and cybernetics, the storage system on which modern computers operate.

Looking at the phenomenon with a clinical eye, Bergsma writes: "Obviously nothing can come out of each individual brain that was not once previously stored there. Material stored may be altered, fragmented, confused, distorted, but cannot be humanly created. Also it is obvious that language ... which comes out as language in glossolalia, must have been introduced somehow in that person's life. Even if that person was not conscious he or she had heard those words or that a memory engram was being recorded, these had nevertheless been recorded there. This will explain the very few cases of modern glossolalia [intelligent foreign languages], *if there are any*."—Stuart Bergsma, "Speaking With Tongues," *Torch and Trumpet*, November, 1964, p. 10. (Italics supplied.)

His first conclusion is valid. The very fact that Pentecostalists in various countries use intonations and inflections common to their native tongue in their glossolical discourse, enabling the impartial parties to identify a tongue's national origin, more than proves his point. They take the sounds that have been stored in their brain and reproduce them in a disconnected fashion while "in the spirit." However, it is his position that *foreign languages* must also have been introduced sometime in a person's mind before they can emerge as *intelligent* glossolalia, that puts him in contrast with the Biblical interpretation of the gift of tongues. The Bible states that in New Testament times these were given as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit—not to show an occurrence of human recall. He completely ignores the possibility of supernatural intervention in the mind of men and denies the existence or even the likelihood of God-inspired utterings.

The ecstatic tongues were judged correctly by Dr. Abraham Kuyper, the late Dutch theologian, long before they had ever become a social status symbol. Said he: "This [the tongues] is not due to man's thinking but in consequence of an entirely different operation. That this is possible we see, first, in delirious persons who say things outside of their own personal thinking; second, in the insane, whose incoherent talk has no sense; third, in persons possessed, whose vocal organs are used by demons. ... Hence it must be concluded ... that the use of these [vocal] organs *may be appropriated by a spirit who has overcome them*." And this is exactly the direction our findings have led us!

There is a deceptiveness in glossolalia that is subtle, religiously oriented, and capable of infecting those who are desperate in their search for new light. This sense of desperation is precisely the spark which can explode the human psyche and hurl the seekers into an experience which they think is similar to the one that accompanied the New Testament outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Being surrounded by others who claim the same emotional upheaval, their sincerity and reasoning goes unchallenged; yet this is in itself no proof of the Biblical validity of what has overcome them. It is the sincere devotion to an "all-

inclusive faith" that has trapped them into a counterfeit manifestation; an experience which does *not* measure up to the Biblical standards governing the gifts of the Spirit.

**[Read Chapter 3 — Who Really Controls the Tongue?](#)**

# glossolalia

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## Chapter 3, Section 1

### Who really controls the tongue?

To a Christian, the existence of an invisible adversary, a devil who is determined to destroy humanity with superhuman power, is a reality. That this same being was also the first to ignite the spark of evil in the heavenly courts is also a matter of inspired record.

More than that, however, Christian theology accepts as factual the Biblical concept that the resulting agonizing encounter between good and evil is to last until the final days of human reckoning.

It is precisely this cosmic war that has necessitated the introduction of inspired prophets on the world scene to act as relay points for the constant stream of heavenly communications directed at the earthbound sinner; for it is here, on earth, that the final battle between the two opposing powers will reach its dramatic climax. And all of the universe will be there to watch it.

One of the greatest prophets of all times, John the Revelator, was especially entrusted with a dramatic disclosure of the stupendous prophecies affecting suffering mankind. Amidst scenes of glory surpassing fantasy, symbolic prophecies describing threatening judgments were beamed at John. Frightening and severe are Jesus' revelations of the momentous events to take place under the seventh seal. Under this seal, seven angels are entrusted with specific tasks, and when the sixth angel (Revelation 16:12) pours out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, it happens!

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet," John faithfully relayed. "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Revelation 16:13, 14.

Who are these spirits? Some interpreters of Revelation regard them as manifestations of *spiritualistic power*, working through the three great religious divisions of mankind, paganism, Roman apostasy, and apostate Protestantism.

But, you may say, We have not as yet reached the time reserved for the seventh seal—and you are right! We are, in fact, still laboring under the handicaps of the sixth; but it is *now*, during this last segment of the sixth seal that the devil power of the spirits is beginning to make its initial inroads into the three religious groupings.

