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A BRIEF LOOK AT THE PHENOMENON OF GLOSSOLALIA

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I. Introduction

In the past twenty-five years, the phenomenon of speaking in tongues has been a topic of much controversy and heated debate in Christian circles. As the Pentecostal and charismatic movements have grown and spread into many mainline denominations, more and more people are being exposed to this strange and supernatural phenomenon, and more and more questions in regard to tongues are being asked. Are tongues of God? How important is it that I speak in tongues? Are they not one of the lesser gifts? If so, why do some denominations put so much emphasis on speaking in tongues? In this paper, I hope to answer many of those questions that people are asking about speaking in tongues, or glossolalia, as it is also known.

However, as we will soon see, speaking in tongues is not just a Christian phenomenon. As Pharaoh's magicians were able to perform the same miracles Moses and Aaron were in the book of Exodus, Satan is also using his people and cultic religions to manifest glossolalia. In this essay, we will look at the various ways in which tongues are being manifested around the world in a non-Christian setting.

Besides these two opposing forces butting their supernatural heads, we will also look at what psychologists are saying of this phenomenon, and about the people who speak in tongues. We will also look at speaking in tongues in Christian history. In order to tie all these loose ends together, I will conclude my work with some comments on how to best serve God in and around people who practice glossolalia on a regular basis. I will look at tongues in this way from a contemporary American standpoint, as well as from the context of a foreign mission setting. Let us begin our study with a brief look at what the Scriptures have to say about speaking in tongues.

II. Tongues in Christian Society

A. What the Bible Says About Tongues

As we begin our study of the gift of tongues, it is first of all helpful to define our terminology. Practically speaking, "Glossolalia is the practice of praying, singing or speaking in fluent accents whose meaning is not known to the speaker" (Christenson 1968:16). Obviously, this sort of thing does not just happen. "It involves a supernatural

manifestation of the Holy Spirit which is clearly spoken of in the Bible" (Ibid., 18).

In Scripture, speaking in tongues is basically spoken of only in the New Testament. The exact term, glossolalia, is never found in that form in the Bible. "The term 'glossolalia' is an Anglicized compound of two Greek words: glossa (tongue) and lalia (speech). It therefore means tongue-speech or 'speaking in tongues'" (Burdick 1969:13). The two terms can mean three different things in the Bible: the tongue as a part of the body structure; a tongue as a language; and lastly, our focus in this paper, speaking in tongues.

Let us now turn to the specific references to tongues in Scripture. Only once are tongues mentioned in the Gospels, in Mark 16:17-18. Beginning with verse 15 in that chapter, Christ is giving to his disciples the Markan version of the Great Commission. Verses 17 and 18 indicate what signs will accompany believers as they minister. Tongues is one of the items mentioned. Interestingly, this passage is somewhat controversial in that some of the Greek versions close off the book of Mark before these verses come up. However, most scholars would see this passage as a viable part of the book. As this is the first and only reference to tongues in the Gospels, the Bible does not record Christ ever speaking in tongues. This despite many and varied instances in the life of Jesus in which he ministered in great power by the Holy Spirit.

In the book of Acts, the subject of tongues is recorded as occurring on three separate occasions. The first and perhaps best-known of these occurs in Acts 2, on the day of Pentecost. The first mention of tongues on the day of Pentecost is of the tongues of fire on the heads of the Christian believers as they met and fellowshiped together. The following verse, 2:4, speaks of the being filled with the Holy Spirit, and beginning to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit empowered them. The men and women of the city were greatly mystified by the phenomenon, and some were even accusing the Christians of being drunk. Verse 11 tells us that the tongues were telling of the "mighty works of God." Thus, in this brief encounter with tongues, we see

that it is the Holy Spirit that enabled the people to speak in the foreign tongues, that tongues were a sign of being filled with the Holy Spirit, and that tongues were comprehensible to those within earshot of the speakers.

The second occurrence of tongues in Acts is found in Acts 10:46. The context is Peter's conversion of Cornelius, the Gentile centurion at Caesarea. Two very interesting things occur here. First of all, Gentiles are recorded for the first time as being filled with the Holy Spirit. Secondly, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the words of Peter, and they spoke in tongues before they were even truly converted! But they were baptized immediately afterward. Once again, the writer of Acts tells us that the ~~tongues~~^{peoples} were telling of the greatness of God as they spoke in tongues.

