

TONGUES

Glossolalia & Charismatic Renewal

By E.L. Bynum

The ecumenical Movement and Tongues

“The reason I refer to the charismatic movement as a form of ecumenism is that major doctrinal differences are often overlooked by those in the movement as long as a person has seemingly experienced the gifts of the Spirit – particularly the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues.” Theodore Epp. “Pentecostalism is doing more than anything else to bring Catholics and Protestants together.” Present Truth, November 20, 1972. The Catholic Digest quotes Catholic Bishop Alexander Zaleski as saying: “Perhaps our most prudent way to judge the validity of the claims of the Pentecostal movement (in the Catholic Church) is to observe the effects on those who participate in the prayer meetings.... They are attracted to the reading of the Scriptures and to a deeper understanding of their faith. They seem to grow in their attachment to certain established devotional patterns such as DEVOTION TO THE REAL PRESENCE AND THE ROSARY.”

(Emphasis ours)

“An Episcopal priest and an Assembly of God pastor will lead a three-day Charismatic Clinic at St. John’s Episcopal church...” – From Ketchikan, Alaska, Daily News. According to Blu-Print, the 1972 World Tongues Convention sponsored by the Pentecostal Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship, met in San Francisco. One of the speakers was Father Joseph Fulton, pastor of Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Seattle, Washington, who is an active spokesman for the Catholic Pentecostal movement.

Note the words of a Roman Catholic Clergyman of Camillien Monastery, Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada: “I believe I’m saved as much as you are. I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. I was baptized. I’m sincere and I’m dedicated to Christ. So, what if I remain a Catholic? Nothing changes! To me, there is no difference between Catholic and Protestant. What counts is that one believes in Jesus Christ as his savior. When one meets those who have had the Pentecostal experience, whether Catholic or from another Christian Church, we unite together, we are one, for there is no difference. It often happens that I go on Sunday evenings to pray in a French Pentecostal Church. I first fulfill my obligations as a Christian Roman Catholic by worshipping the Lord in my own Church in the morning. Then I go to pray with other Christians. I don’t wear my robes but I do wear my cross and also my ring.” – From The Gospel Witness, May 3, 1973. The writer of the above article tells of attending a Pentecostal meeting at this Catholic Monastery, “The friendly atmosphere sparked by Camillien Gaeten Giroux and his helpers was quite contagious and newcomers were quickly put at ease. Lively chatter and heavy cigarette smoke dispelled any thought of formality.”

“Last August, the Sixth International Conference on Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church took place in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Over 11,500 participated. The national advisor for the Catholic Charismatic movement, Auxiliary Bishop Joseph McKinney, told the group, ‘We need Peter.... We must love the leadership of the Church even though it were a scoundrel who leads the Church. This has happened.... It is not the will of Jesus Christ that the charismatic renewal movement result in factionalism, division or alienation from the Catholic Church. We must be

one with the Catholic Church so He will be able to renew the Catholic Church” – From The Gospel Witness. May 3, 1973.

The Gospel Witness also quotes modernist Dr. Henry Pitney Van Dusen of Union Theological Seminary as saying, “The presence of the charismatic (Pentecostal) movement among us is said to make a new era in the development of Christianity. The new Pentecost will appear to future historians as a ‘true reformation’ (compared to that of the 16th century) from which will spring a third force in the Christian world (Protestant-Catholic-Pentecostal).”

“A 16-page paper entitled, ‘Can the Pentecostal Movement Renew the Church?’ was released in February by the World Council of Churches. Written by Father Emmanuel Sullivan, a Franciscan Friar of the Atonement, it says the ecumenical movement should look at the whole Pentecostal movement, **‘as one of the significant signs of a way forward on the journey to rediscovering...full visible unity in Christ.’**” – From The Gospel Witness. May 3, 1973.

A Powerful Argument Against Tongues

The above examples of the influence of the modern-day tongue movements in the various denominations is one of the most powerful arguments against the unscriptural tongues movement. If Catholics and members of modernistic denominations were really receiving a scriptural Holy Spirit experience from God. **THEY WOULD BE COMING OUT OF THESE UNSCRIPTURAL ORGANIZATIONS** just as the Bible teaches in II Corinthians 6:17-18. If these people were really receiving the Holy Spirit, they would be led to obey the Word of God.

