



NEW HEART BEAT DEVOTIONS

Tongues Aflame

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11/25/99

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The History of Tongues

The present tongues movement is rapidly spreading, like wild fire, across both America and the world. Millions are joining the movement and are speaking in a so-called heavenly language. It is not just affecting one denomination but every church is being influenced by this movement. People are no longer satisfied with dull boring religion. They want excitement, they want an emotional high, and they want a living God. But before jumping into something that seems to bring spiritual revival, a Christian should seek the Biblical truth about the experience. The following pages should give insight about the history, the gift, the purpose, the regulations and the modern movement of tongues.

A historical review of this phenomenon in both secular and sacred history is necessary for a good basis of understanding. "However, history can only relate what did or did not happen. It can neither provide an absolute test for right or wrong nor provide a standard for faith and practice".¹

Tongues in Secular History

The most ancient account of frenzied religious speech was record in the "Report of Wenamon" (1100 B.C.). It relates that a young worshiper of Amos became possessed by a god and spoke in an ecstatic language throughout the night.

In his writings, the Greek philosopher Plato (429-347 B.C.) revealed an acquaintance with religious ecstatic speech. In his Phadedros, he wrote about "certain families that were engaged in holy prayers, rites and inspired utterances. The participants were possessed individuals with the loss of control of their mental faculties".²

In his Aeneid, Virgil (70-19 B.C.) described the Sibylline priestess on the isle of Delos. He recorded that she became unified in spirit with the god Apollo and spoke with tongues sometimes incoherently. "She attained this ecstatic state and speech in a haunted cave where drafts and winds made strange sounds and music".³

In the Graeco-Roman world, there were mystery religions centered in the concept of spirit possession or identification. Several recorded accounts of tongues in religious activities were among the Syrian goddess Juno (120-198 A.D.), the Bacides and the Sybils. At the site of Delphi, a woman oracle called Pyhia would utter weird sounds while in a frenzy.

Tongues in Bible History

"Even though the actions of various Old Testament prophets may approximate those of a speaker in tongues, it cannot be demonstrated that these prophets did speak in tongues. There is no explicit statement that they did. To say they did is to impose a New Testament, concept upon Old Testament action".⁴

In the New Testament, the word "tongues" used in specific reference to speaking with the gift of tongues occurs twenty-nine times. There is only one mention of tongues in the four Gospels (Mark 16:17). There are three distinct instances found in the book of Acts: Pentecost (Acts 2:4), Caesarea (Acts 10:46), and Ephesus (Acts 19:6). Lastly, only one epistle I Corinthians makes reference to tongues. These New Testament accounts and references will be examined in detail later.

Tongues in Early Church History

John Chrysostom (343-407) was the greatest expositor and preacher of the early Greek church. He is quoted more than any other church father by modern commentators. In his First Corinthians 12 commentary he wrote: "This whole place is very obscure: 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."⁵

Augustine (354-430) was the intellectual head of the North African and Western churches. "He definitely regarded the sign as a temporary phenomenon, limited to the apostolic era. Tongues speaking was not in existence in his day nor did he expect its recurrence."⁶

There is a question as to whether the phenomenon of tongue speaking did occur in the Middle Age (590-1517) and the Reformation (1517-1648). These were the periods of Roman Catholic domination and doctrinal perversion.

The Post Reformation Period (1648-1900) was the period of Protestant advancement. Also, this period was also marked by the development of cults and sects. With several of these groups, speaking in tongues became an integral part of worship.

One said group was the Jansenists, started by Cornelius Jansen. They believed experience, not reason, was their guide and they were opposed to the teaching of justification by faith. It is reported that in 1731, a group of Jansenists held a meeting at a former leader's grave tomb and spoke in tongues.

During the year of American independence, "Mother" Ann Lee, founded the Shaker Community near Troy, NY. She taught the second coming of Christ was fulfilled in her. She also instituted the practice of men and women dancing together naked while they spoke in tongues.

