

PART TWO

ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST

A persistent demonstration of supernatural power – signs and wonders including “holy laughter” and “slain in the Spirit” experiences – brought spiritual refreshing to thousands of Christians. In the process, a nondescript Toronto area church was transformed into a destination point for pilgrims from all over the world. (Christian Week, January 3, 1995)

How many have never been to a church like this in your whole life?

You’d think you had walked into a **mad house** or something.

Well, we have had one year to acclimatize. If we had started with this at this level we would not have had the faith to go on. I know as pastor **I would have shut it down.**¹ (John Arnott, pastor of the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church, emphasis added)

There’s **nothing in Scripture** that supports these kinds of phenomena that I can see, and I can’t think of anything throughout the church age that would. So **I feel no obligation to try to explain it.** It’s just phenomena. It’s just people responding to God.”

There is no place in the Bible where people were lined up and Jesus or Paul or anyone else went along and tapped them on the head and watched them go down, one after another, and somebody else ran along behind. Can you picture Peter and James – “Hold it, hold it, hold it!” – running along behind trying to catch them? And so the model that we’re seeing, either on stage or on television, is **totally different from anything that’s in Scripture.** (John Wimber, “Spiritual Phenomena: Slain In The Spirit – Part 1,” Vineyard Christian Fellowship, Anaheim, CA, 1981, audiotape, emphasis added)

You have so much today that is pure flesh, yet people have labeled it as the Spirit. It's not the Spirit, because it's not centered on Christ. It's pure emotionalism. Some of what is happening today, some of these manifestations where people are barking, making sounds of animals – I can tell you, that is **not the Holy Spirit**. It is **purely demonic**. **The Holy Ghost does not bark**. Only a **devil barks**. If somebody barks in my meeting, I'll cast the devil out of that man.

You watching TBN here. If you're doing such nonsense, **get back to the Bible**. And **don't you dare experiment with what is not Scriptural**, checking out if God is in it. My brother, **if it's not in the Bible, He's not in it!! If it's not in the Word of God, He is not in it**. (Benny Hinn, "Praise The Lord" broadcast July 4, 1997, emphasis added)

One of the greatest **weaknesses** of the **charismatic movement** is its **lack of sound Bible teaching**. There seems to be an **undue preoccupation with experience**, which is **often placed above the Word**. As a consequence, **charismatics** have become a **fertile field** for strange and **unscriptural doctrines** proliferating through their ranks.

It is of utmost importance that we allow the **Bible to be the final authority for our faith and practice**. Any time we begin to allow experiences to become the criteria for doctrine or belief, we have lost Biblical authority, and the inevitable result is **confusion**. (Chuck Smith, *Charisma vs. Charismania*, p. 121, emphasis added)

Our findings that glossolalia can be easily learned through direct instruction, along with demonstrations that tongue speakers can initiate and terminate glossolalia upon request and can exhibit glossolalia in the absence of any indexes of trance[...] support the hypothesis that glossolalia utterances are **goal-directed actions rather than involuntary happenings**.¹⁶ (Spanos, Nicholas P.; Cross, Wendy P.; Lepage, Mark; Coristine, Marjorie (February 1986). "Glossolalia as learned behavior: An experimental demonstration." *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, emphasis added)

FOUR

BELIEFS OF PENTECOSTALS AND CHARISMATICS

Speaking in “tongues”

Three different manifestations or forms of glossolalia can be identified in Charismatic/Pentecostal belief.

The “**sign of tongues**” refers to xenoglossia, in which one speaks a foreign language he has never learned. We see examples of this in the book of Acts (2.5-12; 10.44-46; 19.1-7).

The “**gift of tongues**” is also considered to be a glossolalic utterance by an individual that is addressed to a congregation of believers. This utterance is believed to be inspired directly by the Holy Spirit and requires a natural language interpretation, made by the speaker or another person. It usually is a prophetic message or a word of knowledge/wisdom.

There is also a gift of “tongues” that they use while praying. It is called “**praying in the spirit.**” When one prays in a mystery language only God can understand it (1 Corinthians 14.2, 14).

Historically, Pentecostals have viewed speaking in “tongues” as genuine languages. This was the view of the leaders of the Azusa Street revival. In 1 Corinthians 13:1, Paul writes, “*If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels....*” They believe that tongues can be a language of men or of angels. Some groups of Pentecostals and Charismatics are convinced that they speak the language of angels and consider most “tongues” to be languages that are incomprehensible to human beings.

There have been many **testimonies** and **anecdotal accounts** in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches of people hearing speaking in “tongues” and recognizing it as their own language. There have also been occasions where an onlooker would understand the language and identify the interpretation of the tongues to be accurate. In 1971, Paul Harris wrote a book entitled, *Spoken by the Spirit*, which contained 70 accounts of people speaking a language understood by the listeners.

Need for interpretation

There is a variety of beliefs among Pentecostals and Charismatics regarding the need for interpretation of tongues. Some teach that if there is no interpreter, a speaker in “tongues” must be silent in church meetings in accordance with 1 Corinthians 14:27-28. Others practice speaking in “tongues” all at one time in the church meeting.

The gift of interpretation of tongues is widely exercised in some Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. After a message is spoken in tongues, someone interprets the tongue. In some cases, two people in the congregation receive the same interpretation, and one person speaks it out.

Singing in the Spirit

On singing in the Spirit, Donald Hustad describes a pattern observed in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in which, during worship, someone begins to utter musical sounds, which may or may not have recognizable words. Other members of the congregation join in and, although there is no particular effort to match the pitch or the words, the overall effect is harmonious. “It is as if the strings of a huge Aeolian harp have been set in motion by the wind of the Holy Spirit. The strangely-beautiful sound rises in volume, lasts for a longer or shorter period, and then gradually dies away.”¹

Prophecy

Most Pentecostals and Charismatics believe the gift of prophecy is still given to some believers today. They exercise it by itself or in conjunction with the gift of “tongues.” These prophetic utterances can range from a personal message for one person to a message for the entire world. Some of these messages are new revelation from God.