Says Uriah Smith, in his *Daniel and the Revelation*, a classic commentary of these books of the Bible, "The agencies which Heaven designs to employ in the accomplishments of certain ends go through a process of preliminary preparation for the part which they are to enact. Thus, before the spirits can have such absolute authority over the race as to gather them to battle against the King of kings and Lord of lords, they must first win their way among the nations of the earth, and *cause their teaching to be received as of divine authority, and their word as law*. This work they are now doing, and when they shall have once gained full influence over the nations in question, what fitter instrument could be employed to gather them to so rash and hopeless an enterprise?"—1944 rev. ed., page 699. (Italics supplied.)

And indeed, since the beginning of the modern reintroduction of spiritualistic power in the 1840's in Hydesville, New York, a new unwholesome influence has rekindled the dying flames of paganism and superstition throughout the world. One of the movement's own leaders tells us why.

[The Plain Simple Truth of Modern Spiritualism](#)

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## Chapter 3, Section 2

### The Plain, Simple Truth of Modern Spiritualism

"Shall we come down to the plain simple truth, that the phenomenal aspects of Modern Spiritualism reproduce all the essential principles of the Magic, Witchcraft, and Sorcery of the past?" he questions. "*The same powers are involved...the same intelligences are operating.*"—J.J. Morse, *Practical Occultism*, 1888. (Italics supplied.)

It was perhaps still early, but spirit power was indeed moving in, preparing itself for its leading role in alliance with the major religious powers on earth.

Inasmuch as pure devil power is the driving force behind spiritualism, and is the same power that used to operate the "magic, witchcraft, and sorcery of the past," we may well speak of an amalgamation of spiritualism, Roman Catholicism and apostate Protestantism; a triumvirate where outright devil power works side by side and in complete harmony with the two other religious groups—all sharing the same cloak of godliness.

Other Bible prophecies can be quoted here to support this identification.

Not everything accomplished today with spirit power is officially recognized as being the result of such supernatural interference. Scientific sounding names have been attached to pure spiritualistic projects in an attempt to make them socially and religiously acceptable. What one psychic calls parapsychology another one renames psychology, yet their aims are almost identical, for all researchers in the field of spiritualists' supernatural phenomena are engaged in attempting to construct a scientifically acceptable basis for a belief in a continuous existence of life after death, whether in a "spirit-sphere" or in the "fifth dimension."

"Parapsychology ... brings hope for world peace, hope for more brotherly relations among men, hope for a new unity of religious faith," states Dr. Alson J. Smith. "Doctrine, dogma, and form of organization all become secondary to the witness and the power of the inner, supersensory life. Parapsychology will help unify Christendom by emphasizing that super-normal element that all denominations have in common and minimizing those divisive elements that have their root in time obsession."—*Religion and the New Psychology*, 1951, pages 151-174.

Even Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the grand old man behind the Sherlock Holmes mystery novels, was convinced of this. "The ultimate merit of the revelation, which came in so humble a shape," he said, referring to the birth of modern spiritualism in Hydesville, New York, "will be the simplification of religion, the breaking down of the barriers between the sects, and a universal creed which will combine the ethics of real Christianity with direct spiritual communication."—*Beware Familiar Spirits*, 1938, page 83.

"Spiritualism will sweep the world," another spokesman asserted, "and make it a better place to live. When it rules over all the world, it will banish the blood of Christ. Spiritualism has a mighty mission to fulfill, and spiritualists are missionaries of this new teaching of the so-called 'Christ-spirit.'"—*The Teachings and Phenomena of Spiritualism*, page 72.

That these budding activities of the spirit world do not go unnoticed, not even by non-bible students, becomes obvious when one looks at the pronouncements on world affairs made as far back as the eventful years surrounding the First World War.

Sir Edward Grey, former British Foreign Secretary, spoke fearfully of the workings of a strange and mysterious power in world affairs. In an address to the House of Commons, he said, "It is really as if in the atmosphere of the world there were some mischievous influence at work, which troubles and excites every part of it."—*London Times*, Nov. 28, 1911, p. 13.