In 1847, the Mormons dedicated their temple in Salt Lake City. Hundreds of Mormon elders spoke in tongues. Brigham Young, their leader supposedly prayed in pure Aramaic language.

Tongues in Modern Church History

Charles Parham, "the father of the modern Pentecostal movement", established the Bethel Healing Home and Bethel Bible College. One of his students, Agnes Ozman, spoke in tongues on January 1, 1901. "Although Agnes Ozman was not the first person in modern times to speak in tongues, she was the first person to have received such an experience as a result of specifically seeking a baptism in the Holy Spirit with the expectation of speaking in tongues."⁷ This experience started the modern Pentecostal revival which taught that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was an experience to be sought and to be verified by tongues.

W.J. Seymour, a Negro Holiness preacher, was called to preach in a Nazarene church in Los Angeles. He was later locked out of the church because of his extreme preaching. He moved his meetings to the Azura Street Mission. On April 9, 1906, seven received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues at the mission. This drew national attention and the teaching of Pentecostalism spread rapidly across the land.

To his Sunday morning April 3, 1960 congregation, Father Dennis Bennett of St. Mark's Episcopal Church (Van Nuys, CA.), announced that he had spoken in tongues. This date marked the beginning of the modern Charismatic revival with its emphasis upon the gifts of the Holy Spirit including the gift of tongues. Charismatic experiences soon crossed into many denominations. Over the next forty years, Baptist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist, Roman Catholic Church, Nazarene, and most Christian churches all had laypersons and/or ministers claiming that they have spoken in tongues. The flame for spiritual excitement and experience continues to ignite in millions.

The Gift of Tongues

History, nor experience, nor popularity can determine what is truth. The Bible and only the Bible contains the absolute truth and foundation for faith. The accounts, references and restrictions of speaking in tongues must be examined in the light of the Holy Scripture.

The Gift at Pentecost

The first Biblical account of speaking in tongues is found in Acts 2:1-4: *"And when the third day of Pentecost was fully come... there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire and it sat upon each of them and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."*

On this particular day of Pentecost (fifty days after Christ's resurrection and ten days after His ascension into heaven) the twelve apostles were with one accord in one place. *"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting"* (Acts 2:2).

This sound was a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The apostles were truly surrounded or baptized in the sound and in the Holy Spirit. This sound was heard everywhere and caused a multitude to gather.

"While they were sitting" is an interesting phrase for it proves that the apostles were not praying for this experience. Jews always stood or knelt when they prayed. They never sat. Christ never pinpointed the exact day for them nor implied that it would be Pentecost. He simply said, *"not many days hence"*.

The *"cloven tongues like as of fire"* was not the fulfillment of the "baptism of fire" which is the purification for believers (Matt. 3:11-12, Rev. 20:11-15). It was used as a sign to show the descent of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of a new dispensation of Grace.

The Holy Spirit never stayed with the believers before this day. There were short periods of indwelling recorded in the Bible. But this was the beginning of the Holy Spirit permanently abiding within believers as Jesus promised. Another sign of this baptism for permanent dwelling was the apostles speaking in sixteen languages and dialects which they never knew before. Several of the languages (Parthia, Medes, Cappadocia, and Cretes) were so rare and distant that only God could of produced such a phenomenon through these men. Each man heard the wonderful works of God in their own language (Acts 2:8-11).

The Gift at Caesarea

Acts 10 records the second Biblical account of speaking in tongues. Peter was sent by God to the gentile household of Cornelius in Caesarea. The purpose of his visit was to show the Jews that through Christ's name *"whosoever believeth in Him (would) receive remissions of sins"* (Acts 10:43). Several conclusions can be made from this account.

First, Cornelius received the Holy Spirit at the very moment he believed in Christ for salvation. *"When Peter mentioned belief in Christ, the spiritually prepared hearts of Cornelius and his household responded in saving faith and it was at that movement the Holy Spirit fell upon them (Acts 10:45)".⁸* This experience is contrary to the basic theory of the modern tongues movement which states that believers do not receive the filling or baptism of the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion.

