

CHARISMATIC CONFUSION

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Few subjects are still as hotly disputed in current Christendom as the subject of the "gift of tongues." In the last few years the so-called "charismatic movement" has swept the world, infiltrating most denominations and many independent Christian groups as well. Celebrated personalities are paraded as recipients of the gift. Tremendous stress is laid upon the importance of special spiritual gifts, particularly the gift of tongues. For many years this emphasis was found primarily in smaller, fringe groups not considered to be a part of the historic stream of conservative Christianity. However, more recently charismatics have become prominent in many different denominational and non-denominational organizations. The rise of the charismatic movement has been hailed as a sign of a great spiritual awakening within the Church. While the emphasis in the popular mind is upon the gift of tongues, many charismatics are claiming a revival of other gifts as well.

What is meant by the term charismatic? In general, as commonly used today, it refers to those who believe that the gift of tongues spoken of in the New Testament is still being bestowed by God today, is an important gift, and should be exercised in the churches. Many, if not most charismatics also believe that other spiritual gifts, long thought by most conservative Bible expositors to be inoperative today in the Church, are being divinely bestowed and ought to be used. Among these would be such gifts as prophecy, healing, and the working of miracles. The term itself is derived from the Greek word *charisma* generally rendered by the English word gift (such as in Rom. 12:6).

EXEGETICAL CONFUSION

Exegesis is the science of determining the meaning of the original text of Scripture. Much of the confusion of the charismatic movement stems from a failure to understand properly certain key passages, phrases, and words of the Bible.

The Meaning of Glossa

Glossa is the word in the New Testament for *tongue*." The unfortunate insertion of an English word not found in the original Biblical text has contributed to the misunderstanding of the usage of the word *tongue*. A sample of this is found in I Corinthians 14:2 where the translation states, "for he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God..." The fact that the word is there (even though some charismatics understand it is not valid) nevertheless lends credence in the popular mind to the concept that what is described is some mysterious, heavenly, or unintelligible utterance.

Actually, the word *glossa* refers to a spoken language, not communication foreign to common human experience. (It, of course, sometimes refers also to that portion of the human anatomy with which we speak.) The first mention in the New Testament of a "gift of tongues" is found in Acts 2:1-13. The waiting believers "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave

them utterance" (Acts 2:4). What were these tongues with which they spoke? It is plainly stated in the following passage that "every man heard them speak in his own language" (Acts 2:6). They asked, "... how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" (Acts 2:8). It is clear from this passage that the gift bestowed on the Day of Pentecost was the supernatural and instantaneous ability to preach the gospel of Christ in a language naturally foreign to the user.

There are those who argue for a distinction between the use of tongues mentioned in Acts 2 and that referred to in I Corinthians. The former is made to be intelligent communication while the latter is said to have been ecstatic utterances or "heavenly languages." However, as John F Walvoord notes in his discussion of this matter, there is really no foundation grammatically which would justify a distinction to be made. All of the passages in both Acts and I Corinthians use the same words for "speaking" and for "tongue" (*The Holy Spirit*, p. 183).

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF I CORINTHIANS 14:39

Those who oppose the validity of the gift of tongues today are often made to seem in opposition to the statement of Paul, "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues" (I Cor. 14:39). Did not Paul admonish us to allow people to speak with tongues? Why should we then seek to prevent them? The answer to this question is evident upon an examination of all of the evidence. (1) This prohibition was addressed to the early Christians living in the apostolic age. (2) When the command was given the gift of tongues was still being bestowed upon some believers for the fulfillment of God's purposes at that time. (3) The words were penned prior to the time when certain miraculous gifts ceased. At that time it would have been wrong for anyone to interfere with the proper exercise of the divinely-bestowed gift of tongues. Today the use of tongues should be forbidden because it is no longer a divinely-bestowed gift. Any claimed gift of tongues is spurious and should be prohibited by the churches of Christ.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF I CORINTHIANS 13:8-10

In the great thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians Paul asserts the fact that love is permanent whereas special sign gifts such as prophecy, tongues, and knowledge are temporary. "Love never faileth" (I Cor. 13:8). The others shall "fail" (that is, disappear). The word literally means "to fall."

