

# *The Gifts - TONGUES and INTERPRETATION*

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## **Special Prefatory Remarks for this Study**

*None of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit are fraught with more difficulties and controversies than this gift of tongues. This is largely due to the showy nature of the gift, to peoples emotional attachments to the gift, to other peoples hatred and misunderstandings of the gift, and to a general carelessness in studying the Biblical teachings concerning it. All of these things are unfortunate, and should never happen, but they do happen, and this is where the problems arise. Paul clearly recognized and anticipated every kind of problem and prejudice associated with this gift, and he addresses all of them in First Corinthians. Every Christian needs to understand and value all of the works and gifts of God. This study applies not just to ministers who are committed with the task of teaching these Scriptural passages, but it also applies to all Christian people. We all need to know about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These teachings, like all the teachings in the Word of God, are for our instruction and edification. They are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2Tim. 3: 16-17). They must never be left out of our catalogue of exegesis and Bible doctrines. There is no reason, good enough to justify eliminating diligent study of God’s miraculous gifts to the church.*

*Knowledge has not ceased. Tongues have not vanished away. Prophecy has not failed. And the perfect church has not come. The imperfect has not given way to the perfect. The childish things have not been put away. The dark things have not succumbed to the full light of day. So, since all these things remain true, we continue to see through a glass darkly (See 1Cor. 8: 13-18). “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity” (1Cor. 8: 18). The abiding truths remind us that love is the most important thing. To love God and to love others as ourselves is the sum and substance of the whole law (Rom. 13: 10; Matt. 22: 36-40). Whatever we learn about the gifts of the Spirit, it is all vanity and vexation without love. Love is the principle thing. And so I send this study forth in that spirit, and with that goal. That in love you might be taught the precious word of truth, and in love you might receive it, and in love it might change you, me, and the world.*

*Most people who know me, and who are familiar with my teachings, know that I am simple and straightforward. I cannot be complicated or profound in the way that I teach, or the things that I say, because that’s not the way that I am. God did not make me to be an intellectual giant. He made me to be a simple, old fashioned Bible preacher. I happen to believe that God knew how to say what He meant when He wrote the Bible, and that’s just the way that it is. And that’s just the way it should remain. Heaven and earth will pass away before one jot or tittle of God’s Word. What He said, might not please us in style and content, but so what? He said just what needed to be said, and any attempts to water it down, make it more palatable, re-interpret it to accommodate personal likes or dislike, or change what He meant to say in any manner; are all worthless and totally God dishonoring.*

*Please exercise restraint from being too quick to judge what is presented in this study. A lot of prayer, research and spiritual reflection has gone into this, and it has turned out to be longer than I anticipated. But, if you lay it aside prematurely, because you do not agree with or understand something that I have written, you will not have a comprehensive or correct view of the subject, because many of the important issues are not discussed till later on in the study, toward the end. Please don’t do that.. I do not care whether you agree with me. I have been wrong before, and I will be wrong in the future. I am only a human. But I do care, and immensely so, that you agree with God. You owe God a fair hearing, so that your*

*understanding of these Spirit gifts will be complete and Biblical.. Pray about each item and look up the related verses. I have taken great pains to substantiate everything from the Scriptures for your proof and edification.*

*William Dyer who wrote a wonderful little book called The Strait Way To Heaven made some important and practical observations on how the Holy Spirit guides us in relation to the Bible. He said: "The **Word** of God is the Christian's *rule*--and the **Spirit** of God is the Christian's *guide*. Keep close to the **Word** and **Spirit** of God. The Scripture is a *rule outside* of us--to show as where we must go; the Spirit is a *guide inside* of us--to enable us to walk according to the direction of that Word. The Word of God is a *compass*, by which we must direct our course; the Spirit is the great *pilot*, who steers us in this course. We have no *eyes* to see the Word--until the Spirit *enlightens* them. We have no *ears* to hear the Word--until the Spirit *opens* them. We have no *hearts* to obey the Word--until the Spirit bows and *inclines* them. By the Word of God--we know the mind of the Spirit of God; and by the efficacy of the Spirit--we feel the power of the Word. The Word of God *shows* us the way; and the Spirit of God *leads* us in that way which the Word points out. The Spirit of God is able to expound the Word of God, and to make it plain to our understanding. The Holy Spirit is the Christian's interpreter; He *gives* the Scriptures, and He alone can *reveal* unto us the sense and meaning of the Scriptures. The Word is God's counsel--to reveal the path in which we are to walk. The Spirit is God's Counselor--who teaches us to walk in that path. If God had not put His Spirit into our hearts, as well as His Word into our heads--we would never have arrived at the fair haven of peace."*

*With that in mind, I have to say that this study is sent forth to all the people of God, wherever they may be, and that it is not targeted at anyone in particular, or to any individual church or group. I am not signaling out specific people or churches in this lesson. Everyone knows that I teach the Sunday Evening Bible study at Second Baptist Church in South Hadley Massachusetts. I am not targeting them in this study. Nor am I trying to change anything in this wonderful church. This church is a blessing to me, and I wholeheartedly support it and pray for it's ministries. The church is blessed with two diligent and spiritual pastor's, whose job it is to guide the church in the directions it should take. That is their job, not mine. While I do teach the Bible there, I am no different from all the rest of the sheep in the flock, and I am required to: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13: 17). I do this. And I wholeheartedly submit myself to their wisdom and spiritual oversight.. They are my pastor's and I am their friend. They may not agree with some of the things that I present here, and that's OK.. I don't agree with everything they say and teach either. None of us are perfect. Our agreement is not with men's teachings but with Christ, the Lord of the church. I'm not targeting them or their ministry in any way shape or form. I am simply teaching the Bible in my own humble way, as God has shown it to me, and what you do with it, and how you receive it is between you and God. My pastors believe in the priesthood of every believer, and so do I. Nobody is out to shove their beliefs down your throat. That is not what we do. We simply teach the Bible, and let the chips fall where they may. What God does with his word, in your heart, or in your church, is up to God. But I can testify, with full assurance and honesty, that I have not handled the word of God deceitfully (2Cor. 4: 2). I have handled it with utmost care, respect and prayer. I send it forth in love and meekness, with the prayer that God will use it to drive you deeper into His word, and closer to the Lord. It will change you and challenge you, as it has done and continues to do for me. And I am fully confident that the results will glorify God and draw you into the fullness of the Holy Spirit. May He bless this little effort, and use it in*

whatever part of the world that it is read. And may the Holy Spirit once again prove that He is the guide unto all truth. Amen.

## ***Introduction:***

**1Co 12:10** to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.

**Gen 11:9** Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

I have decided to treat the gift of tongues, and the gift of interpretation of tongues together in the same study. I have done this not just because they are clearly connected together in the various passages in which they are mentioned, but because they are clearly connected together in their outworking and application in the church. The practice and experience of these gifts is “connected together” by Divine authority. Separating them, and isolating them one from the other, is without warrant or basis in Scripture, and is harmful to a correct exegesis and understanding of the relevant passages. Much confusion and abuse has resulted from failing to keep these two gifts connected together in their respective “manifestations” (1Cor 12: 7). When tongues are “manifested” in the church, interpretation of tongues should also be manifested (1Cor. 14: 28). These are the Siamese Twins of the Holy Spirit’s gifts. Lack of interpretation renders tongues virtually useless<sup>1</sup> to the Body of Christ (1Cor. 14; 2), although tongues may have some significance privately for self-edification (1Cor. 14: 4). For the time being we are going to focus on the gift of tongues as it relates to the church body and not in any private use of the gift. Only a few verses mention a personal value to the gift, and that is regarding self-edification and worship, but all the rest of the verses emphasize the gift as a function valuable for the “corporate body”, and not for the individual. We will attempt to follow the Biblical emphasis here, and since so little is said about the personal use of the gift, we too will concentrate on the use of the gift in church, and for the benefit of the church. So this study is going to focus on the corporate teachings relative to

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<sup>1</sup> John Gill, although he ministered in a church where tongues did not seem to manifest, still had a clear and insightful understanding of the gift when he said this about speaking in tongues without interpretation: “let him not make use of his gift publicly before the whole congregation, since without an interpreter it will be entirely useless... he may make use of his gift to his own edification, and to the glory of God, by speaking with a low voice, or in his heart, which he himself may be conscious of, and God the searcher of hearts, and that knows all languages, fully understands; and so may be edified himself, and God may be glorified by him; whereas, if he was to use it openly and publicly, it would not only be unprofitable, but an hinderance to others: or he might retire to his own house, and there exercise it by himself, and in the presence of God, when it might be of some use and advantage to himself, but would be highly improper to bring it into the church, or public congregation; for instead of assisting, it would but dampen their devotion, and therefore it was very reasonable he should be silent there“ Exposition of the Scriptures Comment at 1Cor. 14: 28.

tongues and interpretation. Little needs to be said about the personal value of tongues, because according to the thrust of the Corinthian Letters of Paul, tongues is primarily of value to the church, and to unbelievers, and any abuse of this gift, or false manifestation also hurts the church and the unbeliever's opinion of the church (1Cor 14: 23).

This concept needs to be understood, or you will not grasp the true doctrine and value of this gift. The Pentecostal and Charismatic<sup>2</sup> groups emphasize the personal ecstatic value of the gift, and minimize the corporate value and regulation. This is one reason why many of their teachings and practices respecting tongues goes way beyond the bounds of Scripture. They do not generally recognize the Biblical emphasis on the corporate rather than the personal. Nor do they recognize, or emphasize, the Sovereignty of God in the oversight and control of the "manifestations". They tend to be "Arminian" in their theology. A man-centered theology, results in man-centered imitations of the true gifts. People become deceived by these sorts of so-called gifts, which are not gifts at all, but are actually forms of the demonic influence, and in some cases possession, which we are taught will be prevalent in the last days (Matt. 24: 24; Mark 13: 22; 2Thess. 2: 9).<sup>3</sup> True Christians are possessed only by the Holy Spirit, but demonic influence can be very strong in churches where false doctrines and practices flourish.

There are some Reformed churches which identify themselves as "Charismatic" but I feel that this is an unfortunate use of the term, because "Charismatic" has too many negative and ecumenical associations. There are "Charismatic Catholics". Do we want to be associated with them? I do not want that association, nor do I want association with the prevalent Arminian theology of the "Charismatics". I realize that "charisma" is a scriptural term, and that with proper definition it carries a scriptural meaning. But that is exactly the problem. The current Charismatic definition is far from a scriptural definition. "Charisma", in the Bible, has nothing to do with: being slain in the Spirit, barking like dogs, laughing uncontrollably, acting like drunks, multiple people speaking in tongues at the same time, speaking in tongues without interpretation, speaking in tongues as a sign of baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues as a sign of

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<sup>2</sup> I refer to these groups as "Costal's and Matic's", I do not want to be associated with either term so I am not a Pentecostal or Charismatic even though I am a Continuationist, and I reject Cessationism. I believe in the Charismatic gifts, and I have some of them, but I am not Charismatic according to the current popular misuse of the term. I prefer the term "Pneumatic Christian". "Pneumatic" covers anything and everything relating to the Spirit, not just the gifts.

<sup>3</sup> Someone is apt to challenge my use of these verses because they refer to "false Christ's" . Surely the Charismatics and Pentecostals are not "false Christ's"? Well, the fact is that these groups do indeed teach a false Christ, because their Theology minimizes His Divine Sovereignty. A partial Christ is a false Christ. They have a Christ who gives people "rivers of living water", but not a Christ who absolutely controls the flow, course, power, direction, limits and use of these waters! Without Divine Sovereignty Christ is just a mere man. A mere man is definitely a false Christ.

regeneration, rolling around on the floor, clucking like chickens, making barnyard animal sounds, falling on the ground, ecstatic dancing and hollering, screaming, gyrating, being a whirling dervish, half-way healings, or any other non-scriptural manifestation or experience. Yet, all these things are present in groups and churches calling themselves “Charismatic”. I refuse to be associated with this kind of phony, imitation, unscriptural “charisma”. I think all Reformed churches should avoid such associations with heresy. Sola Scriptura demands an accurate theology of the Holy Spirit. This includes the proper scriptural use and experience of His gifts. I prefer the term “Pneumatic Christian” or the term “Pneumatic Biblicist” to any of the current misused jargons and labels given to Christians who speak in tongues, or believe in the present active supernatural gifts of God.

## ***Corinth and False Manifestations***

People look at the book of First Corinthians as a textbook of super spirituality or high spiritual attainment, when the truth is, that the Corinthians were not noted for their spirituality, but rather for their lack of it. They, of all churches, are the only church sighted in the Bible as “the immature church”, and “the carnal church”. They are described that way in 1Cor. 3: 1-4. “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?” A Carnal church of mere babes, does not sound super-spiritual to me. They weren’t spiritual at all! They were carnal. Paul describes carnal as being fleshly and unsaved in Romans. **Rom 8:7-9** Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. The term “carnal” is sometimes used today in the sense of just fleshly, materialistic people, and in that sense it might have some limited applications to spiritually weak or undiscerning Christians. But Paul seldom uses the word that way. He may have that sort of thing in mind in Rom. 7: 14 and in 1Cor. 3: 1-4. But, the strict definition of carnal, found in Romans 8, means one who is lost, one who does not have the Holy Spirit, one who is in the flesh, whose mind is at total enmity against God, and who is not subject to Gods laws, and who cannot please God. There is a third use of the word “carnal” where it means simply “of or pertaining to material things, or pertaining to this world”, as when Paul says “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal” (2Cor. 10: 4). At any rate regardless of which sense of the term Paul had in mind, to be “carnal” is never a good thing, and always something associated with the flesh, the world or the Devil. No definition of this word can make it a normative state for born again children of God. This is not normal, it is an aberration, a total irregularity for any believer. The normal state for believers is to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3: 9; Eph. 5: 18). This is our breath of life.

The fourteenth chapter of First Corinthians was written by Paul, under the direction of Divine inspiration, with the express purpose of correcting the heresies that the immature Corinthian believers considered to be the gift of tongues. I have underlined this because many, even some of the best students of scripture, and exponents of the gift of tongues, miss the fact that false tongues were being practiced in Corinth at the time that Paul wrote this corrective letter. Much of what is said in Paul's letter regarding the tongues experience at Corinth, is to contrast their imitation tongues with the true tongues gift from the Holy Spirit. They believed that they were manifesting the true gift, but in reality they had perverted it, by making it a psychological and emotional pleasure orgy for the entertainment of those who were doing the speaking. Their tongues were a mockery. They coveted this gift more than the gifts which they should have coveted. They acted quite fleshly in the services. They elevated this gift to bring attention to themselves, because they wanted everyone to think that they were super-spiritual. Everyone was babbling at the same time, and there was no interpretation being given. They were interrupting preaching and prayers that were taking place. The problem was quite serious, abusive, and unscriptural. If you do not understand this by way of historical background, you will not understand Paul's Corinthian directives regarding this gift.

The way that I propose to treat the subject of Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues, is quite simple. First, I will point out the Biblical prominence and appearances of these gifts. Second, I will provide some extra-biblical evidence for tongues throughout history. Third, I will expound the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of 1Corinthians, which is written to express all the Apostolic restrictions and uses of these gifts. Fourth, I will provide some contemporary commentary based on what I see going on today in both charismatic and non-charismatic churches. Fifth, I will make some suggestions which I think are valuable for the development and use of these gifts today. Sixth, concluding remarks.

## **1. Biblical Prominence and Appearances**

The emphasis that the Bible seems to place upon the gift of tongues, seems all out of proportion to the emphasis which we see being placed upon this gift today. When you examine extra-biblical occurrences of this gift as in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, or by the Shakers, you will realize that when this gift appears to manifest itself, there is an inordinate amount of emphasis upon the 'tongues experience' rather than the Biblical teachings concerning the gift. This indicates a common mistake and misuse of the gift, which can be avoided and corrected by putting the proper emphasis upon it. The gift of Tongues is mentioned in only three books of the Bible, so it cannot ever be considered to be some kind of central or key Bible theme. It is neither central to anything, nor key to anything. Yes, it is one of the special gifts of the Holy Spirit. But in it's actuality, it is considered to be the

least important gift out of all of the gifts<sup>4</sup>. There needs to be correct understanding on this point. Elevating this gift to prominence or, or establishing it as some sort of premier gift, or principle gift is clearly wrong and misguided.

## Mark 16: 17

**Mar 16:17** And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues

This is the only mention of the gift of tongues in the New Testament outside of the book of Acts and the Book of First Corinthians<sup>5</sup>. There are basically two interpretations of this passage. The first says that it was entirely fulfilled in the first century, and that the “signs” which are mentioned are “the signs of an Apostle” (2Cor. 12: 12). Only Apostles had Apostolic sign gifts (according to this view), and when the last Apostle dies, the signs ceased. This view says that all signs ceased in the first century. The second view says that these signs are not just signs manifested by the Apostles, but that they “follow them that believe” and this includes Christian’s from any age. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it*” (Jn. 14:12-14). This view believes that the signs are, in actuality, the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, which He distributes ...“dividing to every man severally as he will” (1Cor. 12: 11). The first view is the cessationist’s view, and the second is the continuationist’s view. Only the continuationist’s viewpoint is consistent with all the passages dealing with all of the gifts. The cessationist is forced to hold the untenable and irrational position that “knowledge” has ceased right along with tongues, prophecy, Apostleship etc. (1Cor. 13: 8-10). That means that all of the partial things have ceased, and clearly ‘knowledge’ is included.

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<sup>4</sup> It is listed last in 1Cor. 12: 28, the passage which says “But covet earnestly the best gifts” (v. 31). It is compared to “sounding brass and tinkling cymbals” when contrasted to love (1Cor. 13: 1). 1Cor. 14: 1-12 emphasizes prophecy above tongues, and indicates the clear requirement for interpretation based upon the absolute need for edification of the body of Christ. 5 intelligible words is better than 10,000 words in a tongue because of the teaching value of what is spoken (1Cor. 14: 19). This must never be ignored or denied. Paul said it to emphasize that the value of tongues is very slight compared to the value of intelligible gifts that require no interpretation. Tongues are way down low on Paul’s scale of importance. Inordinate emphasizing of tongues disassociates the gift from it’s true contexts and lack of importance.

<sup>5</sup> Glossa is also used in the book of Revelation and in other places, but not as a gift of the Holy Spirit, but simply denoting people of various “language groups”, or the “physical tongue” which needs to be “bridled” and which is “set on fire of hell” (See Phil 2: 11; Jms 3: 5,6,8; 1Pet. 3: 10,18; Rev. 5: 9; 9: 11; 14: 6; 16: 16).

## Acts 2: 1-13

**Act 2:1-13** And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

This is the manifestation of the gift of tongues, as part of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and it is plainly said by Peter to be the exact and true fulfillment of a prophecy of Joel (Joel 2: 28-32). You will notice that Joel's prophecy says nothing about the gift of "tongues". It says "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions". Tongues are not mentioned. I think this is important, because even though tongues were present at the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on this occasion, they are deliberately and significantly down played by Peter and by the Holy Spirit Himself, by this reference to Joel's prophecy where they are clearly not mentioned. The silence of scripture is sometimes just as important as what it does say. Joel, left out tongues, when he prophesied Pentecost. That's because tongues were not the main event. They were virtually an insignificant small side thing that occurred. That's why Joel does not mention them.

Peter himself did not mention tongues in his sermon on that occasion although it might be construed that verse 33 indirectly references them when Peter says: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear". "Hearing" could have reference either to the sermon itself, or to the tongues which they undoubtedly heard, or both. In any case, it is still evident that tongues was not the main event of the day. The presence of tongues was an event, but not the main event. The main event was: "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh...And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit" (Joel 2: 28-29). The Big thing that happened on Pentecost was the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in a new "powerful manifestation". "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1: 5) ... "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1: 8). This event is called "the Baptism in the Holy Spirit" (1Cor. 12: 13). It is



the big deal, not the things that attended it. The things that attended it are indications of it, but in and of themselves they are of little importance. The magnitude of the tongues manifestation is small compared to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. The emphasis always needs to be placed upon the things that God emphasizes, and not on what a man might want to emphasize, because of a preconceived and unbiblical preoccupation with a particular gift. The context, content and emphasis of the scriptures address and inform our understanding and interpretation of any doctrine. We are not to read our prejudices and opinions into the exegesis of any passage...that would be isogesis. We are to shape our thoughts from the context and historical background of the text. And we are not supposed to bend and warp the text to force it into our way of thinking. The Word shapes us, we do not shape it! It is the Word of God, not the mere word of a man.

There is no question that Acts Two is a key passage in dealing with the subject of the gift of tongues. Some expositors however, have made an artificial distinction between the glossalalia in this chapter and the glossalalia in First Corinthians. They have even given the tongues in this chapter a different name. They have called them Xenolalia instead of Glossalalia. Supposedly this is to distinguish the tongues in Acts Two as actual known languages, while the glossalalia of 1Corinthians are ecstatic utterances something akin to babbling. According to this view, Acts is languages, 1Corinthians is not. I find this distinction unbiblical, unwarranted, degrading to our intelligence, and damaging to the correct understanding of the Biblical gift of tongues. This is a purely man made and totally false concept.

The term Xenolalia is not found in the Bible. It is a term contrived by people who are obviously uncomfortable with the Biblical doctrine of glossalalia. The correct doctrine of tongues, embraces known languages of men and languages of angels (1Cor. 13: 1), all kinds of languages are covered by the same gift. It is a false doctrine to say that the gift of tongues in Acts Two are languages while the gift of tongues in First Corinthians is babbling or ecstatic utterances. Both examples, while they may appear different to us, because we may not intellectually have the proper Biblical framework to correctly interpret them, are one and the same gift. There are not two separate gifts of tongues, but one gift, and the gift is the miracle of multi-linguistic speech. I am coining and using this term because I understand it to correctly convey the idea of what the gift of tongues is. It is a miraculous form of utterance, which is capable of being French if there are French speakers, Spanish if there are Spanish speakers, Chinese if there are Chinese speakers, or an Angelic language and all at the same time. The speaker is not actually speaking Spanish, but if God wishes, the Spanish speakers hear it as such (Acts 2: 8, 11). At least a portion of the miracle of tongues is in the "hearing". "And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?... we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God".

