

## SPEAKING IN TONGUES

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### I. TOKEN OF GROUP ACCEPTANCE AND DIVINE APPROVAL

THE OUTBREAK within mainline Protestantism of "speaking in tongues,"<sup>1</sup> or glossolalia, and other phenomena usually associated with those churches whose heritage may be traced to the Pentecostal movement, has begun to attract widespread attention and to generate strong feelings—positive and negative. Although there are no accurate figures as to the size of the recent outbreak, it has gained enough impetus to be the subject of official ecclesiastical concern.<sup>2</sup> The movement appears to be particularly strong among certain churches of the Far and Mid-West, and to be gaining in strength on the East Coast. Clergy and laity of the liturgical churches, Lutherans and Episcopalians, appear to be most heavily affected by the movement. Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Reformed churchmen have also received the "baptism of the Spirit" and spoken in tongues.

It is the intention of this article to throw some light on the nature and function of

<sup>1</sup> The term "speaking *with* tongues" has also been often used to refer to the same phenomenon. This term may be traced to the King James Version, which translates "with tongues" (plural) and "in a tongue" (singular). The Revised Standard Version uses "in" for both singular and plural references, and we are following that usage.

The original Greek had a prepositionless dative case, and it is not clear whether nuances suggested by "with" or "in" better represent biblical meaning.

<sup>2</sup> See "On 'Speaking With Tongues'" *Pastoral Psychology*, November, 1963, p. 53.

the small glossolalic groups located in mainline churches and educational institutions, which are the heart of what has been called the neo-Pentecostal movement. A second part will attempt to probe the labyrinth of meaning this strange speech has for the individual person.

#### *What Is Glossolalia?*

Glossolalia may be defined as speech, which, though unintelligible both to the speaker and to most hearers, is purported to be understandable by those who have the gift of interpreting such speech. Although glossolalia has been a part of many religions, and of non-religious activity such as mediumship, it is best known to Christians in its New Testament manifestations, to which we shall briefly turn.<sup>3</sup>

There are two principal clusters of references to glossolalia in the New Testament. The first occurs in the *Book of the Acts*, where it is one of the accompaniments of the Holy Spirit coming at Pentecost. It also accompanied subsequent "descents" of the Spirit at Caesaria, Samaria, and at Ephesus. No mention is made of interpretation in these instances; and in the Pentecost experience, at least, the language was said to be intelligible to Jews of the Diaspora. Whatever else may be the meaning of glossolalia at Pentecost, it

<sup>3</sup> For a fuller treatment of the Biblical material, see Section V of the "Preliminary Report of the Study Commission on 'Glossolalia,'" Division of Pastoral Services, Diocese of California.

appears that the author intended it to have the symbolic meaning of the "unbabbling of tongues," signifying the end of the era of confusion and ignorance. It also apparently came to have the meaning of the "sign" of the individual's reception of the Holy Spirit, though evidence from *Acts* indicates that it was not universally regarded as a necessary sign.

The second principal cluster of references to glossolalia is found in *I Corinthians* 12-14, where Paul undertakes a lengthy and involved discussion of the relative merits of various spiritual gifts. In Chapter 14, he focuses on speaking in tongues, which, while clearly regarded as a gift of the Spirit, is treated with what we would today call a markedly ambivalent attitude. We shall not attempt to treat Paul's argument in detail. Suffice it to say that he recognized both public and private glossolalia as legitimate, but the former was to occur only three times in succession without interpretation. Further, he clearly subordinated glossolalia to the gift of prophecy—the intelligible communication of messages from God. In 14:20 there is a hint that he regarded glossolalia as childish, and in the passage that follows one almost senses, though it is not clearly stated, that Paul would really like to have told turbulent Corinthians to cut it out altogether, but checked himself because of their infirmity.

One question which is of interest is whether the phenomenon in *Acts* and that in *I Cor.* are the same. In the *Acts* accounts, the implication that the speech was an "unknown" or foreign tongue is indicated by its having been understood by multilingual Jews who required no "interpretation." Yet Paul

warns against glossolalia without interpretation in *I Cor.*, as though it would be wholly unintelligible without this. This has led some responsible scholars to assert that two phenomena are involved. However, others hold that the evidence points more in the direction of there being only one.

Turning now to the manifestations of glossolalia today, we find that the three kinds of glossolalic experience found in the Bible are also the three types identified by the "neo-Pentecostals." These are the sign-tongue, given at the "baptism of the Holy Spirit," the tongue spoken in a meeting, which is usually interpreted by someone else who is present, and the tongue spoken in private devotions.<sup>4</sup> Understood from within the movement, these are all forms of praise to God, though edification of the group may come from interpretation, which is usually a commonplace scriptural injunction.

In the "warm-up" stage of a "prayer and praise meeting," glossolalia sounds like inarticulate "oh's" and "ah's" which may be interspersed with ejaculations such as "Oh, Jesus!" The overall effect is not unlike that of an orchestra composed of exotic instruments tuning up. When fully articulated, however, glossolalia does have a speechlike sound and frequently a lyrical quality as though it were alliterative poetry in some language full of "l," "r," and round vowel sounds. This is not a mere babble of sounds; it has an almost artlike quality.