Healing and miracles

Only a miniscule fraction of all Pentecostals and Charismatic churches claim to have members who have the gifts of healing and or miracles. These gifts are extremely rare. Most of the men and women who claim to have them travel from church to church holding revival meetings where they heal the sick and perform miracles.

Evidence of the indwelling

A portion of Pentecostals and Charismatics believe that the evidence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is speaking “tongues.” They base it on two examples in the book of Acts. The family of Cornelius believed in Jesus Christ when Peter shared the Gospel with them. Before he baptized the Gentile believers the Holy Spirit fell on them and they began speaking known languages. They were then baptized (Acts 10.44-48). Paul found some disciples in Ephesus who had not received the Holy Spirit and had only been baptized by John. He baptized them and they began speaking in known languages (19.1-6).

Conclusion

The doctrines that the Pentecostals and Charismatics have developed concerning the “manifestation gifts” have been based on a misunderstanding of Scripture.

“Tongues”

The doctrine that there are three types of gifts of “tongues” is simply not biblical. The Bible is clear that there is only one gift of speaking a **known** language which the speaker has not learned (1 Corinthians 12.10; 14.10-11). Notice that Paul says “*divers kinds of tongues*” and “*There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and no [kind] is without signification. If then I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh will be a barbarian unto me.*” It is clear from the Bible that the gift of “tongues” is a gift of speaking a known language which the speaker has not learned. It does not matter if that gift is used for evangelism or for edification of the church with aid from one who has the gift of interpretation. It is one gift of speaking a known language.

Some believe that they can speak a heavenly language of angels. The Bible does not say that the Holy Spirit gives Christians the gift of speaking the language of angels. Paul said, “*If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal*” (1 Corinthians 13.1). He simply gave a hypothetical supposition that if he had the divine ability to speak the angelic language and he did not have love this ability would be worthless. Doctrine is based on clear statements not on hypothetical statements.

The third is the alleged gift of praying in “tongues.” The Bible does not say the Holy Spirit gives believers the gift of praying in “tongues.” The Corinthian believers were praying in what they thought was a mystery language. Paul rebuked them harshly saying that what they were doing was wrong. He told them that “*if I pray in a 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*” (1 Corinthians 14.14-15). Instead of flatly telling them to stop praying the mystery language he said they could, but they also had to pray in a real language. The praying in the spirit here is not praying in the Holy Spirit, but by a person’s own spirit.

The best one can say is that some people can allow their spirit to take control of their vocal cords and pray in a language that only spirits understand. If this is what you believe you must follow the command by Paul that you should also pray with your mind. If you pray more with your spirit than with your mind you are not following the command of Paul. And when you are in public with other believers you should always pray with your mind (1 Corinthians 14.16-19). He called the practice of praying in “tongues” and speaking in “tongues” without interpretation childishness (1 Corinthians 14.20). He also said, “*howbeit in the church I had rather speak **five words** with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than **ten thousand words in a tongue***” (1 Corinthians 14.19, emphasis added).

Which is more important to you? Is it more important to hear ten thousand words in a mystery language that you do not understand or to hear five words that you understand? Is it more important to you to be entertained by watching people speak a mystery language or to have a pastor teach you the Bible “*line on line*,” chapter-by-chapter and book-by-book (Isaiah 28.10). If you think being taught Scripture by a man who knows the Bible inside and out is more important than being entertained go to a church where the pastor does just that.

The incidents in which people have spoken in a known language which was understood as such are few and far between. Why is that? Is the most common gift given to Christians one of speaking the language of angels or are Pentecostals and Charismatics speaking gibberish as all linguists have concluded and the few times they have spoken a real language has been by the power of demons to deceive people?

Why did the Holy Spirit not nip this unusual practice by the Corinthians in the bud? We can only speculate, but He could have allowed it to go on just as He allows false religions to prosper. God

allows men to chase after false doctrines and false religions to prove to man that man cannot discern between good and evil on his own. It is only by the power of God that any man can discern what doctrine and what religion is true.

God allowed false prophets and dreamers to rise up in Israel to test the people (Deuteronomy 13.1-11). He is omniscient and knew before He created the universe what every man, woman and child would ever do. He tests people to show them how base they are:

I said in my heart, [It is] because of the sons of men, that God may prove them, and that they may see that they themselves are [but as] beasts. (Ecclesiastes 3.18)

This is why it is the spiritual responsibility of every believer to study a doctrine thoroughly to determine if it is biblical or not. Too many believers accept doctrines because their pastor, Bible teacher, favorite televangelist, friend or spouse says it is true. It is up to each believer to study Scripture daily to see whether the things pastors/bible teachers say are biblical (Acts 17.11; 2 Timothy 2.15).

Singing and praying in the Spirit

There is also the doctrine that Christians can “sing in the Spirit.” In the same passage that Paul dealt with praying with the spirit he dealt with singing in the spirit. Some believers in Corinth thought they could sing a mystery language that only their spirit understood. Paul told them if they sing in the spirit they also need to sing with their mind (1 Corinthians 14.15).

The purpose of all the gifts of the Spirit listed in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 is to edify (1 Corinthians 14.17), exhort (1 Corinthians 14.31) and equip believers (1 Corinthians 12.28; 14.26; Ephesians 4.11-12). When any “manifestation gift” does not edify, exhort or equip believers it should not be used. Edification, exhortation and equipping are three aspects of spiritual growth.

The Greek word *oikodome* (edify, edified) means “the act of building a home” (Vine’s, p. 357). It is used figuratively to signify spiritual growth. Scripture is the main tool that is used for spiritual growth (2 Timothy 3.16). The specific “manifestation gifts” of speaking a known language and interpreting a known language are specifically to be used to instruct believers so they can grow spiritually (1 Corinthians 14.3-6) and to convict the unsaved so they trust in Jesus (1 Corinthians 14.24-25).

If one insists on using these gifts for his own edification he must do it alone. The so-called gift of “praying in the spirit” must only be used at home.