Definition of Words

If we are to properly understand the Bible teaching on tongues, as well as the speech of the tongues movement, we must understand the meaning of certain words.

“CHARISMA” is found 17 times in the Greek New Testament. It is translated “gift” 15 times, and “free gift” 2 times. With one exception, it is found only in the epistles of Paul. He uses it in Romans 6:23, “...the GIFT of God is eternal life...” He also used it 5 times in I Corinthians 12, where he speaks of the “GIFTS” of the Spirit, including the gift of tongues. We are hearing much today about the “Charismatic” revival or renewal. They usually emphasize tongues and healing, and ignore the other gifts mentioned in the New Testament.

“GLOSSA” is found 50 times in the New Testament and is translated “tongues” all 50 times. Sixteen times it refers to the tongues as an organ of the body. One time it refers to the tongues “like as of fire” on the day of Pentecost. In the other 33 places it refers to languages as in Revelation 10:11, “...before many peoples, and nations, and tongues...” The glossolalia movement claims to have the power to speak in tongues as on the day of Pentecost.

“UNKNOWN” tongues are not to be found in the Bible at all. Not one time is “unknown languages” to be found. “Unknown” is printed in italics in I Corinthians 14, and this means that it was not in the Greek manuscripts at all, but was added by the translators. (In this instance they do not clarify but confuse the subject). Every tongue spoken in the New Testament was a known language to some race or people. There are no instances of heavenly language, unknown language, unknown language or gibberish spoken in the New Testament.

I. Three Examples of Tongues in the Bible

To listen to the talk of the tongues movement people, you would think there would be many instances of speaking in tongues in the Bible. However, we have only three examples of God giving people power to speak in a tongue (language) that they did not already know.

1. Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2

The day of Pentecost was an annual feast day of the Jews that came every year 50 days after the Passover. The Holy Spirit came to empower the Church for her mission of world evangelism. There has never been another Pentecost like the one in Acts 2, and we are not taught to look for one. On the day of Pentecost, the prophecy of John the Baptist was fulfilled, “He (Christ) shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost...” Luke 3:16. Peter said in Acts 2:16-21, that the events of that day were a fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32.

Devout Jews from many nations were gathered in Jerusalem. These people had lived in the various nations and had learned the native language of these nations. The preaching and teaching that they heard on the day of Pentecost was done by Galileans, yet “every man heard them speak in his own language.” Acts 2:6-8. Sixteen nations and tongues (languages) are mentioned in verses 9-11, and these all heard the messages by the Galileans in their own language.

No one but the Galileans received this gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost. Everybody did not speak in tongues. In fact, it seems almost certain that only these Galileans Apostles of Christ received this ability. There is no record that any of the other people sought the gift of tongues. **In fact, the Bible does not give us even one example of anybody ever seeking the gift of tongues at any place or any time!**

Tongues served two purposes on the day of Pentecost. (1) They were for a sign to the Jews (who seek after a sign). I Corinthians 1:22. (2) They served to communicate with and to evangelize the foreign-born Jews who were at Jerusalem for the feast. What better way could be found to get the attention of these Jews and to evangelize them before they returned to their various countries. Every tongue that was spoken and heard on the day of Pentecost was a known language to some of them there. There was no “unknown tongue” Those who spoke in tongues did not all speak at the same time, or no one would have understood what they said.

There is no record that the Jerusalem Church ever had another service where the gift of tongues was exercised. Much is said about this Church and her services, but nothing more about tongues.

