

A Comparison and Contrast of Ecstatic Experiences of the Mystery Religions and the Phenomenon of Speaking in Tongues in the Corinthian Church

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Abstract

Mystery Religions were native to Greece, and most popular when Christianity was growing. They involved secret ceremonies, though they provided no satisfactory concept of life. The cultic worshippers greatly desired to join with their gods and share in their immortality. This foundation provided the best place for the cults from the east to attain international importance in Hellenistic-Roman times. They were famous for worship in ecstasy - a broader conception of ecstasy, which is not specifically Christian. Emotions and the spontaneity were highlighted during ecstatic practices. Such ecstatic phenomena were the signature of these cults. Enthusiasm was the state of communion with the deity, often accompanying and confused with ecstasy.

In Paul's writing to Corinthians, it is understood that believers are not limited from speaking in tongues today also not an exception to practice God given gifts for His glory, but it is discouraging to see what is going on in some of today's Charismatic or Pentecostal movements in Kerala. It is almost similar situation that occurred in the Corinthian church: an engulfing of the church in pagan religion, resulting in members being emotionally moved by the desire to enhance their own individual status in the church at a time when speaking in tongues as a gift from God is elevated above others. Paul does not argue anywhere that speaking in tongues is anything other than a gift of the Holy Spirit, yet today's tongues-speakers in Pentecostalism commonly claim it is above anything else. Therefore, the focus of the researcher in this research is to what degree did the Mystery Religions influence the phenomena of speaking in tongues in the Corinthian church, what and how does Paul reflect on this issue.

Materials and Methods

In a situation such as this, the researcher will be primarily using the socio-rhetorical method to bring a plausible conclusion to the issue. The investigation of issues or tenants of mystery religious beliefs and practices will be studied through books and other related background materials, which will also include the context of Corinth and its background. Along with the socio-rhetorical method, textual study method will be employed to look at selected passages from Paul, for example 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14. Complementarily, the questionnaire method relating to the understanding of speaking in tongues in selected Pentecostal churches and theological professors in Kerala will be assisting the research to investigate the matter through a critical analysis to find the solution for the subject in the light of the Scripture and history.

Background

Corinth was a large commercial center, attracting people from all over the Roman world for trade, and thus it provided the natural environment for paganism to be carried within the church very faster and easier. This is the Christian church that exercised spiritual gifts more than any other churches. Because of this enthusiasm, the Corinthian church underwent a lot of problems in relation to the practices of spiritual gifts. Additionally, false understandings on emotionalism had crept into the church. Some of the members had an inferiority complex regarding their spiritual gifts while others had a superiority complex. It was shown that speaking in tongues, or tongues-speaking, did not edify the congregation without the interpretation of what was spoken, hence resulting in mere personal edification.

Results

Even so, the local tongues-speakers were abusing this gift by using it to exalt self and personal claims. Even practicing such tongues uncontrollably in public worship services where no one is present knows the language. So it is this abuse that Paul addresses throughout 1 Corinthians, not the phenomenon itself.

Conclusion

When we see it in this light, the difficult texts in this biblical passage become clear and a complex practice become glory to God.

Key word: *Mystery; Corinth; Speaking in tongues; Ecstasy; Charismatics; Pentecostals; Enthusiasm*

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I. Introduction

After having noticed the influences of Mystery Religions on the phenomenon of speaking in tongues in Corinthian church, there is a question that springs up: to what degree did the mystery cults affect the thinking and worship practices of the Corinthian church, especially regarding the phenomena of speaking in tongues, and how did that influence Paul's discussion in 1 Cor 12-14? If the church were affected by these pagan cults, one would expect to see evidence of these in Paul's letters, like certain allusions or terms that the Corinthians or Paul used. However, one must not adopt that Paul was confident in mystery terminology, but he was positively aware of those terms, which were in common circulation.

Justin Martyr and Christian writers of the second through the fifth centuries commented on the apparent similarities between these two religions in often-violent terms.ⁱ From their point of view any commonly shared beliefs and rituals could only be explained as an influence of paganism. On the other hand, representatives of Mithraism saw these commonalities as proof of their superiority in origin and the weakness of Christianity's beginning.

1. The New Testament criteria for Glossolalia

Glossolalia is considered one of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is understood that this gift was in function in the early Church at the time of the Apostles. It is commonly now days felt that same Holy Spirit is again supernaturally operating in conferring the charisma of tongues on Christians. Speaking in tongues, Chavda says, is valuable in public worship when interpretation is available, because the interpretation can then edify everyone present,ⁱⁱ but it is seen that glossolalia today generally takes the form of ecstatic and unintelligible utterances.