Gift of prophecy

Those who believe that the gift of prophecy is extant today must believe that prophets can be given divine revelation that should be added to the Bible. They must believe the warning in Revelation 22.18 only applies to the book of Revelation. Joseph Smith, Jr. believed this and that is why he added to Scripture the Book of Mormon and other writings.

The gift of prophesy is exercised by numerous Pentecostals and Charismatics for personal gain. There are hundreds of cases in which a person has claimed he was given a revelation or message from God for a specific person. Some of these messages are that the person should give him money or something else. There are even cases of prophets saying the Lord told them that the subject should get divorced so they can marry him/her.

The most dangerous aspect of this gift is that it has been used to start every cult in Christendom. Below is a list of men and women who claimed that they had the gift of prophecy and received divine revelation to start a new church that was the one and only true church:

Joseph Smith, Jr. – Mormon Church (1830)

Joseph Bates, J. N. Andrews, James White, Ellen G. White – Seventh-day Adventist Church (1863)

Mary Baker Eddy – Church of Christ, Scientist (1879)

Charles Taze Russell – Watchtower Society (1881)

Herbert W. Armstrong – Worldwide Church of God (1934)

Victor Paul Wierwille – The Way International (1942)

Sun Myun Moon – Unification Church (1954)

Mark L. Prophet – The Summit Lighthouse (Church Universal and Triumphant) (1958)

David Berg – Children of God (1968)

Vernon Howell (a.k.a. David Koresh) – Branch Davidians (1983)

It should be noted that the writings and teachings of Baptist preacher William Miller and practicing Freemason until 1831,²⁻⁴ were used by Joseph Smith, Jr., Joseph Bates, James White, Ellen G. White, J. N. Andrews, Charles Taze Russell and Herbert W. Armstrong to formulate some of their doctrines. Miller was the first preacher in America to gather a large following based solely on his prophetic teaching of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. He prophesied that Jesus would return between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844.⁵ A new date (April 18, 1844) was based on the Karaite Jewish calendar (as opposed to the Rabbinic calendar) when his prophecy failed.⁶ Like the previous date, April 18 passed without Christ's return. Miller responded publicly, writing, "I confess my error, and acknowledge my disappointment; yet I still believe that the day of the Lord is near, even at the door."⁷ Samuel S. Snow made a prophecy that Christ would return on, "the tenth day of the seventh month of the present year, 1844."⁸ Again using the calendar of the Karaite Jews, this date was determined to be October 22, 1844.

Miller stopped predicting and retired, yet he held to his belief that the return of Christ was imminent. His four most devoted followers Joseph Bates, J. N. Andrews and James and Ellen White gathered some other followers and founded the Seventh-day Adventists Church.

"Tongues" is evidence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit

The belief that the evidence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is speaking in "tongues" is not biblical. The Gentile family of Cornelius spoke known languages as a sign to the Jewish believers who did not understand that Gentiles could be saved (Acts 10.45). It was a fulfillment of a prophecy made by Isaiah:

Nay, but by [men of] strange lips and with another tongue will he speak to this people. (Isaiah 28.11)

The disciples of John who spoke known languages did so in the presence of other Jews as a sign to them. Paul spent three months preaching the Gospel to the Jews in the synagogue. The Jews rejected the Gospel and Paul had to preach the Gospel in the school of Tyrannus. He did that for two years performing numerous miracles and people were being healed by handkerchiefs and aprons that he had touched (Acts 19.8-12).

There are also several examples of people who were filled with the Holy Spirit who did not speak in “tongues”:

Luke 1:15 – John the Baptist was “*full of the Holy Spirit.*”

Luke 1:41 – Elizabeth “*filled with the Holy Spirit.*”

Luke 1:67 – Zacharias “*filled with the Holy Spirit.*”

Luke 3:22; 4:1, 18 – Jesus was “*full of the Holy Spirit.*”

Acts 4:31 – Believers “*were all filled with the Holy Spirit*” and they preached the Gospel rather than speaking in “tongues.”

Acts 7:55 – Stephen was “*full of the Holy Spirit.*”

Acts 8:14-17 – Samaritans “*received the Holy Spirit.*”

Acts 11.22-24 – Barnabas was “*full of the Holy Spirit.*”

The only time the Apostles and converts spoke known languages which they did not know was to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah noted above. The next statement said they would not believe:

To whom he said, This is the rest, give ye rest to him that is weary; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. (Isaiah 28.12)

Even though the Jews were given this sign of strange men speaking foreign languages the vast majority of them did not believe as the prophecy said they would not.

Notes

1. Hustad, Donald. “The Historical Roots of Music in the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal Movements.” *The Hymn: A Journal Of Congregational Song* 38. January 1987. p. 7. Cited by Richard M. Riss in “Singing in the Spirit in the Holiness, Pentecostal, Latter Rain, and Charismatic Movements,” paper delivered at a conference sponsored by the North American Renewal Service Committee. Orlando, Florida. 7.28.1995.

2. Bliss, Sylvester. *Memoirs of William Miller*, Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1853. pp. 21-22.

3. Miller (listed as Capt. Miller) is later given as one of the early masters of Morning Star Lodge, No. 27. This lodge is said to have been “organized in Poultney prior to 1800, though the exact date is not known.” David L. Rowe’s recent Miller biography *God’s Strange Work: William Miller and the End of the World*.

4. Rowe, David L. *God’s Strange Work: William Miller and the End of the World* (Eerdmans: 2008) gives extensive documentation of Miller’s Masonic connections, noting that he attended a meeting as a youth on March 4, 1798; joined the Morning Star Lodge in Poultney and eventually rose to the rank of Grand Master. David L. Rowe, *God’s Strange Work: William Miller and the End of the World* (Eerdmans. 2008. p. 27.

5. Quoted in Everett N. Dick, *William Miller and the Advent Crisis*, Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press. 1994. pp. 96–97.
6. Knight, George R. *Millennial Fever and the End of the World*, Boise, ID: Pacific Press. 1993. pp. 163–164.
7. Sylvester Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller*, Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1853. p. 256.
8. Snow, Samuel S., *Advent Herald*, 8.21.1844. p. 20.