Second, Peter did not pray for them nor did he lay hands upon them that they might receive the Spirit. Cornelius was not even seeking or praying for the Holy Spirit. He simply listened to Peter's message, was converted and began speaking in tongues. Cornelius probably did not even know about the gift of tongues until he began speaking.

Third, this speaking in tongues was in know languages recognized and understood by the observers (Acts 10:46). Simon Peter reported that *"..God gave them the same gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ"* (Acts 11:47).

The Gift at Ephesus

The third Biblical account of speaking in tongues is found in Acts 19. The apostle Paul had come to Ephesus, where he met twelve men who were the disciples of John the Baptist. The men knew not about Christ being their Messiah. When Paul explained to them about the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, they believed and were baptized as New Testament believers.

"And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:6). Once again, there is no indication that Paul prayed for them or that they prayed for themselves in order to gain this tongues experience. These tongues were foreign languages because the same Greek word GLOSSA, used in Acts 2 and 10 to describe foreign languages, is also used here.

The Gift at Corinth

There is no recorded event in the Bible of speaking in tongues at Corinth. But from Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church, it was obvious that speaking in tongues was taking place there. It is interesting that in the rest of the Bible, this is the only church that is specifically associated with this gift. The accounts in Acts do not state that the gift continued within the church meetings. Speaking in tongues is not mentioned again in any other New Testament church letter. Paul does not even refer to it in his second letter to the Corinthian church.

The gift of tongues at Corinth was the same as what was at Pentecost. "The use of identical terms in reference to speaking with tongues in Acts and First Corinthians leaves no foundation for a distinction. In all passages, the same vocabulary LALEO and GLOSSA is used, in various grammatical constructions. On the basis of the Greek and the statement of the text, no distinction is found."⁹

The word "interpret" in I Corinthians 14:13 means "to translate". Out of the twenty-one occasions where this word is found in the New Testament eighteen definitely refers to translation or an attempt to make clear through explanation what is said in a known human language (John 9:7, Heb. 7:2, I Cor. 14:13).

The verse *"thought I speak with the tongues of men and of angels"* (I Cor. 13:1) is commented on by Dr. John R Rice: "Angels have no angelic language. They talk in all the languages of earth when they come to talk to men. We suppose no man in the world knows all the languages, all the dialects in the world, but angels do. Paul is playing down the matter of languages. The language in which you speak is not as important as what you speak. And what you say with your mouth is important only when the heart is right with love and obedience."¹⁰

In the King James version, the adjective "unknown" describing tongues (I Cor. 14:2, 4, 13, 15, 19, 27) appears in italics. In this instance, it means that the word is not found in the original Greek. The translators in 1611, did not clearly understand this gift. (It was ceased for more than 1000 years.) They added the explanatory word "unknown". On the other hand, God could of purposely added this adjective in the translation. He could of meant unknown or "not previously known" to the speaker but "previously known" to those around.

Robert Gromacki states: "Speaking in foreign languages which were not learned would certainly constitute a divine miracle; however, speaking in gibberish or unknown sounds could easily be done by either a Christian or an unsaved person. There is no objective standard by which such speaking could be evaluated. Therefore, it logical to assume that God would institute a miracle that men could not duplicate through human simulation".¹¹

The Usage of Tongues

The Gift With Purpose

God's Sign Language

God uses many signs in the Bible. The rainbow is a perfect example of this. God gave Moses signs and wonders. Jesus performed many miracles and wonders. At the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), God again gave several signs that a new dispensation had begun. The dispensation of Grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He continued several of the signs through the apostolic age.

In I Corinthians 14:21, Paul quotes Isaiah 28:11-12. Isaiah is saying that since Judah would not listen when God spoke to them in Hebrew, they would have to listen when He spoke to them (through enemy soldiers) in the Assyrian language. Foreign language was then used as a sign to demonstrate God's judgement upon unbelieving Judah. Here Paul was stating that at Pentecost foreign languages or tongues were again used as a sign upon unbelieving Israel.