We have discussed the earlier spiritual ambitions of Paul's converts and the manner in which they had sought to satisfy their spiritual needs. It was inevitable, therefore, that he should become familiar, Kennedy says, at least from the outside, with religious ideas current in these influential cults.ⁱⁱⁱ Today Christian scholars tell us that people who lived at the time of the mysteries were wrong in their practice with tongues and that people today are still practicing speaking in tongues wrongly. However, Moffatt says restricting themselves to sources based on prejudice for their favored religion, made-up that the idea that the Church fathers were addressing Christianity in pagan rituals.^{iv}

It is understood of Augustine and Jerome who lived in the fourth century, that neither they nor any other Christian father dreamed of saying that the pagans had copied Christianity.^v Borrowing of certain religious ideas and practices may well have occurred in the syncretistic world of Greco-Roman times, but either way it seems clear that from the fourth century on Christianity appropriated a substantial amount from other religions. The mysteries and early Christianity often faced similar religious and social challenges, which resulted in the proposal of similar ways of salvation and transformation and shared points of similarity in their visions of the way to light and life.^{vi}

Having seen different practices of Pagan, which are similar to Corinthians, four things are to be noted. Firstly, speaking in tongues may manifest "as the babbling of inarticulate tones." Secondly, it may manifest as ecstatic speech expressed in low voice. Thirdly, it may manifest "as an act of worship by means of ecstatic exclamations." Finally, it may manifest as inspired utterance independent of the intellect.^{vii}

2 Similar terminology with the Mysteries

According to 1 Corinthians 13:1, *instruments in worship* terms are derived from pagan practices. This is a reference to the use of these instruments in the mystery cults as well. These instruments were used to produce, Lohse says, the ecstatic condition that provided the emotional intoxication needed to experience the sacramental celebration.^{viii} This is especially true in the Dionysian mystery. Failure to indicate love in the expression of the gifts would be as meaningless as their former pagan rites.^{ix}

According to Paul, it is the status of abiding that is the condition of the Christian. However, Smith understands that the special meaning of *πνευματικον* and *πνευματικαν* to the Corinthians was mainly due to their ecstatic emphases, especially the phenomenon of speaking with tongues.^x The next common term is *mystery*, found in the New Testament but with a dissimilar force and practice not of pagan origin; through the revelation of God only will we know things of God.^{xi}

In pagan cults this word mystery referred to the hidden secrets of the gods. These secrets are something that only the initiated could know. Those initiated into the Mystery Religions are blessed to experience the working of miracles and the speaking of unknown words revealed by the spirits. On the other hand, in the NT Church every Christian is initiated.^{xii} Possibly Paul referred to these mysteries when he wrote that "one who

speaks in a tongue . . . speaks mysteries” (1 Cor 14:2). Hanegraaff says regarding this verse if this is not an allusion to mystery terminology, it is certainly not a commendation from the apostle.^{xiii}

3 Similar attitudes in worship

Self-centered worship, in ecstatic religion worship is by its very nature self-oriented. Christians were to use their Christian *χαρισματα* for the common good, Hasel says, but the pagans were totally concerned about their own personal experience. Such attitude also was prevalent among Corinthian Christians.^{xiv}

The Daemon (δαμονιον), the desire or at least respect for the *δαμονιον* may be found in the Corinthian church. In their pagan past, Hatch says, the spirit would enable them to come into contact with the supernatural and to experience oneness with the god in the state of ecstasy.^{xv} These arrogance beliefs occurred among believers at Corinth.^{xvi}

Ecstasy was common in all Mystery Religions, as we studied in detail. Dickason says not every human being can be a miracle-worker and a seer. However, most are susceptible to ecstasy, especially as members of a great crowd, which draws the individual along with it and generates in him the sense of being filled with a higher, divine power.^{xvii} The literal word “enthusiasm” is the state in which “god is in a human being.” The need of current religious feeling is trying to overcome the barricade between human being and god. This strives to enter into the divine and finds ultimate gratification only in that quenching of the consciousness in enthusiasm, says Nilsson.^{xviii} Indisputably the Corinthian church was involved in ecstasy though many scholars today would not consider that they spoke ecstatic utterances.

4 Glossolalia in cults and in the Church

After having seen the influence of Mystery Religions and their terminologies in many activities of the early church and especially on the phenomena of speaking in tongues in Corinthian church, it was understood that the phenomena were very hard, but their identity and to what degree they influenced that congregation, is a matter of argument further. Scholars of earlier in this century expressed their opinions that Christians including those at Corinth were influenced by mysteries, even to the point of Gnostic influence in the church at Corinth.^{xix} However, later it was disproved.