In the absence of direct "hearing in a foreign language", tongues require

interpretation in order to be beneficial to the church. There is no interpretation in Acts 2 because the people “heard and understood” in their own tongues. Interpretation was unnecessary because God granted the gift of “translated hearing”.

The relationship between “hearing” and “interpretation” needs to be discussed. I think this is a neglected area of the doctrine. That part of the gift involves, at least on some occasions, direct “hearing and understanding” (directly translated hearing), without interpretation being necessary, is very important. Paul does not seem to mention this in 1Corinthians and this appears to indicate that it was an already understood fact. Direct hearing in a foreign language, when tongues are being spoken, seems to relate to “translation” and not “interpretation”. “Interpretation” is not mentioned either here, in Acts 10 or Acts 19. But 1Corinthians spends quite a deal of time discussing “interpretation” of tongues, but nothing is said about the “translation” of tongues, or the instant recognition of tongues by native speakers of different languages.

This gift is pan-linguistic or as I have called it multi-linguistic. It covers all languages, known and unknown, learned or unlearned. It is quite possibly the language of heaven itself, the original language as spoken before mankind’s language was confused at Babel, the language which Adam and Eve spoke as they came forth from the hand of God. The Mormons call it the Adamic tongue. It is the mother of all languages, the native language of the universe, whereby God could communicate with every living creature and be perfectly understood. It is the “logos”, the word, or communication of God Himself. Somebody say’s, you are putting a heavy burden on the gift of tongues if you are making it to mean all that! Not really, I think that if you are to grasp what the gift is, and what it means, you have to endow it with all these revealed characteristics. Paul clearly calls it “tongues of men and of angels” (1Cor. 13: 1). The same gift is plural. It is “tongues” not “a tongue”. There are no references where a person is said to have the gift of “a tongue”. He always has the gift of “tongues”, because it is multi-linguistic and covers any language in which God wants to speak.

It is true that here in Acts 2 the original manifestation of the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost, was not a “spiritual orgasm” as it has been described by one Pentecostal preacher. It was clearly a gift affecting people with different native languages. We must not separate this key aspect of the gift from our thinking and teaching about the gift. The Holy Spirit used this gift to miraculously communicate in multiple languages all at once. And this remains an important aspect of the gift today. Yet this aspect of the gift is seldom seen today, amidst all the hoopla surrounding this gift in the “costal & matic” churches.

I would also point out that while the gift was heard and understood by people of different languages, the gift is not given to “preach to men” but rather to glorify God. “We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.” Some people erroneously emphasize that tongues is evangelical or evangelistic in

purpose, and it is not. It is primarily a worship gift (Acts 10: 46; 1Cor. 14: 2). Tongues is man speaking to God, not man speaking to man. Even plain common sense teaches that if you want to speak to another man or group of men, you will speak in your own natural language. Tongues are never addressed to men. Any evangelistic use of tongues, if there is such a thing, is definitely secondary to the worship use of the gift.

## Acts 10: 44-48

**Act 10:44-48** While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

This passage is generally accepted to be the inclusion of the gentile believers into the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and it does appear to be consistent with that interpretation. Peter rests his case on this fact in Acts 11. “And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?” (Acts 11: 15-17). Peter seems to be clearly indicating that by this event, the Gentiles were thus admitted into the same blessings and privileges of salvation as that bestowed upon the believing Jews. This clearly follows the vision that he had on the rooftop in 10: 9-16. Whereas Peter would have once considered gentiles to be “unclean”, following this vision he was prepared by God to receive the household of Cornelius into full gospel fellowship and privileges.

I would add that verse 46 is important in this respect...it describes the content of their tongues messages. It says: “For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.” When they thus spoke in tongues, they “magnified God”. This would indicate that there is another purpose for tongues besides just evangelizing people of other languages. The cessationists would have us believe that the primary function of tongues is for evangelizing. This passage corrects that mistake by showing that there is clearly a worship aspect, which involves “magnifying God”. This very important aspect of tongues is denied by the cessationists, as they are only willing to admit an evangelistic purpose for the gift. Once again they rob us of an important doctrine of the scriptures by their unscriptural insistence that the gift has ceased. Tongues serves as an important element in the worship and magnification of God’s glory. When these people spoke in tongues on this occasion, it was to magnify God, and not to teach men. This is extremely important and it is consistent with 1Cor 14: 2 “For he that

speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.” The idea that tongues are given by God to commune with God and speak “mysteries”...“In the spirit”, is a vital element of this marvelous miraculous gift. The cessationists deny this important aspect of the gift, but we must not thus deny it, because in doing so, we are robbing not only ourselves of a powerful part of worship, but we are also robbing God, of the magnification which He deserves, and which can never be accomplished in this sense without this gift. Speaking mysteries “in the spirit” cannot be accomplished apart from the Holy Spirit or apart from this gift of tongues. It is similar to the Spirit praying with words that cannot be uttered (Rom. 8: 26).

David Guzik points out the relationship that this has to the doctrine of interpretation, and I think this observation is worth noting. It is taken from his 2006 comments on 1Cor. 14: 2 and this passage: *they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.*

**BEGINNING OF QUOTE:**

ii. If we misunderstand this, we misunderstand what is really happening when someone attempts to interpret a tongue and addresses his or her message to men. A true interpretation of the gift of tongues will be addressed to God, not men. It will be a prayer, a praise, or some other communication to God.

iii. If we misunderstand this, we can be led to believe the gift of tongues is just the ability to speak another language, and all Paul is speaking about here is interpreting the preacher's sermon in someone's native tongue. But no one needs to interpret the preacher's sermon to God!

iv. If we misunderstand this, we can misuse the gift of tongues, using it in a way that draws unnecessary attention to ourselves. God does not give anyone the gift of tongues for the direct sake of others (though indirectly others are edified), but for that believer and God alone.

**b. He who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God:** Because this simple statement is so devastating to the idea that tongues is just a human language spoken for human benefit, many of those who believe the miraculous gifts have passed have trouble with this verse. Some have even tried to claim Paul is speaking *sarcastically* here, and is *criticizing* the Corinthian Christians for using the gift of tongues to speak to God instead of men.

i. Paul uses plenty of sarcasm in the Corinthian letters, but certainly not here. If we can say Paul means the exact opposite of the plain meaning of the words here, we are on dangerous ground. Why not apply the same interpretive principle ("he really means the opposite of what he seems to be saying") to other passages of Scripture?

**c. For no one understands him:** Paul recognized that normally, when someone spoke in tongues, no one else could understand him. The reason is simple: with the gift of tongues, the *intention* is to speak to God and not man. Therefore, it is fine if **no one understands him**.

i. The exception to **no one understands him** is when the tongue is publicly interpreted. Even then, it is not the tongue itself that is

understood, but the interpretation of the tongue.

d. **In the spirit he speaks mysteries:** When the tongues speaker can not be understood, it does not mean it isn't really language, or that they are merely speaking "gibberish." It means they are speaking **in the spirit** and that they speak **mysteries**.

i. Many have done linguistic analysis of people speaking in tongues and have "concluded" they are not speaking a "real" language, but just jabbering in gibberish. Of course it sounds like nonsense to human ears, because it was never intended for human ears. We should expect it to sound like nonsense, because Paul plainly says, **in the spirit he speaks mysteries**.

ii. However, this does not mean that all intelligible speech is the legitimate gift of tongues. Some, not understanding the gift, may imitate it, or fake it, just to "prove" something.

*END OF QUOTE*

I think this aspect of tongues and interpretation deserve some extra consideration, since it seems to directly contradict the notion that tongues messages are directed toward men, and are therefore not a form of ecstatic worship. These verses seem clearly to disprove that notion, or at least they confirm an important ecstatic element which is God oriented and not man oriented. Our thinking on this must be governed by the scriptures and not by our own personal agenda.

Throughout Paul's lengthy discussion concerning the gift of tongues (1Cor 14) he never mentions or alludes to the concept that tongues should be used to speak directly to people of a foreign language. This notion does not seem to be included in his thinking and instructions regarding tongues. Why not? If one of the primary functions of the gift is to communicate with people of other tongues, then why didn't Paul urge the possessors of this gift to use it in that way? This noticeable lack of directives concerning communication to foreigners, indicates that the worship aspect of the gift is to have the preeminence and not the communicative aspect of the gift.

I have been guilty of telling people, "If you have the gift of tongues, then why don't you come witnessing with me down to China town, or Spanish Harlem, and you can speak to people in their own language". Now that I have a little more enlightenment on the subject, I see that this is wrong. Yes God can do that if He wants to, but by me emphasizing the communicative aspect of the gift, I am being negligent of the fact that this aspect is secondary, and that the primary aspect of the gift is worship..."speaking the mysteries of God in the spirit". So I no longer take the unscriptural stance that if a person has the gift, he should use it to communicate to people in other languages. That is not the purpose or function of the gift, and now I see that, and I understand it. When God communicates with people in other languages, it is still with the purpose of conveying "the wonderful works of God", and not primarily for evangelism as the

cessationists insist. Tongues were not available “on demand” for the purpose of communicating in other languages, and they were never given for that purpose or use. We must not emphasize something that the Scriptures do not emphasize. To do so, is to twist the Scriptures and make them teach what they do not teach. Be very careful about this. I sincerely apologize if I have misled anyone on this point.

## **Acts. 19: 6**

**Act 19:6** And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

This verse is important because it shows tongues as being connected with prophecy. I have taught elsewhere that these two gifts are revelatory gifts, and that there is not a lot of difference between them, except of course in the way that they sound. In both cases God takes control and uses a man's vocal cords. It does appear however, that tongues is a speaking gift that primarily addresses God, while prophecy is a speaking gift that addresses man. So these things differ with respect to their object.

This verse is also notable for the connection which it has between the laying on of the Apostles' hands and the impartation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There are some scholars that take this text, along with Acts 8: 17-18; 1Tim. 4: 14; Rom. 1: 11; Gal. 3: 5; and 1Tim. 1: 6; to teach that the Apostles could give the Holy Spirit to people at will. The idea is that this seems to be a part of the so called “keys of the kingdom” (Matt. 16: 19). According to this view Apostles had the power to bestow the Holy Spirit upon other people. My opinion of this is more along traditional lines. I see these passages as indicating the symbolic bestowal of the gifts of the Holy Spirit upon believers, and not the actual transfer of the Holy Spirit Himself to them. My intention here is not to get sidetracked by this issue. It does merit some study and discussion, but I don't want to do that here. My purpose here is to stick with the passages bearing on the doctrine of speaking in tongues. I am aware of the issues in these verses, but I bring them up only in passing.

The rest of the verses dealing with tongues are in First Corinthians, and we will deal with those passages later in a brief exposition of chapter 14.

## **2. Extra-Biblical Evidences and Historical Manifestations of Tongues.**

My purpose in this section is not to offer any sort of exhaustive historical narrative of the occurrences of tongues throughout history. The scope of such an historical analysis would be far beyond this study. What I am going to do

however is point out a few historical instances, an historical sketch, because people are under the impression that there were no manifestations of tongues for 19 centuries of church history, until the outbreak at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, in 1906. The fact is that there were hundreds of manifestations of tongues, prior to the Azusa events which are considered the birth of the modern Pentecostal movement. History is full of incidents of tongues speaking, and I intend to point out a few instances only, just to show that tongues is not a new phenomenon, or a phenomenon without historical precedent. My issue here will not be to comment on the doctrinal soundness or orthodoxy of these historical events, or of the tongues speakers, but simply to point a few examples out to you. Nor am I going to comment on whether or not I think these were genuine manifestations of the gift, because I have no way of verifying such notions. I wasn't there, and neither were any of the supposed critics of these accounts. Let them stand for what they are. They are simply historical events where tongues were spoken, nothing more and nothing less, as far as we are concerned in this study.

## **125-202 AD Irenaeus**

Irenaeus was a student of Polycarp and is considered to be one of the early church fathers. He wrote the following about 1Cor. 2: 6:

“When the Apostle says “We speak wisdom among the perfect,” by the “perfect” he means those who had received the Spirit of God, and in all tongues speak through the Spirit of God, as he himself also spake. As also we now hear many brethren in the Church having prophetic gifts, and speaking in all sorts of languages through the Spirit . . . (Cutten, George Barton. Speaking with Tongues, Historically and Psychologically Considered. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927).

## **172 or 173 AD Montanus**

“Montanus in about 172 or 173 entered into an ecstatic state and began prophesying in the region of Phrygia, now in central Turkey. Montanus became the leader of a group of *illuminati* (“the enlightened”), including the prophetesses Priscilla (or Prisca) and Maximilla. The members exhibited the frenzied nature of their religious experience by enraptured seizures and utterances of strange languages that the disciples regarded as oracles of the Holy Spirit.” (Encyclopedia Britannica, [www.Britanica.com](http://www.Britanica.com))

## **185-254 AD Origen**

While Origen did not speak in tongues, he did record their occurrences by quoting Celsus who spoke about Christians who uttered prophecies to which “are added strange, fanatical, and quite unintelligible words, of which no rational person can find the meaning” (Origen vii. 9).

## **Middle Ages**

These are also known as the dark ages, and very few writings survive from this period, and thus very few accounts of tongues during this period exist but the following is noteworthy:

In his *La Mystique Divine, Naturelle, et Diabolique*, Joseph Gorres offers a list of Catholic saints who were apparently gifted with “tongues.” Among these were St. Pachomius (292-348), St. Hildegard (1098-1179), St. Vincent Ferrier (1357-1419) and St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552). (Gorres, Joseph von. *La Mystique Divine, Naturelle, et Diabolique*. Paris: Poussilque-Rousand, 1861).

“Jeanne of the Cross ecstatically spoke Arabic to “two Mohammedans” who demanded baptism. Later, she instructed them “in tongues” concerning the tenets of the Catholic faith”. (Gorres pg. 451)

## **1650 The Quakers**

George Fox and his followers known as The Society of Friends are well known to have practiced not only speaking in tongues, but other ecstatic forms of worship, hence the name “Quakers”.

## **1688-1701 The Huguenots**

“The Huguenots of Southern France under heavy persecution from Louis XIV began to experience glossalalia amongst children, who would prophesy and preach in various languages.” (Cutten pg. 51)

## **1731 The Jansenists**

A group who followed Cornelius Jansen a 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch reformer who was condemned by the Catholic Church. He taught absolute predestination, that man does not have a free will, and that human nature is incapable of good. There was an outbreak of tongues in France among his followers in 1731.

## **1774 The Shakers**

Mother Ann Lee, was said to speak in 27 different languages in one meeting alone.

“During the height of Shakerism in the mid-1800s, these services were ecstatic experiences for the participants, involving hand clapping, dancing, singing, stomping, shaking, jumping, shouting, having visions, and speaking in tongues. Some social scientists suggest that these services provided an emotional outlet for the Shakers who



otherwise lived an austere life.” ([World Culture Encyclopedia](http://WorldCultureEncyclopedia.com), [www.everyculture.com](http://www.everyculture.com))

## 1794 William Paley

30 years before the angel Moroni supposedly contacted Joseph Smith founder of the Mormons, William Paley supposedly received “the Adamic Language” from this same angel. ([A View Of The Evidences of The New Christianity](#), available from the Mormon Church LDS)

## 1830+ Mormons

"As soon as we arose from our knees the brethren flocked around him, and asked his [Brigham Young's] opinion concerning the gift of tongues that was upon me. He told them it was the **pure Adamic** language..."

"The members of the branch in Pennsylvania were the first in the Church who received the gift of tongues..."

"Brother Alpheus Gifford commenced speaking in tongues. Soon the Spirit came on me, and I spoke in tongues, and we thought only of the day of Pentecost, when the Apostles were clothed upon with cloven tongues of fire.... "

" We exhorted them and prayed with them, and I spoke in tongues. Some pronounced it genuine and from the Lord, and others pronounced it of the devil..."

"He called upon me to pray; in my prayer I spoke in tongues..."

" I found the Saints in confusion; they had the gift of tongues among them, and the interpretation, and they were so ignorant of the nature of these gifts that they supposed that everything which was spoken in tongues was immediate revelation from God; a false spirit had therefore crept in, and division was the result..."

(Autobiography (1801-1844) in *Manuscript History of Brigham Young*; Source: *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1801-1844*, ed. Elden Jay Watson (Salt Lake City: Smith Secretarial Service, 1968). *MANUSCRIPT HISTORY of BRIGHAM YOUNG* /[www.math.byu.edu/~smithw/Lds/LDS/Early-Saints/MSHBY.html](http://www.math.byu.edu/~smithw/Lds/LDS/Early-Saints/MSHBY.html))

"Mormons regularly “spoke in tongues”, and both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young claimed the experience.” (Burgess, Stanley M., & McGee, Gary B., Editors, *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1988, pg. 339).

## 1830's Irvingites

“Perhaps the most complete and convincing documentation of speaking in tongues comes from the Irvingite revivals in England during the 19th Century. Edward Irving was a Presbyterian minister who gained a great and wealthy following in England, opening a church in Regent Square. In October 1831, a lady named Miss Hall began speaking in tongues.” (Allen, David. *Regent Square Revisited: Edward Irving, Precursor of the Pentecostal Movement*, *Evangel.* Autumn 2004, 22 (3), pp. 75-80.

“Irving had, in fact, encountered the manifestation at a church in Rhu, Scotland where his friend, John Macleod Campbell, served as pastor (Brown). But, Irving, like modern Pentecostals, hailed speaking in tongues as evidential of Spirit baptism: “We shall ere

long have lifted up amongst us the full manifestation of the Holy Ghost, which is already present in the speaking with tongues . . .”(JOHN BOWKER. "Irvingites." The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions. 1997. Retrieved September 09, 2009 from Encyclopedia.com.)

The Irvingites are perhaps the most influential of all the Pre-Pentecostalism movements, and speaking in tongues was encouraged and widely practiced.

## **1841-1843 Norway Revivals**

“During Protestant revivals in Norway and Sweden from 1841-1843, young people experienced what became known as “sermon sickness” in which they uttered unintelligible words and sang hymns in other languages.” (Cuttan, pg.67).

## **1896 Charles Fox Parham**

Parham, Founder of the Apostolic Faith Missions and Bethel Bible College in Topeka Kansas, is considered the grandfather of the later revival at Azuza Street in Los Angeles, but in reality he had strong oppositions to much of what transpired at Azuza Street particularly the inter-racial character of the meetings. There is no doubt however that he believed and encouraged speaking in tongues.

## **1901 Agnes Ozman**

“January 1, 1901 in association with Charles Parham, Agnes Ozman felt impressed to ask to be prayed for to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit, during a worship service, and asked to be prayed for to receive this. Immediately after being prayed for, she began to speak in what they referred to as "in tongues", speaking in what was believed to be a known language.” (Martin, Larry (2000 (updated version)). The Topeka Outpouring of 1901. Christian Life Books. ISBN 0-9646289-7-X.)

There are other historical cases where speaking of tongues was mentioned or practiced. You might want to investigate Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Augustine, and Martin Luther’s references to speaking in tongues during his day. I think however, that we have provided enough documented cases to show that tongues speaking was extant throughout all of church history in various forms and manifestations.

## **3. Exposition of 1Corinthians 14**

Chapters 12 thru 14 of 1Corinthians are the nexus of Paul’s doctrinal teachings concerning the gift of tongues, and the attendant gift of interpretation of tongues. Much “confusion” would be eliminated if we only realized that Paul wrote Chapter 14 for the very purpose of regulating this gift so that there isn’t “confusion” about

it. “For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” (1Cor. 14: 33). Confusion surrounding this doctrine is not of God. Paul wrote this chapter to eliminate it. This presupposes, as we have already shown, that there was much abuse of tongues in the Corinthian church. There is also much tongues abuse today...fleshly manifestations which have nothing to do with the genuine gift. Our situation today, as evidenced in the Costal & Matic churches and groups, is exactly parallel to that of Corinth. Just as Paul wrote to correct the fleshly Corinthian abuses of tongues, the same inspired words should be used to identify and promote the proper and true use of this gift among today’s churches. We are not exempt from Paul’s teachings simply because we are part of a big Pentecostal church or part of the Charismatic movement, which pretty much says “anything goes”! There is no strength in numbers, to exempt us from yielding in absolute obedience to the word of God! Just because people are doing, or believing something by the thousands, does not make it right, acceptable, or pleasing to God. God has clearly identified and regulated the gift of tongues. This means that true occurrences of the gift, will fall into and be shaped by what Paul here teaches about it. Now there may well be people who have the gift, who are ignorant of Paul’s directives and rules of proper use. This is no excuse for them to continue on in ignorance. The Holy Spirit functions to guide believers into all truth (Jn. 16: 13), and He is more than willing and able to do this respecting the very gifts which He bestows. The Holy Spirit is the illuminator. So there is no excuse for continued ignorance, when God so plainly reveals his mind on this subject.

One area where ignorance persists is in the matter of Costal & Matic insistence that everyone who is a Christian should speak in tongues. This is just plain ignorance. “Do all speak with tongues?” 1Cor. 12: 30. This question is included with a lot of related questions, all of which have the clear answer of NO! **1Co 12:29-30** “*Are* all apostles? *are* all prophets? *are* all teachers? *are* all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?” NO. NO. NO! All Christians were never intended to be apostles. All Christians were never intended to be prophets. All Christians were never intended to be teachers, or healers, or miracle workers. And all Christians were never intended to speak in tongues or interpret tongues. All these things are special gifts, bestowed only on a select few, as the Holy Spirit Sovereignly decides (1Cor. 12: 11). To say that every Christian is supposed to speak in tongues is just plain lying.