Paul specifically declares: "...whether there be tongues, they shall cease" (I Cor. 13:8). What did he mean by this? When would tongues cease? Some good Bible expositors believe that the reference is to the end of the age, the coming of Christ, when we shall be glorified. Those who hold this view generally believe that the phrase "when that which is perfect is come" (I Cor. 13:10) refers to that future state of glorification with Christ. They would thus feel that, from this passage at least, it would be impossible to prove the complete cessation of miraculous gifts such as tongues during this church age.

However, a close look at the entire passage seems to indicate that Paul's argument flows in a somewhat different vein. First of all, he declares that there are some methods of revelation which were partial and temporary in nature. The three special gifts mentioned - prophecy, tongues, and

knowledge - are all stated to be temporary and are predicted to discontinue (I Cor. 13:8). These methods of revelation were partial in nature. They were given to the early churches during the interim period when the New Testament was not yet completed and available. This partial and incomplete revelation is in view when Paul says in verse nine, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part." The phrase "in part" means "imperfectly, incompletely, piece by piece, little by little." Prophecy was a gift which involved receiving special and direct revelation from God in order to give it to His people. It was exercised here and there, at different times and places. Knowledge was the ability to receive direct spiritual truth which truth would now be found in the New Testament, but as yet was not recorded because the books were still in the process of being authored. Tongues as a gift was directly connected by the apostle with these other two. They formed a part of the method by which God communicated truth during a time when they had no written New Testament. In other words, tongues were never intended to be a permanent fixture within the New Testament Church. They were part of a temporary arrangement.

Having spoken of temporary and partial revelation, Paul then contrasts it with the permanent and complete revelation of the Scriptures. The phrase "that which is perfect" (I Cor. 13:10) means the final thing, the completed thing. Neither the context nor the language would seem to support the concept that he refers to heaven or the future glorified state. The phrase is the culmination of a logical argument, moving from temporary and partial revelation to permanent and complete revelation. Revelation is the key thought; not glorification.

If this be the case, then the phrase "tongues shall cease" is very important in the present consideration. We would agree with Merrill Unger who concludes that the Greek text of I Corinthians 13:8 contains a strong affirmation of the temporary character of at least three gifts - prophecy, tongues, and knowledge (*New Testament Teaching on Tongues*, p. 95).

DISPENSATIONAL CONFUSION

By "dispensation" we mean a period of time during which God tests man in reference to some specific revelation of His will. Failure to recognize various dispensations, or special, distinct methods of divine operation, can cause confusion in Biblical interpretation. For example, those who confound the nation Israel with the Church, and view the Church as "spiritual Israel;" evidence confusion in their understanding of many passages of Scripture. It seems clear in the New Testament that the gift of tongues was given for a particular period of time and not for the entire Church age.

When argument is made against the perpetuation of the gift of tongues the question is sometimes asked, "Are we not limiting God when we say He cannot grant such a gift today? Is not God able to do anything? Can He not sovereignly bestow the gift of tongues upon whom He will?" The answer to such a question is clear. God is omnipotent, all powerful. But there are some things God cannot and will not do. He will not sin because to do so would be a violation of His holy character. He is "limited" in this case by His own nature. God could instantly stop all conflict among nations, but prophetic Scripture declares He will not do so at this time. Why? He is "limited" by His own purposes. It is not the time in His program for wars to cease. His failure to act reveals no lack of power on His part. So it is with the gift of tongues. While theoretically God

could bestow any spiritual gift He wished He does not and will not do so in contradiction to His revealed purposes. He has declared in His Word that the gift of tongues would cease, it would be bestowed no longer. He is "limited" by His own plan not by lack of sovereign power.

The Perpetuation of Sign Gifts

Many modern charismatics not only accept the gift of tongues as valid for today, but see all of the gifts mentioned in the New Testament as still in use ... (Example: the discussion on "The Further Gifts of the Spirit" in *The Holy Spirit in Today's Church* edited by Erling Jorstad). In other words, they argue that the spiritual gifts practiced in the early church should be practiced today though most of them place more emphasis upon the gift of tongues than some of the other gifts.