Some of the features of Gnosticism were already present in the general religious attitudes in the first century. Since Gnosticism was a later Christian heresy, it would be inaccurate to see Gnosticism at work in Corinth at this time.^{xx} Whatever the cause, the church in this center of pagan influences was in serious trouble. The church at Corinth abounded in non-biblical and immoral practices along with influences of mysteries. It would be old-fashioned to refer to these enthusiasts at Corinth as people of the Spirit, Bruce says. Gnostics, Bruce says, is a term best reserved for adherents of the various schools of Gnosticism which flourished in the second century AD.^{xxi}

As history proves repeatedly, speaking in tongues was not unique to the Christian faith, as this phenomenon existed in various religions. The worshiper too, Kennedy argues, burst forth into mysterious spill out and captivated utterances of the kind described in the New Testament as *γλωσσαί λαλεῖν*.^{xxii} The carnal members at the Corinthian church and the new converts from the pagan religions to the church failed miserably in distinguishing between the ecstatic utterance of their past and the true gift of tongues given supernaturally by the Holy Spirit.

5 Glossolalia today

To analyze the widespread practice of speaking in tongues in the light of Pauline understanding we have a question: If the tongues in Corinth were not ecstatic utterances and ceased just shortly after first century, then how do we provide a reason for this phenomenon relating to ecstatic utterances today? Dickason strongly argues that glossolalia is not a phenomenon confined to Christianity.^{xxiii} As we have thoroughly seen in previous chapters pagan religions throughout the world are frenzied with tongues and its associated practices.

It is understood that glossolalia is practiced among many non-Christian religions of the world.^{xxiv} He says that certainly we wouldn't attribute glossolalia of these pagan beliefs to the work of the Holy Spirit.^{xxv} For an Indian experience of speaking in tongues in non-Christian tradition we find among the Hindu devotees some who are being possessed in ecstasy. We might be able to measure the physical changes at the time of possession of Hindu devotees as they act in a wild manner. As soon as a person hears the gospel, he/she begins to speak in tongues, this is what certain of today's churches strongly believe.^{xxvi}

The most important distinction that should be made is, Robertson points out, glossolalia does not take place by supernatural forces.^{xxvii} Therefore, glossolalia, as such, is not a spiritual phenomenon, but is a result of deep and meaningful spiritual exercise. How do we explain tongues today in the light of these arguments?

In those days speaking in tongues meant speaking in a real foreign language which had not been learned, just like the Luken incident in the book of Acts, whereas now it means speaking in a strange, unheard-of language, which is often described as an ecstatic or heavenly language like Paul's Corinthian incident.^{xxviii}

Roberts says that “to defend the present-day kind of tongues speaking, charismatic teachers maintain that both real and “spiritual” languages were spoken by tongues-speakers in the early churches.”^{xxxix} We also know that the tongues speaking discussed by Paul in 1 Corinthians was the speaking of real foreign languages but things were duplicated and altered by the influence of paganism.

However, the tongues of New Testament times could never be duplicated by all these people because they were not ecstatic languages, but real ones. When there was disorder and confusion in Corinth, Paul put an end to the issue. In regards to the tongues-speaking held up by charismatics today, Edgar says, “it can be counterfeited or duplicated by people who are far away from any experience of the Spirit of God.”^{xxx}

6 Ecstatic speech and Tongues Speaking

Brown, along with a few writers, believes about ecstatic speech that every instance of the Biblical sensation of speaking in tongues was in the form of ecstatic speech in which the speakers were in control of their senses throughout.^{xxxi} It is understood from the Scriptures that biblical tongues were in the form of a known human language.

Ecstatic speech and foreign languages are the most dominant opinion among both tongue-speakers and non-tongue speakers. Usually, this view holds that foreign languages were spoken in Acts 2 and ecstatic speech was used in the Corinthian church (1 Cor 12-14). Behm defends the use of “tongues” (*γλώσσα*) as ecstatic speech of unintelligible nature, which has been called into question.^{xxxii} Carson cites from more careful word studies of the texts cited by Behm and concludes that in none of their examples does *γλώσσα* ever denote noncognitive utterance.^{xxxiii} Carson goes on to say that even the pagan religious parallels are discounted and no longer a reliable comparison with tongues in the Bible.^{xxxiv}

Charismatics and Pentecostals are strongly convinced that speaking in tongues is a God given aptitude to speak in another language. It can be either in earthly or heavenly language and it is not necessary to have prior knowledge of that language. They take it for granted that Acts 2 shows that tongues is an earthly language. However, many of them believe that the tongues in 1 Cor 13:1 and 1 Cor 14 are a heavenly tongue or ecstatic utterance. In the twenty-first century view a difference is found between the tongues of Acts and the tongues of 1 Cor 14.^{xxxv}

However, the very understanding of the gift of speaking in tongues can be concluded here saying it is a spiritual gift given by God. It is true language can be existing somewhere on the earth but strange to the speaker.^{xxxvi} According to Grudem, Paul sees the possibility that tongues may include more than merely human speech. Whether this is only an imaginary or a real one is difficult to say, but we surely cannot rule out the idea that angelic languages would be involved with this speech as well.^{xxxvii} From Paul’s instruction on tongues in 1 Cor 14: 27, 28, speaking in tongues is not an uncontrollable ecstatic utterance, because he instructed them to be sensitive when they use this God given gift.