These two forms, the warm-up and the "singing" glossolalia, appear to be the principal manifestations among neo-

<sup>4</sup> "Preliminary Report of the Study Commission on Glossolalia," Division of Pastoral Services, Diocese of California, *op. cit.*, Section IV.

Pentecostals.<sup>6</sup> It is the latter, or singing variety which has often been claimed to be in reality an unknown foreign tongue. (One leader of the movement avers his to be "Old Basque.") To our knowledge, no examples of glossolalia during the current outbreak have been so verified by competent linguists, though some have been offered for their study.<sup>6</sup>

Seen as a form of psychomotor behavior, glossolalia appears to be like trance states, somnambulism, mediumship, and automatic writing, in that the conscious centers of the psyche are bypassed in production of these behaviors. It is thus a kind of *automatism*, and will be further analyzed as such in the second part of this article.

<sup>6</sup> With regard to the second type of speech, the articulate "seeming" language which we have called singing glossolalia above, George B. Cutten, in his *Speaking with Tongues Historically and Psychologically Considered* (Yale University Press, 1927), rather irreverently suggests that the children's counting game: "Enee, menea, minee, mo," may originally have been a case in point. Cutten, whose work is the most responsible full-length treatment of glossolalia in English, further maintains that there is another form, that of the manufactured or coined word type, in which the speaker employs neologisms, which may be related to foreign words which come to him through a cryptomnemonic, or hidden memory, source, to stand for words in his own tongue, or these neologisms may be related to nothing more than syllabification in the speaker's own tongue (p. 175f).

<sup>6</sup> Frank Farrell, "Outburst of Tongues: The New Penetration," *Christianity Today*, VII, 24, pp. 3-7. Farrell also states that these linguists were of the opinion that the glossolalia they heard did sound like a language structurally. This position has been challenged by W. E. Wilmers, Prof. of African Languages at UCLA, who contends that it cannot be a language, but is related to the native tongue of the speakers (Letter to the Editor, *Christianity Today*, Nov. 8, 1963).

### *Historical Background*

There have been sporadic manifestations of speaking in tongues throughout Christian history. Notable among these in fairly recent times are the outbreaks among the persecuted Huguenots of the Cevennes at the close of the seventeenth century and in the Irvingite or Catholic Apostolic Church during the 1830's.

So far as we can tell, the first speaking in tongues in America took place in the early days of Mormonism, where it apparently enjoyed considerable vogue, and became an integral part of worship, being sometimes uttered on direction of the leader.<sup>7</sup> However, the traceable history of the Pentecostal movement begins with Holiness revivals in the 1870's. Sporadic outbursts occurred throughout the country from that decade until after the turn of the century. In 1900, students in a Holiness bible school in Topeka, Kansas, spoke in tongues. Three years later the phenomenon broke out in Galena, Kansas, and from there it was carried to Orchard and Houston, Texas.<sup>8</sup>

These occasional sparks became a continual and spreading flame as a result of the revival held during 1906 by William J. Seymour, a Negro preacher, in the Asuza Street Mission of Los Angeles. On April 9, 1906, a few days before the disastrous San Francisco earthquake and fire, the Spirit "fell" upon Seymour and a few followers.<sup>9</sup> Soon the

<sup>7</sup> Cutten, *op. cit.*, p. 70 ff.

<sup>8</sup> See Brumback's *Suddenly from Heaven* and Kendrick's *The Promise Fulfilled: A History of the Modern Pentecostal Movement*, both published by the Gospel Pub. House, Springfield, Mo., 1961.

<sup>9</sup> The earthquake is mentioned because of the doctrine among Pentecostals that the gift

Asuza Street Mission was the site of a continuous demonstration of speaking in tongues. Undoubtedly the occurrence of sustained glossolalia in a large center of transportation and communication facilitated the rapid spread of the movement.

During the period from 1906 to 1914, the initial thrust of the Pentecostal movement took place. It culminated in the United States in the formation during 1914 of the Assemblies of God, the largest Pentecostal denomination in North America. The movement spread rapidly to other countries, and the World Pentecostal Conference, formed in 1947, is said to have more than 10 million persons affiliated with member churches.

The Perfectionist and Holiness movements, off-shoots of Methodism, provided the milieu from which Pentecostalism sprang.<sup>10</sup> The history of the Holiness movement in America during the second half of the nineteenth century reveals a succession of groups which extracted from the Wesleyan ethos an emphasis upon a crisis experience subsequent to the attainment of salvation. It was believed that during the crisis the Spirit fully dwelt in the believer. *There was no necessary motor behavior associated with this experi-*

of tongues is a sign of the coming end of the age, which will be attended by like natural and man-made calamities.