The Costal’s & Matic’s need to quit teaching this kind of rubbish. Speaking in tongues is not a sign of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is not an indication that you have been born again. It is not the mark of a true Christian. It is not the badge of spirituality. It is none of these things. So they need to quit making people feel like every Christian can have this gift if they want it. That is utter nonsense. They need to quit encouraging people who supposedly have the gift, from trying to teach others how easy it is to speak in tongues. This stuff discourages people, puts false expectations in their minds, distracts them from the true purposes of seeking Jesus Christ and His righteousness, and it fosters

fake gifts, phony spirituality, self-righteousness, fleshly pride and self-centeredness. All this nonsense must be shunned and discouraged, and the Glory of the Lord, ought to be held out as the minimum standard for all practices. God is glorified in none of the false shenanigans of Charismatic Pentecostalism. These movements are man-centered showmanship and nothing more. Any genuine manifestations of the Holy Spirit's gifts within them, is purely a matter of the Sovereign Grace of God, working in spite of men, in spite of false doctrines, in spite of misguided leadership, and in spite of the overwhelming presence of the energy of the flesh seen everywhere within these movements. God still knows how to bring glory to Himself. And we should always rejoice when He manifests Himself, and brings glory to Himself. But we should never encourage falsehood, humanistic pride, doctrinal impurity, and the sinful desire that people have to be the center of attention. Christ is the center of attention. Christ is the person who should fill and direct our worship services, and anything less than Christ should be shunned and discouraged. Let all of God's people seek His face, and let us all learn from the Apostle Paul.

**1Co 14:37** If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

I want to begin my exposition of this chapter, not at the first verse but at verse 37. The issue in the chapter is spiritual gifts, spirituality, and the manifestation and use of these gifts, and of this spirituality, within the church setting. Even though this verse comes toward the end of the chapter, it's relevancy and truth pervades the entire chapter, and not just this chapter, but everything which the apostle Paul wrote and taught under the super-intendancy and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. What he wrote, he clearly affirms to be "the commandments of the Lord". This is not just establishing the case of Divine inspiration for his writings. It goes way beyond just that. This is actually establishing the absolute demand of these writings as actual commandments from God, which are to be obeyed without question or doubt. "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." That makes Paul's writings and teachings at least equal to the writings and teachings of Moses and Jesus.

The issue here, pervading the whole discussion, is one of spiritual authority. Our doctrine of the gifts must rest squarely upon Paul's spiritual authority in these matters. What he writes, he writes not as a mere human observer. Nor does he write mere human suggestions about how he would wish that things should be. He writes things which are the very commandments of God! Not suggestions. Not things open to debate, argument, interpretation and disagreement. But **COMMANDMENTS OF GOD!** So when he says for instance, "forbid not to speak with tongues", this is not something that would just be nice to do. This is something that **MUST** be done. It has the full weight and authority of a Divine commandment. The same is true with "covet to prophesy"(v. 39), and "Let all things be...decent and in order" ( v. 40), "Let Him keep silence" (v. 28), "Let him be ignorant" (v.38), "Let him pray that he may interpret" (v13). "Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak" (v. 34),

“ye may all prophecy, one by one” (v. 31), “Let the first hold his peace” (v.30), “Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge” (v.29), “Let him speak to himself and God” (v.28), “Let one interpret” (v.27), “Let all things be done unto edifying” (v. 26), “Be not children in understanding...Be men” (v. 20), “Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church” (v.12), “I would that ye all spake in tongues, but rather that ye prophecy” (v. 5), and “Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye use prophecy” (v. 1). All these things have the full force of Divine commands. And therefore they have also the full necessity of unquestioned obedience.

These are not just intellectual options, they are spiritual demands, which the body of Christ is fully expected to implement and maintain in the churches. It is not a question of whether or not these things fit in with our likes or dislikes, or with our personal beliefs or practices. It is a question of are we obeying these clear commands of God? Or not? The option is not, can we reinterpret these things to fit in with our modern age, our social opinions and the churches as we want them to be? Who cares if society says that they don't approve of commanding women to keep silent in churches? This is not about what society accepts. It is not about our likes, dislikes, approval or disapproval. It is about what God wants and expects us to do as gifted and endowed Christians. It is about Christ's church, not our churches. The church does not belong to us, it belongs to Him. He loves it, and gave himself for it (Eph. 5: 25). He tells us what to do. We do not tell him what we are going to do. He tells us what to think. We do not just think whatever we want, and hope that He approves! We are to be “bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2Cor. 10: 5).

The authority of this chapter, must be fully brought to bear, without any compromise at all, upon the entire body of Christ. We must do it in love, and with tears in our hearts, but we must never compromise the truth, and we must always deliver it as it is in deed the very truth of God. As a preacher, I have a duty to preach and teach the truth, and only the truth. I will never jeopardize that, by compromising it, watering it down, or ignoring the difficult passages. I'm not always perfect at it, but by God's grace I plan to be always faithful in it. This is every preachers calling. Deliver God's word faithfully, and let God deal with the consequences. It's not up to me to determine results. My opinions and feelings don't count. I plant, and somebody else waters, but it is always God who determines the results. Sometimes preaching the Bible is like opening up Pandora's box, you never know what may come out of it. But so what? It's up to God to vilify His own word. He is quite good at it. Better than any mere mortal.

I have to also say, that the Bible does have all the answers. I used to tell people that asked me difficult questions...“I don't have all the answers”. But then God hit me up side the head one day and said, Earl. Why are you lying to people? I said: Lord what are you talking about? And He said, “Why do you tell people that you don't have all the answers when they ask you a difficult question?... YOU HAVE MY WORD, AND THAT HAS ALL THE ANSWERS...You have been

lying. You have all the answers, you just don't know what they are!

So as I am writing this today, I don't know what all the answers to all the questions are, but all of us have all the answers in the Blessed Book of God. This is important for you to know because sometimes my teachings seem polemical and dogmatic, or radical and controversial. But the Bible indeed has this kind of teaching within it. Right now we are asking questions about women keeping silent in church. I know that these commands raise tons of eyebrows and questions. But I cannot rewrite the Bible. If I had written it, I would have left these verses out, because they cause too many difficult questions to be raised. But I didn't write it. And I am certainly not going to rewrite it either. God has called me, and ordained me, simply to teach it and preach it faithfully and soundly. If it is dogmatic or polemic or exclusivistic, or chauvinistic, or difficult, or unpalatable or challenging, or controversial, or radical. So What? I CAN'T HELP THAT.

Pastor Don Bradley says...“Take it up with God!” He's right. We still have a solemn responsibility to deliver the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. One time this got me in trouble in a Baptist church, when I was teaching all the verses that are in the Bible that seem to explain sprinkling as a valid mode of baptism. To Baptist's this is the height of heresy, but I'm sorry. God put them in the Bible, and that's what I teach...the Bible, not a Baptist catechism. There are many verses that can be used to justify sprinkling as well as immersion. I may not know all the answers to the questions that this raises. But I have all the answers, and you have them too. We cannot pick and choose what we are going to believe in the Bible. We have to believe it all, whether or not we understand it all. And if we are preachers we have to preach it all.

Please try to understand where I am coming from here. I'm not trying to upset anyone. I'm not trying to point fingers at anyone. I'm not trying to enforce my views in churches. I'm simply teaching what the Bible says. The outcome is not up to me. And that shows God's infinite wisdom. He knows that no preacher, especially Earl Jackson; no preacher knows all the answers. So please forgive me if I cannot answer your questions that are raised from Paul's commandments. “Take it up with God!” Thanks Pastor Don for that quote. It's a keeper.

It surprises me that I have never once seen a Charismatic Pentecostalist church that actually obeys all the commandments of God in this chapter. I was raised in a Pentecostal environment. I am very well versed in all of their beliefs and practices, as I am also of the newer movements such as “the third wave” etc. Both my grandparents, on my fathers side, were ordained Pentecostal ministers. In fact that's part of the problem that God showed me at a very early age. Even back then, when I was a kid, the Pentecostals were ordaining women preachers. They still do it today. My grandmother was a pioneer woman preacher, and I loved her dearly, but like most Pentecostals on this point, she

was wrong. They expect us to believe that they are following the Lord on the matter of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but they don't obey what Paul commands in this chapter regarding the silence of women. What's going on here? They want their cake and eat it too. They want to disobey God when it pleases them, and then they want to interpret the other things as they see fit. They want to make speaking in tongues available to everybody, but they don't really want anybody to have to obey all the other stuff that Paul here brings into the discussion. They do not take this chapter seriously, and therefore I am fully justified in saying that I have never seen a Pentecostalist assembly yet that actually practices all the required obedience to this chapter. If they do not take God seriously, then why should we take them seriously? They contradict the revealed will of God, and I consider them apostate, because in their minds it's ok to ignore God when that's convenient.

But this is true in other kinds of churches as well. Baptists are no exception. The tendency to ignore things we can't explain is natural to our sinful natures, and so this spans all denominational and religious boundaries. This is part of the very reason we have so many different groups and teachings. It is downright confusing, because there is always someone saying the Bible says this, or the Bible says that. But the real problems arise when people say...It's OK to not believe this verse or that verse because we can't explain it! That is the really big problem. IT IS NEVER OK TO DISBELIEVE OR DISOBEY ANY OF GODS WORD!

A perfect example is the fact that in most Costal & Matic churches, the utterance of tongues is very often, if not predominately, executed by women. I am not stupid. I can tell a woman's voice from a mans voice. Personally, I have heard more woman speaking in tongues in church than men. Anyone can discern this. It takes no special skill. It is not a matter of intellect, or theology or philosophy. All you have to do is listen. Is that a woman speaking? Or is it a man? Is that a female voice? Or is it male? If it is a woman speaking then you simply ask: So what happens to Paul's commandment: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak;...for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (vs. 34-35)? Do these verses not apply? Are we supposed to seek gifts, but not restrictions? Are we supposed to believe in a few choice verses, and reject any that would force us to change some cherished practices or prejudices? What gives here? If we say that these verses don't apply, then who determines which ones apply and which ones don't apply? Is there some kind of authority figure or Pope, to tell us verses one thru thirty three are true and valid today, but verses thirty four and thirty five are questionable, and its all right to ignore them, because they cannot apply, because I the Pope tell you they do not apply? Is that how this stuff works? Who decides what God meant to say? and what verses Paul slipped in by accident because he was a male chauvinist? Who's in charge of slicing and dicing the scriptures to fit our preconceived, prepackaged and sanitized little systems of Theology? Picking and choosing what verses we are going to believe and practice, or disbelieve and ignore, is a very dangerous and blasphemous game. God knew how to write the Bible, and

He had complete control over the commandments spelled out by His infallible pen. I'm sorry if this sounds dogmatic or offensive. "Take it up with God".

Someone is sure to say, that I am unduly emphasizing verses which belittle women, and have little or no value at all in our current society and modern churches. In Christ there is neither male nor female, we are all equals (Gal. 3: 28). Of course I am aware of all the verses that clearly teach the equality of all races, and all genders, and all kinds and conditions of people when it comes to salvation. God does not discriminate when it comes to saving repentant sinners who come to salvation by faith in Christ. Everyone is invited without discrimination. Everyone who believes is received, without discrimination. Males and Females are equal. But these verses have nothing whatsoever to do with God's commandments forbidding women to speak in church, or to ask questions, or to not usurp male authority, or to cover their head, or to be in subjection to their own husbands! Gospel equality has nothing at all to do with the proper functioning and Divine order of God's church, or with the role of women in the church. Since it is His church, made up of all His equally saved people, He has every right to tell some of them, any of them, or all of them, to keep silence, if that's what He wants. It has nothing to do with our likes, our feelings, our social viewpoints, or our inalienable rights or equality. This is not an issue of equality, feminism, chauvinism or any other form of prejudice. It is simply about what God wants to see happen in His church. He wants women to keep silent, and He has clearly expressed His wants. It is God's church, not ours. These are God's commands, not mere human preferences. Nobody, no matter how brilliant, can ever change one jot or one tittle of God's word. Heaven and earth will pass away, before that can ever happen.

Who cares if the Pentecostals don't like what God demands? Who cares if the women don't like it? Who cares if some men don't like it? Who cares if people think this is chauvinistic, or prejudiced, or biased, or degrading, or anything else? Who cares? God cares, that's who! That's why He said it! God has said what He wanted to say, and He has commanded, what He wanted to command. Denying it, fighting against it, decrying it as some kind of imagined evil or inconsistency in God, ruffling our feathers in opposition, none of this will change one word of what God has written. Who cares if all of Christendom objects and rejects God's commandments? That will never change them, or disannul them. But I will discuss what our attitudes, responses, prayerful and humble methods of handling this stuff should be. I'll get to that in just a minute. Just bear with me.

This chapter is all about Paul regulating the gifts and order of the local church worship services. This is not secondary. It is Paul's primary focus and emphasis. I'm not trying to change Paul's focus or distract you from it by mentioning the verses that discuss the behavior of women. The church at Corinth had become a laughingstock because of the abuse of tongues and the disorderliness of their services. Visitors thought they were out of their minds (v.23)! The assembly was dominated by fleshly women teaching, preaching, and



babbling away in tongues. Paul fully intended to put a stop to all of this chicanery, and get things back to a Christ centered, God honoring, and corporately edifying worship experience. I'm not making any of this up. This was the condition of Corinth as Paul addressed it. That church was a carnal mess, an unspiritual bunch of babes, with passions and emotions gone wild, and totally out of control. Paul mentions what He mentions because He fully intended to bring them under the control of the Holy Spirit, and to lead all the dear babes to spiritual maturity, and responsibility. God did not want Corinth to remain carnal and infantile. He wanted them to grow and evidence the true gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. So, God gave Paul all the necessary commands to straighten things out, not just in Corinth, but in any other carnal church...even the ones in our day, two thousand years later. God is so gracious. He has told us to "make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13: 14), and here, when he sets out commands to help us with that problem, it is for our benefit and for His glory. Don't be intransigent or reactionary to what God say's. This is neither a godly nor right attitude. He says it for our benefit and for His own glory. He says it because it is right. He says it because it is necessary. He says it because it is good. He says it because it expresses His perfect will. Let us be as diligent to obey our great God, as He is to provide us with gracious commands for our own benefit and wellbeing. Let us obey.

I am keenly aware of all the issues that this raises, and I am not insensitive to the complexity of problems that it creates when we ask ourselves "How on earth can we ever enforce Paul's rules in our 21<sup>st</sup> century churches?" As a person who has been in the pastorate for many years, and who has taught and preached the Bible, and dealt with issues of all sorts, and of all complexities; I am sensitive to the fact that this causes a world of problems in churches where leadership, teaching, and other public functions have been taken over, given to, and been hired out and contracted to Christian women. Women in our day not only take an active role in our churches, but they also take a vocal role! Oftentimes it is women who contribute some of the most valuable and essential things to the life and ministry of our churches. I cannot deny this, nobody can. But what we have to see here, is that the issue is not women, the issue is what God says about church decency and order. The fact that that God lays down a few precepts that relate to women in this passage, does not mean that this is the primary topic. It certainly is not the primary topic . But it is a topic nevertheless. And restrictions are clearly laid out. This cannot be denied. I see the issue as one regarding overall church and corporate obedience...not just in this issue, but in all the issues Paul discusses in the chapter. How on earth can we implement and obey? That is a valid and vital question that we all have to answer. How can we do what Paul and God expect us to do? Or do we just ignore it, sin, and then confess our disobedience after, but never change? Those are really our only options. Obedience? Or Sin? Which will it be?

I think it is largely personal. Paul never suggests using Gestapo tactics to change the deficient church at Corinth. He never "Lords his authority over

others”, and in fact he is always most humble, though totally uncompromising. I don’t plan to solve these difficulties for all the churches in the world. I’m aware that there were no perfect churches in Paul’s day, and there are none today either. But that doesn’t excuse their failure to struggle with, come to grips with and sincerely seek the Lords will when it comes to these many imperfections. Now we see through a glass darkly, but what we see is still a reflection of what we are. And God points out our church faults the same as He points out our personal sins. He wants us to become like Christ and flee anything that is not like Christ. I can’t change all the churches in the world. That is up to them and up to God. I just plan to speak the truth as God shows it to me, and I leave it up to Him to show it to others and enforce it as He sees fit. Paul was confident that the Corinthian church would obey and do the right things. He left it up to them, and apparently they repented and changed, because the abuses are not mentioned again in the second letter. I’ll teach and someone else will water, but God alone gives the increase.

My goal is not to be polemic for polemics sake, and I don’t think that I am the savior of the churches. Christ is the Savior and the Lord. I seek only to faithfully deliver the truths of scripture. What happens to them is not in my hands but in God’s hands. Paul has an interesting thing to say which should influence how we handle not only this, but any disparity between our practices and God’s revealed will. I know that there is no such thing as a perfect church, and Paul knew this as well. When it comes to our churches, we are all frail humans trying to do the Lord’s work. Look how Paul says to handle this sort of thing:

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will” (2Tim. 2: 24-26).

Gentle, patient, meek, honest teaching and instruction by people who are truly “servants of the Lord”, “will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth”. This spells complete recovery “out of the snare of the devil”. Paul is the expert here. We do not expect churches to change overnight, because there are always people who “oppose themselves”. That is an odd phrase, but it is something that happens to people while they are totally ignorant of it. They have the best intentions, and they are totally sincere. They are trying to do what’s right, but in actuality they are “opposing themselves”. Paul, was kicking against the pricks and he did not know it! Many times we make our situations worse by trying to help. We unknowingly contribute to our own demise. By trying to do something all we achieve is nothing. Paul says for pastors to handle it this way, and “God peradventure will give them repentance”...“that they may recover themselves”. This is God’s method, and God’s method works, when churches and individuals have inadvertently been taken captive by the snares of the devil. This is what we should do. We should teach all the truth in love, and we should do it fully expecting God to grant the necessary repentance and complete

recovery...He is the one who takes care of His church. He is the one who convicts and guides His people. We need to simply trust Him to do, what he wants to do. It's as simple as that. But we must never alter or ignore anything in the Word of God, just because it rubs us the wrong way. So what? Get over it, and get on with a faithful ministry for Jesus Christ. Find your place in church, and use your gifts like He wants you to use them. Make the necessary adjustments by faith, and move on. Church is about His wishes and not ours, His likes and dislikes and not ours, His methodology and organization and not ours, His glory and not ours.

Jeremiah faced a similar situation as Paul, who was trying to correct Corinth, and as the modern pastors who want to reform their churches today to bring them into conformity with Christ. Jeremiah is a perfect illustration of Paul's technique for handling these disparities with gentleness, meekness, patience and yet uncompromising faithfulness to God's word. Look how the weeping prophet handled it.

“Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken. Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, *and* make *it* gross darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for *your* pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD'S flock is carried away captive” (Jer. 13: 15-17).

They were “looking for light” in all the wrong places, and God would turn it into “gross Darkness”. They were “opposing themselves” and they didn't even know it. But Jeremiah faithfully delivered the word of the Lord and called the people to Glorify God by receiving it (hearing and believing it). This implies obedience. If they do not receive it HE WILL WEEP SORE! In the final analysis we cannot make people obey, but if they do not obey, or if they do not obey as quickly as we think they should. We can weep. Indeed we should weep over our flocks. How easily and how often the “LORD”S flock is carried away captive”? It does require us to come up with some other human plan, scheme or device. It requires us to weep before God over the church's heartbreaking sins.

Later on look what happened when Jeremiah delivered God words under pains of death. They had him, and they wanted to kill him rather than obey what he had to say. Look at him then:

“Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard. Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. As for me, behold, I *am* in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears” (Jer. 26: 12-15).

“Amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God.” This hardly sounds like compromise, or watering down God’s message to please the hearers. He knew they could kill him, for delivering God’s truth, but he was faithful to God anyway. This is the same prophet who gushed tears for the peoples disobedience. He is not all of a sudden a hard, callous, uncompassionate man, just because he has to deliver a hard message. No. He is still the weeping prophet. It breaks his heart to see Israel in the sinful state it is in. But preach he must, and preach he does. Even when his very life is on the line. I think Jeremiah is the perfect illustration of Paul’s words “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” God, give us some Jeremiahs to turn around our brothers and sisters who “oppose themselves”. We certainly need that kind of prophet today. God, make me into one, if it pleases your Almighty plan. Amen.

**Co 14:1-5** Follow after charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is* he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

Paul begins his delineations of God’s order for the use of miraculous gifts in the churches, by introducing and contrasting the gift of tongues with the gift of prophecy. He is emphasizing the preferred desirability, and the superiority of prophecy over tongues. And he is introducing the over-arching necessity of edification for the body of Christ. If it is not edifying to the church, and only to the self, it is not of much value. Interpretation of tongues, however, can redeem it from being practically useless, and make it an edifying gift for the church.

## **V.1 - Follow after charity**

This does not mean charity in our modern sense of showing kindness to the poor, needy or suffering. This is the old English word for Love. This is the conclusion and the connection to chapter 13. Love is the “more excellent way” (12: 31). It is superior to any of the miraculous gifts, because it is never self-absorbed, and it’s genuine presence can never be diminished by fleshly self-glorification and imagined superiority. All the miraculous gifts can be faked. But you cannot fake love. You either have it, and display it, or you don’t.

Prophets, healers, miracle-workers, tongues speakers, and people with any of the other gifts, can all easily fall into the trap of thinking that they are something special, or that their gift is better than someone else’s gift, or that they are more

important members of the body, or they serve a better function, or have more power etc. The gifts bring their own attendant dangers. But there is never any danger in love.