7 The Nature of modern Tongues

Samarin reflects that after seeing what glossolalia is and how it worked down through the centuries from the day of Pentecost that in any case modern tongues are lexically uncommunicative and the few instances of reported modern xenoglossia are so poorly attested that no weight can be laid on them.^{xxxviii} Further, Goodman rejects logically the notion that modern glossolalia is known human language.^{xxxix} Goodman answers that the xenoglossia belief is “. . . that glossolalia is not the external construction of a linguistic, symbolic code, of a linguistic deep structure. However, in terms of the present research, it is an object of hyper arousal detachment.”^{xl}

It is a sensational argument against modern day tongues speakers that tongues are a known human language. In addition, we have lack of biblical evidences that, Brown says, forcefully support the idea that angels have their own language different from human but which has its own linguistic characteristics.^{xli} This argument points out a barrier against those who claim their ecstatic speech is the tongues of angels.

8 Corinthian Ecstasy vs Mysteries’ Ecstasy

Believers in the Mystery Religions believed they were sensually in contact with their deity when they worship and devote to gods and goddesses. Paul implied in Ephesians 5:18, some used wine to assist in the overjoyed experience. Whether from literal alcoholism or emotional excitement, when worshipers fell into a state of euphoria, it was as if they had been drugged and intoxicated. They assumed they were in union with gods or goddesses.

In ecstasy mystery worshiper is brought, Bromiley says, into indescribable condition in which the normal functions of personality were in abeyance.^{xlii} The mystai sought union with their god and a mystical or psychological experience to confirm it. The psychological or mystical feeling of development obligatory was influenced and preserved by an initiation ritual. Such initiation rite into a mystery was the peak of a person’s religious life.

In other words, the worshipers would get into a state where their mind would go into neutral and emotions would take over. The intellect and conscience would give way to passion, sentiment, and emotion. This was ecstasy, an intoxicating condition of euphoria. Ecstasy might be induced by vigil and fasting.^{xliii} As the mystery worshiper experienced such ecstasy, they were lifted above the level of their ordinary experience into an abnormal sense of consciousness. They experienced an exhilarating condition in which they believed their bodies ceased being a hindrance to his soul. Ecstasy could emancipate the soul from the confinement of the body and enable a person to commune with the spirit world.^{xliv}

9 Mystery Religions and Christianity

Some critics of the practices of tongues in Christianity try to confuse by conforming the act of speaking in tongues to varying meanings based in different cities and different times. Such critics cannot see that their criticisms are true of Christianity, as this view tries to say we have different Christianity and worship patterns, against the doctrines and apostolic practices. If we can legitimately talk about Christianity, Hawthorne says, then we can legitimately talk about the mystery cults, bearing in mind the caveats.^{xlv}

It is understood from our whole studies that early Christianity, especially the church at Corinth, emerged and developed within a religious context that included the Mystery Religions, so the early Church showed obvious similarities to the mysteries. Like the devotees of the mysteries, Christian beginners undergo such ceremonial rituals as purification, fasting, and baptism in order to be admitted to the group. Often, Raju says, such Pentecostal Christians will not keep up their fervency of faith as they began with. They are emotionally carried away.^{xlvi}

Scholars have seriously differed in their view of the amount the Mystery Religions influenced Christianity or things around it. Some modern scholars have tried to argue that the Mystery Religions and early Christianity were dependent upon each other. Even in the early Church, Clement of Alexandria posited, in a somewhat similar vein, Reitzenstein says that Christianity is indeed a mystery religion with “truly sacred mysteries” that offer pure light and a vision of the only true God.^{xlvii} However, Clement sharply contrasted the Christian mysteries with what he judged to be shameless and corrupt Greco-Roman Mystery Religions. He further argued that Christianity acquired forms, conceptions, and rites from the mystery sects.

We have seen above certain similarities between Christianity and Mystery Religions in connection to their terms and practices that both of them used. Latourette has a more cautious view that “the Mysteries may have exerted limited formal influence on certain subsequent developments of Christianity but they had no influence whatever on the Origin of Christianity.”^{xlviii} On the contradictory side of this, Schweitzer argued that Pauline Christianity was not influenced by the mysteries.^{xlix} According to Bromiley, Pruemm, the famous researcher and renowned author of *Mystery Religions and Christianity* also appears to support the view that the Mystery Religions had no influence on Christianity.¹

10 Pauline Correctives on Glossolalia

It would be very hard to believe that all tongues-speaking in the church at Corinth was illegitimate. It is understood that there were groups of people who had the influence of their pagan practices in their worship to Corinthian church. These people made things worse and gave room for such misunderstanding of real tongues. Did the apostle recognize any of the tongues speaking at Corinth as being genuine? Was there, in other words, a genuine gift of tongues distinguishable from the counterfeit manifestations? Paul gave several guidelines for glossolalia, showing how to differentiate between the true and false manifestations.^{li}