<sup>10</sup> Wesleyan theology from its inception contained an emphasis on Christian perfection, i.e., the belief that a life free from willful sin is possible after a believer experiences sanctification or the "second blessing," through which the eradication of wayward tendencies is effected. (John Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection," *Works, Miscellaneous, II*, pp. 483-531.) This emphasis never became firmly entrenched in either British or American Methodism.

*ence; the believer knew in his heart when it was accomplished.* Believing strongly that God would sanctify, he simply waited for the feeling of assurance to come.<sup>11</sup> It is important to note that in Holiness religion, crisis experiences in the believer's life usually terminated after sanctification. However, this sanctification could be lost, since it was a momentary attainment, and regained again.

In Holiness religion, the proof of having received the full measure of the Spirit was found in the believer's own testimony to that effect and his pattern of holy living. Thus Holiness religion did not give the believer complete certainty that he had been filled with the Holy Spirit. For life styles were subject to interpretation and inner feelings were elusive.

By the turn of the century, the original fervor of the Holiness movement was spent and the time was ripe for yet another movement. The craving for religious expression which resulted in Pentecostalism suggests that inherent in the Holiness ethos and its predecessors was the need for ever new expressions of unmistakable, emotionally releasing, religious experience. The groups and individuals who spoke in tongues early in the first decade of the twentieth century were Holiness in background. William J. Seymour was himself a Holiness preacher.

Pentecostalism thus succeeded in doing what the Holiness movement could not do. The gift of tongues which came during the crisis of the "second blessing" provided the believer with a repeatable and unmistakable motor ex-

<sup>11</sup> A. M. Hills, *Holiness and Power for the Church and Ministry*, Cincinnati: M. W. Knapp, 1879.

pression which, in effect, guaranteed his possession of the Spirit. The Pentecostal—whom two recent empirical studies have shown to be more emotionally unstable and more anxious than other “non-enthusiastic” religious people of similar socio-economic situation—needed only to repeat, or point to the initial expression of the gift to be assured that he was in the fullest possible relationship with the deity.<sup>12</sup> It was a token of group acceptance and the talisman of divine approval.

Although the phenomenon of speaking in tongues was doubtless “caught” from Pentecostalism by the “neo-Pentecostals” in mainline churches, it was not a case of organic development as was Pentecostalism’s emergence from the Holiness movement. Sometime in the mid-1950’s the spark began to strike fire, but the precise time and place are difficult to trace. By 1960 the movement was firmly established among certain Episcopalians on the West Coast and in the Mid-West and had taken hold among adherents of the Reformed tradition, in both its continental and British branches, on the East Coast.

Why did this happen? Although it must remain for church historians of the future fully to establish the causes, the following factors seem to be definitely involved. (1) Upward social pressure from the Pentecostal groups led to contact with members of mainline churches. This is epitomized in an organization called the Full Gospel

<sup>12</sup> Vivier, L. M. Van Eetveldt, *Glossolalia* (U. of Witwatersrand, unpub. diss., 1960), and William W. Wood, *Culture and Personality Aspects of the Pentecostal Holiness Religion* (U. of North Carolina, unpub. diss. 1961).

Business Men’s Fellowship International. Founded in 1953 by Pentecostal laymen, it has headquarters in Los Angeles and is now supported by laymen of all denominations. The FGBM FI attempts to adapt Pentecostalism to the American middle class business ethos through popular speakers at regional breakfasts and national conventions.

(2) The presence within the mainline churches of many “fringe” people, whose needs for personal security and emotional expression were not being met by these churches, provided a pool of potential adherents. Whether there are more such persons in the churches today than there have been in the past is debatable, but personal observation and objective studies indicate that there are many “seekers” of this kind now.

(3) The increasing discontent and disaffection of some clergymen in the mainline churches is now a well known fact. Though some studies and reports have tended to exaggerate the numbers of men so affected, it appears beyond dispute that significant numbers of Protestant ministers find themselves frustrated and anxious about their function and purpose. Of this group, a small minority has sought and found both personal and professional satisfaction in neo-Pentecostalism. They provide the crucial factor of leadership, which had been missing until the last decade.

#### *The Neo-Pentecostal Group*

In order to provide a basis for understanding the function of the small neo-Pentecostal group, a brief description of an actual group meeting will be presented.

This meeting was observed by one of

the authors in a home on the West Coast. This type of meeting is one of the two principal kinds in the movement—the other being the somewhat larger more “open” meeting frequently held in the church school rooms or even the sanctuary. Participants in both kinds of meetings are usually members of one church with which the group is identified, though some may be from other churches.

About 35 people were present in this meeting—half men and half women. Some were teenagers and older youths but the majority were couples in the 35-55 age range. When the leader, a clergyman, arrived, he assumed a prominent position in the room where he was plainly visible to all. He began the meeting talking about the spontaneity of the group and how he did not want to dominate it. He stressed particularly the necessity for spontaneity when speaking in tongues. He went on to say that what comes from praying in the Spirit, i.e., speaking in tongues, is strength and edification. He said that he did not approve of what had happened recently after one of the “prayer and praise” meetings—a small group after the regular meeting had discussed at some length “intellectual problems.” “But,” he said, “God is not interested in our intellectual problems. We must accentuate the positive.”