FIVE

GLOSSOLALIA

Some glossolalists believe their practice is the “speaking in tongues” described in the New Testament and that their utterances are of a real, unlearned language (xenoglossia).¹⁻² Others explain the activity as a “language of the spirit” or a “heavenly language,” perhaps the language of angels.³

Secular linguists examine glossolalia

William J. Samarin

Glossolalia is a material phenomenon which has physical and psychological patterns that can be described. Numerous scientific studies have been published providing an objective description of the linguistics of glossolalic speech and the neural behavior of the speakers.

William J. Samarin, a linguist from the University of Toronto, published a thorough assessment of Pentecostal glossolalia that became a classic work on its linguistic characteristics. His assessment was based on a large sample of glossolalia recorded in public and private Christian meetings in Italy, Holland, Jamaica, Canada and America over the course of five years. His wide range included the Puerto Ricans of the Bronx, the Snake Handlers of the Appalachians, and Russian Molokan in Los Angeles.

He found that glossolalic speech resembles human language in some respects. The speaker uses accent, rhythm, intonation and pauses to break up the speech into distinct units. Each unit is itself made up of syllables, the syllables being formed from consonants and vowels taken from a language known to the speaker.

It is verbal behavior that consists of using a certain number of consonants and vowels in a limited number of syllables that in turn are organized into larger units that are taken apart and rearranged pseudogrammatically with variations in pitch, volume, speed and intensity.⁴

Glossolalia consists of strings of syllables, made up of sounds taken from all those that the speaker knows, put together more or less haphazardly but emerging nevertheless as word-like and sentence-like units because of realistic, language-like rhythm and melody.⁵

That the sounds are taken from the set of sounds already known to the speaker is confirmed by others. Felicitas Goodman found that the speech of glossolalists reflected the patterns of speech of the speaker's native language.⁶

Samarin found that the resemblance to human language was merely on the surface, and so concluded that glossolalia is "only a facade of language."⁷ He reached this conclusion because the syllable string **did not form words**, the stream of **speech was not internally organized**, and – most importantly of all – there was no systematic relationship between units of speech and concepts. **Humans use language to communicate, but glossolalia does not.** Therefore he concluded that glossolalia is **not** "a specimen of human language because it is neither internally organized nor systematically related to the world man perceives."⁷

On the basis of his linguistic analysis, he defined Pentecostal glossolalia as "meaningless but phonologically structured human utterance, **believed by the speaker to be a real language but bearing no systematic resemblance to any natural language, living or dead.**"⁸

Felicitas Goodman

Felicitas Goodman, a psychological anthropologist and linguist, studied a number of Pentecostal communities in the United States, Caribbean and Mexico; these included English, Spanish and Mayan speaking groups. She compared what she found with recordings of non-Christian rituals from Africa, Borneo, Indonesia and Japan. She took into account both the segmental structure (such as sounds, syllables, phrases) and the supra-segmental elements (rhythm, accent, intonation), and concluded that there was no distinction between what was practiced by the Pentecostal Protestants and the followers of other religions.⁹

In 2006, the brains of a group of individuals were scanned while they were speaking in tongues. Activity in the language centers of the brain decreased, while activity in the emotional centers of the brain increased. Activity in the area of control decreased, which corresponds

with the reported experience of loss of control. There were no changes in any language areas, suggesting that **glossolalia is not associated with usual language function.**¹⁰⁻¹² Other brain wave studies have also found that brain activity alters in glossolalia.¹³

The material explanation arrived at by a number of studies is that **glossolalia is a “learned behavior.”**¹⁴⁻¹⁵ What is taught is the ability to produce language-like speech. This is only a partial explanation, but it is a part that has withstood much testing. It is possible to train novices to produce glossolalic speech. One experiment with 60 undergraduates found that 20% succeeded after merely listening to a 60-second sample, and 70% succeeded after training:

Our findings that glossolalia can be easily learned through direct instruction, along with demonstrations that tongue speakers can initiate and terminate glossolalia upon request and can exhibit glossolalia in the absence of any indexes of trance[...] support the hypothesis that glossolalia utterances are **goal-directed actions rather than involuntary happenings.**¹⁶ (Emphasis added)

That glossolalia can be learned is also seen in the traces left behind by teachers. An investigation by the Lutheran Medical Center in Brooklyn showed that the influence of a particular leader can shape a group’s glossolalia: where certain prominent glossolalists had visited, whole groups of glossolalists would speak in his style of speech.¹⁷

Glossolalia exercises is part of the famous Strasberg method acting school. On its web site it is called the “Gibberish exercise”:

This is a fun acting exercise. Take a scene or monologue you’ve been working on. Keep the intentions and circumstances, but instead of speaking the lines, speak gibberish. You’ll notice how much can be communicated through body language, tones and looks. This exercise will also help break a rhythm you’ve fallen into and help you discover new things about the scene or monologue.¹⁸

Xenoglossia?

Practitioners of glossolalia may disagree with secular linguistic researchers and claim that they are speaking human languages (xenoglossia). Ralph Harris, in the work, *Spoken By the Spirit*, published by Radiant Life/GPH in 1973, describes seventy five occasions when glossolalic speech was understood by others.

The Pentecostals and Charismatics who claim they speak known languages should be glad to have their utterances recorded and analyzed by linguists. Yet a miniscule fraction of Pentecostals and Charismatics are willing to do that. Why? What are they hiding?

If they claim they are speaking an unknown language they should refrain from speaking it in public. According to their doctrine this alleged “prayer language” is for private use not public. All public speaking of “tongues” must be of a known language which the speaker has not learned. In all cases in which men exercised the gift of “tongues” they did not know the language they spoke and there were people present who were not believers in Jesus Christ or who did not believe Gentiles could be saved (Acts 2.6; 10.44-48; 19.6). The gift was given as a sign to lead some to salvation and to cause others to understand that salvation was for everyone.

