

In the last decade the tongue-speaking phenomenon has been experienced in most religious groups in the United States as well as foreign countries. It is the most talked about religious item of our time. Tongue speaking is automatic speech which consists of utterances without conscious effort or thought with no rational meaning and with no conscious Purpose. Students of the tongue-speaking phenomenon see it as the outgrowth of three things: First, the dryness of religious ritual in the western culture; second, the crisis climate of our time from which people seek escape; and, third, a personal religious void.

The common human phenomenon of tongue speaking is often confused with the New Testament gift of speaking in other languages. They are not the same in content, source, or purpose. Contemporary tongue speaking is often called glossolalia. It is to be compared to laughter which is a type of automatic speech. One laughs not because he has rationally decided that something is funny or because he makes a conscious effort to, but it is an automatic response to a situation. Even so, tongue speaking does not happen because a person wills to utter specific sounds, but it is an automatic response to a situation.

There is nothing harmful or bad about

glossolalia any more than laughter. It is a common human experience. It is wrong, however, when it is claimed to be a miracle or is substituted for rational, religious expression. One shouldn't confuse a human phenomenon with a divine act.

Because tongue-speaking comes without conscious effort and cannot be understood, it has often been confused for divine intervention in religion. This was true for ancient paganism. The first written record of tongue speaking dates back more than 1,000 years before Christ. A certain Wen Ammon under stress gave forth ecstatic utterances, and the people thought God was speaking through him. Ecstatic utterances were used in the Greek oracles and in the ancient mystery religions. Even today in Rhodesia there is a sect known as the Apostles' Church which combines certain elements of Christianity with the traditional pagan practices. Tongue speaking is a part of their ceremony.

Spiritualists use the tongue-speaking phenomenon in their claim to communicate with the dead. Mormons have always had tongue speaking as a part of their religious expression. It is thought for them to be a confirmation of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon and other documents which came from Joseph Smith. The most common expression of tongue speaking

until recent years was in Pentecostalism which arose around 1900 and developed into a number of denominations.

In the early 1960's neo- Pentecostalism began in Van Nuys, California, and has spread rapidly through the traditional existing religious organizations. It has become very popular, even in Roman Catholicism, and has divided a number of Protestant churches.

The fact that the tongue-speaking experience is found in false and contradictory religions would indicate that its source is not from God but is a human experience confused for divine intervention. The fact that the same experience is known in all religions, ancient and modern, Christian and pagan, and sometimes outside the religious experience altogether would indicate that its source is not from God. The fact that it can be learned and imitated would indicate that it is not a miracle.

The New Testament gift of tongues is a miracle and consists of speaking in human languages that the speaker, had not known or learned by natural means. Contemporary tongue speaking must not be confused with the New Testament gift of tongues. One is a human phenomenon; the other a divine miracle. One is common to all religions,

ancient and modern; the other is unique to the church in the first century. One is irrational, ecstatic utterances; the other is human language. One can be imitated and learned; the other is a miracle from God. There is nothing wrong with the phenomenon of giving forth ecstatic utterances, but it is error when it is confused with the New Testament gift of tongues. Ecstatic, automatic speech can bring forth a release of tension and can be therapeutic, but when it is substituted for rational, religious expression, it is a delusion.

Paul was no doubt talking about such a phenomenon as contemporary tongue speaking when he wrote in I Corinthians 12:2, about pagans, "You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led." John was no doubt speaking of counterfeit miracles when he wrote in I John 4:1, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits to see if they be from God."

One major purpose for tongues was to serve as a sign to unbelieving Jews - a problem that was eliminated with the destruction of the Temple and Judaism as a religion in AD 70 by Rome - 1 Corinthians 14:21-22. Tongue speaking today is not of God, it is of man.

-- author unknown

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If these or other spiritual matters find favorable response in your heart, but you would like to study them further, then at your request we will gladly study the Bible with you in the privacy of your home and at the convenience of your schedule. Please call on us at anytime.

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### **Service Times**

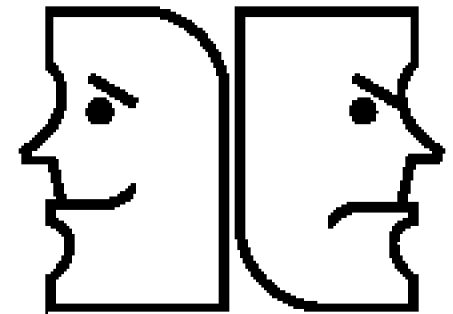
#### **Sunday**

Bible Classes - 9:30 a.m.  
General Worship - 10:30 a.m.  
Evening Worship Hour - 6:00 p.m.

#### **Wednesday**

Midweek Bible Study - 7:00 p.m.

# **Modern Tongue Speaking:**



# **From God or Man?**