Having made the introductory remarks, the leader asked for some testimonies of “good experiences” during the past week. There were about ten testimonies. Three persons were concerned with economic situations which had been recently improved. Three other testimonies were examples of how the Holy Spirit was working in mysterious ways. They amounted to

explanation of events which were assumed to be the workings of the Holy Spirit. More testimonies dealt with how the movement was spreading, the “joy in the Lord” a man had despite his illness, and simply re-telling of commonplace events which had occurred during the past week.

After the testimonies the leader indicated that there would be a service of prayer. This amounted to the leader reading the appointed lesson for St. Stephen's Day (*Book of Common Prayer*) and the group's verbal repetition of the Gloria Patri.

Following the evening prayer, hands were laid on for healing. During this exercise the leader, accompanied by at least one other member of the group, laid his hands on the head of a person who said he was in need of healing. A short, audible prayer was spoken over the “patient” asking God to drive out the evil spirit or power of Satan which was causing the malady. Before and after this prayer the healers prayed silently in tongues. After the last prayer in tongues, some indication was awaited as to the efficacy of the treatment. A smile or nod of the head was the accepted sign that something had happened.

After the healing episode the group sang a few chorus-type songs. The leader read a portion of scripture and announced that the group was going to “praise God.” The leader started the praising of God by closing his eyes and repeating scripture quotation with injunctions to “praise God.” During this period of praising God, the entire group closed their eyes and alternated between softly spoken prayers and certain phrases such as “Praise God” and “Alleluia” which were repeated again

and again by the same person. The leader, himself, was given to repeating "Father, thou art glorious" again and again. The singing of choruses was intermixed with the praise behavior. Suddenly during the praise behavior, a man spoke loudly in tongues. Then a hymn and chorus were sung, the latter accompanied by the clapping of hands.

By this time the meeting had been in progress about one hour. After the chorus the leader began a lengthy instruction period during which he exhorted the people about their lives. The theme of the talk was that participating in meetings such as the present one and practicing prayer and praise in the devotional life is the real heart of the Christian faith. He concluded with the statement: "Is there anything which is more fun than praising God? We have to go further and deeper—clear away the clutter so we have more time for praising God."

Upon finishing his talk the leader spoke in tongues. He also prayed for a sick person. Then the praise behavior began to operate once again. Tongues were spoken and choruses were sung. Prayer requests were heard and prayers offered. Another person asked for healing and hands were laid on his head. Then a man who was evidently one of the leader's lieutenants spoke in tongues after reading a passage of scripture. The leader prayed repeating the phrase "praise the Lord," again and again. Then the leader gave the closing prayer exhorting the group members to "go forth in power." He pronounced the benediction and all crossed themselves. The meeting was over.

Though it is not claimed that all groups which practice glossolalia have exactly the same pattern of behavior

as that described above, it is hypothesized that despite minor variations in expression depending on locale and leadership, all glossolalic groups have basically the same functions. Likewise, there appears to be a structural uniformity from one group to the next. Furthermore, by maintaining the regular pattern of church life, and adding to its glossolalic groups, the identification of the local parish as a part of the denomination is maintained.

At such a meeting as the one described, there are at least five distinct roles: the charismatic leader, the secondary leadership, the initiates, the highly interested, and the curious.

Group members characterize the leader in various ways. He is described sometimes in semi-messianic terms—a wonderful bearer of assurance of divine favor and liberation from the powers of darkness. Again, he may be thought of as an extraordinary teacher—"he really feeds us." Or the leader may be seen as the father of a spiritual family. There is no doubt that the leader has a very exalted position in the group, which he readily accepts. Some of the observed ministerial leaders of glossolalic groups appear to have a past history of frustrated vocational experience in which they failed to be perceived as a spiritual leader or so to perceive themselves. There are evidences to suggest that without the devotion of the group, the leader would lack a dimension of self-fulfillment which is present in his role as charismatic leader.

The secondary leadership participates in the charisma of the leader and may, upon direction of the leader, assume his functions. When the glossolalic groups are operative, the secondary leadership is distinct from the rest of

the group—they are called upon to perform such acts as healing and exorcism. They may serve as the master of ceremonies during “initiation”—i.e., when a person speaks in tongues for the first time, usually after hands have been laid on his head. The secondary leadership is directly under the control of the charismatic leader.

The initiates include all who have exhibited glossolalia and attached themselves to the group. They do not assume leadership functions, but may frequently testify in the meeting, and interpret glossolalia for the group. Since they have received the gift of tongues, their claim of the powers of prophecy, intercession, and interpretation are thereby recognized by the group.

The highly interested correspond to the “anxious seekers” of yesteryear’s revivals. They attach themselves to the groups, hoping to receive the gift of tongues and become initiates. Some persons in this category appear to derive comfort from the group and remain in it, even though they are unable or unwilling to speak in tongues.