Cornelius (Acts 10) was the first Gentile convert. The Jews at Jerusalem did not believe that the Gospel was for Gentiles. Peter had a dream (Acts 11) where God instructed him to go to the Gentiles. This did not set well with the Christian Jews. Again, God used tongues as a sign. This time not to unbelieving Jews, but to the believing Jews (Acts 11:17,18).

With the account of the twelve Jewish disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 18), the message that the Messiah had already come and gone without them knowing it must of been difficult to grasp. After all their Godly leader taught them to seek for the Messiah with all their heart and soul. They also lived in the same country at the same time, as Jesus. Now someone is telling them that they missed it all. Here God used speaking in tongues, as a sign to these now believing twelve Jewish disciples of John the Baptist that Paul's message was true.

When Paul said, "*tongues are for a sign to them that believe not*" (I Cor. 14:22) he did not necessarily mean an unsaved person. Thomas, a saved person, said about the resurrected Christ, "*Expect I shall see... I will not believe*" (John 20:25). Speaking in tongues was God's sign language to the unsaved and saved Jews.

Not For Preaching the Word

On the day of Pentecost, the apostles spoke of the "wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:11) not the "wonderful Word of God". The Word of God was given through Peter preaching in Aramaic. It was after his message that the three thousand were saved, not before (Acts 2:41). At the other two accounts of speaking in tongues, Cornelius and the twelve disciples of John the Baptist, there were no recorded unsaved converted because of the tongue speaking. No where in First Corinthians does it imply that this was the purpose for the gift. God could give someone the ability to speak a language not previously known to them for the purpose of sharing the Gospel but the gift of tongues was not and is for evangelism.

Not For Receiving the Holy Spirit

Some hold the position that speaking in tongues is the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. These have confused the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the filling of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a single not repeatable (Eph. 4:5) act which unites every believer to Christ, making them members of the body of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4, I Cor. 12:13, Gal. 3:27), at the time of their salvation (Eph. 5:18). The filling of the Holy Spirit is a repeated experience commanded to be desired and achieved (Eph. 5:18) which produces the fruit of the Spirit, submission, service, and Christian character (Eph. 5:19-21, Gal. 5:22-23). The believer can not get any more of the Holy Spirit. However, the Holy Spirit can get more of the believer through their continuing yielding (Roms. 6:12) to the indwelling Holy Spirit. Speaking in tongues is not a sign for the Holy Spirit baptism, indwelling, empowering, or filling.

The Gift With Regulations

The city of Corinth was the place of a magnificent temple to Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty. The temple prostitutes would work themselves up into ecstatic frenzies as they followed their heathen rituals. Because of the city's great emphasis on ecstatic, immoral behavior and speech, God had Paul laid down certain rules and regulations governing speaking in tongues.

Not For Unbelievers

Paul's first regulation for speaking in tongues was that the person must be believer. He stresses *"That no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed"* (I Cor. 12:3). "An interesting fact about the modern charismatic movement is that it often includes those who do not meet Biblical standards as born again believers. It is admitted by leaders of the movement that there are those who do not believe in such essential doctrines as the Trinity, the Virgin Birth and the Deity of Christ."¹²

Not For Everyone

In I Corinthians 12:12-27, Paul is stressing the diversities of gifts and the importance of each. He uses the illustration of the body with its different members just to show how ridiculous it is to seek someone else's gift. *"If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole body were hearing, where were the smelling?"* (I Cor. 12:17). Later he writes, *"Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gift of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Have all interpret?"* (I Cor. 12:29-30). The answer is no. Each person has a particular gift, sovereignty given by the Holy Spirit, for a particular service in the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:27). Paul is stating that the gift of tongues is not for everyone. It is even the least of the gifts (I Cor. 12:8-10, 28). In fact, nowhere else in the Bible is tongues listed as a gift of the Spirit. What would happen if someone would stand up in a meeting and proudly announce that they received the gift of helps or administration? Well, everyone would think they were nuts. Then why is this not so with the gift of healing or tongues or even preaching?