Finally, tongues are found to occur in Acts 19:6, in an encounter between Paul and 12 of John's disciples. Paul initially asked these men if they received the Holy Spirit when they believed. The men said no; they had never even heard of the Holy Spirit. Having been baptized into the baptism of John, or of repentance, Paul baptized them a second time, this time into the baptism of Christ. Paul then laid hands on the men, and they proceeded to speak in tongues and prophesy.

In reviewing the three cases of tongues in Acts, we see that the only consistent fact in the three occurrences was that tongues signified or gave evidence of the Holy Spirit coming upon a person. In two of the three cases, tongues were used by people to bring glory to God. The final instance shows Paul laying hands on the men to impart the gift of tongues. Thus, there really is not room for any consistent theory or theology of tongues that can be solely based on the book of Acts.

The remainder of the references to tongues in the entire New Testament come in I Corinthians 12-14, where Paul addresses the subject of the whole realm of spiritual gifts. The first citing of the gift of tongues in this text is in 12:10. In verse 8 of that chapter, Paul begins listing some of the spiritual gifts available to God's people. Significantly, tongues and the interpretation of tongues are mentioned last in the list. Paul again lists various other gifts in verses 29-30 of the same chapter, and again tongues are listed last. Paul also exhorts the Corinthians to seek the higher gifts in this

text. Thus, obviously in Paul's mind, some gifts are more significant to the body of Christ than others.

In I Corinthians 13, the epic chapter in Scripture on love, Paul refers to tongues two different times. In the first verse of chapter 13, he indicates that tongues spoken without love are of no value. Perhaps more importantly, in verse 8, Paul states that tongues will pass away, as will prophecies and knowledge, two other spiritual gifts. This has led many to believe that ~~outgives~~^{tongues} were designed by God only for use in the apostolic era. We will comment on this issue later.

Paul's most specific and involved writings on the gift of tongues come in chapter 14. Here, he discusses nothing but tongues for the first 19 verses. The crux of Paul's argument in this text is that tongues, without an interpretation to accompany them, are of little or no value to the church. Prophecy is of more value as a gift of the Holy Spirit in that it provides instruction and edification to the body of Christ. Tongues by themselves do not do this, but only edify and enrich the speaker himself. Thus, Paul is saying that tongues are a valuable gift, but not as valuable as prophecy. He does not forbid or discount tongues as a gift, but obviously sees it as a lower gift than others.

Accordingly, tongues are not addressed on a regular or extensive basis in the Bible. Paul only writes of tongues to one of the New Testament churches he addresses in Scripture. Based on this seemingly minimal coverage of tongues, it would appear that tongues were not a very common occurrence in the New Testament church. "If we trust such scanty evidence, we have to conclude that glossolalia probably occurred only intermittently and in a restricted manner in the early church" (Stagg et al, 1967:53).

As referred to earlier, there is a school of thought among Biblical scholars that tongues were only meant to be used by the church in the apostolic era. According to Sanders, there are four basic arguments that can be used to prove this hypothesis (Sanders 1940). The first is that there is no evidence or record of tongues-speaking before Pentecost. Next, tongues could be seen to be a sign or proof to Israel that the gospel message was from God. With the fulfillment

of the message, no further sign was needed. Also, as apostleship, prophecy and knowledge were designated to be temporary gifts, tongues could also be seen in that light. Finally, in I Corinthians 13:8, Paul even specifically states that tongues will pass away and so will be temporary. These arguments all are valid ones, but we still are left with the question of, what about the literally thousands of people in our day that speak in tongues? The proponents of this theory that tongues are only for the apostolic period are left with an awful lot of explaining to do about what is happening today in Christian churches worldwide where tongues are in common use. If for no other reason than the widespread use of glossolalia today, I would contend that tongues are at least meant by God to be used in his church in this era, if not for the remainder of time before Christ returns.

A big question remains. What is the value of speaking in tongues for the church today? Besides the value of being a sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as already alluded to above, Sherrill sees Paul giving three other values of tongues to the church. These include use in private prayer and praise to God, use as prayer in the Spirit when unsure how else to pray, and tongues as prophetic utterance in public worship- with interpretation, of course (Sherrill 1964:79). We could then sum up the value of tongues-speaking in three words- evangelical (as at Pentecost), devotional, and evidential. Tongues were a witness to Christians and unbelievers alike at Pentecost, and so are both evangelistic and evidential tools to the church. Tongues also have an especially meaningful and worshipful use in personal devotion. "Speaking and singing in tongues releases the intellect from vocabulary concentration, thus permitting great mental agility in covering many praise and prayer subjects" (Samarin 1972:50). It is evident then, that tongues still can and do have redemptive value in the body of Christ today.