The curious are definitely on the groups’ fringes. After one or two contacts with a glossolalic group, they either depart or move into the category of the highly interested. Some of the curious who are verbally hostile toward the movement quickly become initiated after exposure to the phenomenon. Glossolalics, themselves, say that the best “candidates” are persons who come to their meetings with the specific intent of opposing all that is happening and exposing the group. They soon speak in tongues.

The act of speaking in tongues is then a distinctive part of the rite of initiation into a small charismatically

oriented group, and further serves to maintain one in good standing in the group. Once admitted to the inner circle of such a group, one is qualified for certain benefits. First and foremost the speaker in tongues considers himself to enjoy a superior relationship to God—more intimate and direct than those of persons who have not received the gift. The group itself is conceived to have a better and deeper relationship to God than other religious organizations. Because of this unusual relationship, the individual and group possess extraordinary power of healing, exorcism and speaking directly for God, as did the Old Testament prophets. Thus equipped, the group is felt to be capable of assisting in the solution of a wide variety of personal problems, including especially health and financial difficulties (little of what is usually termed social concern is observed).

In the second part of this article, to be published in an early issue, psychological factors involved in the speaking in tongues movement will be examined and assessed in the context of the historical and social factors discussed in this issue.

## II. INFANTILE BABBLE OR SONG OF THE SELF?

### *What Is the Glossolalic Like?*

All the evidence points to the conclusion that Pentecostals are uncommonly troubled people. Though differing widely at other points, the two empirical investigators of Pentecostalism, Vivier and Wood (to whom we alluded in Part I), agree that Pentecostals who speak in tongues exhibit more anxiety and personality instability than non-Pentecostals of the same socio-eco-



conomic background. Vivier, working in South Africa, found that they tended to come from much more disturbed home situations than did non-Pentecostals, or even than Pentecostals who did not speak in tongues.<sup>1</sup> They are problem oriented people who consume much time and energy in attempting to cope with life, which appears to be a storm-tossed sea in which it is all one can do to keep one's head above water. Further, they are persons who have enough credulity to be able to reduce all their problems to the one global problem of the battle between good and evil, and to view its solution uniformly in terms of supernatural intervention. In addition to the healing of illness and the solving of personal adjustment problems (which is more common among groups of younger people), everyday events such as the finding of a parking place for one's car, and being able to ride on an elevator with some "key" person, are often attributed to the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit.

Although the neo-Pentecostal shares the same basic outlook as the Pentecostal, he is likely to be somewhat more

<sup>1</sup> Vivier, L. M. Van Eetvelt, *Glossolalia*, U. of Witwatersrand (unpub. diss., 1960), and William W. Wood, *Culture and Personality Aspects of the Pentecostal Holiness Religion*, (U. of North Carolina, 1961). Vivier, although interpreting his findings in such a way as to minimize suggestions that glossolalics are "sicker" than other people, nevertheless concludes that frequent speakers in tongues are more unstable and anxious, on the basis of their higher scores on the Cattell 16 PF Test. The data on the home situations were obtained by Vivier from a questionnaire developed by him. Wood bases his conclusions on a significantly higher "vista" score on the Rorschach Test, which is associated with defense against anxiety.

sophisticated in his interpretation of his experience. For instance, the neo-Pentecostal may see both the problem and the solution in quasi-mental health terms. Moreover, he is likely to attribute healing power to the act of speaking in tongues in itself, which is not characteristic of Pentecostalism. One minister has held it to be a catharsis experience far deeper than psychiatry can offer. As such, it has been claimed to be a cure for homosexuality and dope addiction. In the case of the narcotics addiction, the claim has been made by a Pentecostal minister, the Rev. David Wilkerson, in his book, *The Cross and the Switchblade*.<sup>2</sup> It is not clear whether Wilkerson regards glossolalia as the medium of cure, or only an accompaniment, but neo-Pentecostals have hailed his report as a demonstration of its power as a healing agent.

In connection with the mental health emphasis among neo-Pentecostals it may be noted that some of them, in contrast to Pentecostals, have attempted to understand their experience psychologically. Some of the ideas of Carl G. Jung provide the basis of what is apparently the most widespread view, that glossolalia is a manifestation of the collective unconscious—that great underground reservoir of common human experience. They point out that Jung has held that it is necessary for each individual in some way to bring his higher centers of consciousness in touch with the collective unconscious for sound mental health, and claim that glossolalia is a fulfillment of that conception. This view has also been taken by some sympathetic students and ob-

<sup>2</sup> New York: Bernard Geis Associates, 1963.

servers of glossolalia. Among these are Vivier, whom we have mentioned, and Morton T. Kelsey, who is rector of an Episcopal Church with 30 parishioners who speak in tongues, and who has recently published the first full length study of the movement.<sup>3</sup> Glossolalia is thus understood as a song of the depths of the self, bursting the barrier of the unconscious. From the foregoing discussion it will have become evident to the reader that a further difference between Pentecostals and neo-Pentecostals is that many persons of intelligence and station have become a part of the neo-Pentecostal movement, dispelling the idea, formerly taken for granted among students of glossolalia, that it was to be found almost exclusively among the ignorant and the poor. The authors recently heard a research chemist employed by a world famous chemical company describe how Jesus had provided the solution to a knotty chemical problem just in time to save the company a lot of money.

