

Exploring Aspects of the Charismatic Phenomenon

Its Beliefs, Claims and Practices; Are They Biblically Sound?

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FOREWORD: There are various contrasting views and opinions concerning the Charismatic Movement, along with its Beliefs, Claims, and Practices. This begs asking: Are today's Charismatic exhibitions genuine, manifested by the power of the Holy Spirit? Or imitation, manifested by fleshly human emotions or euphoric sensations; either of which can induce ecstatic utterances? Or, are they from other sources, *not* of human or Divine origin? And, was the God-ordained purpose for Apostolic tongues recorded in Scripture intended for:

A) Proclaiming the Gospel to unbelievers? (Act 2:1-12, Heb 2:3-4); **B)** A form of worship to be practiced by believers? (1 Cor 14:22); **C)** Both? *Ibid.*

...In other words, scripturally speaking, under which category did God assign tongues? For unbelievers? For believers? Or, for both?

This means that contemporary *tongues*, as practiced today by Pentecostals and Charismatics, are either theologically sound (*supported by Scripture*) or imitation, lacking a solid Scriptural basis. Are contemporary tongues ordained and blessed of God, or not? Can it be both ways simultaneously? Are these two opposing positions equally valid, dependent upon one's personal preference? We have *one* final authority that we can go to for the answers; God's inspired written Word. Which reminds us to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing (*correctly rendering*) the Word of Truth." (2 Timothy 2:15) As with anything else, Scripture passages referencing tongues should be analyzed, understood and interpreted in light of grammatical, historical and normal considerations, within their contextual surroundings, not misapply passages to conform to personal ideologies or emotional experiences. (1 Thessalonians 5:21)

Likewise, can personal experiences be coequal indicators of truth alongside God's inspired Word? Are they a valid means of establishing one's beliefs and convictions? Also, do things that vacillate, like feelings and emotional experiences, have an equal standing with God's changeless truths and promises as revealed in Scripture? Two passages come to mind: "Every Word of God is pure (*without error*); He is a shield to them that put their trust in Him." (Proverbs 30:5) And, "Forever, O LORD, Thy Word is settled (*established*) in Heaven." (Psalms 119:89) This means there are no new, *previously unrevealed* truths or revelations because God's Word is both changeless and permanently established.

On that basis, the Charismatic Movement either stands or falls, including its belief in signs and miracles, as well as its propensity towards propagating *tongues* as a sign of spirituality. Does one's devout sincerity make something true? The truth is *not* found in anyone's personal opinion, but according to God's revealed Word. (2 Peter 1:19-21) This all piqued my curiosity as to where the truth lie. I felt constrained to take a long look into this burgeoning phenomenon. I didn't jump to conclusions, but after five-decades of observation, research, study of Scripture, and prayerful reflection, the following are my findings, which have helped shape my own views. I have attempted to be honest and fair-minded, yet candid in my assessments, seeking to speak the truth in love. (Ephesians 4:14-15, Colossians 4:6)

Upon reading this paper, you may or may not agree with my findings on this watershed issue. Either way, please hear me out. You might gain some information that you may not have previously known. I am aware that this movement has many good people—sincere Christians who love God and desire to serve Him. I'm also aware that it is fraught with doctrinal inconsistencies, allegorized interpretations, i.e., "proof texts" taken out of context as well as what Scripture calls *private interpretations*, based on individual notions instead of Scripture. (2 Peter 1:20) And yet, its many devotees are convinced that they are emulating genuine biblical signs and wonders, divinely manifested during the times of Christ's Apostles. Are they right; or are they being misled? Read on...

WHAT IS AN APOSTLE? The Greek word *apostolos* means an Official Messenger or Ambassador, sent as an authorized representative of a kingdom or nation. Scripturally, the term refers to the *Twelve Apostles* whom Christ picked from among His disciples and appointed as His *Special Envoys* to initiate the proclamation of the Gospel message to both Jews and Gentiles throughout the known world. These were men who had seen Christ in His resurrected Body, including Paul on his way to Damascus. (Acts 1:2-3, 9:3-6; See Rev 21:14 for number of Apostles) As Christ's Official Ambassadors, He endowed them with special gifts to perform signs and wonders, done to validate the Gospel message to unbelieving Jews, who require signs. (1 Corinthians 1:21-23; Hebrews 2:3-4) The time period was during the initial establishment of *The Church*, before the New Testament canon was complete. (1 Corinthians 13:8-10) God performed these signs and wonders through His twelve chosen Apostles. Some people believe in a theory called "Apostolic Succession," meaning the continuation of the special Apostolic sign gifts through to the present age, which also aligns with Pentecostal and Charismatic thought. However, most Bible scholars disagree with this view.