In their former pagan practices, they did not have control over themselves or things they were practicing as they were in ecstasy. Therefore, among them some might have felt that now speaking seemingly in the Spirit of God along with other existing members of Corinthian Church. They would call Jesus cursed. However, this mystery cult practice and their carry over to be exposed by Paul.^{lii} Whoever says “*Jesus is Anathema*” is obviously not being controlled by the Spirit of God. The lordship of Jesus is the criterion by which pneumatic utterances are to be judged as genuine or false.^{liii}

In the pagan glossolalia, Moriarty understands, no thought was given to the harmony of participants in the group worship. Only the individual experience was considered. However, for Christianity, Paul wrote that unity is a sign of the Spirit’s activity.^{liv} Paul gave the previous safeguards so that the false tongues would be identified. So that they would be recognized as false by not agreeing with the guidelines he set. The true gift of tongues its practices will be functioned in position with the other gifts of the Spirit and edify the church. As we study further one might ask what proof there is that there really was a legitimate gift of tongues in the Corinthian church. Let us see what Paul has got to tell us.

First, Paul give guiltiness to normalize the gift and its practices. As we have seen there was a mixture of the true and the false, Paul gave these orders. Moffatt supposes, Paul gave a way to differentiate them rather than forbidding tongues absolute.^{lv} Second, in 14:26 he showed how *χαρισματα* involves more than tongues. Third, Paul gave the injunction “stop forbidding speaking in tongues” (14:39). Paul wanted tongues, which

seemed to be the main problem at Corinth to continue. Moffatt says, some sober minded Christians in the local church, as at Thessalonica, evidently were shocked; they desired to check the habit (14: 39).^{lvi}

11. Analyzing the Present day views

It is finally comprehended that the gift of tongues was the supernatural ability for the individuals to speak in a foreign language that they never studied or an existing language previously unknown by the speaker. John notices that the gift of tongues is not the ability to speak nonsense - that needs no supernatural ability.^{lvii} However, this is exactly where the debate begins. Practically all liberal theologians think that the gift of tongues was merely ecstatic utterance. They don't want to accept direct revelation and deny the possibility of supernatural.

Ecstatic utterance can be used for private devotional use, not for public use. Parenthetically, it is also evident from this experience that the true gift of tongues was not a purely passive and expressive experience but rather one in which the mind was active.^{lviii} Paul's suggestion is that the one who is speaking in a tongue must understand what he was saying and so be edified.

Abraham says that today the practicing of the gift of tongues is often considered speaking things unknown even to the speaker himself.^{lix} The supposition is that the speakers are in complete control of their mind and mental faculties, so they know what they want to say and are able to control and speak. Like all other gifts, tongues are exercised intelligently.

The beginning of Christianity believed that speaking in tongues was the aptitude to speak in a extraneous language previously unknown or unstudied by the speaker. It is exactly as they said: the true gift had nothing to do with gibberish. The gift of the interpretation of tongues was the ability to translate the message given in a foreign tongue for the common good. Raja says it is good to conclude that there is no evidence that the tongues of Acts is any different from the tongues of 1 Corinthians, except as there may be some abuse of the true gift by the Corinthians.^{lx}

The modern phenomenon of "speaking in tongues" among the Pentecostals and Charismatics has created widespread controversy in Christendom today. Manoj says that today without the knowledge of the truth many have misunderstood and abused the purpose of tongues.^{lxi} We are to admit that no Christian can disregard considerable queries by the remarkable growth of "γλωσσολαλία."

The Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations, which were not famous or heard enough a century ago, now become a great number together. Their position has largely grown to number one position. According to reports, the widespread use of supernatural gifts can be a main reason for such growth. Mathews perceives that the majority of mainstream churches have a common worry of less spirituality and right practices of spiritual gifts for spiritual growth and evangelism. Such rigid attitudes stop the work of Holy Spirit in the life of believer; still we are not liberated by the Word of God, as it assures that "the truth shall set you free."^{lxii} Kunjuni, a Pentecostal Theologian says, Paul's demands of speaking in tongues and any other gifts in the Bible are to enlighten the people of God in the church.^{lxiii} So that such practice would benefit the tongues-speaker and avoid the abuse of this gift.

The mission mandate of Jesus is not compromised. It is going on as the apostles received the commission in relation to the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). However, the Bible condemns wrong way of getting it done. Clement argues that Pentecostal organizations attract dedicated church members in the name of spiritual gifts.^{lxiv} Though modern scholars unanimously approve that glossolalia as unlearned human languages, however disapprove exact character of this miracle.^{lxv} Varghese notes that there are small children at our homes able to speak exactly what is having heard or overheard from tongues speakers in some churches.