Jean Stone, editor of "Logos," the official organ of The Holy Trinity Society, the neo-Pentecostal organization corresponding to the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship, has said that neo-Pentecostal meetings tend to be less emotional and that neo-Pentecostals tend to use glossolalia more in their private devotional living. On the whole it does appear that neo-Pentecostals are less volatile and more controlled than Pentecostals, though there

<sup>3</sup> *Tongue Speaking: An Experiment in Spiritual Experience*, New York: Doubleday, 1964. Cited by McCandlish Phillips, "And There Appeared to Them Tongues of Fire," *Saturday Evening Post*, May 16, 1964, p. 36.

are many exceptions to this general statement.

#### *The Intra-psychic Function of Glossolalia*

We have noted that persons who speak in tongues describe their experience as bringing them joy, peace, and release. It is, as one minister put it, "uttering the unutterable in the power of the Spirit." We have also discussed the social function of the phenomenon in the first part of this article, that of providing proof of spiritual experience. There too, we briefly noted that from a psychological viewpoint glossolalia appears to be a motor automatism, like automatic writing which is done without conscious control of the pen. Now we must attempt to analyze the meaning of this automatism in the psychic economy of the individual. In so doing we fully realize the speculative character of such an attempt, and hope that the reader will receive it as a stimulus to his own thinking rather than an attempted final word.

A motor automatism is defined by Gardner Murphy as "performance of acts normally requiring attention without the apparent supervision, or even knowledge of the performer."<sup>4</sup> In his discussion of automatisms, Murphy states that they result from conflict within the personality, and serve as a genuine escape from conflict. An automatism is thus a form of dissociation within the personality, in which a set of voluntary muscles respond to control centers other than those associated with consciousness. In saying that glossolalia is an automatism, we must note

<sup>4</sup> *Personality: A Bio-Social Approach to Origins and Structure*, New York: Harper, 1947, p. 981.

that it does not quite fit Murphy's definition, in the sense that it is not an act normally requiring conscious attention. Rather the reverse is more nearly the case; it appears "normally" to require no conscious attention at first, but later may become partially under conscious control. In this sense it more nearly resembles a second form of dissociation—the massive dissociation of *all*, or nearly all the voluntary muscles from conscious control, as in sleep walking and trance states. In these states just mentioned conscious awareness is in abeyance, but in other massive dissociative states, such as the fugue—in which the individual "forgets" his identity and performs complex actions such as going on a journey or even starting a business, only to "wake up" in astonishment—consciousness is not in abeyance, but altered. Glossolalia is thus like an automatism in that it only involves a specific set of muscles, but like a massive dissociation in that it seems to come from "beneath" without ever having been consciously learned.

At this point it is relevant to recall one of the more striking features of the current glossolalia revival. This is the apparently universal concern with demons and demon possession which characterizes the movement. In Part I we described one group meeting in which healing always took the form of the exorcism of a demon held to be responsible for the malady. This practice extended even to relatively minor problems such as an earache. Although probably not all groups go quite this far, our observation indicates that attribution of all kinds of difficulties, no matter how trivial they may seem, to the activity of satanic power is quite widespread. This suggests that the em-

phasis on the demonic is not a peripheral accompaniment of Pentecostalism and neo-Pentecostalism, but is very close to the dynamic center of these movements.

When this fact is contemplated in relation to our observations regarding the *conflict reduction* function of glossolalia as automatism, a line of thinking is suggested which leads to a plausible, though partial, explanation of what is going on "inside" the tongues speaker. If we regard the conflict as being due genetically to an unconscious attachment to parental figures characterized by strong feelings of both love and hate, neither of which can the individual express directly, thus producing tension, *the glossolalia may be viewed as an indirect, though powerful expression of primitive love toward the parent and the demonology a projection of the hate and fear in that childhood relationship.*

The total experience of being in the glossolalia group thus enables the individual to regress sufficiently to express his feelings *without ambivalence*, and it is to this that the great sense of joy and release is due. For the time being the person is released from the tyranny of the old love-hate relationship which colors all his relationships in the present. By "uttering the unutterable" expression of primitive desire (perhaps even oral incorporative wishes, which would be related to the muscular region employed), displaced onto the deity as praise, the speaker finds peace. Since the hostility normally bound to these wishes is then released also, it must find an object. The demons provide this.