Another British statesman used almost the very same words 12 years later. "It would seem as if they were all bewitched, or laboring under some doom imposed upon them by devils...." Ramsey MacDonald, former British Prime Minister admitted in 1923. "People were beginning to feel that there was something devilish in the operations now going on to increase armies, navies and air forces."—Quoted in "Disarmament Labour Party's Motion," *London Times*, July 24, 1923, p. 7.

## [The Treacherous Influence of Spirit Power](#)

#### The Treacherous Influence of Spirit Power

Years before the fusion began, Ellen G. White had much to say about the treacherous influence of spirit power on the affairs of men and the combinations of religious groupings to be formed at the "time of the end."

"As Spiritualism more closely imitates the nominal Christianity of the day," she warned prophetically, "it has greater power to deceive and ensnare. Satan himself is converted, after the modern order of things. He will appear in the character of an angel of light. Through the agency of spiritualism, miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and many undeniable wonders will be performed. And as the spirits will profess faith in the Bible, and manifest respect for the institutions of the church, their work will be accepted as a manifestation of divine power."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 588.

And bringing in the amalgamation of the three religious powers, she adds, "The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power: and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience."—*Ibid.*

Both Pope John XXIII and Cardinal Cushing have publicly stated that the gulf separating Protestantism and Catholicism should be bridged, a desire shared by many a Protestant leader.

It is White's statement, however, that "Protestants will be foremost in grasping the hand of spiritualism," that causes the greatest concern, for it is precisely within the smoldering alliance of these religious powers that today's supernatural phenomena have found a home.

It was the late Arthur Ford, ordained clergyman and internationally known Spiritualist medium, who became the single most important agent to advance the fulfillment of this prophecy. It began quite innocently, yet from the very moment of its inception, the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship, brainchild of Arthur Ford, confirmed the validity of Ellen White's vision. Formed in 1956, principally by three men, Albin Bro, missionary and educator, Paul Higgins, a Methodist pastor, and Arthur Ford, it advocated the

"encouragement of study within the Churches of psychic phenomena as related to personal immortality, spiritual healing, and prayer."

"When we explore the psychic faculties, we are not dabbling in something new and strange," commented Arthur Ford at the group's spring conference in 1958. "We are just trying to remind the people in the churches of something that has always been part of the Christian gospel, but has been neglected for centuries." Comprising more than half of its executive counsel of 24 members are clergymen of the Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregationalist, Episcopalian, Baptist, and other churches, but in its principles, the organization is merely a front for the promulgation of spiritualistic doctrines.

So popular was Arthur Ford among Protestant and Catholic clergy that at one of his 7:00 a.m. breakfast meetings in Greenwood, South Carolina, it was reported that no less than 174 men had turned out to hear him speak on the connection between psychic phenomena and religion. It is highly significant that within the Bible Belt stronghold, every local Protestant minister and Roman Catholic priest was present at the breakfast.

But Arthur Ford died, and since then the influence of his organization has greatly diminished. To some it probably seemed as if the initial stages of fulfillment regarding the three unclean spirits of Revelation 16 was being held back, but viewed from a cosmic distance, the process of realization continued uninterruptedly. Even before Ford's death, steps had been taken to assure its continuation, for no sooner did the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship eclipse than the gift of tongues moved in, setting the world churches on fire with a spiritual revival, so enticing and so influential that it has already been called the greatest spiritual awakening since the early apostolic church!

That the Protestant and Catholic church leaders had long felt the need for a "unifying force" is by now a matter of public record. Rare is the man who today is against this force.

[The Public Record](#)

# glossolalia

Rene Noorbergen

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## Chapter 3, Section 4

### The Public Record

Dr. Albert Outler, one of the leading Methodist theologians joined in with many of his colleagues when he said: "This [charismatic movement] isn't my bag, ... but I think I know some of the gifts and fruits of the Spirit when I see them and I am convinced that much of what I have seen is for real and just may be a portent of something very much more.... It just might be that these odd-ball Catholics with their evangelical concerns for conversion, with their charismatic baptisms and tongues and with their courageous commitments to reform in both church and society, may turn to have been the vanguards in the third great awakening this country has seen."—Quoted in *New Covenant*, Sept. 1971, p. 17. That his opinion was practically a spiritual echo of the feelings that captivated other scholars is evident when placed side by side with their comments.