When we speak in tongues, we just utter the words, but it is the Holy Spirit that communicates through us with the Lord. The role of the Holy Spirit is important in tongues. We are also telling the Lord things from our unconscious. We can believe that we are telling the Lord about things deep in our subconscious. As we use a holy language in prayer the Lord will do His cleansing work, so we will be very blessed by praying in tongues between individual and God. Kurian says that be aware that the greatest danger in our day regarding tongues comes when a subjective faith based on experience replaces the objective faith we have in inspired Scripture.^{lxvi}

It is important to understand that several cruxes of interpretation of 1 Cor 12-14 chapters have been interpreted along new lines. These new interpretations have been shown to make up a coherent though complex picture. Here we have a kind of mixture of Christian experience and practices in which Paul directly attacks the Corinthians through this passage. After having understood from what has been said by Paul in 1 Corinthians, some of the Corinthians began to value practice of γλωσσολαλία as sign of elite spiritual status. Speaking in tongues should not be an elite gift rather it is one of the gifts that can be used for edifying an individual or church with the normative that Paul listed down.

Supernatural gift can't be fed to anyone by force. Therefore, Raja says avoid stubborn diluted doctrines that one must speak in tongues in order to be shown to be mature in the spirit.^{lxvii} This is a serious mistake since not all people speak in tongues, because not all people are gifted by the Holy Spirit this way.

Abraham confirms in this way counterfeit tongues-speaking can be discouraged in the church. So it is time to move in the Spirit rather than emotional and prestigious feeling.^{lxxviii} Because such experience is not God-given, it will have produced good feelings of emotional fervor in ecstasy.

It is important to avoid well-intentioned and misguided enthusiasm from the contemporary practices of speaking in tongues. Those who are carried away with such notions assume speaking in tongues is to speak in a jumbled, unintelligible manner, in a state of ecstasy. Further they visualize the situation as follows when the mind is entirely inattentive from the external world and unconscious of things about it, then the experience takes place. Ultimately this is nothing more than adopting paganism.

The present-day Pentecostals and charismatics need to be careful with this kind of wrong notions and practices. It is understood that Christians are not limited from speaking in tongues. But, what kind of tongues is the matter of fact to consider when one speaks. It is important to consider that Paul does not argue anywhere that speaking in tongues is anything other than a gift of the Holy Spirit. Johnson says today's tongues-speakers of Pentecostalism claim it is a sign or evidence of baptism in the Spirit.^{lxxix}

It is discouraging to see that what is going on in some of the Charismatic or Pentecostal movements today is the same kind of situation that occurred in the Corinthian church - an engulfing of the church in pagan religion, or being emotionally moved by the desire to enhance our own individual wishes in the church, at a time when others speaking in tongues or people keep their individual gift up.

The charismatic movements and Pentecostal leaders know how to use emotions to produce their desired effect: ecstatic utterances. That which is counterfeit has been accepted as reality because it impacts the emotions of people who sat, for a long time, in churches where they never got anything that changed their lives.^{lxxx} Today, instead of praising, the present ministry of speaking in tongues in many churches is pointing toward cursing Jesus Christ knowingly or unknowingly, as some of the Corinthians were doing.

Forbes argues that the Bible does not compare a foreign language with another foreign language, but rather compares naturally acquired languages and those miraculously bestowed by God. He argues that they are not identical and can be justifiably associated to each other in their own right.^{lxxxi} Next, he argues that the reference to "tongues of men" in 1 Corinthians 13:1 favors the human languages interpretation. Second, he resists that the indecent show off of the gift of tongues in public worship will not lead to edify the church as unadorned sound.^{lxxxii}

Paul does not discourage speaking in tongues, but requests control over it when it is not understood. Paul's analogies with glossolalists do not refer to tongues per se, but to the futility of using them in the assembly where no one can understand a word spoken.^{lxxxiii} The analogy in 1 Cor 14:7-11, according to Forbes and Hasel, is not so much between human and non-human speech as it is between the futility of speaking in ways that are unknown to the hearer and the Corinthians' use of languages in church to edify themselves.^{lxxxiv}

II. Summary

Paul initiates his correction with a broader framework.^{lxxxv} Now he puts these together by insisting on intelligibility in the gathered assembly and by giving guidelines for order. The disagreement on the issue of intelligibility is mainly highlighted in two ways. One is the intelligibility for the need of fellow believers; as they hear the gospel they need to be edified equally. When there is understanding on what is being said, they might hear the word of the Lord in the form of gospel and be converted. Paul directly spoke to the issue of unintelligibility. He underlined that if it is not understood by the hearers, it remains unable to edify them.