Glossolalia should be universal

The traditional Pentecostal view is that every Christian should expect to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, the distinctive mark of which is glossolalia.¹⁹ While most Protestants agree that baptism in the Holy Spirit is integral to being a Christian, others believe that it is not separable from conversion and no longer marked by glossolalia. Pentecostals appeal to the declaration of the Apostle Peter at Pentecost, that “*the gift of the Holy Spirit*” was for you and “*your children, and to all that are afar off, [even] as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him*” (Acts 2:38-39). Cessationists reply that the gift of speaking in a known language that one had not learned was never intended to be given to all Christians (1 Corinthians 12:30). The statement by Peter was made to the Hebrew people and not to Christians. And he did not say that everyone who believes in Jesus Christ will receive the Holy Spirit and also speak in “tongues.”

Different aspects of speaking in tongues appear in Acts and 1 Corinthians, such that the Assemblies of God declare that the gift in Acts “is the same in essence as the gift of tongues” in 1 Corinthians “but different in purpose and use.”¹⁹ They distinguish between (private) speech in tongues when receiving the gift of the Spirit, and (public) speech in tongues for the benefit of the church. Others assert that the gift in Acts was “not a different phenomenon” but the same gift and in both cases the speech is in an unlearned language.²⁰

The New Testament describes “tongues” as something that can potentially be interpreted into human language, thereby “edifying the hearers” (1 Corinthians 14:5, 13). At Pentecost and Caesarea the speakers were praising God (Acts 2:11; 10:46). Paul referred to praying, singing praise, and giving thanks in “tongues” (1 Corinthians 14:14-17), as well as to the interpretation of “tongues” (1 Corinthians 14:5), and instructed those speaking in tongues to pray for the ability to interpret their tongues so others could understand them (1 Corinthians 14:13). While some limit speaking in tongues to speech addressed to God – “prayer or praise,”²¹ others claim that speech in “tongues” is revelation from God to the church, and when interpreted into human language by those with the gift of interpretation of “tongues” for the benefit of others present, may be considered equivalent to prophecy.²²

Musical interludes of glossolalia are sometimes described as “*singing in the Spirit*.” Some hold that singing in the Spirit is identified with singing in “tongues” in 1 Corinthians 14:13-19,²³ which they hold to be “spiritual or spirited singing,” as opposed to “communicative or impactive singing” which Paul refers to as “singing with the understanding.”²⁴

Sign for unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:22)

Some understand that “tongues” are “a sign for unbelievers that they might believe,”²⁵ and so advocate it as a means of evangelism. Others point out that Paul quotes Isaiah to show that “when God speaks to people in language they cannot understand, it is quite evidently a sign of God’s judgment” so if unbelievers are baffled by a church service they cannot understand because tongues are spoken without being interpreted, that is a “sign of God’s attitude,” “a sign of judgment.”²⁶

Comprehension

Some say that speech in tongues was “not understood by the speaker”¹ while others assert that “the tongues-speaker normally understood his own foreign-language message.”²⁷ This is not correct. Very few of the people who speak in “tongues” understand what they say. There is no proof that those who claim to know what they are saying do because most do not speak a known language. There is no

way to confirm their interpretation. This is a serious problem with the tradition of speaking in a “tongue” that is not a real language.

Conclusion

“Tongues”

Virtually everyone since the late 19th century who has spoken in “tongues” has spoken gibberish. The speech that the Pentecostals and Charismatics call “tongues” is complete gibberish. Only on a few rare occasions have people spoken a known language which they have not learned. Because the instances of “tongues” speaking a known language are so very rare this “gift” is not a gift from the Holy Spirit of speaking a known language that one has not learned (1 Corinthians 12.10; 14.9-11).

This truth has been confirmed by linguists who have conducted extensive investigations into the “tongues” phenomenon. They have always concluded that the people are speaking gibberish that they have learned from listening to others speak gibberish. They even conducted an experiment in which they trained people who had no experience in speaking “tongues” to speak in “tongues.”

Prayer language

The “gift” that the Pentecostals and Charismatics have can only be an alleged “gift” of speaking a special prayer language. As we saw in Chapter Two there is no special “prayer language” that no one understands and which millions of Christians around the world speak on a daily basis. This so-called “prayer language,” if it were real, would be a sign gift. It would be a daily sign that the one who has it is truly saved and walking in the Spirit. This concept contradicts clear passages in the Bible that say Christians are to live by faith (Romans 1.17; Galatians 2.20; 3.11; Hebrews 10.38). Every Christian who speaks mysteries (1 Corinthians 14.2) is living by signs. This should concern the people who speak an alleged mystery language. Are they living by faith or by signs? What did Jesus say to the Pharisees when they asked Him for a sign?

An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of Jonah. And he left them, and departed. (Matthew 16.4)

Are the Pentecostals and Charismatics of the 20th and now 21st centuries an *evil and adulterous generation*?”

The argument by some radical Pentecostals/Charismatics that every Christian should have the gift of speaking in “tongues” is clearly not biblical because Paul said that “all” do not speak a known language they have not learned (1 Corinthians 12.30). Their claim that all Christians should speak the alleged mystery “prayer language” is also not biblical because there is no special “prayer language.”

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SIX

CESSATIONISM

The discussion regarding speaking in “tongues” has been controversial since the first appearance of the “manifestation gifts” in the late 19th century, and it became more intense since the widespread Charismatic Movement of the 1960s. Many books have been published either defending or attacking the practice. The issue has sometimes been a contributing factor in splits within local churches and in denominations. Within that debate are continuationists who believe that the gift of “tongues” and the other “manifestation gifts” have a role to play in contemporary Christian practice and cessationists who believe that the “manifestation gifts” were given only to believers in the time of the early Church.

There are two major camps within cessationism:

Classical Cessationism asserts that the “manifestation gifts” ceased with the apostles and the completion of the Bible around 100 AD. Those gifts were given to equip believers to do the work of spreading the Gospel and making disciples (Ephesians 4.11-13). They also served as proof that Jesus is the true Messiah and His disciples were commissioned to evangelize the world (Matthew 28.19-20; Acts 1.8; 2.1-12).