### **and desire spiritual gifts**

All gifts are to be desired, but some are worth coveting (12: 31). The verb here means to continue desiring spiritual gifts, indicative of the fact that this is supposed to be an ongoing passion of the church. There is no indication here of any kind of cessation of the gifts, or of any concept which says Christians should quit desiring the gifts at some point. Such teachings are in direct conflict with this verse. We are to continue, to go on, to keep on, to continually desire, to constantly and earnestly desire these gifts.

Additionally, the word “gifts” is not in the original and the word “spirituals” might be a better translation. “Keep on desiring the spirituals”. That is, all the things concerning spirituality and the realm of the spirit.

### **But rather that ye may prophesy**

Prophecy is the most desirable gift. Paul wants all of the gifts, he desires them all in the church, but especially the gift of prophecy. Many versions render the verse exactly like this...“continue desiring spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy”. Prophecy propheteuo is prediction, foretelling or Spirit inspired speech.

### **V.2 - For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God:**

The word unknown does not appear in the original, but everything else in this statement does. It is a very important point about the gift of tongues. Contrary to what the zealots of cessationism want to say, speaking in tongues is never addressed to men...“but unto God”! That seems to pretty well eliminate the idea that this gift was some sort of first century evangelism tool. If the tongues speaker is not addressing men, then how on earth could he be proclaiming the gospel? The gospel is never addressed to God, and is always addressed to men. But tongues are never addressed to men, and always addressed to God. There is nothing complicated here. The complications arise when someone speaks in a tongue, and thinks that he is delivering some sort of secret coded message from God to men. That is not what tongues are. Even common sense tells us that if you want to speak to your neighbors and friends you use the words and language that everybody understands. If God wants you to speak to men, it will always be in a known language. There is no instance of God ever sending someone to deliver a Divine message by babbling or muttering non-sense vocalizations. When God wants you to speak to men, you better use normal words, or they may haul you away to a nut house. Babbling might be what impersonated tongues are. Perhaps a fake gift might pretend to deliver secret, mysterious, coded messages to people. But real tongues address God and never men. Men just happen to hear them, but they are never directed to the

human ears. Cases of activated human hearing in the Acts 2 event are incidental not consequential. God's hearing is what counts when it come to tongues.

Further study of the verse indicates that the act of speaking to either man or God is in the dative case, and this means not simply "unto" as our English translations render it, but it actually means "for the benefit of". So the tongues speaker is not speaking "for the benefit" of "man", but "for the benefit" of "God". This is a little different than just saying he is speaking "unto" man or speaking "unto" God. "Unto" in English indicates more of who is being addressed. The dative case however, has more of the goal of the speech in mind. Thus tongues is speaking which is directly benefiting to God in some way, and it is not benefiting to man in the same way.

### **for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.**

It is consistent with what he has already said, to say that no man understands the tongues speaker. This is normal. This is the way that it is supposed to be, because Paul has just pointed out that tongues are addressed to God and not men. The mysteries that are being spoken are mysteries directed to the Heavenly Father, not to anyone assembled in the church.

I think this is a very significant concept, because all too often people think that they are supposed to understand tongues when they are spoken in church. But this is fallacious. Tongues are not understood by men. The mysteries and the speech, is in the spirit dimension, and we just happen to be witnesses. Even the tongues speaker himself is included. He does not understand either. We should never be insulted by the process, just because we do not understand. We are not supposed to understand.<sup>6</sup> Nor can we understand unless God grants us the gift of "instantly translated hearing" and we hear in our own native tongues (Acts 2: 8), or unless He grants the gift of "interpretation".

"In the spirit" and "with the spirit" seem to be phrases that are used in this passage as synonyms for speaking in tongues, and at the same times as words indicative of a deep involvement with the spirit realm, possibly ecstatic. The tongues speaker is said to be "in the spirit". He "prays with the spirit" and he "sings with the spirit" (v.15). The proper understanding of this seems to be indicated in verse 14..."For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth". This is a function of spirit, and it takes place in the spirit dimension. Prayer to God is a deeply spiritual act, and tongues is a form of prayer.

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<sup>6</sup> We will discuss the necessity for intelligibility and the role of interpretation when we get to them, but there is no inconsistency between Paul saying men do not understand and Paul saying that edification by interpretation will add a corporate value to the gift, and is therefore necessary in the church.

### **V.3 - But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.**

Herein lies the immediate superiority of prophecy over tongues. Tongues always requires additional miracles for edification to occur...either the miracle of “activated hearing in known languages” or the miracle of “Interpretation”. Prophecy is direct. It is an instantaneous stand-alone miracle. Prophecy directly and perfectly edifies because it is a form of direct intelligible communication. Prophecy directly exhorts, so people instantaneously can tell what to think or do. Prophecy delivers needed comfort, which goes a long way in establishing a solid and stable congregation.

These three things...Edification...Exhortation...Comfort, are three key components in the true gift of prophecy. These things do not eliminate a futuristic component. Nor do they indicate that a futuristic component is not included in the gift. They do however, indicate that the prophetic gift can be operating even though a futuristic component may be altogether missing. Prophecy is never just about foretelling the future. It is, however, always about edification, exhortation and comfort.

The word “edification” deserves some special attention because it is also used throughout this passage with reference to the gift of tongues. Edification is not just a component of prophecy, it is also an important component of tongues. It is a compound word made up of two other words oiko “house or building” and domah “to build”. Thus it means to be “a house builder”. This is significant because the church is called a spiritual building (1Cor. 3: 9; Eph. 2: 21), God’s house or temple (1Cor. 3: 17; 6: 19). We should all want to be building up the house of God, and never tearing it down. Edification is one of the most amazing and important functions in the body of Christ. We will talk quite a bit more concerning this, so remember what edification means...to build up the house!

### **V.4 - He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself**

Some see this as some sort of a spiritual problem with the tongues speaker. They interpret it to mean, he is building up his own ego, or he is inflating his own self importance and is calling attention to himself. They make it mean: ...”See Him, the tongue speaker...He’s tooting his own horn, and that’s bad. He should be building up others instead of himself. That would be good!”

This is an amazing distortion of what Paul is saying. It is taking what he says, and making it to mean exactly opposite of what He is actually saying. Paul is making a simple statement about “edification”. The person who speaks in a tongue is edifying himself. This is not bad. Paul never says that edification is bad. It is always good in the Bible, and never a bad thing. Just because it is self oriented does not make it bad. Everybody ought to edify themselves. Is this not why we read our Bibles, study, pray and listen to sermons? What purpose is any of that if it is not for self-edification? Why are you studying this lesson, if it is not

for self-edification? Edifying yourself is good! Of course it is. Come on! Use your head. Think about it when you are twisting the Bible to make it mean what it does not mean. There is no excuse for that kind of shabby Bible reading and forcing personal viewpoints into the Bible. Keep your opinions out of the Word of God. They don't belong there. Ever! Keep them out. They stink. Perhaps this thought will be self-edifying to you!

### **but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.**

This is another good thing. The assembly is being edified. Praise God! And this is why prophecy is better for the church. It doesn't just build up one person (as in the case of a tongues speaker), it builds up everyone. This is much better. This is much to be preferred. That is what Paul is saying in a nutshell. No deep doctrine. No hidden agenda. Prophecy is superior to tongues because it edifies everybody, all the time. Tongues cannot do that, any of the time. It is not within the nature of that gift. We should not try to make tongues be like prophecy, because it cannot be like prophecy. Is an apple a fig? Or is a banana a cucumber? Well, tongues is not prophecy, and it cannot do what prophecy does. It's simple. Tongues cannot edify more than one person. Prophecy can edify everybody. It's simple and plain. Don't complicate it. Listen to what God is saying here about these two wonderful and drastically different gifts. Tongues are for self-edification and prophecy is for church edification. Tongues cannot edify the church. It takes the gift of interpretation of tongues to do that (see the next verse).

### **V.5 - I would that ye all spake with tongues**

Here is another verse that is the shameless target of abuse, and perpetual twisting to make it mean the opposite of what God intends. Quite simply this means that Paul would love it if everybody had the gift of tongues. How different this is from the cessationist interpretation which says Paul was speaking here sarcastically, and he really didn't mean what he was saying. He's sort of cracking a joke, so he can emphasize the second half of the phrase about "rather that ye prophesied". Come on. This is ridiculous. Paul did not want us to interpret this as a joke. What kind of exegesis is that? He saying, He would love it if everybody had the gift of tongues. There is nothing wrong with Paul expressing this desire. To say that he didn't mean what he plainly said, is a slap in the face of the Holy Spirit who superintended and inspired Paul's writings. How could we ever take anything seriously using this method of blasphemous interpretation? Who determines what verses he is really meaning what he says, and which verses he is simply being sarcastic or cracking a joke? What are the hermeneutic rules for this? And who the heck wrote those rules? Obviously whoever it was did not believe in an inspired Bible.

This expression of Paul's desire, in no way indicates that it is God's will for everyone to speak in tongues. It is like when he said in 7: 7 that he "wished that all men were like himself...unmarried". Obviously celibacy is not God's will for everybody. Paul is simply expressing his personal feelings toward it. Even



though it is clearly not God's plan to give the gift of tongues to every Christian, there would be nothing wrong if it was, and there is no reason why we cannot imagine it or wish for it. It is Paul's way of giving Apostolic approval to anyone who has the gift. Certainly if everyone had this gift, there would be more general comfort and comprehension about what it is and how it should function. It's like verse 18 where he says "I thank God that I speak with tongues more than ye all". Well if everyone spoke in tongues as much as Paul, as often as he, then everyone would have a greater comprehension of the gift, and this would be much closer to the ideal than the shenanigans and fiascos that were taking place in Corinth. That's the point of expressing his wishes. To get people to view the gift correctly.

### **but rather that ye prophesied**

But I am even more desirous that you prophesy. Mallon in the Greek means "more" not rather. I prefer more that you prophesy. Prophecy is better. If Paul means what he is saying in this phrase, he means what he is saying in the other phrases as well.

### **for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues,**

Paul is in no way denigrating the gift of tongues. Nor is he trying to puff up the ego's of people with the gift of prophecy. He is simply putting the two gifts in their proper perspective by illustrating the relationship they have to each other. He has taken the first five verses to underscore why prophecy is superior, more desirable, and better for the church. This cannot be denied. Tongues is a gift indeed, but it is not one of the "greater" gifts. It is a "lesser" gift, and therefore less to be desired in the church.

### **unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edification.**

Here Paul says that the edification value of tongues, can be improved by interpretation. Remember, tongues edifies only one person. Tongues cannot edify more than one person, and that is the problem with the gift. This is what makes tongues of no value as a gift during church. So here Paul introduces tongues twin sister...the gift of interpretation. For tongues to have any corporate value at all, it must be interpreted (vs. 13, 27). Without interpretation it is purely self-edification. But interpretation (which is a separate gift) makes it a house building gift that can be profitable to the body of Christ.

**1Co 14:6-11** Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be

understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them *is* without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh *shall be* a barbarian unto me.

This section of the chapter is designed to illustrate the concept and importance of intelligibility in the church services. Because tongues lacks intelligibility it also lacks in useful purpose. It is like speaking into the air (v. 9). It makes the tongues speaker to be like a barbarian (a foreigner, an alien, v.11).

### **V. 6 - Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you?**

The same word ephaleo is found in 1Cor. 13: 3 “And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing”. It means “of no value” in both verses.

Here Paul introduces the very simple concept that tongues lack a useful purpose in church. They are unprofitable because they lack intelligibility. Paul goes on to contrast them with useful things...Revelation...Knowledge...Prophesying and Doctrine. Tongues does not agree with these things, and tongues cannot do what these things do. Tongues appear to be the only gift that has no value to the church. That is why it's twin sister “interpretation of tongues” becomes absolutely essential (v. 13, 27-28). Without intelligibility there is no value. “Interpretation of tongues adds value because it adds intelligibility. This will undoubtedly upset some of you who think that tongues is some sort of valuable gift to the church. It is a gift, but it is edifying only to the tongues speaker and is absolutely useless, of no value ephaleo, to the church. Don't try turn an inferior gift into a superior one. You cannot do it. It won't work. Tongues is worthless to a congregation because it is incomprehensible, unintelligible. Only the gift of interpretation can give it any value at all to the rest of the people in the congregation.

### **what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?**

Paul here lists four kinds of profitable speech in church:

**Revelation** - apocalupsis - disclosure, unveiling. It means to reveal God's truth clearly and plainly. This is a direct act of God, and not a Spirit gift. It is God unveiling Himself or His thoughts.

**Knowledge** - gnosis - knowing, understanding. It is considered to be one of the Spirit's gifts to the church (1Cor.12: 8).

**Prophesying** - propheteia - prediction, foretelling, Spirit inspired speech. This is also a supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 12: 10).

**Doctrine** - didache - teaching, instruction. It is translated “wisdom” in the

passage where it is listed as one of the supernatural gifts (1Cor. 12: 8).

From the use of these four words Paul is extolling the virtues of several of the other gifts of the Spirit, because they edify the body of Christ. Tongues does not edify the body, and that's why it is the only gift that has no value to the church.

### **V. 7 - And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?**

Even inanimate objects deliver recognizable sounds. By the sounds that are delivered you can determine what kind of instrument it is that is being played. The sound of a flute is different than the sound of a harp. The sound of a guitar can be clearly distinguished from the sound of an organ. But what he is discussing here when he speaks of "distinction of sounds" is the actual distinction of the individual notes that each instrument makes. By distinguishing the sounds, we can know if the music is off-pitch, out of tune with the other instruments being played, and if it therefore has a pleasant and agreeable sound, or is a cacophony of dissonance. Paul is here giving this example as a key argument for intelligibility. Just as we can hear individually recognizable and harmonious notes in a symphony, so we must hear profitable and agreeable speech in the assembly. David Guzik gives a good illustration of the concept in his commentary on 1Corinthians in the Blue Letter Bible Commentary.

It may feel good for a child to bang on a piano, and they may like the sound. But for anyone else, it is unpleasant. Even so, someone communicating to God with the gift of tongues may be blessed, but no one else is. Therefore, if someone is going to make an **uncertain sound** (speak in tongues unto God), let them do so unto themselves, and not among others.<sup>7</sup>

### **V. 8 - For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?**

This verse differs from verse 7, and even though Paul is still speaking under the metaphor of musical instruments, in this verse He is speaking about their ability to convey a discernable, recognizable and understandable message. A trumpet in a military conflict must convey the message to CHARGE! ATTACK THE ENEMY! Trumpets are also typically used to blow the wake up call in the morning, and to signal "lights out" at night. In this example Paul is illustrating the argument for clear intelligibility of speech in the church. It's a very simple and easy to understand statement that Paul is making. Tongues are unintelligible, unrecognizable speech, and therefore have no value in church. Even a trumpet

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<sup>7</sup> [Blue Letter Bible Commentary 1Corinthians](#), David Guzik, ©2006

is capable of conveying a message to men, but tongues is not.

### **V. 9 - So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?**

Paul establishes a simple and plain rule in these verses. The rule is this...In the church, utterances of the tongue must be easy to understand. Intelligible speech is required in church. Speaking in tongues may appear mysterious and spiritual, and it is, but this is exactly why it serves no purpose. They are words that cannot be understood what is spoken. In church the human tongue is best used to convey understanding and plain speech, and because tongues do not do this, they should be relatively rare occurrences, not necessarily things that happen every service. The tongues speaker should ask himself, should I speak in a tongue, or should I deliver some sort of message that is “easy to be understood”? This is not an unreasonable question, and most tongues speakers would find that while tongues is extremely profitable for self-edification, God would rather have them see if they had a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge or a prophesy, and use the directly edifying gifts rather than an obscure, mysterious gift. Which would better profit the congregation? A tongue used in edification, or a tongue with no value to the church? The answer is obvious. God would rather have the edification of the church.

### **for ye shall speak into the air.**

Or speak to the wind. The words will fly off into the air and disappear. A modern translation which approximates the original meaning quite well is “For you will be blowing wind”. I had a professor in college who was always fond of talking about preachers who were, as he called them, “Pious Gas Bags”! “Hot air” and nothing else! That’s kind of what Paul is getting at here, blowing hot air into the sky. It is useless. It might make the speaker feel good, but it is still empty gas as far as the church is concerned. It’s good for inflating balloons, but of no value in church. Putting sounds in the air should never be our object. The object is to put truth into peoples minds and hearts. Our verbalizations in church should always strive for this and not just noise. This means that tongues speakers need to severely restrict their use of tongues in church. That’s the whole point of Paul’s discussion here. Regulate the gift. Put a muzzle on it (Let him keep silence). Without interpretation it is valueless. For it to become a major interruption in the church service, you better be certain that this is what God really wants you to do with your tongue, because if there is no interpretation it is just a bunch of worthless hot air!

My father when he was alive, used to say of certain people...”He just likes to hear himself talk”. Now I know what he meant, because I have encountered it over and over again in ministry. There are always people who are enamored with the sound of their own voice. Whether they think they are being profound, or whether they just like to move their jaws, I don’t know. They feel like people are waiting for their every word, when the truth is that people are waiting for them to shut up! But you can never seem to shut them up, and nobody else ever

seems to be able to get a word in . Unfortunately I have seen the same thing with tongues speakers. They become enamored with the sound of their own voices uttering mysteries in the Spirit, and they think that everyone else should be just as blessed as they are. So they speak in tongues incessantly. Every time there is a service they think the church should hear their voices being used in the gift of tongues. Unfortunately this is exactly the opposite of what Paul is teaching here. Tongues must be controlled and not be controlling. The speaker needs to ensure that an interpreter is present (vs. 13, 27-28) and if not, he is to keep silent because he's simply flapping his jaws. He may love the sound of his voice. But it's hot air and empty gas as far as the church is concerned. It is far better to err on the side of silence, then to err on the side of incessant tongues babbling. No tongues speaker should ever feel guilty for not speaking in tongues. The tongues gift is not something that absolutely has to take place in church. In fact, it is better if it does not occur in church, because even with interpretation there is the real danger of it being totally misunderstood, and people thinking that you are crazy or intoxicated(1Cor. 14: 23; Acts 2: 13), both things being always bad. Common sense say's Christians should not act this way. So please be very careful in the use of this gift. If you know that it can be so easily misunderstood, perhaps you could better serve God in church by using a better gift. This is what Paul is trying to show in this passage.

### **V.10 - There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them *is* without signification.**

In verses 7 and 8 Paul illustrates the intelligibility requirement by using inanimate objects like flutes, harps and trumpets. Here he proceeds to continue to illustrate the absolute requirement of intelligibility in church, only this time he uses living examples. He is referring here to all the different kinds of voices in the world. That this is a reference to human languages is clear by reading verse 11. Every language has value because it has "signification" or meaning to the people who understand the language. The question that must be asked then is: Does this have significance or meaning to the church?

Speaking in tongues is language also. It is multilinguistic speech, and it can be understood by every person in the universe under the proper conditions. Paul describes it as "the tongues of men and of angels" (1Cor. 13: 1), and it has "signification" to those who understand it...i.e. God, Angels and men, who either have the gift of translational hearing given to them (as in Acts), or who have the gift of interpretation given to them, or who are already in heaven, where this is the native tongue of that region. To the rest of us it has no "signification" or meaning. Our ears are closed to the understanding of it, because of the tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues that God caused (Gen. 11: 9).

### **V. 11 - Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh *shall be* a barbarian unto me.**

The Greeks considered their language as the universal language, and anyone who spoke some other language they referred to as barbarians (See Rom. 1: 14). It was not meant as an insult, as we tend to think of a barbarian with negative connotations today. The word barbarian simply means foreigners, people who speak a different language.

The issue here is failure to understand “the meaning of the voice”. When you cannot understand what is being said, you cannot have a conversation. This is why we have translators in the United Nations. The translators stand between two people who speak different languages and they convert what is being said in one language to the other language, they do it back and forth so that both parties can speak to each other with understanding. Without translators each can hear the other, but each cannot understand what the other is saying. They are barbarians to each other...foreigners...aliens.

**1Co 14:12-17** Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.

Paul here equates three things and illustrates their necessity. These three things are equal to each other and are different aspects of the same thing. They are Edification...Understanding...Interpretation. Edification is to be sought, because it equals understanding, and it comes through interpretation. Paul puts these things together and makes the case that they are absolutely essential in the church. I call this the doctrine of intelligibility. This is what we must always strive for in church, but particularly when it comes to the gift of tongues.

### **V. 12 - Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.**

“You are zealots for spirituals” would be the literal translation. It means that they were covetous (1Cor. 12: 31) and desirous (1Cor. 14: 1) of spiritual gifts more than anything else. It has the connotation that they were “fanatics” about Spirit-gifts. Paul does not condemn them for this, but he says that they should be more fanatical, more zealous, about edifying the church. Let’s get excited about what is really important. Do not misplace your zeal by emphasizing an inferior gift. As we have already seen, with reference to the gift of tongues, edification of the church cannot take place with the exercise of this gift. But edification of the church is more important than the exercise of one’s gift. That’s what he is getting at here. Let’s be more zealous for edification than we are for manifestations of gifts, especially if those gifts have no corporate value, or are

regularly misunderstood because of their uncertain sound. Edification is more important, because it brings understanding. Fanaticism for our particular gift, must be subordinated to fanaticism for the building up of the body of Christ, especially when it comes to the gift of tongues. Paul's arguments here are strong and clear. Covet the best gifts when in church. What you do at home is your business, but what you do in church is God's business, and everybody else's business also. Be considerate of those in the church. Don't be oblivious to the absolute importance of edification. You may actually be offending a weak brother by your insistence on always using an inferior gift, ignoring the use of the plain language gifts, which are far better. Most people will respect what you say intelligibly, but they have a difficult time appreciating your gift of tongues. This is only understandable seeing that tongues is so obtuse and mysterious. You should think about this before rushing to deliver a tongues utterance.