After a series of analogies exemplifying this, we see the basic lack of benefit from what is unintelligible according to 12:7-12. Paul applies these points to this situation. He stresses that prayer and praise must be intelligible if the community is to be edified. For Paul to come to them speaking in a tongue would not benefit them. He talks about himself, that even though he speaks in tongues more than all of them, in church he will do only what edifies, that is only what is intelligible.

Paul spoke in un-interpreted tongues even more than the Corinthians as he testified. The reason he rebukes the Corinthians for doing the same because they mixed it with paganism and resulted in cursing Jesus. Paul through the Holy Spirit placed regulations on the operation of tongues and interpretations. Is there speaking in tongues apart from interpretation?

According to 1 Cor 14:5 interpretation is not the only purpose of tongues. Therefore, Paul acknowledges the fact that there are tongues apart from interpretation. It says that prophecy is greater than someone speaking in tongues, except if the tongue is interpreted. In this case it would then be equal to prophecy. The key word is except. Paul says that it is possible for some people to speak in tongues without an interpretation.

Paul was not pleased with what Corinthians were doing. Paul argues that the characteristic of the Corinthians' heathen past was the sense of being overpowered and carried away by spiritual forces, referring to the counterfeit pagan babbling that some of the Corinthian believers were evidently using instead of the true gift of tongues. Meaningless ecstatic speech was fundamentally all the same. As we have seen through in chapter

four the Corinthian enthusiastic attitude was influenced by Mystery Religions. It was a kind of religious fantasy that overlooked them. So Paul had to take corrective steps and measures on practice.

Do any of us recognize any genuine spirit of speaking in tongues in Corinthian church? It is very clear that the practices of Mystery Religions influenced the whole worship system of Corinth especially the practice of speaking in tongues. What could be the implication for the speaking in tongues community from this study? What are the possible issues that could be solved in relation to speaking in tongues today among the modern glossolalists or Pentecostals in Kerala?

References

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- ⁱ In particular Justin Martyr (mid-second century), Tertullian (early third century), Origen (mid third century), Firmicus Maternus (mid-fourth century), Gregory Nasianzen and Jerome (late fourth century) and Socrates (early fifth century). *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950) Vol. 1, 531.
- ⁱⁱ Mahesh Chavda, *The Hidden Power of Speaking in Tongues* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image Publishers, 2003), 113.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions*, 35.
- ^{iv} James Moffatt, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, Moffatt New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper and Brothers, n.d.), 211.
- ^v They had to defend their own church from the charge of copying the pagans. A composed clarification of the association between the mysteries and early Christianity acknowledges the similarities but avoids simplistic conclusions about dependence.
- ^{vi} Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 243.
- ^{vii} Christian F Kling, "Corinthians." In *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Critical, Doctrinal and Homiletic*, ed. J. P. Lange. Trans. and Ed. with additions by Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960), 252-253.
- ^{viii} Eduard Lohse, *The New Testament Environment*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), 240.
- ^{ix} O Robertson, *Epistles to the Corinthians*, 229.
- ^x Smith, "Glossolalia Manuel," 678. 674.
- ^{xi} According to 1 Cor 2:1-6, the revelation given by the Holy Spirit from God about these things is clear; it is not given privately in unknown words.
- ^{xii} O Robertson, *Epistles to the Corinthians*, 227.
- ^{xiii} Hanegraaff, *Counterfeit Revival*, 114.
- ^{xiv} Gerhard F. Hasel, *Speaking in Tongues: Biblical Speaking in Tongues and Contemporary Glossolalia*, 88.
- ^{xv} Edwin Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1890) 34.
- ^{xvi} They sensed that an idol (daemon) was nothing and that meat sacrificed to an idol was just meat for eating (1 Cor 8:1-7).
- ^{xvii} Dickason, *Demon Possession and the Christian*, 97.
- ^{xviii} Martin P. Nilsson, *A History of Greek Religion*, 2d ed. (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1964), 205.
- ^{xix} That there are elements of Gnosticism at Corinth is certain, but this is due not to accepting a system of beliefs but to the intermixing of ideas in the Hellenistic Age. All the developed systems of thought in the first-century Mediterranean world are the children of one mother -- Hellenistic syncretism.
- ^{xx} Dickason, *Demon Possession and the Christian*, 99.
- ^{xxi} F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 261.
- ^{xxii} Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions*, 160.
- ^{xxiii} Dickason, *Demon Possession and the Christian*, 98.
- ^{xxiv} The Peyote cult among the North American Indians, the Haida Indians of the Pacific Northwest, Shamans in the Sudan, the Shango cult of the West Coast of Africa, the Shago cult in Trinidad, the Voodoo cult in Haiti, the Aborigines of South American and Australia, the aboriginal peoples of the subarctic regions of North America and Asia, the Shamans in Greenland, the Dyaks of Borneo, the Zor cult of Ethiopia, the Siberian shamans, the Chaco Indians of South America, the Curanderos of the Andes, the Kinka in the African Sudan, the Thonga shamans of Africa, and the Tibetan monks, Hindus, Mormons, Moslems, Shintoists, spiritists, and voodoo devotees. Going back a little in time, we also see many Quakers, the Irvingites, Jansenites, and American Shakers.
- ^{xxv} George J. Jennings, "An Ethnological Study of Glossolalia," in *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* March 1968.