However, due to the spiritual nature of tongues, as well as their penchant for causing and stirring up controversy in the church, it is important to outline some potential dangers involved with the use of tongues. Sanders has pointed up five different limitations or dangers that are inherent to tongues (Sanders 1940:129). They include:

1. preoccupation with oneself and subjective experience

2. inherent divisiveness of tongues
3. constitute only one form of prayer
4. can lead to spiritual pride
5. tongues can be seen as the only evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Sanders has much insight here in these warnings. As Christians use tongues in a private or public context, these are frailties that need to be reckoned with.

B. Tongues in the History of Christendom

Another way to analyze the validity of tongues is to look at them in an historical context. What do our Christian brothers and sisters down through the centuries say about tongues? What were their experiences with glossolalia? Was it a common thing? Why or why not?

Moving chronologically through history, let us take a brief look at tongues in the Christian church. "The earliest clear evidence for glossolalia after the New Testament era concerns Montanus, a converted priest of a Phrygian cult (Stagg et al, 1967:47 ff.). It is reported that Montanus and two of his followers, Priscilla and Maximilla, engaged in ecstatic speaking, claiming to be under the possession of the Holy Spirit. Montanus and his theology, Montanism, were later charged as being heretical by the church, mainly due to his ecstatic experiences with tongues and prophecy.

Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons in Gaul during the last quarter of the second century, referred to speaking in tongues three different times in his writings. Tertullian, another early church father, indicated only one definitive and positive experience with tongues. Origen, writing in the early third century, displayed only a hazy and incomplete acquaintance with glossolalia in his day. Later still, both Augustine and Chrystostom made it clear in their works that they had no first-hand experience with tongues. Thus we can see that tongues were seen only sparingly in the early history of the church.

Moving on into the medieval period of history, Hinson writes that through the entire medieval era, from the fifth century on, evidences for tongues were scanty at best (Ibid.). Thus, as we look back at the use of or exposure to tongues in the first 16 centuries of church history, it is evident that tongues were a very rare occurrence indeed. However, in the 17th to the 19th centuries, there are two noteworthy outbursts of tongue-speaking. The first of these occurred

in southern France in the late 17th century. The people involved were the Cavenols, who were peasants of Langudoc province, living in and around the Cevennes Mountains. Later, a more widely-known incidence of tongues took place within the church of Edward Irving in England. Irving was a Scottish Presbyterian pastor in London, and he and his followers had many and varied experiences in glossolalia in that time, around 1831. Several early American revival movements also reported experiences with tongues, including the Ranters, Quakers, Methodist, Shakers, and even some Mormons.

By far the greatest and most extensive use of tongues, however, has taken place in this century, with the advent of the Pentecostalism. The Pentecostal movement started with Charles Parham and his church in Topeka, Kansas. The supernatural evidences of tongues gravitated south and westward, where it picked up steam in the 1906 Azusa St. Revivals in Los Angeles. Since 1960, with the beginning of the charismatic movement with Father Dennis Bennett, an Episcopal priest, tongues are commonly spoken in churches all over the world. Today, the use of tongues is probably more widespread in the Christian church than at any point in the history of Christendom. This includes Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal churches alike.

What conclusions, if any, can we draw from this brief trip through Christian history? Only this: As the Bible says in John 3:8, "The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit." God, in His infinite wisdom and providence, has chosen to manifest and use the gift of tongues at certain times in history when He has felt it was needed to edify and encourage the church. While in early and medieval Christianity it was apparently not necessary, God has chosen to use this gift in the lives of His people today. As this is the case, we would do well to understand and theologize about this phenomenon, so that if God desires to do so, He can use tongues in our lives as well.

good way of putting it.

III. Tongues and Psychology

As speaking in tongues is often a very subjective and experientially-oriented phenomenon, I feel that it is very important to

look at some of the findings of psychologists in ~~regard~~^{regard} to glossolalia. "The psychical and spiritual realms are very closely inter-related, and it is easy to mistake the one for the other" (Sanders 1940:130). Sanders point is well-taken. Therefore, in order to give further insight and understanding to both psychological and experiential data surrounding the use of tongues, as well as basic personality types most commonly involved with glossolalia, let us look at tongues from a psychological viewpoint.