Not Asked For

Not once in the three occurrences in Acts was the gift of tongues prayed or asked for. The recipients did not even know about the gift before they received it. Gifts are sovereignty given, *"dividing to every man severally as He will"* (I Cor. 12:11). They can not be changed only discovered, developed and deployed. *"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him"* (I Cor. 12:18). *"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given us"* (Roms. 12:6).

Not For Self Edification

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (I Cor. 12:7). *"He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself"* (I Cor. 14:4). Although a believer might speak to God through the gift of speaking in tongues (I Cor. 14:2), it is totally unnecessary and unfruitful even for self edification (I Cor. 14:14). God is quite able to understand the believer in the believer's native tongue. Every gift is for the edification of the church.

Not With Confusion

Paul also stated that there should be no more than three individual instances of speaking in tongues in one service, and they should occur only one at a time (I Cor. 14:27). Simultaneous speaking in tongues only leads to mass confusion and ridicule by believers and unbelievers (I Cor. 14:23). God is not the author of confusion but of peace (I Cor. 14:33). God does everything decently and in order (I Cor. 14:40).

Not For Women

The sight of frenzied women speaking in ecstatic languages in their dedication to worship and immorality was a common sight in Corinth. Strangers walking by an assembly of God hearing women in an unknown speech would immediately think they found a little colony of Aphrodite worshippers. For this reason Paul writes: *"Let your women keep silence in the church"* (I Cor. 14:34). The prohibition to speak uses the same word (LALÉO) as was used in tongues (I Cor. 14:27-28).

The Gift With Interpretation

Much of the speaking in tongues today is in ecstatic speech (not Biblical), not being interpreted in meetings or when they are interpreted the interpretation is often a fraud. "In Pentecostal services, often someone speaks in tongues and then another gives what is pretend to be a divinely given 'interpretation'. But a few words may result in a long interpretation. Or a long speech in tongues may be interpreted in few words. Often prophecies are made that are never fulfilled."¹³

George Gardiner said, "I have heard hundreds of messages in tongues and interpretations. Not one ever added anything of value to the meeting. Everyone has a rehash of scripture, (often quoted inaccurately) some promoted false teaching, and some were wild interpretations with whom even the tongues speaker had had a disagreement".¹⁴ This type of speaking in tongues is not for the edification of the church.

The reason interpretation of tongues does not appear in the Book of Acts is because the Bible does not specifically state that tongues must be interpreted outside the church meeting. The gift of tongues was not two different gifts, foreign languages in Acts (not needing interpretation) and ecstatic speech at Cornish (needing interpretation). The gift of tongues was always speaking in a foreign language not previously known to the speaker, needing interpretation only in a church meeting for the edification of the church (I Cor. 14:5, 23, 28).

The Gift Real Experience

At this point I, the author, have been lead to share my real experience with this phenomenon. (I know I am breaking every rule of writing.) It was during the early 70's. It was when the Jesus Movement was spreading the country. We all had our One Way hand signs. The music, the clothing and the actions kind of followed the 60's hippie movement but with a Jesus focus. Somewhere, I still have those national Jesus Movement newspapers that shows what being high on Jesus meant.

During those years, I was invited to a meeting in the house of an insurance agent. I went there with several Christian school friends. We all sat on the floor. Someone started playing the guitar and we began to sing slow mood songs. Then everyone began swaying their hands. We started repeating phases like Jesus is Lord and Praise Jesus. People were crying and getting emotional. Then someone started saying strange syllables. I was told that they got it. Then another and another and another. Guys and girls were being "caught up in the Spirit". There was no interpretation, no order, no Bible message, no group edification. Just "feeding on Jesus". I began to cry, hug others, and became very emotional. I, too, wanted it. (I never got it because I already had Him.) For days after that I could not sleep. I wanted that emotional high, again. I wanted to lose myself (like those on drugs) but for Jesus. My Christian parents saw what this was doing to me and refused to let me return. I did not understand all I wanted was JESUS.