- ^{xxvi} Bill Hamon, *The Seventy Reasons to Speak in Tongues* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image Publishers, 1989), 153.
- ^{xxvii} O. Robertson, *The Final Word*, 176.
- ^{xxviii} Smith, "Glossolalia Manuel," 678, 679.
- ^{xxix} O. Roberts, *The Gift of Tongues*, 66.
- ^{xxx} Thomas R., Edgar, *Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit: Affirming the Fullness of God's Provision for Spiritual Living* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1996), 78.
- ^{xxxi} Raymond E. Brown, S. S. Joseph A Fitzmayer, S. J. Roland E. Murphy and O, Carm, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2002), 730.
- ^{xxxii} Johannes Behm, "Glossolalia," 719-27.
- ^{xxxiii} Carson, *I Corinthians 12-14,80*.
- ^{xxxiv} Carson, *I Corinthians 12-14,81*.
- ^{xxxv} This type of tongues should be evidenced by all and is not the gift of tongues of 1 Corinthians which is not bestowed on all (1 Cor 12:30).
- ^{xxxvi} Paul sees in Romans 3:13; 14:11; Philippians 2:11 tongue as a figure of speech.
- ^{xxxvii} Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1087.
- ^{xxxviii} W. J. Samarin, *Tongues of Men and Angels: The Religious Language of Pentecostalism* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1972), 84.
- ^{xxxix} Goodman, *Ecstasy, Ritual, and Alternate Reality: Religion in a Pluralistic*, 67.
- ^{xl} *Ibid.*, 76.
- ^{xli} Murphy, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 736.
- ^{xlii} Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Volume 4*, 87..
- ^{xliii} Hasel, *Speaking in Tongues*, 103.
- ^{xliv} Hawthorne, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 79.
- ^{xlv} Chavda, *The Hidden Power of Speaking in Tongues*, 149.
- ^{xlvi} Philip Raju, Indian Pentecostal Church of God, Thiruvalla: Personal Interview, 07/12/2020. Raju has been in the ministry for 32 years has planted four churches. By birth he is a Pentecostal believer. He is experiencing the speaking in tongues from his college studies as he was gifted.
- ^{xlvii} Reitzenstein, *Hellenistic Mystery-Religions*, 98.
- ^{xlviii} Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), 261.
- ^{xlix} Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters*, 189.
- ^l Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Volume 4*, 98.
- ^{li} Paul wrote, "Wherefore I am making known to you that no one speaking in the Spirit of God says, Jesus is Anathema" (1 Cor 12:3).
- ^{lii} William F. Orr and James Arthur Walter, *I Corinthians, The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1976), 278.
- ^{liii} Robert E. Picirilli, *The Randall House Bible Commentary: 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Nashville: Randall House Publication, 1987), 175.
- ^{liv} Michael G. Moriarty, *The New Charismatics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1992), 56.
- ^{lv} Moffatt, *I Corinthians*, 211.
- ^{lvi} Moffatt, *I Corinthians*, 212.
- ^{lvii} John, Online Interview on 12/12/2020\
- ^{lviii} Biju, Interview, 08/12/2020.
- ^{lix} Abraham, Interview, 08/12/2020.
- ^{lx} Raja, Telephone Interview 05/12/2020.
- ^{lxi} Manoj, Personal Interview, 10/12/2020.
- ^{lxii} Mathews John, Zion Bible Church, Manjeswaram: Online Interview 16/01/2021. He has been in the pastoral ministry for more than 32 years and worked under more than three Pentecostal organizations.
- ^{lxiii} JeyarajKunjanni, Seminary Professor, Trivandrum: Personal Interview 02/12/2021
- ^{lxiv} Edward, Telephone Interview, 05/01/2021.
- ^{lxv} Gladstone Robert, Seminary Professor, Changanacherry: Personal Interview 09/12/2021.
- ^{lxvi} Biju, Interview, 08/12/2020.
- ^{lxvii} Raja, Telephone Interview 05/12/2020.
- ^{lxviii} Abraham, Interview, 08/12/2020.
- ^{lxix} Johnson, Interview, 09/12/2020.
- ^{lxx} Manoj, Personal Interview, 10/12/2020.
- ^{lxxi} Forbes, *Prophecy*, 63.
- ^{lxxii} *Ibid.*

^{lxxiii} Hasel, *Speaking in Tongues*, 136.

^{lxxiv} Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 669.

^{lxxv} He claimed for diversity, tongues being only one among many manifestations of the Spirit.