God occasionally performs miracles today, such as healings or divine guidance, so long as these “miracles” are not used to create new doctrine or add to the New Testament canon. Some Classical Cessationists believe that the miraculous gifts can take place where the message of salvation is being propagated to a tribe or nation which is unfamiliar with the Gospel. Richard Gaffin, John F. MacArthur and Daniel B. Wallace are perhaps the best-known classical Cessationists.

Full Cessationism additionally asserts that no miracles are performed by God today by the hand of man. God performs miracles but no human agent is involved. All divine guidance is through Scripture as the Bible says (2 Timothy 3.16). B. B. Warfield, J. Gresham Machen, F.N. Lee are the most notable teachers of this.

SEVEN

PENTECOSTALS AND CHARISMATICS SPEAK OUT

In this chapter you will read what the leading Pentecostals and Charismatics have said concerning the exercise of “manifestation gifts” in the modern era.

John Arnott

John Arnott, pastor of the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church, had a few words to say about his church that are most informative:

How many have never been to a church like this in your whole life?

You’d think you had walked into a **mad house** or something.

Well, we have had one year to acclimatize. If we had started with this at this level we would not have had the faith to go on. I know as pastor **I would have shut it down.**¹ (emphasis added)

When he was asked by a reporter concerning the congregation at his first revival meeting he said they were “laughing, rolling, and carrying on.”²

Guy Chevreau

Guy Chevreau attended the services at the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church soon after the “Toronto Blessing” began. The second night that he and his wife Janis attended she was allegedly overcome by the Holy Spirit and broke out in uncontrollable holy laughter. He said, “I would have attended only a couple meetings, having pompously dismissed what I was witnessing as Vineyard nonsense” (*Pray with Fire*, p. 3). Yet he could not ignore what happened because Janis “has never demonstrated any significant emotional instability: she is not in desperate need of attention; she is not easily persuaded, nor is she subject to either premillennial angst or hysteria” (*Ibid.*, 3).

Even though the behavior of his wife and others at the meetings were extremely unusual, Chevreau accepted the phenomenon as being a work of the Holy Spirit:

Though Janis's behaviour was outside our experiential and expectation set, I reluctantly concluded that, given the context, it seemed as if God was doing some unusual, but truly wonderful things in and through my wife, as well as those around us. (Ibid., p. 4)

Janis did not break out into "holy laughter" just once but routinely. "In the early months, my wife frequently fell about in hysterics. While this now only occurs on occasion, the laughter was received as a precious gift – as never before, she discovered that the 'joy of the Lord is her strength'" (Ibid., p. 11).

A friend of Chevreau had numerous bouts of shaking so severely that he broke several folding chairs. He even had some women who broke out roaring like a lion and crowing like a rooster in the middle of prayer (Ibid.).

Another incident that persuaded Chevreau was the bizarre behavior of a regional overseer of the Vineyard churches. Ron Allen was about to speak to the congregation "and with a dumb-drunk look on his face, Ron slowly panned the congregation. His mouth dropped open – and for perhaps a minute, he made several attempts to speak. Then, without warning, he fell over sideways" (Ibid.).

Chevreau confessed that his first thought was, "God doesn't do that to people" (Ibid.). Yet he searched the Bible and found where Jehovah told Ezekiel that He would make his tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth and then give him back his power of speech (Ezekiel 3.26-27). He also found a similar incident concerning Welsh revivalist Richard Owen (Evans, Eifon, *The Welsh Revival of 1904*, p. 17, Worcester, Evangelical Press of Wales, 1989). He concluded that "some of the weirdness witnessed at the Airport meetings has historic precedent" (Ibid., p. 6).

Christian Week

The bi-weekly Christian newspaper "Christian Week" described the unusual events at the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church:

A persistent demonstration of supernatural power – signs and wonders including "holy laughter" and "slain in the Spirit" experiences – brought spiritual refreshing to thousands of Christians.

In the process, a nondescript Toronto area church was transformed into a destination point for pilgrims from all over the world. (January 3, 1995)

John Wimber

John Wimber started a home church and moved it to Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa. He parted company with Chuck Smith over the use of the “manifestation gifts” and eschatology. (He believed in Kingdom Theology while Smith is a Pre-Millennial/Pre-Tribulationist.) He went on to work with Kenn Gulliksen founder of Vineyard Christian Fellowships. This is what he had to say about being slain in the Spirit:

There’s **nothing in Scripture** that supports these kinds of phenomena that I can see, and I can’t think of anything throughout the church age that would. So **I feel no obligation to try to explain it**. It’s just phenomena. It’s just people responding to God.”

There is no place in the Bible where people were lined up and Jesus or Paul or anyone else went along and tapped them on the head and watched them go down, one after another, and somebody else ran along behind. Can you picture Peter and James – “Hold it, hold it, hold it!” – running along behind trying to catch them? And so the model that we’re seeing, either on stage or on television, is **totally different from anything that’s in Scripture**. (John Wimber, “Spiritual Phenomena: Slain In The Spirit – Part 1,” Vineyard Christian Fellowship, Anaheim, CA, 1981, audiotape, emphasis added)

This is what he had to say about the Toronto Blessing phenomenon:

Nearly everything we’ve seen – falling, weeping, laughing, shaking – has been seen before, not only in our own memory, but in revivals all over the world.³

Benny Hinn

Benny Hinn is one of the most influential Pentecostal leaders of our time. He routinely slays people in the Spirit by waving his coat at them, blowing on them or tapping them on the forehead. He had this to say concerning the Toronto Blessing and Pensacola Phenomenon:

You have so much today that is pure flesh, yet people have labeled it as the Spirit. It's not the Spirit, because it's not centered on Christ. It's pure emotionalism. Some of what is happening today, some of these manifestations where people are barking, making sounds of animals – I can tell you, that is **not the Holy Spirit**. It is **purely demonic**. The **Holy Ghost does not bark**. Only a **devil barks**. If somebody barks in my meeting, I'll cast the devil out of that man.