### **V. 13 - Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret.**

This is one of the key verses of the chapter. It pulls together what Paul is emphasizing concerning intelligibility and the regulation of the gift of tongues.

It appears that the gift of tongues, and the gift of interpretation of tongues are not always given to the same person (1Cor. 12: 10), but according to this verse the tongues speaker can seek both gifts, and sometimes God will give both gifts to the same person.

The emphasis here is on the necessity for interpretation, because only with interpretation will there be intelligibility, understanding and edification. Without interpretation there should be no tongues spoken (v. 28). So when Paul is urging the tongues speaker to seek to interpret, he is urging and instructing concerning the complimentary gift of interpretation of tongues. The two gifts are supposed to be exercised in tandem. Together they can bring edification, but separately they are useless to the church. Tongues without interpretation are useless (v.6), and interpretation without tongues is equally as useless, because there would be nothing to interpret. Both gifts are interdependent and interconnected. They are Siamese twin sisters that should never be separated in church. God is not glorified when these gifts are severed or isolated from each other.

Interpretation is not to be confused with translation. We mentioned the translators in the U.N. but that is not what an interpretation is. A translation is a word for word conversion of one language into another. An interpretation has nothing to do with the exact wording, but rather with what the message means to the interpreter. Interpretation involves emotions, feelings, understanding and extraction of the truth from the tongue that has been spoken. A forty word tongue, could conceivably be interpreted by a single word. Or a tongue of a few words could require a lengthy discourse to interpret. Nothing is word for word in interpretation.

**V.14 - For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.**

Here Paul gets back to the matter of understanding. How important it is. But the key here is to realize that Paul is saying that even the individual who is gifted with tongues, does not understand what he is saying. The self-edification that he experiences (v.4) is without understanding! This means that this is a form of edification distinct from knowledge. It is emotional and ecstatic, but not intellectual. It cannot convey understanding, only feelings of worship, adoration, and awe. It is a form of prayer. But the understanding remains unfruitful.

Ideally the tongues speaker should pray for the gift of interpretation, so even he could gain some understanding through the operation of the gift. Intelligibility is even to be preferred for personal use, so if this is true, how much more should it be desired in the church setting?

**V. 15 - What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.**

Paul is expressing the true desire that everyone gifted with tongues should have. They should not just want to speak in tongues for the sake of speaking in tongues. They should want to “pray with the understanding also“! They should desire to “sing with the understanding also“, rather than just to sing in the spirit.

Having been around Pentecostals and Charismatics my whole life I have to confess that I have seen loads of misplaced zeal. Paul is still talking about being zealous for edification (v.12). He has not changed the subject. Yet all too often we encounter well meaning people, who are only zealous about speaking in tongues, and they could care less if it edifies anyone. This is not the desire that they should have. They ought to desire to keep quite and control the gift if they cannot interpret, or if there is no one present who can interpret, or if they are uncertain whether the use of tongues is really necessary. The Holy Spirit will lead people with this gift to use it for God’s glory by using it in compliance with the proper restraint and desire for understanding, that is supposed to accompany the gift. People with this gift must be conscious of the Holy Spirit’s instructions here, or they will just be exercising their own fleshly impulses and not the directions of the Holy Spirit. Sensitivity to the Spirit is part of having and using any of the gifts. Tongues are not excluded. The Holy Spirit leads to restraint in the use of the gift in order to maximize it’s significance and ensure that interpretation, edification and understanding takes place.

If tongues are heard in every service, they will not carry the full weight of the miraculous gift that they are. They become commonplace, and they become ordinary. The truth is that tongues are a miraculous gift, and they should never be reduced to the commonplace and taken for granted. When they are used, it



is supposed to be a special form of prayer, speaking mysteries in the Spirit, conveying awe and wonder, and when the interpretation is given people should feel that they have had an encounter with God Himself, and everyone should fall on their faces and say AMEN (v. 13). By controlling the gift through Spirit sensitivity, we are ensuring that the gift is not unnecessarily cheapened, and at the same time we are adding real importance and value to the gift. Tongues are special, and their judicial use makes them more special than profligate utterances.

It is very sad to see the mockery that is made of God through the abuse of the gift of tongues today. There are very few true instances of the genuine gift in the Costal & Matic churches. They have cheapened the gift, denigrated it by telling everybody to speak in tongues, and they show none of the restraint that is necessary with all the true miraculous gifts. Jesus never performed miracles simply to perform miracles. He used restraint. He did not do them to entertain people. He did not do them incessantly. He did them to demonstrate the wonder working power of God on special significant occasions. When the miraculous becomes ordinary and commonplace it loses its significance and it's power to bring Glory to God. Healing is another miraculous gift which we seldom really see today. I know that healers and healing services abound. But most of it is fakery and psychological manipulation. When Christ and the Apostles healed it was always a special, glorious, and unexpected blessing. The miracles were not scheduled to take place on this coming Tuesday night in an auditorium. They were spontaneous, and in most cases they happened outside the church. They were Divine Events, and in most cases healing rarely occurred for Christians. It was usually for unbelievers, because it points them to the greatest miracle, that of healing the sinful and godless soul. All of the gifts have been cheapened and rendered powerless jokes in our day. We need real revival, not more man made and man centered imitations of revival. We need the real gifts, operating in real power, and bringing real glory to God. That's why Paul directed the church at Corinth toward discretion, discrimination, godly desire for understanding and edification. These are the things which must be emphasized and pursued by God's people, not an inordinate desire for fleshly demonstrations, which are in fact sinful, and should never be in the churches of Jesus Christ.

**V. 16 - Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?**

Paul has so many wonderful and good things to say about tongues and other gifts in this chapter, that it should challenge us and take us to the next level of obedience in our churches and in our lives. But none of it is negative. All of it is positive and constructive for the churches. If it seems negative to you, as I'm sure it might have seemed to some of them at Corinth also, it is because you are holding on to unscriptural personal preferences and your own way of thinking and feeling and not the way here proscribed by God in His infinite wisdom.

Here God points out the positive value and necessity for everybody to be able to say AMEN! Amen, is not something for a chosen few. It is for everyone, including “he that occupies the room of the unlearned” (the ordinary, uneducated people). A poor common, ordinary sinner cannot say Amen if he cannot understand what the heck is being said when someone speaking in tongues is blessing God with the Spirit. He can’t say Amen, because he can’t understand anything! There is nothing complicated here. This is simple common sense. Nobody gets anything out of listening to unintelligible gibberish. That’s what Paul has been emphasizing throughout the entire chapter. Tongues do not edify the church. Tongues cannot edify the church. And that is why nobody can say Amen intelligently. Amen means “I agree”! Speaking in tongues is a high and exalted form of prayer, but prayer is not supposed to be rendered in a vicarious manner. Others are not supposed to do our praying for us. We are all supposed to join in together and give our mutual assent. That’s what Amen means. It means “count me in. I agree. I concur.” Amen is a loud, verbal response to the prayer that has been rendered. Amen transforms prayer from a vicarious worship into a participatory worship. But how can anyone say “I agree” when they cannot say “I understand”? Understanding precedes agreement. Once again Paul is underscoring the necessity of intelligibility. For the church to benefit by the “giving of thanks” in tongues, they must understand what has been said. It’s basic. It’s common sense. Having a gift should never turn us into morons with no common sense. What Paul is emphasizing is basic Pneumatology 101. It is beginners doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and it is mostly simple common sense. Nobody gets anything out of babbling gibberish. Think about it. It is noise only. It is like running your fingernails across a blackboard. To some people this is quite irritating. This is basic truth that even the most developmentally challenged Christian can understand. Tongues do not edify, and that’s why nobody can say Amen! It is imperative that understanding be given and not just noise, gas, wind, and hot air! We always need an interpretation. Period. These verses settle it. But silence is better in church, because tongues tend to self-exhibition and unproductive mockery of the Christians who use it (Acts 2: 13).

### **V. 17 - For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.**

The act of worshipping God in tongues is never a bad thing. Paul is not saying that. Paul says “thou givest thanks well”. There was nothing wrong with the affection, dedication, sincerity, or devotion when a tongues speaker is thus giving thanks to God. That stuff was all “well” or good. The problem was that nobody else was edified. Edification therefore becomes primary. You can pray a good prayer in tongues, and have wasted your breath as far as the people in the church are concerned.

My mother grew up as a Roman Catholic, and back then the Masses were conducted in Latin. The people would sit for an hour. The priest would be going “uninum domisco santus sanctimonius uno pres dos trinum” and nobody would

get a blessed thing out of it. He was speaking to the wind (v.9). My mother said it was the biggest waste of time she ever saw in her life. As a matter of fact this is one of the factors that God used to lead her out of that useless and dead religion. She said to herself, "what good is going to a church when you can't understand what's being said?" It makes the priest look mysterious and close to god or someone, but it does absolutely nothing for the people. That's exactly what Paul is saying here. Beautiful, well-meant prayers are useless if nobody in the church is edified. You should pray like that at home, in your closet, to the Lord, for self-edification. Church is about edifying everybody, not just about the self-edification of one or two who are speaking in tongues.

**1Co 14:18-19** I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue.

Paul inserts a personal testimony about his own gift of tongues. This is like the icing on the cake of what he has been saying. If he exercises control of the gift with full preference for the teaching and edification of others, then so ought every person who has the gift, to do the same and follow Paul's example.

### **V. 18 - I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:**

Here he states the plain fact of his personal testimony regarding the gift of tongues. He speaks in tongues more than anyone in Corinth. He is an Apostle of Jesus Christ, and not only an Apostle, but an Apostle to the gentile nations. Many different language groups came under the direct ministry of the Apostle Paul, and we can expect that at least some of that ministry would have been similar to that in Acts 2 where tongues were spoken, and people of different ethnic backgrounds were simultaneously given the gift of hearing in their own languages. Such things can happen like that today also, and when it happens nobody even knows that a tongue has been spoken because everybody hears only their own language, and they do not hear the tongues. Think about this for a moment. When God grants everybody to hear in their own tongue, nobody hears the tongues being spoken by Divine gift, because they only hear English if they are English, Chinese if they are Chinese or Italian if they are Italian. When the gift operates like this there is no need for interpretation because nothing foreign was said, and everybody understands. But this is not the customary or usual way that the gift operates. Most recent reports like this have come from mission fields by missionaries with limited language skills. But this is not the way the gift usually operates in church. This is the rare exception, not the rule. That's why we have so much discussion here about the preference for using the intelligible gifts. So Paul goes on to say:

**V. 19 - Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue.**

It is very difficult to twist and confuse Paul's plain and simple statements to make them mean something other than what he is getting at. But people do attempt to confound the words of the Apostle in order to justify their own disregard for the Scriptural teaching. If Paul says that he controls the gift of tongues in church, limiting how much of it he does in preference for speaking just a few paltry words that are intelligible. It's better to do this than to speak thousands of words in tongues that nobody can understand. How difficult is this to comprehend? We should ask ourselves the same question that Paul would have asked himself... "When I'm in church, how can I best use my voice to teach others?" Like Paul, we should want our voice to teach and edify others. If you don't desire this, then you are probably desiring the wrong things from the church worship services. Would you rather be babbling away with thousands of words in a tongues frenzy? or would you rather speak five words directly to people's heart, that could change them forever and build up their souls clearly and quickly? These questions are not unreasonable based on Paul's personal testimony in these verses. Paul was a deeply spiritual and enlightened man, and here he expresses a vital truth regarding the proper use of tongues.

We should concern ourselves, in all of this instruction by Paul, with how we ourselves are using the gifts that God has given to us. This stuff should prompt us to serious self examination. Lord, am I using the gifts which you have given me, the way that you want them to be used? Am I using them for the benefit of the church, or just for my own personal reasons? Are my gifts edifying the body of Christ, or just edifying me? Am I being selfish in the way I am now using them? Am I using them to draw attention to myself, or to focus people's attention on the Lord Jesus Christ? Are they of value to the church, and if so, in what way? When I open my voice to speak in tongues does it grate on anyone's nerves like fingernails across the blackboard, or like many musical instruments playing a dissonant sounds all at the same time? Lord I want to be deeply convicted about using these gifts for your glory. Am I truly pleasing you by using them the way I have in the past? Or should I be restraining myself and be using them only in times when they are absolutely essential? Have I said five words to help someone? Or am I too busy saying 10,000 words to hear my own voice? Lord help me to not cheapen your true miracles. Help me to keep them holy and special by using them on the special occasions when they will do the most to edify the Body of Christ. And if I speak in tongues Lord, may there always be an interpreter. Deliver me from sinning in my attempts to do good. I do not mean to make mistakes with these gifts, but I have. Bring me through this learning curve Oh Lord, and make me like Paul, who not only spoke with tongues, but who did everything with your power and wisdom. Lord send a revival of the true gifts to my church, and help me to be a mature believer concerning their use, and not a babe or a carnal person. Let me be a solid leader in the correct use of the gifts, and let me lead by example, and let my example be the example of the Apostle Paul. Thank you Lord for your inspired and infallible teachings concerning all these things. Amen.

**1Co 14:20-22** Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. In the law it is written, With *men of* other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

## **V. 20 - Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.**

It boils down to spiritual maturity. Misuse of the gift of tongues is a sign of immaturity. Our churches are filled today with babies in understanding concerning this gift. It is ok to be a baby, and to be childlike and innocent when it comes to meekness, modesty, humility, freedom from pride and vain glory; to be without guile and hypocrisy, without bitterness, envying and malice (which is mentioned here), to be tender hearted, and ready to forgive. These childlike qualities are good, and the apostle recommends them. But in the matter of Spirit gifts, our understanding must be as adults and not as children. In understanding be men. This is another command from God within this chapter. Are we obeying?

Children do foolish and vain things. They love to play and feel good. That's all they want. Everything has to make them feel happy and content. They want all sugar and spice and everything nice. Candy is great, but spankings are like the end of the world. When things don't please them they cry, pout and feel sorry for themselves. They are totally self-centered because they are just discovering the universe. They know nothing of the countless worlds that exist outside of themselves. They are just beginning to learn that the universe does not revolve around them, and this is what growing up is all about. It is about expanding your horizon outside of your own little happy childish dream world. It's like a butterfly coming out of the cocoon of his infancy stage (pupae). It will never fly if it remains a baby. In church, the goal is maturity, not bunches of people trapped in the pupae stage! Bound by the cocoons of infancy! Come on church of Jesus Christ...Grow up, and use your gifts as adults, and not as children playing in the sandbox of the spirit. Move outside of your own little selfish and childish world, and move into the real world, where you are no longer the center, but Jesus Christ is the center. It is not what pleases you that counts. It's what pleases Him...that's all that counts! What pleases Christ is people like the Apostle Paul who are mature...men in understanding...stable adults who are more concerned about others than themselves...concerned about the edification of the Body of Christ...concerned about speaking that profits everyone...concerned about obedience to the truth...concerned about the glory of God...real people and not phonies...people who love the Lord more than themselves...people who will do anything to bow in submission to Christ's will for their lives. We pray for revival, but the kind of revival we need is a revival of spiritual maturity. God send us that, and it will revolutionize our churches.

**Eph 4:14-16** That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried

about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

**V. 21 - In the law it is written, With *men of other tongues and other lips* will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.**

**The Law** is the technical phrase which is freely used not just to describe the Mosaic Law Code, but is used by the Jews to mean the entire Old Testament. To the Jews, and also now to the Christians, the law is all the Scriptures of God (Jn. 10: 34; Rom. 3: 19)

“The term torah, Law, was used by the Jews to express the whole Scriptures, law, prophets, and hagiographia; and they used it to distinguish these Sacred Writings from the words of the scribes”.<sup>8</sup>

This verse (21) is a free quotation from Isa. 28: 9-12; Deut.28: 49; and Jer. 5: 15. Paul’s reasoning and argument here is a little obtuse and difficult to follow but basically it goes like this...

- 1) There is a quote from the old Testament that says that God would bring judgment upon the Jews.
- 2) The sign of this judgment would be that they would be spoken to by people of other tongues.
- 3) In spite of this judgment they refused to hear what the Lord was saying to them.
- 4) Strange tongues is therefore a reminder of the judgment from God because of sin.
- 5) The church should not be subject therefore to listening to strange tongues, because the church is not under Divine judgment.

You may need to re-read the five points of Paul’s logic at this point, and study the verse carefully to grasp the conclusion of the fifth point.

This clearly leads to the next verse which is connected to it by the word “wherefore”.

**V. 22 (a) - Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not:**

Because tongues are historically a sign of God’s judgment, it is a sign to unbelievers and not to believers. Unbelievers are under the judgment of God, not believers. Therefore the miraculous sign of tongues pertains to them and not us. We have been justified by faith, but they have no faith. So even as God pronounced his judgment upon the ancient Jews by the tongues of the

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<sup>8</sup> Dr. Randolph, Cited by R.A. Torrey, Treasury of Scripture Knowledge, Fleming H. Revell, 1880

Assyrians, He signifies his judgment upon unbelievers by the gift of tongues operating in the church. Tongues are proof that unbelievers are forsaken by God if they do not repent and believe.

**V. 22 (b) but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.**

Prophecy, on the other hand, is a miraculous gift that signifies God's blessings and favor upon believers. Prophecy is our sign of God's pleasure with us, tongues are the unbelievers sign of God's displeasure with them.

While Paul's line of reasoning here is difficult to understand, it underscores what he has already said clearly. In church tongues are basically useless, because any significance they may have is symbolic of the judgment of the lost, and it pertains to them, and not believers. Prophecy is the gift that pertains to believers. And this is one more reason why it is to be preferred over tongues in church.

**1Co 14:23-25** If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

Our attention is now clearly focused upon what happens to unbelievers who come into our assemblies. What they think is determined by what they hear. The goal is clearly to get men saved, to lead them to a clear understanding of sin so that the secrets of their hearts are made manifest, resulting in a deep and genuine repentance, confession of faith, and true worship of God.

**V. 23 - If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?***

These people are out of their minds! They are a bunch of wacko nuts! They are crazy as bed bugs! That is exactly what people will say every time they enter a church where the gift of tongues is unregulated. When everybody is doing their own tongues thing however they want, and not according to the leading of the Holy Spirit, which is always decent and in order (v. 40). In every case they will say you are foolish...idiots...nut cases...crazy...kooks...fanatics...whackos...freaks... space cadets...loony-tunes...morons...out of your mind...insane...madmen! Mockery of Christians comes with this gift (Acts 2: 13).

Let's face the facts. Paul was a very good judge of human character, and his clear statement of how people will react to uncontrolled tongues in the church is a simple matter of common sense. They will think you are nuts! Does this

bring glory and honor to Jesus Christ? Is this the way we want the world to perceive of Christ's church and God's miracles? Do we want people to think that if you are a Christian you will be part of a nut-bag religion, where everybody is controlled by the holy spook rather than the Holy Spirit?

While Matthew Henry, the great puritan commentator, did not fully understand the gift of tongues, he did however, fully understand the urgent necessity for plain simplicity and understandability in church. He wrote:

“Would it not make Christianity ridiculous to a heathen, to hear the ministers pray or preach in a language which neither he nor the assembly understood? But if those who minister, plainly interpret Scripture, or preach the great truths and rules of the gospel, a heathen or unlearned person might become a convert to Christianity. His conscience might be touched, the secrets of his heart might be revealed to him, and so he might be brought to confess his guilt, and to own that God was present in the assembly. Scripture truth, plainly and duly taught, has a wonderful power to awaken the conscience and touch the heart”.<sup>9</sup>

**Vs. 24-25 - But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.**

This is perhaps the underlying factor for why Paul told them to desire prophecy more than any other gift (v.1). Prophecy speaks directly to men's souls, and opens them up, revealing what's in them (the secrets of his heart are made manifest). Prophecy's value is in direct, meaningful and convicting speech. Prophecy goes right to the spiritual jugular vein and needs no other gifts to do its job in men's hearts. When prophecy is operating like this, men will be convinced of all (convicted by the impact of it), and judged of all (their state and condition laid bare). They will be brought face to face with themselves, and face to face with God. The result is a true conversion and confession of faith.

This is the kind of revival we need today. A revival where sinners will fall on the faces and cry out to God over their sins, because they are deeply convicted by the Holy Spirit and by the people of God. This is no casual repeat after me prayer. This is not slick marketing or psychological manipulation. This is not a high pressure altar call. In fact it's not an altar call at all. This is not swooning because of sentimental music and heart wrenching stories. This is the real deal. Men spontaneously falling down under the power of the Holy Spirit, because they have been awakened by Grace, touched by God, and forever changed into new creatures in Christ. This is what Christianity is all about. This is the heart of the

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<sup>9</sup> Matthew Henry, Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible, Fleming Revell



reason for all our gifts and all our ministries. This is the soul and essence of our gospel. This is what we need. Are you seeking this for your church and your life? May God burn the centrality of this into our hearts and minds. May every gift bow to this noble cause of reaching men for Christ. This is the big deal. This is the main event. This is the core principle of practice for the church. Touching men, and changing them with the plain words of the everlasting gospel...this is our mission. Let us strive for it. Pray for it. Let us die for it, if necessary. And let us truly yield every gift to it, glorifying Christ and not ourselves.

This seems to be the only instance where falling down is mentioned in connection with any of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. So I want to say a word about the "slain in the spirit" doctrine that is taught and practiced in the Costal & Matic churches. Their doctrine and practice has no basis in scripture, and this verse provides no support either. They zap people with a touch of the hand or fingers usually on the forehead; and the zapped person falls backward, usually into the arms of a designated catcher. They then lay on the floor for various lengths of time, supposedly unconscious or in a state of ecstasy and elation, sometimes twitching or rolling around, sometime uttering things in tongues, sometimes groaning as if in travail. This is the "slain in the spirit" phenomenon, seen all around the world among the Costal & Matic groups. And which is one more reason I refuse to be identified with their false movements. But is that what Paul is describing here in this, the only verse that speaks of falling down in relation to the Holy Spirit's gifts?