Throughout my high school years others invited me to similar meetings. Even while attending a Bible University, an off-campus friend would encourage me to speak in tongues. After researching and writing a term paper on Tongues Aflame, I finally saw what God's Word said on the subject. It was then that I found peace about not speaking in tongues. (By the way, I got an A on the report.) In many areas, I now keep my faith to His Word and not to my feelings.

Now twenty five years later, I have been recently approached by several Christians seeking to understand this phenomenon. They are confused after attending a similar service or a friend has asked them to speak in tongues. For them, I blew off the dust from my original term paper (still on erasable onion skin typing paper). For others, I am greatly condensing my long wordy assignment, improving it slightly, and placing in print the understanding which God allowed me to discover.

The Cessation of Tongues

In Light of First Corinthians

Right between Paul's discussion about tongues is I Corinthians 13, the great love chapter. Paul purposely put this chapter here to show the importance of a more excellent way. Unselfish, kind, patient, and self sacrificing love to God and to others should be the highest goal and the heart beat of every Christian.

In this chapter Paul states, "*Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away... But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*" (I Cor. 13:8, 10).

The word "perfect" means mature or complete. The word "perfect" is neuter in form. Paul is speaking about the coming of a complete thing, not a complete person (the coming of Christ). It will be at this time that the transitory gifts of prophecy, tongues and knowledge will cease. God's Word was finished in 96 A.D. with the completion of the book of Revelation. With the completed Word of God, God will no longer need to use man to prophecy, to speak His Divine knowledge, or supernatural signs to confirm His Word. That one book called the Bible is complete and self-sustaining.

In Light of Apostolic Confirmation

In Hebrew 2:3-4, the writer states that miracle gifts were given by God as a confirmation of the message of the apostles. Those who have been with the Lord from His baptism to His resurrection (Acts 1:21-22) and have seen the Christ (Acts 1:2-3) and were appointed as official witness of His resurrection (Acts 1:8) died in 98 A.D.

God does not change. He is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8) But to assume that the confirmation gifts of healing, miracles and tongues are still in use today based on God's unchanging character is wrong. God has changed His dealings with man since the dispensation of Innocence. For example, we are no longer under law but under grace. This is not to say that God is no longer in the miracle business. He can perform the functions of these gifts through man even though the gift was ceased.

In Light of Historical Facts

Historical knowledge can be helpful in affirming what the Bible already states is true. In this case it can confirm that the gift of tongues ceased. "Tongues are mentioned by none of the church fathers of the second century. It were so completely unknown that later writers confessed, in commenting on I Corinthians 12 to 14, that they no longer understood what Paul was talking about."¹⁵ It was not until 1900 years later did this issue arise again in the Christian church.

The Present Movement of Tongues

The Movement's Power

The power or source for the modern movement of speaking in tongues can be classified as either satanic, psychological or artificial. Due the arguments previously discussed, it is not Divine in source .

Historical records have shown many instances of speaking in ecstatic tongues among satanic cults and beliefs. Christ even predicated that miracles and prophesying would be done in His name apart from His sanction or power (Matt. 7:21-23). "This is why an experience or miracle, no matter how great, can not be appealed to as the sole judge of the source of that event. Speaking in tongues can be done by professing Christians in a Christian atmosphere and yet still have its' origin in Satan."¹⁶

A known Charismatic leader once said: "The desire for experience coupled with instruction, motivation, and the approval of the peer group produces ecstatic speech. I have publicly said many times, 'give me a group of people who will do what I tell them to do; sing, relax, anticipate and go through the right motions and it will be only a matter of time before some will speak ecstatically.' It is a psychological phenomena and bears no resemblance to the tongues of the Bible."¹⁷