Erwin Prange, a Lutheran minister and tongues enthusiast, wrote in *Voice*: "I have been having dialogues with Catholics and with Pentecostals, and it has been a wonderful blessing. In Brooklyn we have two dialogue groups now, composed of Lutheran ministers of all flavors and young Roman Catholic priests. We meet and study the Scriptures together, pray together, talk about community problems, and discuss mutual involvement of our parishes.

"Recently I attended a Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, and Lutheran retreat. The Holy Spirit is moving in the Roman Catholic Church. I am convinced that the basic meaning of the Charismatic Renewal is the reunion of the churches. Not a reunion of compromise, of the creation of the super-church, but a renovation as to what the unity of the Spirit means."—"A New Ministry," *Voice*, April, 1965.

As recently as December, 1972, I had a chance to sit down and talk with Dr. Charles Conn, president of Lee College of the Church of God in Cleveland, Tennessee. An old time Pentecostal minister, Dr. Conn had reached the same conclusion as the more recent converts of Pentecostalism.

"The outpouring of the Holy Spirit," he said, "is similar to what was happening at Pentecost. It was genuine. Today it has grown and has gained a place of influence in this generation.

"It is growing and spreading and is bringing about a spiritual union. I have met and discussed these matters with certain dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church. I have had them in my services. ... I have been to the Vatican and have discussed them there. ... I have discussed them with the Episcopalians, the Lutherans, and there is a *unity* that is *growing!* It is a spiritual unity of churches, not an organizational unity. I don't think a total unification of the churches is in the making at this time. But there is a feeling of a *spiritual unity* that will begin to spread to all the main-line churches.

"One church leader talked to me some time ago and said, 'In the early days we regarded the Pentecostal people as crackpots, and we shut our eyes and hoped they would go away. But when we opened our eyes again, you not only had not gone away, but you had grown so large that we could no longer ignore you. Will you come and take us by the hand and show us the way?'

"The charismatic movement will not cease. This is only the beginning. It will grow until at the time of the Lord's coming it will be very widespread."

I might just as well quote the comments made to me while I talked about this to Father O'Connor of Notre Dame University. He is one of the seven scholars who, as a committee, regulate the Catholic involvement in the charismatic movement.

"Where is all this leading to, you wonder?" he asked, repeating my question. "There is a very good chance that this will lead to a *spiritual unification of all churches*. I think the renewal of the churches is the main thing, not the tongues. That is just one of the signs. I think the real thing is that the Holy Spirit is renewing the church, and I believe that this will bring them all together in complete unity. The gift of tongues, as we know it, may well be one of the signs of the end and of the coming of Jesus." This conviction is shared by Bishop Joseph McKinney of Grand Rapids, the Catholic chairman of the Committee of Seven.

It is highly significant that many of the leading theologians of all the Sunday keeping churches support the gift of tongues. But—and somehow this seems almost more weighty—*every leading psychic, medium, and astrologer interviewed endorses it!*

God was not secretive when it came to voicing His disapproval and outright condemnation of these practitioners of the occult:

"There shalt not be found among you any one ... that useth divination [*fortune-telling*], or an observer of times [*astrologer*], or an enchanter [*magician*], or a witch ... or a consulter with familiar spirits [*a medium possessed with a spirit or a guide*], or a wizard [*clairvoyant or psychic*], or a necromancer [*medium who consults the dead*]. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord." Deuteronomy 18:10-12.

God condemns them because of the Satanic nature of their work, yet it is this same group of agents who wholeheartedly approve of the gift of tongues.



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## Chapter 3, Section 5

### Testimony of Astrologers

The Southland is home to one of the great astrologers of the United States. Known to his followers as "Doc" Andersen, he operates out of a shack-like office along the highway in Rossville, Georgia. But this unpretentious outward appearance bears no relationship to his importance in the area of the supernatural.

Agreeing to an interview about the tongues manifestation, "Doc" observed that he is convinced the tongues are "definitely supernatural. These people go into this state and speak without knowing how or why," he pointed out, "and I believe most certainly that this is godly. It is most certainly not *ungodly!* The gift of tongues—I don't believe it can be evil. You bet your life—I believe it's all good!"