2. Three Years Later at the House of Cornelius Acts 10:34-48

Cornelius was an unsaved Italian gentile who was a centurion of the Roman army. Peter was sent to tell him how to be saved. Acts 11:14. When he preached the gospel to them, they believed and were saved. (That is, Cornelius and others of his household). At that very moment they received the “gift of the Holy Ghost”, and began to speak “with tongues, and magnify God.” Acts 10:45, 46; and Acts 11:12. They went back to the Jerusalem Church and testified to the Jews what God had done among the gentiles. Acts 11. However, they did not call this event a gentile Pentecost, and those who do so today are in error. No doubt but what a number of different languages were represented here, as there were at Pentecost.

3. Twenty-Two Years Later at Ephesus Acts 19:1-7

Twelve men in the city of Ephesus claimed to be disciples and to have received the baptism of John the Baptist. Paul asked them, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since (when) ye believed?” Acts 9:2 These were sincere but ignorant of John’s preaching and all that followed. This is proven by their answer, “We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.” Had they known John’s preaching and John’s baptism, they would have known about the Holy Spirit and Jesus, for John preached both. See John 1:26-34.

When Paul preached, these people believed and were saved. At that very time Paul “laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.” They did not seek to speak in tongues, but rather it was a sign to the Jews as were the other two instances.

4. Why Are Tongues Not Mentioned Elsewhere?

Other than the abuse of tongues at Corinth (which we will deal with later), there is not one other single instance of the first of tongues in the whole Bible. At the time that I Corinthians was written in 57 A.D., there were only 4 new Testament books written. They were Matthew, Mark, and I & II Thessalonians. ONLY two books of the New Testament mention the gift of tongues and these are Acts and I Corinthians.

Acts was written in 65 A.D. and only mentions tongues these three times. Romans, II Corinthians and Galatians were written in 60 A.D. and there is no mention of the gift of tongues. Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians were written in 64 A.D. and there is no mention of tongues. I & II Timothy and Titus were written at an unknown date, but there is no mention of tongues. Philemon was written in 64 A.D., Hebrews in 70 A.D., James in 62 A.D., Jude in 66 A.D. and Revelation in 96 A.D. and none of these mention the gift of tongues.

It seems incredible if tongues were to continue, that all of these inspired books could be written with no mention of the gift of tongues. Many of Paul’s experience in missionary travel are given in Acts and his Epistles, but none of these accounts mention tongues, except the ones we have already listed.

II. The Importance of Tongues

The gift of tongues was only meant to be temporary, for it is only listed in the two early lists found in I Corinthians 12:8-11 & I Corinthians 12:28-30. In the two other lists which were published several years later, tongues are not mentioned at all. See Ephesians 4:8-12 and Romans 12:4-8. Neither are tongues listed as being the “fruit of the Spirit”, in Galatians 5:22-23.

Even in I Corinthians 12 where tongues are included, they are at the bottom of both lists, which shows us their importance in the plan of God!

III. The ceasing of Tongues

“Charity (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. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that

which is in part shall be done away.” I Corinthians 13:8-10. A few words of explanation are in order for certain words found in the above Scripture.

“**PROPHECIES**” refers to office of the prophet who received a direct revelation of the future from the Lord. “Fail” does not mean that some prophecies given by Divine inspiration would not come to pass, but rather that there would be no need of prophecies when the Word of God was complete. John wrote the last prophecies in 96 A.D. on the isle of Patmos. Now there is no need for prophecies and prophets for John finished that work.

“**TONGUES...SHALL CEASE.**” Tongues here means the gift of tongues. Tongues (languages) have to be learned today, they are not received as a gift. If they could be received as a gift, it would save the missionaries a lot of study on the foreign field. God said that “tongues...shall cease”, and they have. Why? Because they are no longer needed, since we now have the complete Word of God!

“**KNOWLEDGE...SHALL VANISH AWAY.**” “Knowledge” here means revelatory knowledge necessary for completing the Word of God. After the last book of the Bible was finished this “knowledge” vanished away, because there was no more need.

This interpretation is confirmed in I Corinthians 13:9, “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.” At the time that Paul wrote this only small parts of the New Testament had been written by “prophecy” and by “knowledge”, so there was need for these gifts to be continued until it was completed.