Perhaps one of the major reasons for the common use of glossolalia in the American church today is that western culture simply does not provide sufficient emotional and psychological outlets. "It may be justifiably asserted that in conventional religion today, the emotional element is unduly suppressed" (Ibid.). This is especially true in many liturgical and mainline denominations. Thus tongues becomes both a spiritual and emotional release for the glossolalist. Oates explained the resurgence of glossolalia today in different social strata as the breaking through of deeply-felt but long pent-up emotions" (Gonsalvez 1979:58). Lapsley and Simpson, in their 1952 study, concur with this idea. "The bulk of neo-Pentecostals are those who have a deep need for personal security and emotional expression" (Ibid., 57).

But Jesus Christ ~~came~~^{came} to proclaim, among other things, a holistic gospel, one that cares for every aspect of human need. Is it necessarily a bad thing for glossolalists practice tongues for both personal and spiritual needs? I think not. But clearly, glossolalia in the main must be for the worship of God and for the edification of the body of Christ. Replacing either of these two priorities with any type of emotionally-based tongues-speaking is not of the Holy Spirit.

Studies of the above-mentioned types have gone far in affirming certain personality types as most apt to be involved with the glossolalic phenomenon. Glossolalists have been shown to be more "emotionally labile, easily swayed, and prone to functional ills which are symbolic of conflict and an attempt to resolve conflict" (Ibid., 47). Vivier indicates that "glossolalists had a preference for feeling over thought, for the unusual and the extraordinary" (Ibid., 57). Machie described glossolalists as "having an unstable nervous system, disturbed sex life, perversions, exhibitionisms, masochisms and sadisms

of the early saints" (Ibid., 56). He also mentioned egomania for spiritual experience. Gonsalvez, in her book, thus concluded that hysterics and glossolalists have many behavior traits in common. Kelsey affirms this truth, but added that Pentecostals and glossolalists showed a greater ability to cope with reality than did the hysterics (Ibid., 100). Goodman also affirmed that Pentecostals that had a Christian conversion experience saw their lives very much improved within a very short time.

However, despite this quite negative evidence against glossolalists, tongues have also proven to be very helpful, legitimate and spiritually-edifying experiences for many Christians. Thus I prefer to take a very balanced approach to the above-mentioned psychological evidence. Samarín notes,

People talk in tongues, because it is part of a movement that offers them the fulfillment of aspirations that their previous religious experience created in them. They too want to believe in God passionately, to know the light of communion with Him, and to see Him at work in life" (Samarín 1972: 235).

Larry Christenson, a renowned charismatic leader in the Lutheran church, has had many conversations with people who have had tongues and other "Spirit-filled" experiences. His conclusions?

"The common denominator in the experiences seems to be this: The experience of speaking in tongues has intensified the sense of the presence of God; the Word of God has become more contemporary, believable; Christ the Lord has become more real - in a word, faith has been strengthened" (Christenson 1968: 14).

Other research have pointed to other experiences of growth in Christ after glossolalic experiences. Stagg reports that many people that he met with to discuss glossolalic experiences spoke of a feeling of power which preceded the glossolalia. Frequently, they compared the feeling to electricity.

Moreover, we see here in this study of tongues and psychology that we have much evidence, both positive and negative, with regard to glossolalists. While this evidence cannot lead us to say unequivocally that all people who speak in tongues are hysterical and have deep seated emotional problems, nor for that matter are spiritual giants, it does prompt us to be discerning in our use of tongues-speaking, as well as in our judging of same.

IV. Tongues in the Non-Christian Realm

We have already seen ⁱⁿ ~~on~~ our study of speaking in tongues that they can often be more than a religious experience. In this section, we will come to learn more about tongues as a non-Christian religious experience.

One of the first points that needs to be made in this area is that glossolalia is not new to the spirit world. Reports have proven and documented that tongues have been used in ancient and dated religions. (See Gonsalvez 1978). We also have the Biblical accounts.

"In Paul's time, as well as in later experience, it was considered possible for evil spirits to control persons and perform wonders similar to those performed by good spirits, and among the gifts of both classes of spirits was that of tongues. (Cutten 1927: 29).