When I pressed for an answer to my question as to the power behind the strange utterances he retorted, "They are vibrations directly from God. I don't believe it is evil. You hear a lot of people talking about being possessed, but I don't believe that people can be possessed. A person can be evil but not possessed. Talking in tongues is definitely the Holy Spirit moving in!"

Evaluating the worldwide tongues movement from his comfortable gilded armchair, he concluded, "Tongues are good for people because they are bringing all faiths closer together, and whatever brings people closer together has to be godly!"

A representative of the psychic research fraction, Hugh Lynn Cacey, was also found willing to submit his views on the subject. Son of the late famed psychic Edgar Cacey, Hugh Lynn heads the Association for Research and Enlightenment, Inc., formed to study his father's supernatural legacy.

He volunteered, "I have taped the phenomena for years and have researched it from the psychic angle, and it has several different possibilities.

"The first possibility, of course, is pure hysteria, where religious people think themselves into a state of hysteria. But there is also the possibility of it being godly, or of an entity possessing someone; a case where the individual functions as a medium for an unknown

entity.

"There is also the possibility," he continued, "that this is a kind of 'speeded up' mystical experience vocalized, and it becomes a higher form of communication with God or whatever you call it.

"At this point you ask, of course, the question, 'Does it do anything to people? Does it make them better people, or does it just produce confusion or bewilderment?' There is, however, definitely evidence that *it is psychic*, and by this I mean that it may be a retroactive kind of thing, a sort of primitive memory bank that is in operation.

"Some organizations like the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship have endeavored to bring psychic phenomena into the Christian churches. I seriously consider the possibility that the gift of tongues is one of those spirit manifestations that is being brought into the church in general.

"It will be instrumental in bringing unity to a divided church!"

For fear of being repetitious I will eliminate most of the other psychic witnesses I interviewed; yet David Bubar will have to be included, as his views are typical, not only of the clairvoyant mediums, but also of that new breed of psychologist, the psychiresearchers whose aim it is to bring the academic field of psychic research into the nation's classrooms.

Relaxing in his Memphis home, David sorted out his thoughts on the subject, finally vocalizing them into the tape recorder.

"I ask, Could not the speaking in tongues be a case of tapping into a high spiritual dimension where this language is spoken?" he thought aloud while trying to sort out the various options open to him. "And is it perhaps that this happening is triggered by a 'high' spiritual experience?"

"I don't want to call it hysteria, but it is close to it. Their high experience brings them in tune with the *intelligences of other dimensions*.

"Since their experience is an 'electrical happening' to start with, it allowed them to slip right into another dimension. It might very well be a holy dimension, for all I know. I can't discern that. Those who have 'linked up' claim to be better because of it—not worse." Then he added seriously, "I don't have to speak in tongues, because I always live in this spiritual high. To me, the idea of speaking in tongues is simply tapping into knowledge that has been stored in another dimension. But—and this I want to emphasize—*we attract that which we are!*

"I don't talk to Satan," he added rather wishfully, "I have no contact with him at all. I only talk to God, and because of my positive attitude I doubt that I am even tempted by

Satan ....

"Can spirit power really operate the gift of tongues, you ask? Yes, it is undoubtedly spirit power; but I am convinced it is Holy Spirit power. It is not a depraved thing. You simply cannot get down on a low level where the untrained spirits work and come away with something that is high and spiritual.

"Not having had the experience personally, I don't want to be guilty of calling today's manifestation a counterfeit. If you want to say, however, that the tongues speakers are receiving their ability to speak from their *direct contact with beings in other dimensions*, then you are undoubtedly correct."

[One Common Denominator](#)

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## Chapter 3, Section 6

### One Common Denominator

Having researched the subject extensively before my scheduled interviews with the psychics and mediums, I found that their reaction came as no surprise. All, without exception, approved of the phenomenon and name God as its supernatural source. They are unified in their conviction that through this new communications medium a common ground needed for the unification of all churches has finally been achieved. In the tongues, Catholics, Protestants, and Spiritualists have found their common denominator, operated by the same supernatural source whose power they assume to be God.