INTRODUCTION – Some Background Information: During Old Testament times, when God was about to do something significant among His Chosen People, the Israelites, He would validate it through supernatural manifestations of His mighty power, done through His chosen servants.

MOSES: In the book of Exodus, we see Moses, whom God had chosen to lead His people Israel out from under bondage of the cruel reign of the Egyptian Pharaoh. When Pharaoh refused to submit to Moses' requests saying who is God that I should obey Him, God caused loathsome plagues to befall Egypt, and finally the death of all their firstborn sons before Pharaoh complied and let them go. As they were departing, Pharaoh changed his mind and led his army in hot pursuit. The Israelites found themselves trapped on the shores of the Red Sea with no way to escape. But as Moses held up his staff, God parted the waters so that they could all escape, walking across on the dry sea floor. As the Israelites reached the safety of the far shore, God drowned Pharaoh and his pursuing army as the two great walls of water came rushing back together.

(Note: SCUBA divers, who explored the bottom of the Red Sea at that location, discovered the remains of horses' and men's bones, pieces of chariots and weapons encrusted in coral, which had been there for thousands of years, ever since the day in history that it occurred.)

God then led the Israelites through a prolonged 40-year wilderness journey, miraculously providing sustenance for them and protecting them from their enemies. (*Nehemiah 9:21*) Despite their continual waywardness, stubbornness and complaining, God eventually led them back to conquer and inhabit the land that He had promised their Patriarch Abraham would be theirs forever. This was no small feat because at that juncture it is estimated that there were at least two-million Israeli men, not counting their wives and children, which would bring the total count to well over five-million people. God performed these miracles by his mighty power through His chosen servant Moses.

ELIJAH: We also see God's prophet Elijah as he stood alone against all the Prophets of Baal in *1 Kings*, challenging them to prove their false god Baal's existence, to ultimately show who was truly God, Jehovah or Baal. As a test, Elijah told them to prepare an altar with a bull offering to Baal. Then, he challenged them to call on their false god Baal to come down and consume the bull offering by fire. Elijah taunted and mocked them as they cut their bodies, crying out all day long to their non-existent god, Baal, to come consume the offering. When they were completely exhausted and had finally given up, Elijah poured buckets of water on the bull offering he had prepared for Jehovah God, drenching the offering, the altar, the wood, and the surrounding area around the offering site until all was dripping wet.

Elijah then called upon Jehovah to prove Himself real before His wayward people. Immediately, Jehovah God sent fire down from heaven, consuming the bull, the soaked wood and the altar. God's holy fire even licked up the water in the trench surrounding the offering. Elijah then ordered all the false prophets of Baal to be executed, proving that Jehovah was truly God and that He disliked false gods and false prophets who lead His people astray. Again, it was God who performed these miracles through His chosen servant Elijah.

THE MESSIAH: Then, we see Christ Himself, whose advent was prophesied throughout the Old Testament and accomplished through a miraculous, Divine conception and birth by the virgin Mary. We see His supernatural manifestations of power over all of nature, His death on the Cross to be our sin-bearing Messiah, followed by His bodily resurrection from the grave three days later, on the first day of the week, just as He foretold would occur. We then see His many undeniable appearances before hundreds of eyewitnesses, inviting some to touch Him and watch Him eat, proof positive that He was not a ghostly apparition. Some were even privileged to witness His bodily ascension back to the realms of glory to be our Advocate and Intercessor before the Heavenly Father. He will return again, as promised, to receive all believers unto Himself.