There are still others who know that speaking in tongues is a status symbol of spiritual achievement in their churches. Dr. John R. Rice comments: "I knew a Godly, soul-winning preacher. He said that he had been active in these churches and had talked in tongues. He said, 'I will show you how,' and he cut loose in a gabber and smiled at me. In other words, he was saying that he could initiate and put on the kind of show that people expected in these services and he had done it himself."¹⁸

The Movement's Problems

The modern tongues movement maybe actually hindering the cause for Christ and not building it up. It is causing thousands of churches to split, broken homes and divorce. "A young wife in Florida went into ecstasy over her tongues experience, left her fundamental church, broke up her home and divorced her husband because he would not renounce his Bible convictions and join her in the charismatic movement."¹⁹

It is causing some harmful psychological damage. "It was discovered that they were finding it difficult to recover from the harmful effect that those years of emotional excesses had had on their nervous systems. They told of some who had ended up in mental institutions."²⁰

There is also a great tolerance of doctrinal error and careless living. "Pat Boone speaking approvingly of the youth segment has said that the movement has no headquarters, no leader and no doctrine. They are just feeding on Jesus".²¹ The present tongues movement could be the very tool that gets the world ecumenical church together. "There should be a charismatic renewal of other Christians churches in to one worldwide church. We must work concretely for the union of all those churches involved in the charismatic renewal not just the Catholic church but all Christian churches."²²

The Movement's Purpose

The rapid growth of this movement shows that God's people are no longer satisfied with cold formalism but demand living reality. It shows that there is today a real hunger and thirst for the deep things of the Lord and for a moving living Christianity. It is exciting to know that people no longer settle to be just spectators at a religious drama played out on Sunday morning but want to be involved for the things of Christ. But the disaster comes when God's people are ignorantly involved in the wrong things and base their convictions and beliefs on experiences and not the Word of God.

Conclusion

God's people must understand that the gift of tongues was always the gift of speaking in a foreign language not previously known to the speaker, It was never prayed for, never expected, and never gibberish. It was a sign to believing and unbelieving Jews during the first century. The gift was only for male believers. It was conducted in decently and in order, with an interpretation which edified the church. Both history and the Bible records that the gift ceased at the completion of the New Testament canon and the end of the apostolic age. The present tongues movement maybe hindering the cause by placing the focus on experience and allowing great tolerance of doctrinal error.

The Christian church must get it's self out of the dull boring motions of religion. It must stop being Biblical sound....asleep. It must show the world that Jesus Christ is alive and well on the planet earth. And that being a follower of Him can radically change a life. Jesus can beak the chains of sin. He can mend a broken home. He can turn sorrow in to joy. He can give that peace that passes all understanding. And through His Word and not through experiences we can find the truth, direction, purpose and victorious living.

We, as Christians, must not throw stones. We must love those who are involved with speaking in tongues. We must commend them on their spiritual zeal. But we must prayerfully and carefully give an answer to those who ask what is wrong with tongues.

It is with great sadness that I write these things because God's people should not have the issue of "Tongues Aflame".

Footnotes

- ¹ Gromachi, p. 5.
² Gromachi, p. 7.
³ Gromachi, p. 7.
⁴ Gromachi, p. 10.
⁵ Gromachi, p. 16.
⁶ Gromachi, p. 17.
⁷ Gromachi, p. 28.
⁸ Gromachi, p. 91.
⁹ Willmington, pp. 3-4.
¹⁰ Rice, pp. 115-116
¹¹ Gromachi, p. 65.
¹² Gardiner, pp. 49-50.
¹³ Rice, p. 176.
¹⁴ Gardiner, pp. 53-54.
¹⁵ Boyer, p. 126.
¹⁶ Gromachi, p. 47.
¹⁷ Gardiner, p. 53.
¹⁸ Rice, pp. 171-172.
¹⁹ Pyle, p. 11.
²⁰ Hugh, p. 67.
²¹ Gardiner, p. 51.
²² Pyle, p. 12.

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