Did God intend for all the gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4, Romans 12, and I Corinthians 12-14 to be perpetuated throughout the church age? Are we evidencing a backslidden, disobedient, and spiritually cold condition by our failure to see all of these gifts utilized in our churches? There seems ample evidence in the New Testament that God never intended for all of these gifts to continue throughout the entire church age.

Some gifts were for the time of Incomplete revelation □ It has already been noted in I Corinthians 13 that Paul argued for the temporary nature of some gifts. After the completion of the New Testament canon, these gifts would cease.

Some gifts were for the time of the Church's childhood □ In arguing for the temporary character of certain gifts, including tongues, Paul uses the illustration of physical and mental growth from childhood to adulthood. Why did he use this illustration? He wished to show that the Church was in a process of development at the time he wrote - from infancy to maturity. "Progressive development from infancy to maturity in Paul's personal life would best suit the development of the body of Christ (cf. I Cor. 12)" (Robert Gromacki, *The Modern Tongues Movement*, p. 127). Language, thoughts, and actions that characterize an infant do not evidence themselves in a grownup. Gifts, such as tongues, which were practiced in the infancy of the Church, were not appropriate for its maturity.

Some gifts were divine signs attesting to the truthfulness of the apostolic witness □ The apostles of Christ came into the Roman Empire and into the Jewish communities preaching a startling message. They were declaring that the crucified Jesus of Nazareth had been miraculously raised from the dead, that He had ascended to heaven, and that He was the promised Messiah and the only Savior of all men. This was a very difficult announcement for either Jew or Gentile to receive. What proof was there that this Jesus was Messiah and Savior? How could men know that what the apostles preached was accurate? God solved this problem by granting to the apostles and other early Christians supernatural abilities, mighty signs, which served to corroborate the truthfulness of their message.

The apostles were men especially called and gifted of God for the purpose of laying the foundation of the Church (Eph. 2:20). The very fact that they are described in such a way indicates

that their gift was a temporary one. Foundations are laid and then the superstructure is built upon them. Once the foundation was completed the apostolic gift was removed. "Since this was a gift that belonged to the earliest period of the history of the church when her foundation was being laid, the need for the gift has ceased..." (Charles Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 85).

Now, if the gift of apostleship was temporary, and if that gift was attested by other special gifts, the necessity for these attesting gifts no longer exists. In other words, if special gifts were given as "signs" that an apostle of Christ was working and speaking, and if there are no more apostles of Christ, then it seems evident that the special signs which accompanied their ministry are no longer operative either. We are expressly told that there were such special gifts. In arguing for the importance of the apostolic message, the writer of Hebrews declares that God set the apostles forth so everyone would know they were from God. "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders and diverse miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his own will" (Heb. 2:4). God is telling us here that there were miraculous signs performed in New Testament times to bear witness to the divine source of the apostolic message. We should not expect such signs to be seen today because there are no apostles. The same truth is found in II Corinthians 12:12: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." As Charles Hodge, the eminent theologian states, "**The signs of an apostle** were the insignia of the apostleship; those things which by divine appointment were made the evidence of a mission from God" (**An Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians**, pp. 290-91)

The question remains, if the apostleship was temporary, and, if the special sign gifts attesting the apostleship were temporary, was the gift of tongues one of these gifts? It seems clear that it was from I Corinthians 14:22 where Paul argues that "tongues are for a sign." The exact purpose of that sign we shall discover in a further discussion. However, the gift was definitely a "sign," an outward, miraculous, visible authentication of a divinely-sent person and/or his message. Since the gift of tongues was included among the signs accompanying the preaching and ministry of the apostles, and since there are no apostles today, it follows that the signs which accompanied them are no longer present either.

The purpose of the tongues gift

The charismatic claims □ **The crux of the conflict over the validity of the gift of tongues is settled right here.** For what purpose was the gift originally given? Most present-day advocates of tongues give answers such as: (1) It is the visible sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit; or (2) It enables recipients to pray, give thanks, and worship God in a more satisfying manner.