THE APOSTLES: At the onset of the Church Age (*as recorded in the Book of Acts*), God initiated various miraculous signs and wonders through His Chosen Apostles; Paul being the last. (*Acts 9:3-6; 1 Corinthians 15:4-10*) God did these to validate the Gospel of the resurrected Messiah to the unbelieving Jews, who consider such things as Divine confirmations of God's workings, just as he did in the Old Testament. (*cf. 1 Corinthians 1:21-23; Hebrews 2:3-4*) Again, it was God who performed these miraculous signs and wonders—including Biblical tongues and healings—through His chosen Ambassadors, the Apostles for His own Divine purposes, according to His sovereign plan—to reveal the Mystery of Christ. That is, the establishment of His Church, i.e., the Body and Bride of Christ "*out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation.*" (*Revelation 5:9-10*)

It is generally accepted among Bible scholars that the Church Age was initiated at Pentecost with the coming of the promised indwelling Holy Spirit (*John 14:17, 16:13-15*), accompanied by the proclamation of the wonderful Gospel by the Apostles to visiting Jews in their own languages and dialects, unknown to the speakers, astounding their hearers, who reacted in v. 8 with, "*How is it that we hear, each in our own 'native-born' dialect (Grk: dialektos)?*" (*Acts 2:4-12*) God also performed other miraculous signs and wonders through these men to validate the Gospel. Most scholars believe these sign gifts were eventually withdrawn as the Church became firmly established and the New Testament canonical writings were completed. Example: Paul, who, as an Apostle, had the apostolic gift of healing, had to leave his sick friend *Trophimus* in the city of *Miletum*, unable to accompany Paul to Rome. (*2 Timothy 4:20*) Would not the Apostle Paul have miraculously healed his friend with apostolic powers if he still could? Most likely he would have.

PRESENT-DAY EVENTS: There is presently a phenomenon gaining increasing popularity called the Charismatic Movement, which seeks to resurrect or emulate what God did through His Chosen Apostles in Acts. This movement began in the 1960s at St Mark's Episcopal Parish in Van Nuys, California, initiated by the Rev. Dennis Bennett. Bennett announced to his congregants one day that he had received the *fullness and power of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by speaking in tongues*. This writer doubts the validity of the claim that what Bennett experienced was actually biblical tongues, as seen in Acts 2:4-12. Its origin was more likely to have been fleshly in nature. While striving to manifest the desired *gift of biblical tongues*, the result was more akin to mouthing emotionally-charged ecstatic utterances, induced by or producing euphoric sensations.

The newly-birthed Charismatic Movement was a spin-off of the earlier Pentecostal Renewal Movement, which began on January 1, 1901, when a woman, Ms. Agnes Ozman (1870-1937)—a student at Charles F. Parham's Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas—after a period of much seeking, allegedly *spoke in other tongues*. This occurrence was an outgrowth of the Holiness Movement, which Parham taught, which sought the attainment a higher plane of spirituality. The Holiness Movement had originated out of the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. Note: Ms. Ozman's celebrated account, whatever it actually was, has been greatly embellished over the years.

These higher-plane seeking movements seemed somehow more attractive and fulfilling than simply following the numerous scriptural admonitions to: "Abide in Me" (*John 15:4*); "Walk in Newness of life" (*Romans 6:4*); "Put on Christ" (*Romans 13:14*); "Walk in the Spirit" (*Galatians 5:16*); "Walk in Good Works" (*Ephesians 2:10*); "Walk in Love" (*Ephesians 5:2*); and "Walk in Him" (*Colossians 2:6*); "Walk in Truth" (*3 John 1:4*); all of which describe visualized aspects of the faith-walk life of the believer's spiritual fellowship with God. Besides that, here's a little Bible reality check: *We have been "GIVEN EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING* in Christ" (*Ephesians 1:4*); and *"We are COMPLETE* in Him" (*Colossians 2:10*); and *We have been "GRANTED ALL THINGS* pertaining to Life and Godliness" (*2 Peter 1:3*)

The point being, there is nothing to seek for that God hasn't already freely given every believer at the moment of Salvation. A study of the Apostle Paul's prayers for believers will reveal that what we *do* need to seek for is: "*the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,*" and an enlightened understanding of God's greatness, as well as the riches of our eternal position, inheritance, and unfathomable Love *In Christ*. And walk worthy, pleasing to the Lord with thankful hearts *in the knowledge of His will*. (*Ephesians 1:16-23, 3:14-21; Colossians 1:9-12*)

In retrospect, there is no proof that any of the modern-day *seeking* and *striving* efforts described in these various movements above succeeded in attaining any actual higher plane of spirituality. More importantly, none of these movements were evidence of any *Divine confirmation* of any *God-ordained* event or transitional period where actual biblical signs, wonders and miracles were in evidence, such as described in the INTRODUCTORY section above.