The hypothesis that demon possession is the result of unacceptable de-

sires gaining control of the personality either totally or in part, is, of course, not a new one. The mass witch and devil hunts of the middle ages and of the seventeenth century have been often attributed to "hysteria." Aldous Huxley's *The Devils of Loudun*<sup>5</sup> is a superbly written narrative of one of the most notorious—the outbreak of possession among the nuns of the Ursuline Convent at Loudun, France, early in the seventeenth century. By painstaking research into the childhood of several of the protagonists, Huxley has shown that possession enabled them to utter through the mouths of the demons blasphemies and lewd phrases spawned by frustration which would otherwise have been entirely unutterable. Jean L'hermitte, the distinguished French Catholic neurologist, in his *True and False Possession*, reaches the same conclusion.<sup>6</sup>

As a means of dealing with inner tension, glossolalia has a great advantage over classical paroxysmal demon possession, in that it is not painful and exhausting physically. In the glossolalia groups the demons are more pursued and attacked by the group members than they are pursuing and possessing them. The demon functions more as *deus ex machina* (in reverse), who is brought in to absorb the hostility freed by the glossolalia. In this connection it may be noted that possession among glossolalia groups is usually a pale phenomenon which would not be noted by an objective observer, though one case of exorcism of a paroxysmal possession of classical proportions is known to the authors.

<sup>5</sup> Harper, 1952.

<sup>6</sup> Trans. P. J. Hepburne-Scott, New York: Hawthorn, 1963.

In a credulous age it is not so difficult to see how many persons could believe in devils, but in our secular day there must be a powerful inner motivation which leads persons not only to believe in demons, but also to attune their lives to combatting them. Our hypothesis is that this motivation is supplied by the need to find a suitable object for the hate released in the unravelling of the ambivalence through glossolalia which occurs in the security of the group. If this hypothesis is correct, glossolalia will seldom, if ever, be found without accompanying demons, though these need not be constantly present.<sup>7</sup>

To sum up, glossolalia is understood to be a regression "in the service of the ego," to use Hartmann's phrase. That is, a regression controlled by the ego and for the purpose of maintaining personality, rather than a disintegration of personality. It is a genuine escape from inner conflict, but contrary to the position held by William Wood, whose work we have cited, and others; of itself it does not bring a further permanent integration of personality, which would usually require insight into the roots of the conflict. Neither is it a simple regression to infantilism, as John B. Oman, writing in *PASTORAL PSYCHOLOGY* (December, 1963, pp. 48-51) holds. Viewing glossolalia as infantile babble expressive of the megalomania of infancy, Oman can see no

<sup>7</sup> One of the paradoxes of this association is that one of the classical signs of demon possession is the ability to speak in tongues. Glossolalics are aware of this, and listen carefully to any "unusual" sounds, especially if these have a pained quality, which may indicate that the speaker is possessed, not by the Spirit, but by the devil.

constructive purpose in it. While we disagree with him about the kind of regression, Oman is correct, we think, in noting the self-aggrandizing, narcissistic component. We regard this as being of secondary significance to its function of conflict reduction, however. By reducing inner conflict, glossolalia may contribute to the enhancement of the social interaction and productivity of the individual, even though it does not act directly as an integrative agent.

#### *Some Unanswered Questions*

Admittedly the foregoing discussion raises many questions, and we can attempt to answer only a few of the more important. In the first place, should glossolalics be considered mentally ill? We have said that they are uncommonly disturbed, and that the intrapsychic function of speaking in tongues probably is to reduce conflict brought on by developmental "fixation" at an early age in their relationships with parental figures. This way of thinking about the problem is obviously related to psychoanalytic concepts developed in clinical settings, beginning with the work of Freud, and the general picture is that associated with hysterical personalities—emotionally labile, easily swayed persons who are prone to bodily ills which come and go without apparent organic cause. Indeed in this connection, it may be noted that hysterical conversion symptoms, in which inner psychic tension is "converted" into a bodily dysfunction, such as paralysis of one of the extremities, palpitation, breathing difficulties, or vague abdominal pains—which are symbolic of the conflict and an attempt at a solution, are often the objects of the healing in glossolalia groups. Such

symbolic dysfunction represents still another form of dissociation in addition to the automatism and massive dissociative states discussed earlier, and is a third type of solution to developmentally generated conflict.

While all this suggests that the dynamic out of which some mental illness develops is quite similar to that involved in the glossolalia movement, it would not be useful to regard most glossolalics as mentally ill in any clinical sense. In some cases the glossolalia experience may be a preventative of mental illness. In recent years dynamically oriented psychiatrists have been insisting that mental illness is not a discrete "state" that is discontinuous with "normality," but that there is rather a continuum of function and dysfunction, so that it is difficult to say just when the "threshold" of mental illness is crossed. Viewed with this model in mind, most glossolalics usually manage to stay mainly on the functional side, rather than the dysfunctional side of that threshold, though they resort to tactics which appear bizarre to most persons in attempting to do so. There is also some evidence that some young persons may pass through a glossolalic episode, which helps them to get through a late adolescent developmental crisis. When the crisis is passed, they lose interest in glossolalia.

Another question is that of the relation of the interpretation which we have given the phenomenon, which is based primarily on psychoanalytic thought, to the Jungian approach taken by some participants and observers, which we mentioned earlier. In our view there is no necessary incompatibility between these two, since in

Jung's view the collective unconscious is always filtered through the personal. That is, glossolalia may be expressive of "archetypes" from the collective unconscious, but these are shaped and given added power by the familial relationships which give rise to conflict. We do not necessarily hold that this is the case, but only that there is no incompatibility. Further, it may be pointed out that from Jung's point of view, glossolalia could not be a final solution to the problem of relating conscious and unconscious regions of the personality, since there is no symbolic integration of the archetypes with the real world, but only projection.