- 1). Notice, there is no zapping taking place here. Nobody touches anybody on the forehead or anywhere else.
- 2). The falling down is forward, and is on the face, not backward and out of control. Falling on your face is a deliberate, willful and controlled act. Falling backward means that you're out of control, and cannot land safely. The two things are not the same.
- 3). The man in this verse falls on his face, because he is deeply aware and convicted of his sin, not because he was zapped by an evangelist.
- 4). At no time does the man in this verse lose consciousness, act silly, roll around, utter things in tongues, or otherwise act irreverently.
- 5). When he thus falls on his face it is with one purpose...the worship of God. He is not getting zapped in order to get an ecstatic feeling of elation. He is being humbled under the mighty hand of God. He is being converted and saved. This bears no resemblance to the "slain in the spirit" falsehood. The only similarity is that "falling down" is mentioned.

No Bible believing church should ever practice or condone the "slain in the spirit" experience. It is a form of self-hypnosis and psychological manipulation, and it is absolutely not from God, and has no business among His people. It is the product of demonic deception and intrusion into the church. Beware of false signs and wonders (Matt. 24: 24; Mk. 13: 22).

**1Co 14:26-33** How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and *that* by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

The things which Paul wrote were not directed at any individuals by name. He could have named the guilty offenders. He names people by name in many places, but this stuff is addressed to everyone in the church, so the guilty ones have to insert their own names where it fits. They know if they have acted like this, or have acted out of line with their gifts. By the same token. I am not addressing any of my comments to anyone in particular either. I don't know who will read these studies, or into who's hands or what churches they may fall. I send them forth as God's simple truth the way that I read it. I'm not profound. I'm very basic in my teaching. But if the shoe fits you will have to insert your own name, and put the shoe on your own foot, because I'm not picking on anyone, or pointing out any individuals that I might know. That's up to God, and not up to Earl Jackson. So please, read this study, as I intend it, and as I send it forth, the same as Paul sent it forth before me. It's not addressed to any individuals, but to all of them collectively. You put your own name in where it fits. Let it convict you, where you need to be convicted, and let it change all the churches where ever it may come in contact, in whatever part of the world. You are precious. The gifts of God are precious. The churches of Christ are precious. And the salvation of souls is precious. And my goal is not to offend any, but to help all, by speaking the truth to all in total privacy, and in total frankness and honesty, so everyone who needs to can change, and grow to become more useful in the kingdom of God.

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

If all things are to be done unto edifying, then all things will be done for corporate benefit and not for individual excitement. That is what Paul is alluding to when he says that when they were coming together in Corinth one had a Psalm, another a doctrine, another a tongue, another had this and another that. They were all caught up with what they had as individuals, and not what was best for the church. It is a clear case of misguided zeal (1Cor. 8: 1; 12: 1; 12: 31; 14: 1; 14: 39).

It was all about what they brought to church with them, rather than about

edifying, and building up the house of God. Carrying your exciting experiences to church in a childish frenzy, does nothing to edify a poor needy soul, to build up a person who wants to grow in grace, and to glorify God. Nothing! That's what your gifts are, when they are misplaced and misused. They are nothing. They should be things that bring honor to the Lord and magnify His Infinite power, but by what you have done to them, and done with them, you have trashed them and rendered them useless to the church, useless to God, and useless to yourself! What should be a blessing, you have turned into a hinderance. It hinders worship. It hinders men's salvation. It hinders the work of the Holy Spirit. It is indecent and it is out of order. It is a crying shame. What you have done by acting like childish kids in the spiritual gifts candy shop, is a scandal. Your gifts have gone wild. It is a disgrace. It grieves the Holy Spirit, and it grieves every sensible Christian who really wants to see God work. This is an absolute joke. It is a mockery. It is spiritual perversion as wicked as anything ever coughed up by hell, because this wicked stuff can keep men from being saved, and can cripple churches and strangle the life of God right out of them...Everybody all caught up in their special giftings, and their special blessings that they think that they bring to the church. You are no blessing when you act like this. You're a curse. You're keeping men in darkness. You're turning the grace of God into a laughingstock. You're making the genuine gifts of God seem like party favors at a birthday celebration. The gifts of God are holy and sacred trusts, that He has bestowed upon His chosen ones, so that His name will be glorified, sinners will be saved, and the church will be built up in the most holy faith. You are doing none of these things when you act like cradle bound infants who are off to see the extravaganza on Sunday. You have made the church into a three ring circus. But it is the holy temple of God, the sanctuary of the Almighty. What have you done? What on earth? What in God's name do you think you are doing? Who do you think you are? You have turned the worship of the Almighty into a carnival sideshow, where people come to stare and mock the spiritually deformed...the carnal babes who never grew up...stunted and malformed... freaks and circus attractions. They laugh at you. They mock you. They say you are mad. And they think your religion is something that escaped from a nut house. Where is God in any of this? Please, Please, Please, I beg of you. I plead with you. I urge you with all my strength. I pray, please repent of this spiritual fiasco, this chaos that you feed by your misbehavior in the house of God. Please quit doing this stuff to God's church. You need to either quit this phoniness, put these shenanigans from you, or remove yourself from the church. You do not belong there, if you feel and think the way that you have been thinking in the past. Now that you have seen what Paul says, it's time to either reform your ways, to obey God's commands, or to remove yourself to a bar or brothel where you can do whatever the hell you want to do, and where you won't have to answer for eternity bound souls, and you can damn yourself along with the ones you have kept out of God's family!

True Christians will comply with God. They cannot help but complying. They have been awakened. They are alive from the dead. They walk in the light and

not in darkness. They cannot resist their Saviors instructions. They always repent, and persevere in the ways and things of God. They are always bringing their thoughts into captivity. It is their lifelong passion and purpose...to be like Christ. This is no frivolous matter with them. This is the very will of God. They are keeping their heart, for out of it are the issues of life (Prov. 4: 23). They will crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts, and they will say, "Yes God you're right about these gifts. Yes, God I will bring them under the godly control of the Holy Spirit. From hence forth I will use them only as you have prescribed. I will never again abuse the wondrous gifts you have given to your church. May you alone be magnified. And may all my flesh, and filthy rags be taken to the cross for crucifixion! Let God be true, and every man a liar! May His name be praised forever. Amen.

**Let all things be done unto edifying.** This is another Apostolic command contained in the passage. The whole chapter is concerned with how to edify the Body of Christ, through the proper control and exercise of the gifts of tongues, prophecy and interpretation of tongues. For edification to take place the gifts have to be used properly, according to God's authoritative commands, and not according to human feelings, whims and fleshly excitement.

It's nice that you have a hymn. It's nice that you have a prophecy. It's nice that you have a tongue, and you over there you have a new doctrinal insight, and you have a direct revelation, and you have an interpretation. These things are nice. But, Guess what? Keep them to yourself! Be quite! Leave them at home. Church is about edifying. It's not about you and your nice little gifts! This is what Paul is saying. It's simple. It's only offensive if you're guilty of this sort of thing. If your offended by what Paul is saying, it is because you need to repent. If you have an issue with the holy Apostle, you are wrong! Church is not about you. It's not about your gifts. It's not about your excitement. It's not about your experiences. It's not about your feelings. It's not about what you can bring to the table on Sunday morning. It's not about how you feel about things. It's not about your psalms, your doctrines, your tongues or your revelations. It's about Christ. It's about building up His body. Why are you having difficulty grasping something that is so simple? If you cannot comprehend simple and plain language, spoken by the authority of an Apostle, how on earth are you ever going to comprehend the gift of tongues? Failure to know when to be quite, is failure to use the gifts properly. Failure to shut up, is failure to build up! Failure to build up, by edification, is actually to tear down, by disobedience. May God deliver us from this sinful problem, and may God create in us a pure heart that only and always wants to please Him in everything. God help us to obey Paul, and to follow Christ. Let everything we do from henceforth "be done unto edifying". Amen.

**V. 27 - If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.***

Three is the maximum number of tongues interruptions that are allowed in a

church service. They must occur, by course, or sequentially, and not all at the same time. One is supposed to follow the other until a maximum of three tongues have been spoken. There are those who teach, but I am not one of them, that one tongue is just as wrong and out of order as four tongues would be. They say that Paul is specifying that if tongues are spoken at all, there must be at least two of them spoken and not more than three. According to this view, one is not an acceptable number, because Paul does not mention it. He says that two or three is the correct number of tongues which are to be spoken. This seems to conform to both Old Testament and New Testament instructions (see Deut. 19: 15 and 2Cor. 13: 1). Two people are required to validate and confirm whether something is true or not. Two tongues speakers would then serve the same purpose. They would validate that the genuine gift is operating and not just someone engaged in a show of ostentation. I think this view is a little too forced of a literalization of Paul's words. I think he is simply establishing a maximum number of tongues events. Two or three is the limit. I don't feel that it is necessary to say that this verse excludes one tongues speaker. I think that is a bit extreme, and it is actually reading into the text what it does not say. But I'll leave it up to the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth concerning this. At least you have both views.

The tongues are to occur one after the other sequentially, and are not to be scattered throughout the service at different times. One is to immediately follow the other, by course. And then there is to be only one interpreter for all the tongues that have been spoken, and not two or three different interpreters. It is one interpreter and not more than one. This is indeed a very literal understanding of Paul's actual words. This is what he has clearly said.

There are three rules established by this verse:

- 1). Tongues are spoken by no more than two or three persons in any given church service.
- 2). They must speak consecutively one after the other, never at the same time, but not scattered throughout the service at different times either. Consecutive means one after the other each following the preceding.
- 3). There is to be only one interpreter extracting the meaning for the congregation for all the tongues spoken. It is the extraction and explanation of the meaning by the interpreter that adds the value to the tongues messages. They are of no value without the extraction and explanation.

## **V. 28 - But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.**

The key word's here explain the whole meaning. **"No Interpreter...Keep Silent"**. This is what Paul says. This is what Paul means. If there is no interpreter, tongues speakers are to keep silent, keep their mouths shut, not verbalize anything in tongues. It's Ok for them to silently speak in tongues "to himself, and to God". This means that their tongues should not be loud and

audible to the church members sitting nearby. This is whispering in the faintest tones. It is personal prayer when it is done like this, and is not meant as a public show of the tongues gift. There is no ostentation in prayerful, very soft tongues to God. They are breathed as a light breaths of the Spirit, and are not bellowed in loud, echoing, thundering tones. The general rule however is...No Interpreter KEEP SILENT! SHUT UP! DON'T OPEN YOUR MOUTH! Wait for an interpreter. This is the rule. It must be followed along with all the other commands of God for the churches.

This raises the question of how is a person supposed to know if an interpreter is present? Is this knowledge somehow given by God prior to the tongue speaking event? These questions are quite complicated, but I think the simplest answer is the best. Those with the gift of interpretation are generally known and recognized by the church. Most likely they have used this vital gift before. At any rate, they are admitted to be acknowledged and valid interpreters. They are readily known, and their presence is easily ascertained ahead of time. Most likely this is what Paul has in mind, rather than supernatural instant revelation of the interpreters presence. God could reveal an interpreters presence directly and miraculously, but the whole tone here seems to indicate that it is simply a matter of recognizing the presence of someone who is known to have the gift of interpretation. I discussed this at length with Pastor Ryan Bradley, and he was influential in guiding my thinking in this direction. In either case, however, there is to be no tongues displayed without the presence of an interpreter.

**Vs. 29-31 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.**

Paul now moves to the gift of prophecy, to show that it operates in a similar manner as tongues. By showing how prophecy operates, he is also clarifying how tongues operates, because they are both revelational gifts. Just like tongues, there is to be no more than two or three prophets who speak. I do not think Paul is saying that there must be at least two, but it is clear that there should be no more than three. This exactly parallels verse 27.

**And let the other judge.** "Other" is the Greek word aloi. It is plural and should be translated "others". It either refers to other prophets who are present, or to the other people who are in the congregation, who are expected to use discernment in evaluating the prophetic message. To me, It seems however to mean the other prophets. "Judge" is a misleading translation. "Evaluate" or "weigh" would be better. We must never just accept men's words. "Take heed what you hear" (Mark 4: 24). Devils disguised as angels of light can preach great, motivating and uplifting messages. But do they come from lying spirits, or their own spirit, and not from God? Careful, prayerful discernment is required by all the flock, and particularly by the other prophets, so that they can respond as

in verse 32. The example of the Berean Christians applies here (Acts 17: 11).

Just a note about judging sermons here. Many people listen to sermons simply to critique them. Paul is not telling you to become a critic of homiletics, so as to instruct the prophets. Some of the greatest prophets are the poorest orators. Nor is he telling you that prophets need your approval of their message. He is simply making the case that we should all be careful as we embrace new or strange sounding doctrines, or teachings which might be pleasant but wrong, because they serve wrong purposes or come from wrong sources. Be very careful. But, you are still expected to receive the true prophets of God, and to receive their messages as the actual word of the Lord for your soul (Acts 4: 31; 1Thess. 2: 13). No Christian is exempt from this requirement.

**V. 30 - If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.**

The words “**hold his peace**” are actually the single Greek word which is found in verse 28 and which there is correctly translated “**Silence**”. In other words, if a second prophet will be delivering another message, the first prophet is to sit silently, and to listen to his discourse with respect, and without interruption. Apparently Corinth was a church which was blessed with multiple prophets who could expound God’s word faithfully to them. Their services were quite long, and it was not uncommon to hear at least three discourses during the church sessions. We do not usually see this today, unless we are having special conferences or seminars. The general idea seems to be that more than three sermons in one session would be an undue burden and weariness for the congregation. I know today, people start looking at their watches and start becoming weary after 30 or 40 minutes. This is evidence of our shallowness and lack of zeal for the things of God. We are more concerned about the pot roast than we are about the things of God.

**V. 31 - For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.**

Learning and comforting are two of the most important benefits of prophetic messages. Paul points out these important features of the gift. Learning can be associated with the general concept of “edification”, and it is more than mere memorization of doctrines, which even unsaved people can do. This includes a genuine deep seated experiential knowledge of Christ and the gospel. It includes grasping the practical implications of the Christian message, so that they are implemented in your life and are not just some sort of intellectual knowledge. You have not learned Christ until you have “put Him on” (Rom. 13: 14). You have not “put Him on” until you have “righteousness and true holiness” in your life (Eph. 4: 24). This is a complete “renewal in knowledge” resulting in all kinds of practical and godly changes in your life (Col. 3: 10-14).

The verse also implies that prophecy is comforting to the souls of every true believer. There is always comfort in learning the truths which God has for you. It is because Divine wisdom transcends the mere shallow thinking of this world. Learning the things of God, brings us knowledge of our eternal destiny, peace with God, peace with our fellow men, comfort in our distresses and difficulties. God does not promise to save us out of trouble, but to comfort us in it!

### **V. 32 - And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.**

Some have interpreted this verse to mean that the prophetic messages uttered in church are to be discussed and approved by some sort of committee of prophets, so that all speakers are subject to being monitored and approved by this spiritual board of special important men. Nothing could be further from the truth. God's men are not subject to approval or validation from other men. Paul conferred not with flesh and blood (Gal. 1: 16-17; Gal 1: 11-12; Gal. 2: 6). God is the author of true prophecy, and neither this verse nor any other verse, says that they need to be approved, or their message approved by anyone other than God.

What the verse is indicating is that the prophets must speak in accordance with the messages of the true prophets who came before them. Prophetic utterance must conform to the words of the prophets recorded in the Scriptures. No truth will ever contradict the Bible. So then, no prophet will ever contradict the Biblical message. Content and spiritual authority comes by agreement with Scripture. Messages which disagree with God are not from God. Scripture is the touchstone by which all truth is derived and determined. True prophets agree with the true prophets, because all truth is one truth, and it is never contradictory to itself.

### **V. 33 - For God is not *the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.***

This verse expresses the great object of all the teachings in this chapter. They are all given because confusion is not of God, but of the Devil. Where God's gifts are operating truly and powerfully, there will be complete compliance with God's government and rules for them. There will be no chaos and disorderliness. Everything will be "decent", according to the way that God has defined decency, and "in order" according as God has defined the order and regulation of the gifts (v. 40). If it doesn't comply with God, it is both indecent and out of order, and it constitutes "confusion". The word "confusion" has within it the idea of an uproar or insurrection. An example of such confusion is given in Acts 19: 28-30). Confusion is an uproar, a noise, a riot that is not from God. Confusion is any form of spiritual anarchy, and disobedience to God. It is the



antithesis of “peace” which is here supposed to be “in all the churches of God”. This is not peace as in an idyllic scene of Leprechaun’s, fairies and nymphs fawning in a peaceful meadow beneath a glistening rainbow. This is not the peace of a dream world, where every church is crystalline and faultless. Such peace does not exist on earth. It is the peace which is harmonious with the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is peace with God’s truth, peace which conducts men to faith in Christ and edification in the things of God. There cannot be disharmony with the truth in a church where God’s peace is present. Men will be able to find salvation, because the message is one of peace with God, and the means proclaiming that message are clear, sensible and easily understood. Nothing is unsure, uncertain, discombobulated or frenzied. There is an air of inner peace, inner beauty, inner reflection, without being ridiculous or fairyland pie in the sky. The whole thing is sensible and plain comfort and direction from the Holy Spirit.

**1Co 14:34-36** Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

Why did Paul introduce the topic of proper behavior of women in church at the end of a lengthy discussion about tongues and related spiritual gifts? Was his mind just wandering? Had he become distracted from his objective to regulate the gifts in Corinth and other churches? Or is this intimately connected to the rest of his discussion about tongues and spiritual gifts? It seems like this pops up and is unrelated to what preceded, but to view it this way is a mistake. This was not a drifting of the Apostolic mind from the inspirational control of God. Paul was still writing what the Holy Spirit was instructing him to write. These verses are God-breathed, just like the rest of the scriptures. They are not a blunder made by an Apostle who somehow got off track. These are holy and inspired words, inserted just where God wanted them to be. God also says the same things in 1Tim. 2: 11-15, but there he links the prohibition of women speaking in church to the fact that Eve was deceived and not Adam. This probably has something to do with the female tendency to be governed by the emotions more than men are. Whatever it means, it clearly says that women should keep silent because Eve was deceived and not Adam. So God’s commandments regarding this are not accidental chauvinistic insertions into the Bible. They are the repeated testimony of the Holy Spirit.

I have already spent considerable time discussing the critical importance of these words (see pages 21-25). Paul’s authoritative discussion of the role of women in the church cannot be questioned or ignored without doing terrible violence to the scriptures themselves. He spoke God’s word, and not his own, when he said that “women are to keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience”.

No interpretation of these verses can be correct, that says that they are not true. No interpretation of this passage can be correct, that says that this does not apply equally today as it did in Paul's time. Wrongly dividing the word of truth is not a method of exegesis, it is Biblical butchery (2Tim.2: 15). No interpretation of this passage can be correct, that says these verses are somehow gender neutral. Even a moron can see that they are gender specific. No interpretation of these thoughts can be correct, that say's Paul was sinning here by being a male chauvinist. These are not sinful words, they are Divine commands. No interpretation of these words can be correct, that says they are irrelevant, because today's women are educated. Paul is not speaking about a woman's education, he is speaking about her behavior in church. Education has nothing to do with this passage. Permission is not granted here for female speech, but permission is granted for female "obedience" to God. Interpreting the passage otherwise is to abuse it.

I have already covered what the passage is clearly saying, with the exception of the somewhat cryptic verse 36. So I'll make a brief comment on that verse, and then we'll move on to Paul's concluding verses.

### **V. 36 - What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?**

The word "you" is in the genitive case and it makes the question a form of sarcasm. The question means. "What? Did the Word of God originate with you? Are you the source of the truth? Are you the fountain head of God's Word?" The implications here are clear. Do you think that you are the ones who make up the rules in God's church? Do you think that you are the source of the gospel? Did the word of God come from you? Or did it only come "unto you"?

Paul here is putting the churches in the position of Grace. When we think that God's truth originates with us, then we can do no wrong, and we are in the position of self-sufficiency, and we can make the rules anyway we feel like making them. This is what Corinth obviously thought. Paul straightens them out and say's: "You are the origination of nothing!" The fact of the matter is that the word of God just came to you. You did not deserve it. You did not contribute to it. You did not design it, purpose it, choose it or contribute one iota to it. This is the position of Grace. That's the position every church, every pastor, every prophet, every tongues speaker, every gifted person, every woman and every man must stay in. The Word of God just came to us, when we least expected or deserved it. We must always listen to it, in all things, and all the time. By it God reaches down to us poor sinners, in order to lift us up to the realms of His infinite love. God keep us in the position of Grace. Amen.

**1Co 14:37-40** If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. Wherefore, brethren, covet to

prophecy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order.

These are the concluding words of Paul on this wonderful discussion of tongues and related subjects. It has been a wonderful journey, studying this Theological masterpiece concerning the pneumatic gifts. These words are pretty much self-explanatory. So my Comments will be brief.

**V. 37 - If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.**

This is really a continuation of the discussion about “did the word of God originate with you?” We would say it like this...”If you are so spiritual, and If you are a prophet, then you should recognize that my writings are the word of God, the commandments of the Lord!”

**V. 38 - But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.**

Paul began the entire discussion of chapters 12 thru 14 with these words...”Brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant!” Now after 81 verses discussing the gifts of the Holy Spirit, he concludes as he began with a statement about ignorance. Ignorance according to Paul is a sign of being lost. The lost are ignorant, blind and stupid when it comes to the things of God. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God...He cannot Know them” (1Cor.2: 14). So he remains ignorant. Paul says “Let him be ignorant”. You cannot change him. He is lost, and only God can impart knowledge to him. We were all like this before Christ saved us.