The major difference with the Charismatic Movement being, it took on a life of its own as it spread in varying degrees, readily spilling across denominational and theological demarcation lines, be it evangelical, mainline, liberal or ecumenical. This *new enlightenment* even found its way into heretical sects and cults. Those who denied the authority of Scripture, the Deity of Christ and Salvation by Grace alone took on a Charismatic flavor. These included Mormonism, whose adherents claimed it *helped* them to follow Mormon rules; and Roman Catholicism, whose adherents said that it made their worship of Mary more fulfilling.

As the Charismatic Movement grew, the focus evolved until *tongues* and *healings* became the litmus test for acceptance and fellowship. Absolute foundations of the faith were bypassed or set aside. Things like: Scriptural authority; Christ's Deity, His virgin birth, His sinless life and miracles, His death and bodily resurrection; Salvation by Grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, i.e., the necessity of being born again through trusting in Christ's substitutionary death and redeeming Blood atonement, *et al.* This alone ought to have raised bright red flags to its more conservative adherents. (*John 1:12, 3:14-18, 3:36; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Timothy 4:3; Titus 3:3-7*)

Regrettably, in seeking to achieve a higher plane of spirituality, sincere but untaught and ungrounded believers are still being captivated by the *tongues* phenomenon, which even displaces normal worship services. Professional linguists have analyzed these simple consonant-vowel sound combinations and concluded that they are *not* actual languages, of which all real languages are extremely complex in structure because God created the real thing at the Tower of Babel. (*Genesis 11:5-9*) In each instance in Scripture when God or His Angels visited humankind, they communicated in human languages: ^{A)} Angels in human form visiting Abraham and Sarah; ^{B)} One was *The Lord Himself* in a pre-incarnate appearance (*Genesis 18:1-31*); ^{C)} The I AM speaking to Moses from the Burning Bush (*Exodus 3*); ^{D)} The Archangel Gabriel speaking to Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary and the Shepherds concerning the advent of John the Baptist and Jesus (*Luke 1 & 2*); ^{E)} The Heavenly Father extolling praise on the Son (*Matt 17:5; Luke 3:22, 20:13*); ^{F)} Angels appearing as white robed young men speaking to the women at Christ's empty tomb, etc. These six examples should cause people to ask themselves: "*Why all the claims of needing a Heavenly prayer language to be able to communicate with God or His Angels?*" ...*especially with Biblical proof that God and His Angels always communicate to us in human languages?*

Most are unaware that even heathen Buddhist and Brahman priests and priestesses practice these same *ecstatic utterances* when spirits descend upon them during annual temple ceremonies in Bangkok. I have viewed this on a video recording, given to me by a Thai Buddhist friend. The sounds these godless souls utter are of the same type—simple vowel-consonant construction and cadence—as those who *claim* they speak in biblical tongues by the power of the Holy Spirit! Who or what could be empowering this phenomenon...fleshly emotionalism or possibly even demonic? Certainly not the Spirit of God! In fact, the heathen priests and priestesses involved in these annual events also practice healings, miracles, and *slayings in the spirit*. (Sound familiar?) It's all done in the midst of their idolatrous surroundings.

I recently viewed other videos of a Buddhist priest coaching and cajoling some Buddhist women to let their intellect go and practice repeating a hodge-podge of syllables. They all snickered and called it *gibberish*. He countered by claiming it was an *Angelic Language!* What do you think in was that he was promoting? Is God causing ungodly heathen to do the same things that they claim God is empowering them to do in their Charismatic meetings? During one such meeting where Charismatic tongues were being practiced, there was a visitor in the audience who was fluent in various Chinese dialects. He was aghast when he heard one of them cursing God in one of the dialects. Who do you suppose was empowering that?