Thus it is clear that tongues and their use in non-Christian settings is not a recent development. Tongues and their use by pagans is not a localized phenomenon, either. In my research in this area, pagan usage of tongues were reported by anthropologists in such diverse settings as Africa, Japan, among North American Indian tribes, in Muslim areas, Greenland, Tibet and China. Tongues in non-Christian religions are thus a worldwide phenomenon, as well as an ancient one.

Varied uses and functions for glossolalia in religious cults is also evident. Anthropological research records tongues in shamanistic practices, worldwide, in Buddhist healing ceremonies in Ceylon, in Zulu cults in Africa, in spirit possession, as well as in exorcism and prophecy. Perhaps the ^{widest} ~~widest~~ study of this kind of use of tongues was performed in 1956 by L. Carlyle May. (See "American Anthropologist, Feb. 1956, Vol. 58. No. 1) He concludes his article with these remarks:

"Speaking in tongues is very widespread and very ancient. It is probable that as long as man has had divination, curing, sorcery and propitiation of spirits, he has had glossolalia."

As a result of these findings, it is clear that there is a power in our world that is not the power of God, yet is very forceful in its effects. As Stolee ^{sternly} ~~sternly~~ warns,

"There is power, not human, but far stronger than human to be reckoned with. There is something more effective than all mental suggestion and hypnotic influence combined. A power that can becloud the keenest human intellect. That is the power of Satan (Stolee 1963: 87).

It is clear then from this brief look at what Satan is doing in the world, that tongues are equally prevalent and meaningful in the heathen world as they are to Christians in their glossolalic experiences. As Sanders points out, "of all the spiritual gifts, this is the one most open to counterfeit" (Sanders 1940: 129). Therefore as seekers of spiritual insight into the tongues phenomenon, it behooves us to recognize this fact, and be very sensitive and discerning in our contacts and experiences with it. Christians all know that in the end, God will triumph, but in the meantime, Satan is certainly "alive and well on planet earth." His widespread and long-lived use and counterfeiting of the gift of glossolalia makes this point abundantly clear.

V. Conclusions

A. Missiological Applications: Tongues in a Western Setting

1. For Non-Glossolalists

Like many of the spiritual gifts, speaking in tongues can at times be very controversial. As such, it is imperative that non-glossolalists maintain a very open mind about tongues, and spiritual gifts and their use in general.

Hopefully, as one is exposed to tongues or other spiritual gifts, he will be willing to spend the time to study and learn about tongues. This entails observing and learning from a cognitive, ultimate-belief level first. This should be followed by learning of glossolalia from an affective or feeling level. Then, after one has a deep and profound understanding and grasp of this phenomenon, only then should evaluative judgments be made. Fairness and openmindedness is the first key to approaching tongues.

A second important point to consider as one approaches the gifts of the Spirit is to stay Scriptural. As Paul indicates in I Corinthians 12-14, our major concern in this area is to seek the higher gifts. As we are open to what the Lord has for us, He will lead us to the gifts and ministries that He desires for us. While tongues are not the highest gift, it is evident that they are helpful to many people in both a devotional and ministerial way.

Besides being openminded and Scriptural in our study and seeking of the gifts, it is important as well to consider the whole body of

of Christ and its welfare. With the potential divisiveness of tongues and the gifts of the Spirit in general, we must seek unity and brotherhood in relationships within the body of Christ. If the church is to truly be the body of Christ in the world, Christians must bind themselves together and seek points of doctrine in common. This is best done by stressing the major and most orthodox beliefs that all Christians share. The current Christian generation must realize that now is not the time to begin splitting doctrinal hairs with Christian kindred. The body of Christ's effectiveness as a witness to Jesus Christ will be measured in large part by how united it can be as it seeks to serve God and His people.

Finally, as I have already stressed in this paper, it is imperative in these matters to be ~~discerning~~^{discerning} of spirits. Pray that the Lord would lead and guide as we seek His will in these important spiritual matters. As we seek to glorify Him first and foremost, He will honor our efforts in this regard.

2. For Glossolalists

To many glossolalists, eager to share what the Lord is doing in their lives, it is sometimes very difficult to remain objective and understanding when that eagerness is not shared by other people. Thus it is important for tongue-speakers to be fair and openminded with people who are seeking more information about tongues, or others who simply are not interested in them. Fairness, objectivity and understanding must work both ways between these two groups.