For the moment we will bypass the question of the alleged connection between the baptism of the Spirit and speaking in tongues, reserving this for a later discussion. We will concentrate on the question of whether or not the gift of tongues was ever intended to be devotional in nature since this is a favorite contention of modern charismatics.

One leading Pentecostal author declares that "the chief purpose of tongues is to provide the human spirit with an opportunity to worship God in ecstatic prayer, praise, thanksgiving, and song..." (Carl Brumback, *What Meaneth This?* p. 303). If one speaks in tongues, it is claimed, one can praise God so much better. Why one cannot praise God adequately in one's native language is

not abundantly clear. At any rate, the so-called "devotional use" of tongues is prominent on the charismatic scene at present.

Is it God's intention that believers be privately edified by speaking in tongues? Those who think so rest their case primarily upon a few verses in I Corinthians. For instance, Paul states, "He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself, but he that prophesieth edifieth the church (I Cor. 14:4). This, however, is not an exhortation to private edification through tongues, but an argument by Paul to the effect that tongues were not intended for private use but for public ministry, and that tongues-speaking is less desirable than prophesying. Likewise, in I Corinthians 14:14 he writes, "For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful." This verse, combined with verse fifteen which follows, is often used by charismatics to argue in favor of tongues as a devotional exercise. However, as Hoekema notes, the subject here is not the private exercise but the use of tongues in public services. In I Corinthians 14:15 Paul is not expressing favor toward the use of tongues either publicly or privately, but rather is pleading the superiority of praying in a known language (cf. Anthony Hoekema, *What About Tongue Speaking?* p. 100).

Why must we reject the concept that the purpose of the gift of tongues was to give enablement in private praise and thanksgiving to God? First of all, this concept militates against the express statement of Scripture that the gift was intended as a sign (as in Mark 16:17). If a "sign," then it must be exercised publicly in order to have its intended effect. Private usage would hardly fulfil this purpose. Secondly, there is no evidence that the early Christians employed the gift of tongues privately. Thirdly, Paul's argument in I Corinthians 14 is not intended to show that one can have a better devotional life through the use of tongues. He plainly states that it is better to worship God with one's spirit and understanding than in a tongue (I Cor. 14:14-15). Fourthly, we need to ask, if the purpose of the gift were devotional in nature, why would it be temporary? Why would it not be continued throughout the Church age?

Scriptural teaching □ What then was the purpose for which God bestowed the gift of tongues? The specific answer can be found in I Corinthians 14:20-22. As one has said, "it is within this passage that there is to be found the only direct and specific Scriptural statement regarding the purpose of the gift of tongues" (Zane Hodges, "The Purpose of Tongues:" *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 120, July-September, 1963, p. 228). Let us examine this vital statement.

The prophet Isaiah foretold a time when God would specially and specifically speak to the nation Israel. "For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people" (Is. 28:11). Israel often did not listen in obedience to the Old Testament prophets who proclaimed to them the Word of the Lord. Isaiah foretells the time when the nation will hear his voice through the medium of "tongues." Paul, in citing this verse, gives us the key to the understanding of tongues. It was a gift meant to be a special sign to the nation Israel that Christ, and His apostles, were sent from God and should be heeded. The explanation of the events of Pentecost by the apostle Peter seem to support the conclusion that tongues was a divinely-intended sign to the nation Israel.

"Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this [the supernatural manifestation of the Spirit and its evidence of tongues], which ye now see and hear. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ"

How was Israel "to know assuredly" that Christ was the Messiah and that the apostles preached the truth? Because they saw and heard "this" - remarkable and predicted manifestation of tongues. Paul specifies that the sign was to the unbelieving (I Cor. 14:22), and to "this people:" the nation Israel to whom the original prophesied words were given (I Cor. 14:21). "The scriptural testimony bears sufficient witness to the fact that the ability to speak in other tongues (languages) vindicated and authenticated both the messenger and his message to the nation Israel..." (Robert Lightner, *Speaking In Tongues and Divine Healing*, p. 28).

THEOLOGICAL CONFUSION

Theology, the systematic study of God and His works, is vital to the spiritual life of an individual believer as well as to the collective testimony of the Church. The Pentecostal, or charismatic movement historically has not been noted for its emphasis upon theology. There is some interest in the study of theology among current neo-Pentecostals, but basically it has been an experience-centered movement.