In a letter signed, "Ralph & Bobbi," a young married couple who attended one of the first modern outpourings of their "Holy Spirit" at the now famous Duquesne Weekend in 1967, looked back on that memorable weekend after six years of "spirit-fever." One of the paragraphs of their testimony shows the influence it had on their relationship to members of other non-Catholic churches.

"Most of our Friday evenings we go to a prayer meeting with Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, and Pentecostals," they wrote. "And for three hours all denominational differences are annihilated, without compromising an inch on our Roman Catholicism ....

"Never have I heard the Church of Rome prayed for with such fervor," they concluded proudly, "as I have at prayer meeting. And with such love."—*New Covenant* (the monthly magazine of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal), Vol. 2, Number 8, Feb., 1973.

Doctrinal differences are fast disappearing among the members of the various churches, as this letter testifies. A newfound oneness in the spirit is permeating hundreds of thousands of well-meaning Christians, making a mockery of the Biblical doctrine that the Spirit of God is the Spirit of *truth*, and that this same spirit will lead us into discovering and accepting "all truth." Even without evaluating all the other available evidence, we can see that modern tongues stem from a lesser source than the Holy Spirit. The violation of this Biblical concept *alone* is sufficient to make us question seriously the source behind the tongues, for what does this superficial oneness really mean?

It indicates that the charismatics are indeed unified, but in confusion. They claim to be "one" and led by the Spirit of God (truth), but strangely enough, this Spirit of truth does not lead the charismatic Catholic to abandon his prayers for the dead or his belief in an eternally burning hell. This same spirit does not tell him to stop using the saints as intermediaries, or to stop seeking for forgiveness of sins through a human confessor. Does he have to stop believing in the infallibility of the pope or in a flaming purgatory? No—they are not told to abandon their belief in these doctrines but are encouraged by their "brothers-in-the-spirit, " the charismatic Protestants to retain this heretical faith.

The charismatic Protestants, on the other hand, are free to cling to whatever doctrines they may espouse, preferring their charismatic spirit over the Spirit of truth. To them, love is the supreme test of faith. They are not unified by trust in God and His guiding principles; they are unified by one common spiritual orgasm! Doctrines are now held to be essential elements of a church's individual heritage, and the oneness in the spirit is to be the spontaneous spark which ignites the flaming experience that binds them.

As we examine the tongues and their legitimate role in today's Christianity, we find that sanction or even a quiet acceptance of the phenomenon has virtually become an impossibility. No matter *how* badly the charismatics want to prove the validity of the sounds, the evidence shows that in their zealous efforts to give the utterings Biblical support, the tongues-speakers have overstated their case.

The ecstatic utterance of disconnected vowels, weird and irrational to some; melodious and beautiful to the charismatics, has been termed "linguistic nonsense," "spirit-guided grunts," "untranslatable gibberish," and even less flattering names by most or all of those who have given scientific investigation to the phenomenon. And no matter the objections of the movement, there is indeed a relationship between the increase in tongues speakers and the growing degree of mental instability. What's more, both psychiatrists (for the mentally unstable) and the theologians (for the charismatics) agree that we are only at the beginning of the problem.

Yet, if this were all, the glossolalic's case would still not be hopeless, for statistics in themselves are never absolute proof—only an indication of something. But a careful scrutiny of the manifestations as found in the books of Acts and Corinthians destroys all hopes for a Biblical basis. The gift of tongues against which Paul cautioned in Corinth has no relationship to today's charismatic gift of tongues which has its origin in paganism, heathen ritual, and even devil worship, historical records of which precede the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit by at least 1,100 years!

[The Significance of Our Study](#)

# glossolalia

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### Chapter 3, Section 7

#### The Significance of Our Study

Realizing the significance of this, we find that the charismatic tongues suddenly take on a new and frightening dimension. Biblical prophecy suggests that in order to arrive at a unity of faiths in the closing days of history, the adversary must provide a common denominator that will serve as a spiritual adhesive.

The charismatic movement has now supplied that "adhesive" through its "tongues."

"I believe the charismatic renewal has spread so rapidly in the Church these past six years because it is God's work," editorialized Patty Gallagher, a Catholic charismatic convert, hopefully. "He [God] desires to reveal himself to his people," she continued, "as he spoke to us during the June conference in prophecy, '*What you see before your eyes is just the beginning.*'" —*New Covenant, op. cit.*, p. 3.