This is an important part of Paul’s concluding remarks concerning Divine giftedness. In essence he is pointing out that many of the ones in Corinth who think that the truth has originated with them, who think that they are “spiritual giants”...some even think they are “prophets“; these poor souls are really ignorant and lost. They are not saved at all. They evidence their lostness by their ignorance. That’s why they are always wanting to discuss things, question things, ignore things that don’t please them, argue, be disruptive and remain un-submissive. They want their own way. And they could care less that the church is God’s. They don’t care because they are ignorant. Paul say’s let them be. Don’t argue with them. Do what pleases God, and prove that you are not ignorant by your obedience. Endless discussions are futile. Obeying is much simpler and much more pleasing to God.

**V. 39 - Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophecy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.**

While people tend to clamor toward tongues because it is a showy and mysterious gift, Paul urges them not to. He wants us to covet the best gifts (12: 31) and prophecy fits this bill...it’s the best, because it is the best at edifying the church and speaking directly to peoples hearts. God speaks directly through

prophecy. But this being said, Paul is not trying to eliminate tongues, because it too has a special function in the church. So Paul says..."Forbid not to speak in tongues". I have been following things in the Southern Baptist Convention, and their International Missions Board issued an official policy in 2005 banning any missionary from speaking in tongues or using tongues as a prayer language. A committee was formed in 2006 to study the new policy banning speaking in tongues. They concluded: "the rapid spread of neo-pentecostalism and its pressure exacted on the new churches in various regions of the world warrants a concern for the clear Baptist identity of our missionary candidates." So with language that is somewhat softened, they are still saying that because they are afraid of neo-Pentecostalism, their missionary candidates must maintain a "clear Baptist identity". In other words, Baptist missionaries do not speak in tongues. While this language may not sound like "forbidding to speak in tongues" that is exactly what it is. It is a sad direct contradiction of Paul's command. Obviously Paul did not have a "clear Baptist identity" because he spoke in tongues more than anyone that he knew (v.18). What's wrong with this picture? God forgive us. When the name "Baptist" means that we will tell God what He can and cannot do, that's the time to flee the name.

#### **V. 40 - Let all things be done decently and in order.**

This is the blanket statement that covers everything that Paul has discussed in this key tongues chapter. We have went through the entire chapter exegetically and expositionally, and we have covered everything that God has said here. We have left nothing out. But if we have, then these words cover it. If there remains any questions that Paul has not answered, if there is any doubt about other charismatic behavior (laughter, barnyard sounds, slain in spirit etc.), this rule must apply. It is not decent and it is not in order if it does not agree with what Paul has plainly revealed. Questionable or doubtful practices must never contradict the order Paul has established for the assemblies. This is God's order and God's decency. It is supposed to pervade all the churches of Christ. They are supposed to obey. God help this to happen in churches everywhere. Amen.

### **4. Comments and Observations**

I am just a lowly servant of the Lord. Much of what I say however is prophetic. Not because it is profound, but because it clearly stands against the trends of our age, and calls men back to allegiance to Christ and His word. I can't solve all the problems facing the modern church. Nobody but God can do that. We are bombarded and barraged constantly with the worlds ideas, the worlds standards, the worlds likes and dislikes, the worlds messages, and the worlds mentality. These things should never overcome the church. God says that we are the over comer's, not the overcome (2Pet. 2: 19; 1Jn.2: 13; 1Jn.4: 4). But when we look at the current condition of God's people we have to say that it is

pathetic. Things have never been so dismal. Mega churches abound and true spirituality is in the toilet. Bible Colleges, Christian Universities, Bible Institutes and Seminaries saturate the society, but society is more godless and profligate than ever. There are new movements arising daily, supposedly great moves of God; and yet churches are closing their doors forever, false doctrines and cults are prospering and growing like wild fire. All we ever seem to be able to see are phony gifts, half way healings, people caught up with themselves, the trend to turn church into an entertainment venue like the Tonight Show or Dr Phil. What on earth are we doing to the church? It is God's church yes, but we are members of it. We are the ones allowing it to crumble into the downward spiral of antipathy and self destruction. I know that Jesus said "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". But he was talking about how she'll end up in the end, making it safely to the shores of heaven, where she will be forever triumphant. He was not saying that we should sit idly by while the rot and corruption of the world eats away at her soul. This world is a battlefield, and the church is supposed to lead the fray against all the forces of darkness, not welcome them into her pulpits and music programs.

Just today, I received an email from some kind of Charismatic preacher calling himself Dr. Nasir Siddiki. I don't even know who this man is, but as soon as I read a few sentences of his email I knew without a doubt that he was a false prophet, a wolf in sheep's clothing, a demon of darkness disguised in light. It is money grabbing, proselytizing, crib robbing, devils like him who have been welcomed with opened arms into our churches and our hearts. He was trying to recruit me to come to one of his so called "Wisdom Conferences". Here's the second sentence: "Dr. Siddiki will be teaching on Financial Empowerment and Healing. Learn how to appropriate your finances and miracles. Bring your friends and hear how to position yourself and apply God's Word to receive NOW!" Nothing about Christ. Nothing about the gospel. Nothing about anything that is true. Come and "learn how to appropriate your finances and miracles...hear how to position yourself and apply God's Word to receive NOW!" Church is now about appropriating your finances and the miracles that God is waiting to give you. God is a heavenly investment advisor. Actually He is the giver and you are the receiver NOW, IF YOU POSITION YOURSELF! This is all about how much money and how many miracles you will gain by giving generously to DR. Siddiki. This is the gospel of greed. It is not the message God's churches are supposed to be preaching. Whatever happened to "Blessed are the poor" (Matt. 5: 3, Lk. 6: 20)? Did Jesus tell them to position themselves to appropriate their finances from heavens bank vault? Christ preached the gospel to the poor, not a get rich quick scheme (Lk. 4: 18). This is an example of the blatant deception and lies that I'm talking about.

The church is far a field from what she is supposed to be. We are allowing far too many wolves to creep in and worldly practices to seep in. 39 years ago when I was in Bible College, I went to what was then a mega church, small however by today's standards. The church was known all over the country for having one of

the finest choirs in America. They were 60 or 70 people who sang and blended like a choir of angels. It brought shivers up your arm to hear them sing Christ exalting songs. Well, the church moved to newer and bigger facilities. They brought the choir with them, and it thrived for a few years, but the preacher wanted to reach more people. More people translates into bigger offerings which translates into bigger pay-checks. This is how it goes. I'm just telling it how I see it. At any rate, the churches started having rock band based worship music. Only a few years prior they had denounced rock music as a tool of the devil. A big screen replaced the cross in the front of the church, they even got rid of their pulpit, because under the new plan, dialog is what people need, not sermons. I went on their web site recently and was heart broken to find out how they just threw away one of Americas best choirs. They threw out their hymn book, which was actually compiled by their choir leader and which was one of the most popular hymnbooks and most Spirit used hymnals ever written. Gone! They burned their pulpit as a useless relic, and they probably buried the last survivors who remembered how it used to be when church was church, and not a theatrical carnival of gyrating hips and blaspheming lips, blasting music and blasted souls. Gone! Many good things of Eternal value...Gone! This trend is alarming to say the least.

I'm not saying that I disapprove of contemporary worship. I'm not saying that at all. It is wonderful and effective when it is Christ centered and mixed with genuine worship and solid Biblical preaching, and when the lyrics are not just vain and shallow repetitions but are theological messages along the lines of the great hymns of the faith...songs with a God centered and not man centered theology. I'm not opposed to genuine worship, no matter what form it takes. I am simply saying that God doesn't trade His glory for S&H Green Stamps! Cheapening God, cheapening church, redefining the gospel, taking away the centrality of the cross, removing the primacy of preaching, pretending to have the true gifts of the Spirit, and substituting the true things with a boogie beat on drums, and a video on a screen, is an empty and pitiable trade of truth for feelings. God is not glorified when the captain sells out the ship of faith for a treasure chest of the world's booty, or for five minutes of applause or fame.

What does any of these things have to do with the gift of tongues, or with any of the other gifts of the Spirit? They show the rapid and dangerous decline in true spirituality within the kingdom of God. We have come to accept frivolous and unscriptural use of the gifts in our churches. The gifts that we now accept are not gifts at all. They are productions of the flesh. They are being peddled off on unsuspecting people as though they were the genuine article. In most cases they are not, in most cases they are infiltrations and counterfeits. The genuine gifts operate the way God say's they will, and only for the purposes for which God has ordained them.

I realize that there is a learning curve here, where the people of God have to learn about the gifts, their functions, operations and regulation. That's Ok, but

it's like the great reformation. When the people of God come to grips with the truth, they have to reform their thinking and practices. Just as Martin Luther came out of an Apostate Roman Catholic church, so we need to come out of Apostate Charismatic and Pentecostal churches and organizations which have perverted the gospel, the gifts, the form of worship, and the plain commandments of God. I don't see any way but the way of total reformation.

There are many solid reformed churches (Reformed Baptist, Presbyterian, Independent, Bible Churches and others) who are seeing the need for the gifts as they are revealed in scripture. They are in a quandary however, because most of the teaching concerning the gifts has come down the pike tainted with the Pentecostal, Arminian and Humanistic Theology. But God is raising up some very spiritual and godly men who are leading the effort to restore the true gifts, and bring true revival and reformation to the American and World church scene. We should pray for these efforts, and seek this kind of genuine revival for our churches.

Then there are the staid and dyed in the wool Cessationist churches where the mere mention of a gift from the Holy Spirit brings terror and tension, fear and accusations of heresy. These people need to study what the Bible say's and need to learn how to rightly divide the word of truth. Many of them truly love the Bible, and love the Lord, but they have been trapped by the false Theological concepts of Dispensationalism which says that the gifts were for another time and another place, and that God gives them no more. They struggle hard to free themselves from this pernicious error, but they can't see the forest for the trees, because their minds have been conditioned to operate in a theological straight jacket, and not according to the Sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. Most of them will never learn what the Bible teaches about the wonderful gifts of the Holy Spirit, because they do not really believe and understand that the Holy Spirit is God and as God He can do whatever He wants to do.

They will say, that the Holy Spirit no longer does that sort of thing, because He no longer wants to do that sort of thing. We simply say to them...prove it! Prove that the Holy Spirit no longer wants to endow the church with the living and vital power of Jesus Christ (Acts 1: 8; Acts 6: 8; Lk. 10: 19)! Prove that the Holy Spirit no longer wants to guide the church into all truth (Jn. 16: 13; Jn. 14: 26; 1Cor. 2: 10-13; 1Jn. 2: 20, 27)! Prove that the Holy Spirit cannot act Sovereignly as God alone acts (Acts 5: 3-4; Lk. 1: 35; Jn. 3: 8)! Prove that the people of God are supposed to be shorn of God's indwelling power, and be incapable of doing what Christ said they would do (Mk. 16: 17-18)! Prove that the works of the Holy Spirit are really the works of the Devil (Matt. 12: 31-32; Mk 3: 28-30; Lk. 12: 10; Acts 7: 51)! They cannot prove any of these things. Nor can they prove that even one gift has vanished away, or that the church has come to perfection and no longer needs them, because she is fully mature (1Cor. 13: 8-13). This idea is not only unscriptural, it contradicts plain observable facts. To make "that which is perfect" (1Cor 13: 10) to mean the Bible, is to interject something, pulled right

out of thin air, and to insert it into a passage which has nothing to do with the Bible but is clearly referring to the maturity of the church. Isogesis cannot prove anything except the stupidity of the person who is using it.

So then there are basically two prevalent views in the church. The view of the cessationist, who relegates the Holy Spirit to a distant time and a distant church, long in the past, and the Charismatic Pentecostal's who pretty much teach that anything goes in the Spirit. It's all about the experience. It's all about the excitement and raw energy. It's about getting a spiritual rush and the drug free high that you get when you are acting in the gifts. Every Christian can speak in tongues if they want to, and every true Christian wants to. If you don't speak in tongues you're not a true Christian. Neither of these positions are true. Neither of these positions glorify God or emulate Christ.

But there is a third option that many probably have never heard of or considered, and that is the option of sound, orthodox, Bible-believing churches, where the glory of God comes before the glorification of the flesh, and where God is acknowledged as Sovereign, and where the dispensing and administration of the miraculous gifts is under His control. They are neither afraid of the Holy Spirit, nor afraid of His power. They want both Him and it. They seek His face, and say, Lord if it be Thy will manifest Thy presence among us. Come Holy Spirit. Come. We want you in our services. We want your presence and power more than anything, because it is the presence of Christ the Lord. This group shuns anything superficial and false, because they know that God does not operate like that. But at the same time they are fully open to the filling of the Holy Spirit, to His anointing and living presence among them. They believe in the miracles that God can and does do, and they seek them for those who need them, and minister them in Spirit and in truth. To this third group, true worship comes only with the presence of God. True worship brings true revival, and true revival is God manifest among His people. They become happy people, holy people, loving people, ministering people, people who are willing to die for Christ, a miraculous people, a simple people, a Spirit minded people, a Spirit controlled people, a people for whom there is no earthly explanation but God with them and in them. This is what we should all desire... genuine New Testament Christianity.

There is no cheap substitute for New Testament Christianity, and there never will be. Either we have the real thing, or we are deluded. Don't settle for second best, when you can have the very best. I'm not talking about spiritual superiority here. Nobody is better than someone else. But I am talking about spiritual reality...not superiority but reality. Real presence of God. Real Gifts from God operating in real churches, with real and lasting benefits, for the real purpose of glorifying God. Manifestations of His magnificence. Edifying, Convicting, Converting, Healing, turning the world upside down, humbling men and exalting only Christ. This is what I desire. This is what I seek. If you bring me anything less I will turn you away and tell you to feed on your own chaff. The



dog returns to his own vomit. As for the King's Children, they have far better food. Even the dogs of faith, which sit beneath the Masters table, eating holy crumbs, eat better than anything this world system can dish up. Anything that smacks of worldliness and humanism, needs to be carried back to the brothels, bistro's, bars and drug parlors, where it belongs, and never, never be carried into the church of the living God.

We need reformation. We desperately need it in our wicked, media saturated and polluted age. There is so much wrong with this world that it is depressing, but to see it's ideals, it's tastes, it's technologies, it's sensualism, it's psychology, it's theology, creep into God's churches, pretending to be the Holy Spirit; this is utterly and absolutely hideous. It is an atrocity worse than anything Hitler ever perpetrated, this is the wholesale massacre of the very Church of Jesus Christ, His Bride! Don't fall for the phony and fake. Don't be deceived by the glitz and the glamour, the showmanship and the sparkle of the mega churches with their Hollywood pastors, or the TV Evangelists who falsely claim to be reaching the world for Christ, or the feel good theology which emphasizes only what you can get from God, and not what God demands. Beware my friends of the wolves, false prophets, seducers, charlatans and scammers that will do, say or teach anything for the sake of a buck.

Don't follow a crowd to destruction, no matter how big it may be, nor who may tell you.. look, here is Christ...or look, there is Christ. He is not there. He has told us that. These are signs of the end of the ages, and the impending end of the world. These are avenues to superficiality, foam on the surf...all churned up and glistening, but soon to disappear. Nothing lasting comes from a vapor. Nothing solid is built out of shifting sand. It was the foolish pigs in the nursery rhyme who built their houses out of sticks and hay. It is the foolish church that lets the devil in through the music loft, or the healing room, or through false signs, or spurious gifts, or through false prophets, or false doctrines, through a video screen, or through any other entrance. We must not be blind leaders of the blind, and both of us fall down into the ditch. At least one of us must see. I'm telling you without a doubt, that what you have read is the eye-opening truth. You are no longer in darkness if you have absorbed what the Lord has spoken in His word. My eyes are opened. And I intend to keep them that way, by the grace of God.

## **5. Suggestions for the Understanding, Development and Use of These Gifts**

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are gifts that should be sought and encouraged in the churches of Jesus Christ, because they are uniquely designed to bring glory to Him as nothing else can do. In church we read the Bible, we Sing and hear music, We listen to a sermon, we fellowship with each other, we pray and then we leave. All of this is supposed to have an impact on our lives, change us, and

go with us till we gather again in another week. But how much good does it really do? How much of this is lasting and treasured? How many people does this really touch? How many people does this really change? And does this bring the maximum glory to God? Or are there more ways to bring glory to Him in our worship?

Every church can improve, just the same as every individual in it. Stagnation chokes the life out of the fish. We require rivers of living waters. And that is exactly the kind of crystal clear streams the Lord has given to His church. There is much said about the river of life in the Bible. It flows right through our churches, when our churches are honoring Christ and pleasing God. So the best way to develop and experience the full blessings of the gifts, is for everyone to be Christ centered, and God oriented to the point of extreme. I heard someone say of godly individual one time: He's so heavenly minded that he is of no earthly good. This is absolute rubbish. No one was ever more heavenly minded than our Lord, and because of it, He was the only thing that was actually of any good at all in the earth! We are commanded to have the mind of Christ. So much for the idea that being heavenly minded is no earthly good. That idea is Satan inspired trash, not Biblical truth, which conforms us to the image of Christ.

### **1. The gifts are given not taught.**

Many people have the feeling that they can teach others how to speak in tongues, or how to interpret tongues, or how to become a prophet, or other things concerning the Divine miraculous gifts. The gifts are not taught. They are given by the sovereign administration of the Holy Spirit. So trying to teach them is trying to usurp the office and prerogatives of the Holy Spirit. They cannot be taught, only received.

### **2. The gifts are given for God's glory.**

While you may experience many blessings, feelings, emotional joys and edification through the gifts, this is not their primary purpose, nor should it be your primary goal. If God has enriched you with the gift of tongues, or interpretation of tongues, it is so that these gifts might be used to magnify Him and not you. Speaking to God in tongues, is a form of worship, in fact it is the highest and purest form known to man. In it, the worshipper being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 4), speaks directly to God (1Cor.14: 2), utters mysteries in the Spirit (1Cor. 14: 2), speaks the wonderful works of God (Acts 2: 11) as the Spirit gives utterance (Acts 2; 4). No other act of worship is so powerfully controlled by the Holy Spirit. The goal of every gift is to glorify God by magnifying Christ.

### **3. Tongues is Spirit Controlled Speech.**

The point to be emphasized is, for tongues to be spiritual and glorifying to the

Lord, they must be Spirit controlled and not man controlled. By this we eliminate any possibility of man scheduling the times when they will occur or when they will not occur. A pastor friend of mind told his parishioners, you can speak in tongues in the non-traditional contemporary services, but not in the traditional worship services of the church. What is that all about? In other words man regulates when the Holy Spirit can use the gift of tongues? I don't think so. To make Holy Spirit Free Zones in our churches is to mock the Sovereignty of God.

#### **4. Spirit speech is always Biblically compliant.**

By this we indicate that God knows how to control the gifts for full compliance with His word. The Holy Spirit does not break the worship rules laid down for church order and edification. He wrote the Bible, and when the genuine gifts of the Holy Spirit are functioning in individuals, and in church, they always function according to Gods rules of decency and order, as laid down in 1Cor. 14. God does not break His own rules, or lead people to break His rules. Any leadings contrary to the rules are leadings which are not of God, but come from some other source.

#### **5. Biblically compliant speech is always edifying.**

This is why the exercise of tongues in the worship service requires an interpretation. The interpretation extracts meaning which is conveyed in a language that is understood by everyone. Interpretation makes tongues edifying, and therefore compliant.

#### **6. All forms of Spirit speech should be welcomed in every church, all the time.**

This also includes welcoming it at any time according to the direction of the Holy Spirit. This does not mean that an outburst of tongues should occur as an interruption to the pastors sermon, or while a prayer is being offered, or during a wedding ceremony or funeral. The Holy Spirit is not rude or inconsiderate. He does not act like that. By the same token, every person in every church should acknowledge and receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit as they properly manifest themselves within the church. It also means that we cannot exclude the Holy Spirit from certain worship services or limit Him to others. He must have free reign and absolute Lordship.

#### **7. An atmosphere of worship should be cultivated in which the Holy Spirit has time to work.**

The disciples tarried in an upper room waiting for the presence of God (Acts 1: 13-14). An attitude of prayerful waiting for God to bless, and for God to move is a good thing. Too often our church services are rushed and contrived affairs,

that leave little time for the Holy Spirit to move in peoples hearts. We must learn to wait upon the Lord. The choice, progression and speed of music and prayers must not be hurried, but must be respectful and worshipful. Expectation for God to work should be encouraged and sought. Church is a time for God to speak to us and change our lives. We should be expecting His presence every time we worship. Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them (Matt. 18: 20). This is a statement of fact, not just a bare hope that we have. He is in our midst when we gather together in His name. We don't have to pray for this, because He said that's what He automatically does. If Jesus is in our services, it is because He wants to do something. He's not there just to give us a happy feeling, He is there to communicate His life giving presence, and to tell us what we should be doing with our lives. He is there to touch us with His truth and send us forth as lights into the darkness of this world.