The emphasis upon experience

It is interesting that Morton Kelsey, a leading spokesman for the charismatic movement, has subtitled his major work, *Encounter With God* thusly: A Theology of Christian Experience. Throughout the study he places great emphasis upon one's **experience** with God. The word "experience" is employed scores of times. He declares that the early church was experiential in its primary outlook. He further encourages the "inward look" if one would be used of God. He believes the Spirit-filled life to be "mysticism," and hastens to add that it is evidenced by speaking in tongues (cf. Morton Kelsey, *Encounter With God*, pp. 154, 157, 165).

This emphasis upon the inward, upon feeling, upon religious mysticism is typical of the charismatic movement. Its practical outworking is seen when one endeavors to present Biblical theological truth that is opposed to the charismatic claims only to receive the retort, "Oh, but you've never experienced it. I've felt it, and it's so wonderful!" One's Christian life, however, ought not to be built upon feelings, however good they may seem, but upon the rock of Holy Scripture. We would agree with the analysis of another who wrote:

"A tongues speaker recently wrote the editor of Christianity Today, 'You cannot give fair treatment to a gift from God which you neither believe in or have experienced: This person has really said that tongues speaking is not subject to critical examination in the light of Scripture. Yet to say that the one who has spoken in tongues is the only one qualified to comment on the subject is to assume the experience is a gift of God and to put the subjective above the Scripture.

"Since what has happened to the glossolalist is no more exempt from the judgment of the Word of God than any other aspect of the Christian life, the tongues speaker should be willing to examine his experience in the light of Scripture. Only in this way can he determine whether or not his experience is the same as that spoken of as tongues in the New

Testament" (Stanley Gundry, "Facing the Issue of Tongues," *Moody Monthly*, October, 1973, p. 96).

One can scarcely believe the extreme statements made when emphasizing "experience." An example would be found in Christenson's work where he argues that the Christian faith is basically an "experience" and theology is merely an explanation of the experience (cf. Larry Christenson, "How to Have a Daily Quiet Time with God;" *Speaking In Tongues*, p. 136). The same author in another place says that speaking in tongues means praying in the Spirit rather than with the mind and further teaches that by praying in tongues one can bypass the intellect" (Christenson, *ibid.*, p. 73). This emphasis upon experience is completely contrary to the teachings of the New Testament. Our minds are to be very active in the proper worship of God.

THE NATURE OF THE SPIRIT'S BAPTISM

Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism center in large measure around the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's baptism. Typically they would view the baptism of the Spirit as taking place at a definite time and as being a "conscious experience" (As an example cf. Bob E. Patterson, "Catholic Pentecostals," in book *Speaking In Tongues; Let's Talk About It*, edited by Watson Mills, p. 105).

Let us examine that claim. The determinative passage is I Corinthians 12:13. There the baptism of the Spirit is stated to be a sovereign work of the Spirit performed upon every believer. Nothing is said about it being a "conscious experience." In fact, it is not a "conscious experience;" that is, something perceptible to the senses. It is an instantaneous and non-experiential work of God.

Most modern charismatics distinguish between tongues as an **evidence** of the Spirit's baptism, and tongues as a **gift** of the Holy Spirit (cf. Carl Brumback, *What Meaneth This?*, pp. 261-272). He, and others who hold this position, attempt to distinguish between the tongues of Acts and the tongues of I Corinthians. Suffice to say at this point that there is no Scripture in the New Testament which declares that speaking in tongues is an evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The misunderstanding has arisen due to the fact that in Acts 1:5 the baptizing work of the Spirit is predicted, and then in Acts 2:4 the waiting disciples are said to be "filled with the Holy Spirit" which was followed by their speaking in tongues. Since the term "baptized with the Spirit" is employed in the prophecy of Acts 1:5 and since that same phrase does **not** appear in the account of Acts 2, but rather the "filling of the Spirit" is mentioned, some have drawn the erroneous conclusion that the "baptism" and the "filling" are one and the same. They have also concluded that because the apostles spoke in tongues in connection with their "baptism" or "filling" every other believer will also do the same. This deduction, however, is not supported by a close examination of the Scriptures. Several considerations should be noted:

- (1) The prediction of Acts 1:5 was fulfilled at Pentecost. The disciples were baptized by the Spirit. Acts 11:15-17 so indicates.
- (2) The filling of the Spirit mentioned in Acts 2:4, however, was not a fulfillment of Acts 1:5. The baptism of the Spirit is a once-for-all ministry performed on behalf of every believer (I Cor. 12:13). The filling of the Spirit is a continuous and contingent ministry performed with some believers who meet the conditions

(Eph. 5:18).