On a more chilling note, ex-Satan worshipper John Ramirez—once the third highest in rank in New York City before he accepted Christ—testified that he often watched his own father speaking in ecstatic utterances (*tongues*) whenever he worshipped Satan. Examples such as these should be profound indicators; enough to cause followers to call into question the validity of Charismatic claims and practices. Does God share His glory with realms of heathen darkness? The answer is an obvious, No! If not, who then is behind these things Charismatics call God-ordained? I repeat, these instances of heathen and satanic manifestations of an altered state of mind or consciousness (*ASC*) *should* give Charismatic adherents and "fellow travelers" (*non-participating supporters*) serious pause.

Consider also how Pharaoh's sorcerers were able to produce serpents from their staffs which resembled God's Serpent, which was transformed from Aaron's Staff when he threw it down before Pharaoh upon God's command. In the end, these were proven counterfeit when consumed by Aaron's Staff. (*Exodus 7:8-12*) What I am saying here is that this is an example of how Satan, in his limited power and subtle craftiness, has the ability to transform himself into an "Angel of Light" (*2 Corinthians 11:14*), causing things not genuine to appear amazingly genuine, until being found out.

Yet Christians who practice this *tongues* phenomenon claim they are *anointed* of God, and divinely empowered to emulate what the Lord Jesus empowered His hand-selected Twelve New Testament Apostles to do. This claim falls under the heading of *Apostolic Succession* or *Continuational Succession*. (See ADDENDUM on page 19 under *Cessationists*.) This movement continues to splinter off into various subgroups as new and different strange manifestations take place, such as: uncontrolled laughter; curling up into a fetal position; dancing; leaping; running; barking; howling and rolling or crawling around like animals, all *supposedly* done under the power and direction of God's Holy Spirit. This writer is referring to the phenomena at the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church, called *The Toronto Blessing*. Does anyone not see a problem here? Charismatic claims and practices have caused no end of confusion as to where the truth lies, of which new claims seem unending. Apparently, no new tale is too weird not to be warmly received by those under the Charismatic spell. Whatever happened to "*Let all things be done decently and in order*" as a standard for worshiping the Lord? (*1 Corinthians 14:40*)

Note: Keep in mind that the Book of Acts is Dr. Luke's written firsthand account of occurring events as the Apostles spread the Gospel under the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. As such, unlike Paul's teaching epistles, Acts is *not* to be regarded as an instructional handbook to follow. (*1 Corinthians 11:1*) And yet, Charismatic adherents still seek to emulate the Book of Acts in the power of the flesh.

To arrive at an accurate determination concerning these watershed issues, one must base his or her conclusions by rightly dividing (*correctly rendering*) the Word of Truth (*2 Timothy 2:15*), and *not* be influenced or persuaded by emotional impressions, likes or dislikes, personalities, giving heed to hearsay accounts (*1 Timothy 4:1*), or so-called proof texts—typically quoted only in part to prove a point, misappropriated or taken out of context, which sounds convincing but is misleading. Spiritual discernment is of prime importance here, since, "*by their fruits ye shall know them*" ... meaning the actions and personal character of false teachers. (*Matthew 7:16, 20*)

The Pentecostal and Charismatic groups aren't the only ones who misapply the Scriptures concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. The weird poisonous-snake handling, trance inducing, tongues speaking, poison drinking cult in the Appalachians get their twisted beliefs and practices by misappropriating Mark 16:17-18. This passage refers to Christ's commissioning His eleven remaining Apostles just before He ascended back to Heaven. Groups like these have just enough truth mixed in to confuse and convince people.

WHAT IS THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

What is the ministry of the Holy Spirit during the present Church Age? A further look at the Person and work of the Holy Spirit—the third Person of the Trinity (*the Godhead*)—according to the revealed written Word of God.