Earlier in this work, I mentioned Sanders' dangers and limitations inherent in the use of tongues. I feel that these are helpful, and should be kept ever in mind when tongues are used.

Tongues are an enjoyable and spiritually enriching experience. But the Lord has bigger and better things to offer His people than to speak in an unknown tongue. Paul exhorts the Corinthians to recognize tongues for what they are- a gift of God, but just the same a lower gift. If you speak in tongues, thank God for them. But use the gifts of the Spirit for God's glory. Develop them in whatever ways the Lord leads. The gifts of the Spirit are designed to build up the body of Christ, and to glorify and lift Him up. If the Spirit's gifts

are not manifesting those types of fruits in the lives of God's people, and the lifestyles of Christians today are not reflecting Biblical priorities, we at that point need to go on our knees before the Lord for forgiveness and direction.

Lastly, I must again mention the importance of Christian unity. One of the things that make the gifts of the Spirit so controversial is the behavior and attitudes of the people who have them. The Holy Spirit does not choose to give His gifts in order that they be flaunted or pridefully used. They are designed to edify and unify the body of Christ. If these gifts are not accomplishing that as they are being practiced, then we, and not the Spirit of God, are being manifested. For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, etc...

B. Tongues in a Missionary Setting

Christian missionaries in a foreign environment may very possibly encounter tongues in some manner or form. In such a situation, it is very important that the context and purpose of the use of tongues be established as soon as possible. Missionaries must enter a culture as learners, and must conduct themselves accordingly at all times. In observing glossolalia in the new context, it is imperative that it be determined how tongues fit into both the religious and the cultural contexts.

Renowned anthropologist A.R. Tippett has analyzed various means of inducing parapsychological states, which often lead to the manifestation of tongues. As they are desirable events in most formalized religions, there are various ways by which these can be induced by religious or cultic leaders. The first of these means are biopsychologically induced. This simply means that they are induced by some physical phenomenon in the human body. This may include such activities as running or dancing, in order to produce fatigue. Or it could occur by the use of some mind-affecting drug, such as alcohol, or another substance used for the purposes intoxication. Biopsychological inductions can also occur in the forms of depressing activities such as extended prayer meetings, or else by the use of rhythm to dull a person's senses in that way.

Besides physical ways of affecting people, tongues or similar emotional states can be induced socially. These forms may include

mob or mass psychology, with activities such as congregational singing, dancing or chanting. Other social activities may be dramatic role playing or enactment or else certain types of sacrificial rituals. A key question to ask with regard to this type of phenomena is, Which forms of preparation for hearing God's word and voice are acceptable to Christians?

As we analyze the context of the glossolalia, we must always be considering whether or not the ritual or action can be integrated into Christian experience without syncretization. Only after we have spent sufficient time learning enough about the ritualistic environment can we begin to make judgments about how tongues can or cannot be in some way integrated into the culture. It is important to remember that this kind of a decision must be made with the help of the "insiders" within the culture itself. As Western "outsiders," missionaries are only guides and shepherds for the flock. Decisions such as these that directly involve the people of the host culture must be made whenever possible by Christians ^{from} within the immediate cultural context.

On the other hand, if missionaries go into a foreign culture as glossolalists themselves, again they must know the religious and cultural context in which they are working. They must be discerning and careful as they authorize or encourage the use of tongues in that foreign context. Key questions to ask in this type of a situation are, How would these people perceive the gift of tongues? Or, could it be a stumbling block to them in any way? Why or why not? As many westerners have very real fears about such spiritual experiences, it is very possible that people living in the two-thirds world would have similar fears as well. In fact, with both good and evil spirits being so prevalent and powerful in many of these cultures, there may very well be more fears and superstitions about tongues. So it is again important to be prudent in the use of tongues, and discerning and respectful of the lives and faith of the people to whom we minister in the receptor culture.

To conclude, in considering tongues, spiritual gifts and other such phenomena, it is important to always be mindful of one key point. The bottom line in determining the redemptive value of

any activity, whatever it may be, is what fruit it will bear for the glory of God and for eternity. God has shown us that His requirement is to do justice, love kindness and to walk humbly with our God. That is the standard. As our thoughts, actions and words are performed with that in mind, God will be honored, and His Kingdom will be advanced in our world. And in light of our Christian priorities, our lives will be fruitful in the eyes of all.

*Excellent
well argued
well documented - The
conclusions are brilliant*

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