- (3) Speaking in tongues is not a necessary result of either the baptism or the filling. The key verses on these subjects show no necessary connection between either of these ministries and the gift of tongues (I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 5:18).

It is most instructive that there is **no command in the New Testament for anyone to be baptized with the Spirit**. There is **no invitation for anyone to pray for the baptism of the Spirit**. These facts are sufficient in themselves to sound the death-knell of the charismatic movement. There are no such commands or invitations because the Holy Spirit baptizes all believers the moment they are saved, placing them into the body of Christ. There is nothing for the believer to seek or to do. It is done by God alone.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GIFT OF TONGUES

Modern charismatics place far more importance upon the gift of tongues than did even the apostles when the gift was operative. One of Paul's principal arguments in I Corinthians 14 is that tongues was a relatively minor gift. There were other gifts far more significant. The constant glorification of tongues in the public eye which has been done by the charismatics is completely out of touch with what the New Testament presents.

ECCLESIASTICAL CONFUSION

What effect has the charismatic movement had in the churches of this land and others?

THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT AS AN ECUMENICAL CATALYST

Certainly no movement of the twentieth century within the Church has the potential for spanning denominational barriers as does the charismatic movement. In an age which hails all kinds of religious cooperation as good and progressive, the charismatic movement is being looked upon with delight by many. Virtually every traditional division of Christendom is found under the umbrella of what is called the "charismatic renewal." One leading proponent of the "renewal" believes it has ecumenical importance of great significance (cf. Watson Mills, editor, *Speaking in Tongues: Let's Talk About It*, p. 13).

The phenomenon of tongues-speaking has gained a foothold in practically every major denomination. The old-line denominations whose leadership is dominated by liberals of various shades are infiltrated with charismatic persons who are either exercising their claimed gifts within the structure of the established churches or on their periphery in private gatherings.

Members of various denominations meet in great charismatic gatherings and experience little difficulty in fellowship though there may be wide theological differences. In many cases, those claiming to have gifts of the Spirit are not even born again, and are members of churches where the gospel is ridiculed. However, they meet together on the basis of a **common experience**.

Spiritual unity, however, can not be attained with experience as a center. Paul argues forcefully that there must be sound doctrine in order to have proper spiritual unity (Eph. 4:1-16). Some "old-line" Pentecostals are concerned about the ecumenical tendencies of the "new Pentecostals." Such an one, in decrying the ecumenical involvements of neo-Pentecostals, noted, "The tongues experience seems to serve as a bridge over the chasm of theological difference" (J. R. Ensey, *The Pentecostal Herald*, November, 1972). Featured speakers at many charismatic conferences represent all portions of the theological spectrum. A Roman Catholic writer declares, "One of the richest fruits of this contemporary charismatic movement is the binding together of Christians of many denominations in the Spirit of Jesus. Episcopalians, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Disciples, Nazarenes, Brethren, as well as denominational Pentecostals, have become our very dear brothers and sisters in Christ, united by the baptism in the Holy Spirit" (Kevin Ranaghan, *Catholic Pentecostals*, p.225). Nothing is said here as to whether or not all these persons are truly and Biblically born again. What is emphasized is that, supposedly, they have received the baptism in the Spirit.

As is indicated by the book just cited, Catholic Pentecostals are in increasing prominence in the charismatic movement. Most of them remain loyal to the Roman Catholic Church, but claim to have received the baptism in the Spirit. Such experiences do not cause them to repudiate the apostasy of Catholicism, however. For instance, consider this report under the heading, "Pope Encourages Charismatic Renewal."