“**But when that which is PERFECT is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” I Corinthians 13:10** “Perfect” does not here refer to Christ, as some would have you to believe. “This adjective (used as a noun) is in the neuter gender. Therefore, it is a reference to the finished (perfect) or completed Word of God. If it referred to Christ, it would be in the masculine gender.” – William G. Bellshaw, Th.M. When the New Testament was completed, prophecy, tongues, and knowledge were no longer needed. This interpretation of I Corinthians 13:10 is also confirmed by Merrill F. Unger and Roy L. Laurin in his commentary on I Corinthians.

IV. The Regulation of Tongues

We have just established that tongues have ceased, according to the Bible. However, we must remember that tongues HAD NOT ceased when Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth. Tongues were still permitted, but this Church was abusing the use of tongues. Remember, that this church was one that had to be often corrected. They had turned the Lord’s Supper into a drunken banquet. In fact, Paul had to correct something that was wrong in this church in every chapter of I Corinthians.

In I Corinthians 14 Paul gives some very strict rules concerning the use of tongues. The modern-day tongue movement violates almost every one of these rules. We repeat, TONGUES have CEASED! However, if they were in effect today, then these rules would apply. The very fact that the tongues people today ignore these rules, make a powerful argument against modern day tongues! Now let us notice a few of those regulations. (Remember that “unknown” is in italics and not in the Greek manuscripts).

1. Paul sought to show them that prophecy was much more edifying than tongues. I Corinthians 14:1-6.
2. He also taught them that an uncertain sound from the trumpet or a tongue that was not understood, would only result in confusion I Corinthians 14:7-17.

3. Five words that can be understood are better than ten thousand words that could not be understood. I Corinthians 14:19.
4. Tongues were for a sign (to the Jews I Corinthians 1:22), to the unbeliever and not for the enjoyment of the believer. I Corinthians 14:22/
5. Gibberish flowing from the mouth only confused the unlearned and turned them from the truth. I Corinthians 14:23.
6. No more than three people were to speak in tongues at the same service. Even then, only one could speak at a time. I Corinthians 14:27. The modern-day tongues movement ignores this time and time again!
7. If there was no one present who could interpret every word to every person in the audience, then they could not speak in tongues! I Corinthians 14:28.
8. There was to be no confusion in the service, for “God is not the author of confusion...” I Corinthians 14:33. Confusion best describes many modern-day meetings when they speak in tongues.
9. Women were not to speak in the churches, either in tongues or their regular language. I Corinthians 14:34-35. It is a well-known fact that the tongues movement today sanctions women talking in tongues and preaching. Whatever they are doing in this respect, you may be sure that it is not of God!
10. “All things (were to) be done decently and in order.” I Corinthians 14:40. This writer has been present in services where people who spoke in tongues uncovered their nakedness while under this power!

If tongues were in effect today, then the above regulations would have to govern their use.

V. Conclusion

If tongues today are unscriptural, why is there so much emphasis on this subject? There are several possible sources for tongues. (1) Divine. We have already ruled this out. (2) Satanic. (3) Psychological. (4) Fakery. We believe that every tongues experience today is one of the last three listed.

Where Tongues Flourish Today?

(1) Where the Bible is not taught and/or understood. (2) Where people are seeking experiences, visions, and feelings, rather than truth of the Bible. (3) Among people who have been exposed to the cold, dead preaching of modernistic churches. (4) Where orthodoxy has become cold and dead. (5) Among the lost who are seeking a religious experience.

To seek after an experience that is contrary to the teaching of God’s word, is one of the most dangerous things a person can do. Why? Because they are wide open for demonic invasion and delusion. “...In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” I Timothy 4:1. Satan is an imitator. See II Corinthians 11:13-15; I John 4:1; Isaiah 8:20. Satan is ready to help people imitate the tongues of the Bible, since there are so many who are seeking this experience!

There is no need for anyone to seek the “baptism of the Spirit today.” Every born-again believer already has the Holy Spirit! See I Corinthians 6:19-20. Romans 8:9. Yes, we need to “be filled with the Spirit”, but this is not done by seeking, tarrying or begging, but by simply yielding and surrendering to the Lord!