## **8. Quenching, Grieving and Resisting the Holy Spirit are unacceptable behaviors for Christians, Churches, Pastors, Deacons, Teachers, Missionaries, Church Boards, Committees, Kitchen staff, Musicians, Worship Assistants, and even Janitors in the Kingdom of God.**

**1Th 5:19** Quench not the Spirit.

**Eph 4:30** And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

**Act 7:51** Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye.

## **9. Pastors are to teach and encourage people to seek and properly use the gifts of the Spirit.**

**Rom 12:6-8** Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, *let us wait on our* ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

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

**Eph 4:11-12** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

**1Pe 5:1-3** The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

## **10. Correct understanding of the doctrine of Holy Spirit gifts should be disseminated throughout each local church, using the Bible as the textbook and not just personal feelings.**

Appropriate Bible lessons and sermons should be prepared and presented by the pastors of the church to all the people. Never should the gifts be presented for just some of the people in the church. The gifts are for the entire body, and not just certain sections of the body. And everyone in the church needs to understand this. Discussion groups concerning the gifts should always be led by pastors, and not just left to lay people. These gifts are great sources of controversy, divisiveness and dissension, and pastoral oversight is required in order to ensure that sheep are not led astray into false use of their gifts. Never should the gifts be presented as just experience without doctrine. The gifts can be seductive to the emotions, and the emotions can easily get out of control when discussing and using the gifts. Spiritual leadership and guidance is critical. It is pastoral responsibility that must be emphasized here. What you don't want is Charismatic or Pentecostal subgroups within the church. The gifts need to be presented Biblically and used according to God's directives. The Costal's and Matic's do not do this. This is a warning. If you have a Bible based church, then keep it Bible based, and Christ honoring by exercising pastoral leadership and guidance, and by training your entire flock in the way that they should go regarding God's gifts.

## **11. When Spirit manifestations occur in church appropriate commentary should be offered by the pastor.**

Not everyone present will understand what is happening. Let's say that two men have spoken in tongues, and an interpretation is given. Some people present might be scared, offended, confused or disconcerted by the display. There is nothing that says that the pastor of the church cannot offer an explanation or short comment about what just happened. The purpose of his comment would be to alleviate fears, show the Bible basis for what happened, re-emphasize an important element of the interpretation, or simply to aid in the smooth transition to another portion of the worship service. Pastoral validation, while not required, does set the minds of the sheep at ease, and helps to guide them into the exploration of their own gifts.

## **12. Pastors should always interpret if no one else exercises the**

## **gift of interpretation.**

The pastoral commentary, mentioned in point 11, is actually an interpretation of the tongues event, and serves the same purpose as if any other interpreter were interpreting. All pastors have the gift of interpretation, even if they don't know it. It falls under the requirement that they be "apt to teach" (1Tim 3: 2), which means "being capable of explaining the truth to others". All pastors are required to have this capability. Explaining the truth is the main pastoral function in the church. Truth is always spoken when tongues are uttered in the worship of God. And that truth requires explaining also. Explaining this truth to others is the gift of Interpretation. Pastors have this gift, because it is one of their qualifications for ministry. Their presence in the service means that at least one interpreter is always present. So there is really never an excuse for not having an interpretation given.

Unfortunately many pastors have not yet realized that God has given them the gift of interpretation as part of their qualification for the ministry. This is not taught in Seminary. The gifts cannot be taught. Instead of standing around waiting endlessly for someone in the congregation to interpret the tongues, he needs to do what he has been called to do, and explain the truth that has been uttered. If he is apt to teach, then he will teach whenever required. God gives the words necessary to extract the meaning when the pastor acts in faith. Like everyone else in the church, the pastor needs to recognize and use his Holy Spirit supplied gifts by faith. All the gifts operate by faith. He will never understand his ability to interpret if he does not step out by faith and do it. He simply needs to exercise the gift that God has given him, and when he does, there will rarely ever be a service where an interpreter is not present, because the pastor is usually present in all the regular services of the church. The pastor is the main interpreter in any church. He is also the main prophet in the local church.<sup>10</sup>

### **13. Soft prayers in tongues, which are prayed by individuals, male or female, and are not intended to be heard by the whole church, but are just offered up in whispered prayer, do not require interpretation, and are perfectly acceptable.**

Speaking to yourself and to God is acceptable and requires no interpretation

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<sup>10</sup> A careful study of 1Cor. 14: 29, 32 and 1Thess. 5: 19-21 seems to clearly indicate this. While I did not discuss this aspect during the exposition of 1Cor. 14, it appears that when it talks about one judging the others, and the spirit of the prophets being subject to other prophets, that these things have reference to the likelihood that Paul had in mind certain prophets being over the other ones in the church. If this is indeed the case, as I think it is, then the pastors of local churches have authority over the other prophets in the congregation. Spiritual authority in the local church is hierarchical to a large extent. *"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake" (1Thess. 5: 12-13).*

(1Cor. 14: 28; 1Cor. 14: 2, 4). I say, male or female, because females also have the gift of tongues. They are following the rule for silence when they use their gift in this manner, because they are not addressing the whole church. They are speaking to God and to themselves in their hearts. Any male or female can pray to God, at any time. The rule of silence for women is only broken when it goes beyond speaking softly to God, and moves into vocalizations intended to be loud and heard by the whole church, or by a lot of people. Paul has quiet, barely audible praying in mind in verse 28 when there is no interpreter. If an interpreter is present, the rule is that tongues loud enough to be interpreted, are spoken by men and never by women.

#### **14. How should Paul's requirement for the silence of women be handled by the pastors of churches trying to implement the Biblical pattern for the usage of the gifts?**

The pastor cannot be held responsible for the actions of the people in the church. Nor is he to Lord his authority over God's people. Pastors are not Popes in the church, nor are they military commanders. They are Spirit leaders, who must not only give account for what they teach, but who must teach and lead under the full control of the Holy Spirit. They should exhibit the fruits of the Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit which they have received. They are expected to know, teach and respect the priesthood of every believer, and this includes all women as well as men. Gentleness, kindness, meekness, and patience are all fruits of the spirit that must be exercised when implementing God's program for church order and the regulation of gifts. God is the one with the Iron hand, not us. The priesthood of the women of the church is just as vital and important as the priesthood of the men. This means, that they answer directly to God, not to the pastor or the other members of the church. But it also means that if they are true believer priests, they will listen attentively for the voice of God in all things. They will honor God in their decisions as God teaches them and convicts them. They will recognize God's will in these matters, and will come to the right decisions and practice the truth as they are taught by the Holy Spirit according to God's Word. In addition to 1Cor.14, 1Tim.2: 11-15 also contains commands respecting the silence of women in church. I'm not trying to establish Paul's doctrine from only one passage, although one would be sufficient, especially one as crystal clear as 1Cor. 14. The same truths are annunciated and confirmed in 1Tmothy as well. Jesus said "My sheep hear my voice" and this includes the female sheep as well as the male. Jesus ought to know who will hear Him, and who will not. All the sheep hear His voice.

So pastors, must counsel the women to obey the voice of Christ that they hear in His word. He is their Savior and Lord as much as of the men sitting next to them on the pews. If the truth of God is not compromised by the pastors, but is stated clearly, forcefully and Biblically, so that everyone understands it, it can be expected that everyone in the church will come to the consensus of the Biblical standards for church conduct. The word will never return to God void, but will

always achieve it's true purpose, and accomplish His pleasure not men's (Isa. 55: 11). But it all requires prayer, love, Spirit controlled leadership, heart searching and Spirit controlled submission to God's wishes and word. Nobody says that any of this will be easy. We may need to wait prayerfully for our women to catch up with what God is saying, and what His perfect will is for them and their church. Some might embrace God's order of worship instantaneously, and realize that whatever God wants is always best for us. But some, who are used to speaking in tongues when they feel like the Spirit is leading them, may not easily come to the truths of God's sacred order of the sexes in church. This may all be new to them, and they may need to spend much time in prayer and study, looking up the verses concerning the role of women in church. And they must seek direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, who always and only leads people into the truth. They must be urged not to trust their own feelings, preconceptions, or past experiences. God wants to lead all of his children more and more into the full light of truth, and away from problem areas in their lives. This requires receptivity and submission to the Word. Faith will always produce the right results.

Some women may take longer to come around, because women's rights and equality has been perverted in our day, and Christian men and women have bought into the secular views on this subject. Womanhood is elevated and spiritually defined in the Bible. Christian women do not define themselves by taking off their bra's, taking over men's jobs, becoming pastors of churches, joining the army to fight wars, leaving the role of motherhood to pursue careers, becoming corporate executives, or opening their mouths in church. These things may define worldly women, but they should never define godly women. These are worldly goals and ambitions, not Christian ones. This is secular behavior not spiritual behavior. The Bible defines Christian womanhood, not society. The Biblical role for women is much more elevated, because it is much more spiritual than any worldly or societal conceptions. Eve was the mother of all living (Gen. 3: 20). Even our Lord derived his physical existence by passing through the womb of a godly Christian mother. The world is constantly putting down this important spiritual aspects of womanhood. But the Bible clearly defines womanhood partially in terms of motherhood. Taking motherhood out of womanhood leaves a void. This is not to say that all women will be mothers. That is not true. It is saying that the female concept of motherhood is indelibly stamped into the fabric of true womanhood. Mothers who go off to fight wars or leave their children behind for the pursuit of money and things, are acting contrary to part of their own spiritual nature. They were created to be mothers. Now I understand that not all women are mothers, but they all have the female components, which were ordained by God to elevate them to the highest spiritual standards. Not the worlds standards and definitions but God's.

Next they were created to be wives (Gen. 2: 18, 20-24; 3: 20). This relationship is an exclusive one, and it is the only relationship on earth capable of displaying Christ's love (Eph. 5: 22-33; Col. 3: 17-19). Marriage is the first institution



created by God, and it is a permanent institution, regardless of what the world says. Today women are used as sex objects, and marriage is viewed as some kind of archaic medieval leftover, or irrelevant social contract to be sanctified by legal prenuptial agreements, and having nothing to do with God. Womanhood is degraded, because it no longer follows God's definitions. The marriage relationship is so twisted and perverted in our day, that same sex marriages are common, as are couples who simply shack up with no commitment to each other or to God. Listen, marriage is God's principle Divine Institution on earth... Number One! Chief! Primary! It precedes, and is more important than the church, because it was the first church! It is still the only church that some children will ever know. Marriage also precedes government, industry, economics, science, business, the arts, education, medicine, or any other institution. God commands women to submit to and reverence their husbands (1Cor. 11: 3; Eph. 5: 22-24; Col. 3: 18; 1Pet. 3: 1; 1Pet. 3: 5-6). When God tells women to submit themselves to their own husbands, it is always "as unto the Lord" (Eph. 5: 22). Submission to the husband is always an act of worship toward God, because it is rendered "as unto the Lord". This is an act of worship. Not worship of the man, but worship of the Lord! Women who do not willingly obey these concepts are missing part of their true definition in life. They may also be missing an exclusively female method of worship. No man can render "unto the Lord" this kind of female only worship. This female only worship of God, is a high and sanctified honor, which only the Bible can bestow upon womanhood. This is not degrading and archaic, it is elevating and fulfilling for any woman who truly loves God and seeks his face.

This has many practical applications. But one of them is mentioned by Paul in the chapter on tongues which we have studied already. The reason why the women are to keep silence in the presence of the men in the church, is to show respect for their own husbands. Look at what God says... "let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (1Cor. 14: 35). There is no shame in a woman's speech. In fact, many women speak better, and are more qualified to speak than men. Many women have more and better things to say than men. Many women are more intelligent than men, have bigger vocabularies, and are more eloquent than men. The shame that is mentioned here is not in the speaking. Paul never wanted us to think that the shame was in the speech itself. Nor is the shame in being a woman. This has nothing to do with feminism. To make it mean anything like that, is a complete misrepresentation of Paul's teachings here. The shame is in what the speech does. The "shame" is linked to the words "let them ask their husbands at home". What Paul is saying here is that for a bossy woman, or a masculinized woman, or a disrespectful woman, or a disobedient woman, or a modern day liberated woman, or even a well-meaning Christian woman; to stand up in church and express her opinions or speak in tongues; she is bringing shame on her husband. She is embarrassing him, because he is supposed to be her head (Eph. 5: 23). She is publicly humiliating him, because she is supposed to receive all her honor directly from him (1Pet. 3: 7) and only from him, not from any of the

other men in the church. It is not degrading for women to obey God and respect their own husbands. “She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life (Prov. 31: 12). This is an honor, which also honors the men in the church, but especially her own husband. Anything less is disrespectful to everybody, but especially to God.

Now if a woman does not have her own husband at home to honor in this manner, that does not give her the right to disrespect the other men in the church (1Tim. 2: 11-12). In the absence of a husband, she is to seek understanding from the older women, who have ministries that function as tutors or mentors of other women (Titus 2: 3-4). Paul says that they are co laborers in the gospel (Phil. 4: 3). That is because they have gospel oriented ministries directed toward other women and not toward men. This verse does not give women the authority to be church pastors, to direct their teachings to or usurp the authority of men in the church, or to do any other thing that would be contrary to the Divine order of the sexes.

### **15. How can the gifts be developed in a local church if they are Sovereignly given by the Holy Spirit?**

1). They can be sought by all of the people. Everyone should be challenged to discover their gift or gifts. Every Christian has at least one gift... 1Cor. 7: 7. They can be prayed for (Example: praying for the gift of interpretation 1Cor. 4: 13 cf Mk. 11: 24; Jn. 14: 13-14; Acts 1: 14).

2). Every Christian should explore the full catalogue of gifts listed in the following portions of Scripture... Rom. 6: 23; Rom. 12:6-8; 1Cor. 12:4-11, 28-30; Eph. 4:7-12.

3). Openness about the gifts should be encouraged. People should never feel ashamed or afraid to use their gifts, or to discuss their options with the pastors or other spiritual people in the church. Maybe someone is not using their gift because they are not quite sure how to interject it into the service. Should a person with a word of wisdom, or a prophecy just stand up and say what God wants them to say? And when is the appropriate time? And what should be the necessary introduction? A guy jumping up to give a prophecy, opening his voice in a loud tone and saying “Thus saith the Lord” is not only intimidating, but it is most likely not of the Lord. The Lord does not speak Elizabethan English. He has complete mastery over our modern day vernacular, dialects and accents. And if the Lord speaks to us it will be in our perfect everyday language. The interpretation of tongues should also be in the common tongue of the people, not in a “Thus saith the Lord“. We do not speak like King James. Nor does God speak like that. So discussions need to be frank, honest and open about all aspects of the gifts.

4). Bible Studies, Lessons and Sermons need to be presented concerning the

gifts. Failure to instruct about the gifts, especially from the pulpit, is an open door for false doctrine and abuse.

5). Sometimes gifts are bestowed in conjunction with prophecy and the laying on of hands. This might seem vague or mysterious to us, but there is clear mention of this method of the divine impartation of gifts. Timothy, either at his ordination, or at his consecration as temporary overseer or bishop over Ephesus, received a spiritual gift "by prophecy," i.e. by the Spirit speaking through the prophets, accompanied "WITH the laying on of the hands of the presbytery"<sup>11</sup>(Acts 13:1-3; 1Tim. 1:18; 1Tim. 4:14-15; 2Tim. 1: 6). When certain gifts are missing but needed in the church, the prophets and elders should pray about exercising this unique Biblical option (Rom. 1: 11), so that nothing will be lacking in the assembly. Prophecy, accompanied by the laying on of hands by the elders, imparts divine gifts, because it is done in perfect compliance with the will and word of the Holy Spirit. This needs to be done more often, as it is clearly one of the scriptural methods for developing the gifts in the churches. More needs to be studied and taught about this important Spirit leadership option. This is undoubtedly part of the keys of the kingdom.<sup>12</sup> It is clear that when prophecy and laying on of hands occur together gifts of the Holy Spirit are Sovereignly bestowed.

6). It is more important to cultivate a Biblical culture in the church than to promote personal experiences or personal agendas. This is very important. Yes, every Christian has gifts. Yes, these gifts should be used for the edification of the body. Yes, the pastors should encourage them and teach about them. Yes, people will have some powerful personal experiences because of them. But experiences are never to be put on a pedestal or sought after as the be-all and end-all. Experiences are consequential and incidental. But they are never primary. The Bible is primary. Christ is primary. The Holy Spirit directs us to God's Word and God's Son, exclusively (Jn. 14: 26; Jn. 16: 13-14; Eph. 1: 17). Jesus has the prominence in church and nothing else.

7). Care must be taken to recognize and stop fleshly behavior relative to the gifts. Anything that draws attention to the giftee and not to the gifter is not of God. The Holy Spirit points us to Christ exclusively (Jn. 15: 26; Jn. 16: 14; Zech. 12: 10), and to God's word exclusively (Jn. 16: 13). Christ is both the Way and the Truth (Jn. 14:6) and the Holy Spirit is the Guide who shows the way to the Truth (Jn. 16:14). The gifts never distract us from Christ or His Word. The gifts never draw attention to the person using them. Humility and reverence must prevail in their use. Pastors who see excessive ostentation, unnecessary drama, uncalled for movements, suggestive sensuality, or other unscriptural

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<sup>11</sup> Note: the presbytery are the elders or pastors in the church.

<sup>12</sup> Similar references occur where it is simply called giving the Holy Spirit, but these refer to certain gifts of the Spirit or manifestations of the Spirit, and to the actual transference of the Holy Spirit Himself. So these passages probably apply to this topic. (See. Acts 8: 15-19; Acts 19: 6; Gal. 3: 5)

behaviors surrounding the gifts (like being slain in the Spirit), should dissuade the people who do such things, and teach them the correct practices, which are the only practices acceptable in church. Many people will come from churches with unscriptural practices, and if they hear tongues, they may automatically assume that anything goes, like it does in some of the Costal & Matic churches, and they may do something in the flesh, and not in the Spirit. The pastor should, gently and scripturally “reprove, rebuke and exhort” (2Tim 4: 2). And he should simply state that: “We believe and use the gifts here, but not in that manner. We stick to what the Bible teaches. If I can help you or explain what the acceptable behavior is, I will most gladly try to show you from the Bible how we use the gifts in this church.” This sort of posture is critical, not because it tries to limit the Holy Spirit, (we must never do that); it is critical because it is trying to eliminate false and distractive manifestations. “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God” (1Jn. 4: 1). “They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17: 11). “I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil” (Rom. 16: 19). “Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge” (1Cor. 14: 29). “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1Thess. 5: 21).

8). Everyone must realize that God leads us according to where He wants us to be, and not according to where we have been. He is leading churches all over the world into a genuine revival of signs and wonders on a Biblical scale, and I for one will gladly admit that we have not gone this way before. It is new territory for me, as I am sure it might be for some of you. But we must go wherever God wants us to go, and we must speak all the counsel of God into our churches and our world. These are the last days, and perilous times have come, but so have times of refreshing from the presence of Lord. This is a latter day movement of the Holy Spirit, and it is unparalleled by anything else in history. It is not just signs and wonders for the sake of miracles, but it is a breath from the Almighty, accompanied by a genuine revival of doctrine and theological depth and breadth. The doctrines of grace are on the upsurge everywhere, and people want to know more of Christ, and are sick and tired of superficial spirituality. This is a movement back to the Reformed faith, and a movement back to our theological moorings and the roots of truth. This is not just people running around wildly speaking in tongues in an emotional frenzy. One shallow Charismatic preacher called tongues A SPIRITUAL ORGASM! That is not what tongues are. That is not what tongues ever should be. That idea is disgusting. This is about tongues speakers falling under the deep conviction from God that everything must glorify Him, and everything must magnify His name. People are being humbled, and the Lord is being exalted, wherever the true gifts are being manifested.

9). The best way to nurture and develop the gifts is to nurture and develop Christians. Jesus did not tell us to make converts. He told us to make disciples (Matt. 28: 19)...teaching people to observe all things whatsoever God has commanded...teaching them to be followers of Christ. Building depth among the people of God is essential for the promotion and development of the gifts. Without true disciples, any gifts that are exhibited will be spurious and useless.

But with discipleship comes Christ likeness, humility, obedience, the fruit of the Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, and deep and profound worship of The Most Holy. Let us strive to build men and women of God, not just gifts or excitements.

## **6. Concluding Remarks**

The study which you have just completed has been a thorough examination of the doctrine of tongues and interpretation of tongues. Everything has been presented from a Biblical theological perspective. It is doubtful whether you can get everything that has been revealed in just one reading. Perhaps you will need to revisit these pages again and again.

Perhaps you are a pastor, and God has spoken to you about your failure to discover and promote the gifts properly, or about the way that you have allowed the gifts to be cheapened or prostituted. Whatever the case. You are a spiritual leader. Take up the cause of God And truth. Repent of any past errors and sins regarding these things. Then seek for God to use you mightily in these last day outpourings and manifestations of the Divine Presence.

Perhaps you are a godly woman, and God has spoken to you about the use of your gifts for God's glory, and you have come to understand that there are things which you must change. This is a good thing, and you, like all of us, must look to the future and not the past. Where does God want to lead you? And what does God want you to do from henceforth? Your past experiences should not keep you from enjoying God's blessings that He has for you now and in the future. We cannot live on last weeks dinner. You need to move into God's future.

Perhaps you are a man in the church, who has sat by and done little or nothing, forcing the women of the church to do what you should be doing. Spiritual sloth in the men is indefensible. You should be ashamed of yourself, and you too should repent, rebound and get moving into the future. If you have neglected the gifts and the callings of God in your life, you have sinned. Seek what God wants you to do, and then do it. Jump on the chariots of fire that God is sending through His churches, and get revived and start using your gifts. Only this way can you bring glory to the Savior, and lead by example.

We have covered a lot of ground, and we have all been confronted, challenged, sometimes frightened, perplexed and stimulated, but always brought into the presence of the Biblical teachings, realities, doctrines and laws. We must confront any issues we have, and settle them based squarely upon what the Bible says. The Spirit does not lead contrary to the Word. Nor does the Word teach contrary to the Spirit. The word and the Spirit always go together. So that we worship in Spirit and in Truth. But the Word without the Spirit is just an empty, lifeless husk. The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. In wrapping all of this up, remember that this is God's method and God's way. Spirit and Truth.

Spirit and Word. Spirit and Life. We need both. Indeed we need nothing else. So may God lead all of us into this fullness, and this blessed marriage of the Spirit and the Truth, and may he give us all the courage to do what's right, because it is the right thing to do. Amen.