A further question which arises when anything presumed to be beyond conscious control is discussed, is whether the phenomena observed are due to the person's "faking" them, rather than to any process properly termed unconscious. While undoubtedly some glossolalia is "fabricated" in this way (Cutten in his *Speaking in Tongues* makes this point well in connection with the early Mormon glossolalia, p. 74f.), this does not appear to be the case with the fully developed "singing glossolalia" (which we described in Part I). This musical speech seems beyond the conscious capacity for control, except for the ability to start and stop at will, which is developed by many proficient. While glossolalia is transmitted from person to person in social settings, it appears more correct to say that it is "caught" rather than learned, if by learning we mean a consciously directed trial and error process.

Finally, the question may be raised regarding possible negative or harmful effects which glossolalia may have.

In the strictly psychological sense, as we have indicated, it is likely to be of benefit to emotionally labile, disturbed persons who have internalized their emotional conflicts, in that it provides a unique kind of release. For persons whose conflicts have been partly intellectualized, and who are, as a consequence, prone to have grandiose ideas concerning themselves and their place in the scheme of things, the experience of the glossolalia group may be so stimulating and exciting that they either seek to impose themselves on the group as leaders or have great difficulty in functioning outside the group, or both. Such persons present severe problems for glossolalia groups, as they are frequently attracted to such groups, and are likely to be divisive in the effect they have on the group.

#### Conclusions

The neo-Pentecostal movement appears to be still spreading and growing among the mainline Protestant Churches, but this growth is not likely to assume such proportions as to threaten the basic outlook and structure of those churches. Both resistance to the disturbing influence of neo-Pentecostalism by the churches and the basic antagonism between the extreme naïveté characteristic of the movement and the scientific secularism of our age will serve to check it. Further, if our hypothesis concerning the connection between glossolalia and dissociative tendencies is correct, the movement will have an appeal to only a limited, if sizable, group.

For most who are attracted to the movement it has very definite benefits, which we have described as temporary relief from intrapsychic conflict, en-

hanced by the security of the group and the assurance of divine approval. Many persons who formerly managed barely to cope with inner and outer stress have been enabled to take a more adequate stance toward the interpersonal aspects of life as a result of the glossolalia group experience.

On the negative side, it must be said that in addition to the danger of psychopathology for a few, the isolation from the rest of society which is involved in participation in the group is a problem for all. For they must still somehow function in the larger social context of mid-century America, and the rigid distinction between the "insiders" and the "outsiders," which is characteristic of neo-Pentecostalism, makes it difficult to relate without hostility to those outside. Too, the credulity demanded by the movement is incompatible with modern life and its empirical orientation, which means that the neo-Pentecostal must either compartmentalize his life (which surprisingly many persons appear able to do), or constantly expose himself to the pangs of doubt. In either case functioning in the world outside the group would be jeopardized, since even in a compartmentalized mind the barriers are apt to break down at crucial moments.

If the movement is not likely to take over Protestantism, neither is it likely to die out in the immediate future. Although the experience will probably begin to pall for some, like the potency of a "wonder" drug on the market for several years, there is doubtless a pool of potential adherents which is barely tapped, and adequate leadership seems assured by the continuing uncertainty and frustration experienced by some

ministers. Eventually some groups may become more or less permanently tolerated within the life of the mainline denominations. Those for whom this entails too much domestication may well move toward spiritualism, with which, as we have indicated in Part I, glossolalia has been associated in the past.

We have indicated that speaking in tongues and its associated behavior, especially the belief in demon possession and exorcism, appear to resemble some aspects of the phenomena called "hysteria" from a clinical point of view. This does not mean that all, or even most, who speak in tongues would be called hysterical in a clinical setting, but we have suggested that their psychodynamics may be similar to those of a person with hysterical symptoms. More specifically we have hypothesized that glossolalia represents a temporary undoing of the tangle of love and hate involved in a fixated object relationship, with the unconscious positive feelings being expressed in the tongues speaking, and the negative feelings projected outward and displaced onto the devils. Although the evidence is not conclusive, this appears to be the most powerful hypothesis available. This means that the movement, both in its Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal manifestations, tends to "select" persons with a good capacity for dissociation for initiation, from those who came as "seekers."

Toward the movement, our attitude is then, like St. Paul's, ambivalent. A sign of changing, and often frustrating and frightening, times for the Church, the movement has brought succor to many in distress who found none in more traditional expressions of Chris-

tianity. However, if the Church turns to this movement for answers to its pressing questions, it will have given up its task to change the world for that of only coping with it. For glossolalia is neither mere infantile babbling nor a song of the inmost self, but is rather a dissociative expression of truncated personality development. Yet through it, many have found release from inner strife, and some have been able to transcend their former isolation and brokenness, at least for the time being.