"Some 125 leaders of the Catholic charismatic renewal met near Rome October 9-13 to assess the growth of the charismatic movement within the Catholic Church and were warmly encouraged by Pope Paul VI ... The rapid growth of the Catholic charismatic renewal ... is one of the extraordinary phenomena of the Roman Catholic Church today ... The unusual characteristic of the Catholic groups is that they have not, by and large, caused disunity and disruptiveness, but have developed in harmony with ecclesiastical leadership..." (News Story, **Catholic Voice**, November 7, 1973).

Could it be possible for such a movement to be of God, cooperating as it does with the hierarchy of Romanism? Can movements so careless about theological truth be fostered by the Holy Spirit who is the "Spirit of truth"?

THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT AS AN ATTRACTION TO EVANGELICALS

Unfortunately it is human nature to be impressed by important personalities and to be attracted thus to whatever they may believe or endorse. The charismatic movement in recent years has grown steadily in influence and has attracted to itself numbers of well-known persons in various walks of life. Such organizations as the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship have taken full advantage of this and have heralded leading citizens who supposedly have received the baptism of the Spirit.

Books by the dozens roll from evangelical presses promoting the charismatic movement. David Wilkerson struck the popular imagination and made inroads for charismatic doctrine in his best-selling book, *The Cross and the Switchblade*. More recently Corrie ten Boom, author of *The*

Hiding Place, has been a speaker at charismatic rallies. The Logos International publishers are promoters of this position. The Bethany Fellowship is as well. Creation House in Illinois and Fleming Revell in New Jersey are both helping to promote the "renewal."

There is a growing spirit of appeasement abroad among many evangelicals, particularly new evangelicals. Such a spirit characterizes Clark Pinnock and Grant Osborne in their article, "A Truce Proposal for the Tongues Controversy" (*Christianity Today*, October 8, 1971, pp. 6 ff.). Their solution is given at the end of the article in the words of A. B. Simpson, founder of the Christian Missionary Alliance who wrote:

"We believe the Scripture teaching to be that the gift of tongues is one of the gifts of the Spirit, and that it may be present in the normal Christian assembly as a sovereign bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon such as he wills. We do not believe that there is any Scriptural evidence for the teaching that speaking in tongues is the sign of having been filled with the Spirit, nor do we believe that it is the plan of God that all Christians should possess the gift of tongues.... The attitude toward the gift of tongues held by pastor and people should be 'Seek not, forbid not' (quoted in the *Alliance Witness*, May 1, 1963, p. 19):'

Hal Lindsey, popular author, in his book *Satan Is Alive and Well On Planet Earth*, has declared that tongues speaking is possible. Russell Hitt, editor of *Eternity* magazine, repented of his earlier-expressed opinion that the "new Pentecostalism" would go away, and wrote as follows:

"I have come to the position that it is a spiritual phenomenon, being used of God, very dramatically in some quarters. It is plainly bringing new life and virility to denominations long since pronounced dead or apostate by many evangelicals. Thousands have been ushered into the kingdom of God and others have received a new endowment of power despite the theological questions this raises" ("A Second Look At the New Pentecostalism," *Eternity*, March, 1976, pp. 12 ff.).

Yes, it certainly does raise some theological questions and we would be wiser to explore these than to focus on the experiences of "thousands" who allegedly have been swept into God's kingdom....

THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT AS A FOE OF BIBLICAL SEPARATION

God's command for true believers to separate themselves from those who hold false doctrine still stands. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (II Cor. 6:17). Modern charismatics, however, glory in the fact that their shared experience of speaking in tongues transcends all denominational, and practically all theological boundaries. They view such unfettered fellowship as part of the great "movement of God." What difference does it make whether a person believes in the verbal inspiration of Scripture, in the full deity of Christ, in the lost condition of man, or in the personal new birth? What difference does it make if a person is supporting the apostate program of a liberal denomination? If he or she has been "baptized in the Spirit" and is speaking in tongues, this is the most important matter.