We are now indeed witnessing the awakening of the three unclean spirits of Revelation 16, and the position of the minute hand of the prophetic time clock of eternity is no longer a mystery.

But it is not just our conclusions and judgments based on the aforementioned evidence that have brought us to this point. The supernatural master of the charismatics *himself* has proudly supplied us with even more devastating indications that "something" ungodly has gained control of the movement.

While attending a study conference on the charismatic movement, I became acutely aware of this.

Speaking of his experiences with college students who had become charismatics, a young minister I conversed with enumerated the various phenomena that accompany the tongues. Drawing on his many counseling sessions with an impressive number of glossolalists, he submitted a list of seven accompanying phenomena, every one of which was a major revelation in itself.

Those who join the charismatic movement and become spiritually committed to its

operation depend, in various degrees of involvement, on one or more of the eight following manifestations:

1. *Prophecy*: their leader or other members of the group speaking to them "for God" in an authoritative way.
2. *Clairvoyance*: the supernatural ability to foreknow events.
3. *Clairaudience*: hearing voices giving supernatural revelations.
4. *Gift of Tongues*: the ability to speak in untranslatable words.
5. *Laying on of Hands*: the supernatural ability to transmit "power" and the "Holy Spirit" to new converts, often accompanied by an experience resembling an electric shock.
6. *Healing*: the ability to perform spirit(ualistic) healing of the sick.
7. *Visions*: the reception of supernatural guidance or information in dreams.
8. *Trance*: a withdrawal from reality during which state contact with the supernatural is made.

The revealing thing about these points is not their number or their order, but their significance in this modern movement.

For they can be regarded as the "fruits of the spirit"—of the master spirit guiding the charismatic movement and its gift of tongues.

They're not new.

They were revealed before. And not so long ago either!

Just ask the spiritualists, and they will gladly tell you where and when. For it was exactly 59 years ago, in 1914, that the Nationalist Spiritualist Association of Churches adopted a list of definitions for the manifestations of spirit power.

The fifth paragraph is the one we are interested in, and it should be of interest to the charismatics.

It reads as follows: "The Phenomena of Spiritualism consist of *Prophecy, Clairvoyance, Clairaudience, Gift of Tongues, Laying on of Hands, Healing, Visions, Trance, Apports, Levitation, Raps, Automatic and Independent Writings and Paintings, Voice, Materialization, Photography, Psychometry* and other manifestations proving the continuity of life as demonstrated through the Physical and Spiritual senses and faculties of man."—*Spiritualist Manual*, page 37.

Sounds familiar, doesn't it? It is interesting that the spiritualists have listed their phenomena in order of importance, and that the gifts occupying the most important place in their churches are also those that unify the charismatic movement.

Yet, some people still ask the questions, Are the tongues godly? Are they God's gift to the

church? Aren't we still to wait for the "fruits of the Spirit"?

To the committed Christian there is only one possible answer. An emphatic NO is the only responsible reaction, for the indications that the manifestations of the charismatic movement of today are a new revelation of spiritualism, this time, however, cloaked in a disguise of godliness, are too real to be ignored.

The identification of the charismatic movement is no longer a problem. The spiritualist movement has identified it for us.

But this does not mean the end of the tongues.

This devil's counterfeit fulfills a definite role in prophecy, and there is indeed a reason for the introduction of the false tongues in these closing days of mankind.

Commented Ellen G. White: "It is with an earnest longing that I look forward to the time when the events of the day of Pentecost shall be repeated with even greater power than on that occasion. John says, 'I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.' Then, as at the Pentecostal season, the people will hear the truth spoken to them, every man in his own tongue. God can breathe new life into every soul that sincerely desires to serve him, and can touch the lips with a live coal from off the altar, and cause them to become eloquent with his praise. Thousands of voices will be imbued with the power to speak forth the wonderful truths of God's word. The stammering tongue will be unloosed, and the timid will be made strong to bear courageous testimony to the truth."—*Review and Herald*, July 20, 1886.

Anticipating God's special gift of this "second Pentecost" to His church, the devil has moved in with force, introducing his counterfeit as a Godly manifestation.

History stands ready to repeat itself—but the result will be such that it can never be forgotten.

**Rene Noorbergen**

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