You watching TBN here. If you're doing such nonsense, **get back to the Bible**. And **don't you dare experiment with what is not Scriptural**, checking out if God is in it. My brother, **if it's not in the Bible, He's not in it!! If it's not in the Word of God, He is not in it**. ("Praise The Lord" broadcast July 4, 1997, emphasis added)

What he said is true, but this applies to him and his activities at revival meetings where he allegedly heals people. Many people think what he does is just as bad as what John and Carol Arnott did at the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church (now called the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship) and John Kilpatrick and Steve Hill at the Brownsville Revival (Pensacola Phenomenon). Randy Clark, the evangelist that sparked the Toronto Blessing, had been influenced by the ministry of Rodney Howard-Browne who started the holy laughter movement.

Many Charismatic pastors considered the activities that went on at the Toronto Blessing were not Scriptural. Most independent observers of the Brownsville Revival considered the stories of healings and miracles to be public relations hype to draw people in.

Jesse Duplantis

Many of us think miracles get everybody to come to church. But miracles actually create doubt. (*Heaven, Close Encounters of the God Kind*, p. 129)

Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith, founder of the Calvary Chapel Movement and one of the leading Charismatic pastors in the world, became disappointed in the direction that many Pentecostal and Charismatic churches were going in the 1980s and wrote a book about it. He called the abuses of the

“manifestation gifts” and the false teachings of many Charismatic and Pentecostal preachers “Charismania.” Thus, the title of his book, *Charisma vs. Charismania*. He made several comments in that book which are quite intuitive:

One of the greatest **weaknesses** of the **charismatic movement** is its **lack of sound Bible teaching**. There seems to be an **undue preoccupation with experience**, which is **often placed above the Word**. As a consequence, **charismatics** have become a **fertile field** for strange and **unscriptural doctrines** proliferating through their ranks.

It is of utmost importance that we allow the **Bible to be the final authority for our faith and practice**. Any time we begin to allow experiences to become the criteria for doctrine or belief, we have lost Biblical authority, and the inevitable result is **confusion**. (*Charisma vs. Charismania*, p. 121, emphasis added)

One of the experiences that is quite common among charismatics is the practice of being “slain in the Spirit.” **I have never discovered the supposed value of this experience**. (Ibid., p. 122, emphasis added)

He explained how it is easy for an evangelist to knock people over with a mere tap on the forehead:

When I was young I attended many services where people were supposedly being slain in the Spirit. I often had hands laid on me; quite often there was a gentle pressure exerted on the forehead, pushing me backward. With some of the evangelists, it was not quite so gentle. If you stand with your eyes closed, hands lifted, and your head tilted back, it does not take much pressure for you to go over backward, especially if you know that someone is standing behind you to catch you! (Ibid., pp. 122-123)

Concerning the practice of casting out demons from believers he said:

Paul warned against doctrines of demons in the last days. This whole doctrine and practice was **developed entirely upon experiences**, with no solid scriptural foundation. (Ibid., p. 124, emphasis added)

Smith argued in his book that true believers cannot be demon possessed and therefore cannot have demons cast out of them:

There is no account in the Scriptures of a born-again believer in Jesus Christ being exorcised of a demon.

That demons can and do possess the bodies of *unbelievers* is an accepted fact of Scripture, and that they can be exorcised through the authority of the name of Jesus is also evident. But to believe that a child of God can be freed from the problems of flesh (such as lust, anger, and envy) by exorcism is charismania. (Ibid., p. 121)

Another problem that Smith sees with a large number of the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches is the “power of rhema over the logos.” In too many churches the “ministry of the prophet or exhorter is preferred above that of the teacher” and the “anointing of the Spirit is preferred above that of the teacher.” In these churches the anointing of the Spirit is recognized “not so much by the truth that is unfolded,” but by the “fervency and excitement displayed by the speaker” (Ibid., p. 125).

Smith described the gimmick that virtually all televangelists use to make people think they are anointed:

If the voice is loud and pitched high, and the speech very forceful and rapid, this is the sign of true anointing, especially if he sucks a lot of air between phrases and throws in amens and hallelujahs between thoughts! Some of the more adept evangelists have developed great skills in **whipping the people into a high state of excitement bordering on hysteria** by just repeating a single phrase, such as “Praise the Lord,” using different voice intonations. (Ibid., emphasis added)

He goes on and hits hard at the use of speaking in “tongues” that is prevalent in the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches:

Because of the preference for the spoken word, **tongues** with interpretation or a prophetic utterance **is desired above the preaching or teaching of the scriptures**. In many charismatic fellowships, if there have not been manifestations of these vocal gifts, the people do not recognize or acknowledge the moving of the Spirit in that service. I have often heard people say that the Spirit moved in such a powerful way in the service that the **preacher did not even have an opportunity to speak**. This idea is used to express the “ultimate” in the moving of God’s Spirit. (Ibid., emphasis added)

Smith refuted this concept that the moving of the Spirit is seen by numerous people speaking in “tongues” and making prophetic utterances:

It is God's Word that ministers to the spirit of man and feeds the spirit. So if the minister is not given the opportunity to share God's Word, we must legitimately question if the soul of man or the Spirit of God was moving in the service. It is sad that the unscriptural excesses are so freely tolerated among charismatics. Often, hungry and sincere believers who sense a lack of power in their lives will go to services with an open, hungry heart seeking God's power, but when they observe the absence of solid Scriptural content and the presence of distasteful fleshly manifestations, they turn their backs on the whole valid and beautiful work of God's Spirit that a person can experience in this life. (Ibid., p. 126)

We must remember that Smith was reared in a Foursquare Gospel church and saw a lot of abuses of the "manifestation gifts" of the Holy Spirit. He also came to realize that many Pentecostals do things to draw attention to themselves instead of to the Lord:

Many of the things done in charismatic services are done to draw attention to the individual. The person who shouts "Hallelujah!" and thrusts his hand upward is drawing attention to himself, and many times distracts those who are truly worshipping God. (Ibid., p. 127)

He also has some harsh criticisms of how some pastors and evangelists motivate people to give:

I have heard evangelists say that God told them that ten people were going to give a thousand dollars that night, then would rant and rave and threaten the people until the ten were standing to their feet. As each would stand, attention would be given to him or her, and applause would be encouraged. As the crowd applauded I felt sick in my heart, and I thought, "Enjoy it and take it in, poor soul, for this will be the only reward you will receive for that gift." As Jesus said, "You have your reward." I also felt anger toward the pastor or evangelist who would encourage people to give in such a way as to receive no reward from God. I also felt that **he lied** when he declared that God had told him how many people were going to give a thousand dollars. This is nothing more than a **psychological ploy**. (Ibid., pp. 127-128, emphasis mine)

Another trick that many evangelists and pastors use to raise money is sending out letters requesting donations for some special emergency or endeavor. These mass mailings make some donors believe the pastor is

making a special request just to them. As Smith notes in his book the donor's name is inserted into the text of the letter several times and there are numerous lies made by the pastors who often say, "The Lord laid you on my heart this morning to pray especially for you. Is something wrong? Please write me and tell me your need so I can help you" (Ibid. p. 128).

Smith saw through the lies and correctly analyzed the problem:

It has always puzzled me how these men who have learned all the secrets of faith and have such great power with God never seem to have enough faith to trust God to take care of their *own* needs, but warn that God's work is going to fail unless the people come to His aid immediately and save him from bankruptcy. (Ibid., pp. 128-129)

A false doctrine that has misled many is the prosperity doctrine. This doctrine teaches that God never wants His children to be sick and if a Christian gets sick it is because of sin or a lack of faith. Smith noted that such teachings "sound more like Mary Baker Eddy than the Apostle Paul!" (Ibid., p. 129). These prosperity preachers teach that a person's words become a force for good or evil. Smith believes that as a person hears this teaching he would "swear that the sermons came from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* rather than the Bible" (Ibid.).

The following is a shocking confession that a Charismatic leader made to Smith:

One of these charismatic leaders said to me, "Inasmuch as this was given to Paul lest he be exalted above measure, don't you think that if Paul could have just conquered his flesh, the thorn would not have been necessary?" I cannot imagine the spiritual pride insinuated by such a remark. In essence, he was declaring that he had conquered over his flesh more thoroughly than Paul. This surely was not apparent by the flashy clothes, car, and home that he possessed. Yet he said that all of this lavish living was just a sign of his faith, for if God could trust us with money, He wanted us to prosper, and anyone with enough faith could live like the King's kid. (Ibid., p. 130)

Smith refuted this idea saying Jesus had no place to lay His head and He sent Peter to fetch a coin out of the mouth of a fish to pay a tax. We can add to this what James said, "*But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate: and the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away*" (James 1.9-10).

Smith is irked by the refusal of medical treatment. “In other cases I know of people who followed the lies of the positive-confession evangelists, and when their confession failed to materialize, they turned their backs on God completely,” he explained (Ibid., p. 130).

Besides people losing their faith due to this heretical doctrine, Smith noted that some of these prosperity evangelists are hypocrites:

I also know that some of the **evangelists** who are the chief exponents of this positive confession as the way to constant health and continuous prosperity have **spent time in the hospital for nervous exhaustion** (Ibid., emphasis mine).

Smith concluded his expose of the hypocrites with powerful rebukes:

The people who seem to prosper the most from these teachings are the evangelists themselves. How will they answer to God for conning the poor little widow out of half of her Social Security check, causing her to miss several meals for lack of funds so they can fly their private jets to their luxury condominiums in Palm Springs and dine in the plushiest restaurants?

Paul writes to Timothy about the perverse teachings of men of corrupt minds who are destitute of the truth, for they suppose that godliness is a way to prosperity. Paul warned Timothy to stay away from them. This is a free but accurate translation of the Greek text in 1 Timothy 6:5. Paul then told Timothy that godliness with contentment was great riches. (Ibid., p. 131)

Smith is convinced that charismania is a “repelling influence on so many hungry, earnest saints of God who are needing and searching for a deeper experience of God’s power in their lives” (Ibid., p. 145).

Conclusion

Jonathan Edwards wrote a treatise in 1741 called “The Distinguishing Marks of the Spirit of God.” He stated that we could recognize God’s hand by five sure distinguishing, Scripture evidences:

1. It raises the esteem of Jesus in the community.
2. It works against the Kingdom of Satan.
3. It stimulates a greater regard for the Holy Scriptures.
4. It is marked by a Spirit of Truth.
5. It manifests a renewed love of God and of man.

Pentecostals and Charismatics believe the “manifestation gifts” are for all believers today. As Smith says in his book, Christians “need to always remain open to God for whatever He may desire to bestow upon us” (*Charisma vs. Charismania*, p. 146). His prayer is that all Christians “may experience all of the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the gifts that He desires to bestow upon us as we wait for our Lord’s return” (Ibid.).

Cessationists have received all of the gifts that the Holy Spirit desires to give them and the “manifestation gifts” are not among them. They also cite Scripture which says that every believer has been given “*every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*” (Ephesians 1.3) and in Jesus Christ “*dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in Him ye are made full*” (Colossians 2.9-10a). They have also served God faithfully for over 1900 years without the “manifestation gifts.” Some of these men, considered to be the greatest Christians of the Church Age by Pentecostals and Charismatics, are:

Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Anathasius, Eusebius, Cyril, Chrysostom, Maximus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Thomas Becket, John Hus, Jerome of Prague, Savonarola, Peter Waldo, John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Thomas Cranmer, John Knox, William Tyndale, Huldrych Zwingli, Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley, William Gurnall, John Newton, David Brainerd, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, William Carey, David Livingston, Adoniram Judson, John Gill, George Muller, James Hudson Taylor, Robert Moffat, Dwight L. Moody, Charles Spurgeon and Charles Thomas Studd.

Should the Holy Spirit have given the “manifestation gifts” to these men? Are those gifts just for the first century Christians and those living in the last days? Does a Christian need those gifts to bring glory to God? Do you believe any Pentecostal/Charismatic evangelist or preacher has made as great an impact on the world as the men noted above?

Notes

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