To fellowship with people who deny or question great truths of God's Word is wrong. To justify such fellowship upon the basis of a common religious experience is no less wrong. It seems clear that the Pentecostal experience, the charismatic emphasis, is becoming a significant factor in

the development of an ecumenical mood among many evangelicals. This mood bodes no good for the future testimony of Christ's churches. It will only serve to weaken their witness and to dilute it by unscriptural alignments.

THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT AS A DISRUPTER OF LOCAL CHURCHES

Much heartbreak and conflict has resulted in many local churches because of the charismatics. Generally speaking, it is difficult for persons who think they have received the "baptism in the Spirit" to keep quiet about it. In fact, they are encouraged to spread the "good news;" and to tell neighbors and friends what has happened to them. When this is done within the context of a local church it can divide the congregation. The writer was recently in a large midwestern city and inquired of a local pastor as to the status of a well-known church in that area. The sad tale was told. The pastor of the church had "received the gift of tongues." He began seeking to indoctrinate the people. Opposition arose, the church was disrupted, and the pastor led a group out to found another congregation. Such stories could be repeated many times. Churches that have stood for the truth for years have been either captured and taken over by charismatics, or their ministry has been crippled because of their persistence in promoting their doctrinal peculiarities.

THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT AS AN ENIGMA TO BELIEVERS

"How do you explain the fact that some people seem to speak in tongues?" This question is frequently encountered in discussions with believers. There are several things that must be kept in mind in facing the problem of the current charismatic movement.

In the first place, the phenomenon of tongues is not unique to Christianity. The fact that someone has spoken in "tongues" does not mean that he is a superior Christian, nor does it even suppose that he is a Christian at all. Certainly it does not require that the origin of his tongues-speaking be the Lord. The ancient Greeks had tongues-speakers as Plutarch and others record. Voodoo priests sometimes speak in tongues as do devotees of other pagan religions.

It also needs to be kept in mind that most modern tongues-speaking is not spontaneous in nature. The New Testament accounts emphasize the spontaneity and supernaturalness of the gift when it was manifested in the early church. However, modern authors such as John P. Kildahl have underscored the fact that tongues-speaking is a learned skill (*The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues*, p. 74). Lest one be accused of undue bias against charismatics the same truth can be found in a book by one of their own. Larry Christenson, a leading charismatic, details for his readers how they may begin to speak in tongues, outlining the steps to follow and declaring that if the seeker just starts talking and keeps talking in faith the Spirit will shape his sounds into a language (*Speaking in Tongues*, p. 130). An utterance such as this which calls for concentration and practice can hardly be said to be the Biblical gift of tongues.

Probably most of what currently passes as the "gift of tongues" could be characterized as verbal utterances which are psychologically induced. Charles Smith has an excellent discussion of the psychology of tongues (*Tongues in Biblical Perspective*, pp. 93-128). After analyzing various

psychological factors which may be involved in some tongues-speaking, Smith enumerates several reasons why the gift of tongues has become so popular in modern times. Among those which he lists are: insecurity, spiritual hunger not satisfied in the modern churches, a secularized society, and the generally impersonal nature of modern life.

Nor should the possibility of demonic control be overlooked. While one should rightfully hesitate to attribute all tongues-speaking to demonic power, it is nevertheless a very real fact that, where humans relinquish control of their faculties, demons may seize them. The powers of darkness like nothing better than to imitate divine power, seeking thereby to lead people astray. Christians need to remember that because a thing is marvelous, unusual, or seemingly unexplainable to man's mind does not mean that the thing in question is divine in origin. The coming emissaries of Satan during the tribulation period will startle the world with extraordinary exploits (II Thess. 2:9; Rev. 13:11-14).

Conclusion: In light of the testimony of Scripture it can and should be said - the modern charismatic movement is not of God. No doubt within it are true, though deluded, believers. God, however, is not bestowing the gift of tongues today. Those who claim to speak in tongues are not exercising a divine gift.

There are genuine, spiritual gifts being bestowed upon true believers today. These spiritual gifts are very precious and are vital to the fulfillment of God's purposes in this age. Rather than seeking nonexistent gifts, believers should discover the gifts God has bestowed upon them and use these in the power of His Spirit to the upbuilding and edification of the Body of Christ.

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