What is the Holy Spirit's work among believers? The moment one receives Christ, that person is saved from sin's penalty and becomes one of God's Saints (*Holy Ones*). The Holy Spirit takes up residence in that person's heart and life. He gives that person Eternal Life and seals with His presence as being one of God's children. He remains with that one, awaiting Christ's return to receive all born-again believers into Heaven to be with Him forever. (*Ephesians 1:13-14*) Jesus promised that He would send the Holy Spirit, who is our Comforter and Helper (*parakletos*). He is also our Teacher, Guide, Counselor, Intercessor and Advocate, and will bring Christ's Words to our remembrance. (*John 14:16, 26; 16:7*). He empowers every believer for spiritual service, distributing Spiritual gifts to each for the functional operation of the Body. Most importantly, the Holy Spirit always glorifies (*lifts up*) and testifies of Christ, never Himself. (*John 15:26; 16:14*)

Concerning the Holy Spirit's distribution of spiritual gifts, Conservatives hold that certain gifts were foundational in nature (*e.g., apostles and prophets—Ephesians 2:20*) given for the establishment of Christ's Church on earth, and that certain miraculous sign gifts—*speaking in tongues, healing, signs and wonders, etc.*—accompanied the foundational gifts as authenticating proofs that God was now speaking through this new group known as the Church (*Acts 2:1-14, 4:1-16, 5:12-39; 1 Corinthians 14:20-22; II Corinthians 12:12*).

What is the Holy Spirit's work among the unsaved? ¹ He convinces unbelievers of God's existence and power through observing Creation. (*Romans 1:18-20*) ² He convicts unbelievers of Sin, Righteousness, and the coming Judgement. (*John 16:7-11*) ³ He restrains unrighteousness or anti-God anarchy and lawlessness until Christ's Church is Raptured (*called up*)—when He too shall be taken away. (*2 Thessalonians 2:7*)

What is baptism with the Holy Spirit? (*Jesus Christ does the Baptizing*) The Lord Jesus Christ baptizes each believer with the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation, placing them into His Body, the Church (*Mark 1:7-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14*). Upon His ascension back to be with The Father in Glory, Christ sent the promised Holy Spirit, who takes up residence within the heart and life of every Born-again Believer at the moment of Salvation. This also signified the beginning of the formation of His Church or what is known as the *Body of Christ*, as well as the Church Age. (*Matthew 3:11, Luke 3:16, John 14:17, Ephesians 1:13-14*)

What is baptism by the Holy Spirit? (*The Holy Spirit does the Baptizing*) Upon salvation, the Holy Spirit "baptizes" (*incorporates*) every Believer into the Body of Christ, which consists of all repentant sinners, who are now Born-again Saints or *God's Holy People*. (1 Corinthians 12:13) Compare the Aorist (*Super-perfect*) Greek tense of *Baptized* here to the Perfect tense of *Rooted* in Ephesians 3:17b, and Colossians 2:7. Done once permanently for all time!

What is baptism of the Holy Spirit? Charismatics sincerely believe in what they call a "baptism of the Holy Spirit ." They believe that speaking in *tongues* is proof of having received the *Baptism of the Holy Spirit*. Quoting one adherent, he says that this is experience is an "*overflowing and overwhelming with the Holy Spirit releasing all holy emotion in us and we all speak in tongues.*" The key phrase here is RELEASING ALL EMOTION, resulting in so-called speaking in *Tongues* as a group experience. A digital search of the New Testament shows 30 matches of the phrase "**of the Spirit**," none of which, however, are in the context of being *baptized* in any way. Consequently, these two concepts (evidence of a second, higher spiritual experience and the gateway to speaking in tongues) are without any scriptural merit. Whereas, undeniable evidence of the Spirit's control of one's life is a transformed lifestyle! (*Galatians 5:16-25*)

What did John the Baptist mean when he said of Jesus "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire"? The meaning of this statement, as seen in Matthew 3:11 and Luke 3:16, is not difficult if one does a little contextual exegesis. Many fail to consider the context and misinterpret the term "fire" in this passage as meaning a fiery zealotness for the Lord and for His Word. However, when this is read within its context, John explains what he means by "fire" in the very next verse of both texts: "*Whose [winnowing] fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his [threshing] floor and will gather the wheat into his [barns]; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.*" People will either be Saved or Judged for eternity depending on their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Where is fire that cannot be quenched in scripture? The fires of Judgement, found in eleven places in the Old Testament, in Mark 9:43-46, 48; and in Revelation 20:10 where "*the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone ...tormented day and night for ever and ever.*" Also in Rev 20:14 & 15 "*Death and Hell were cast into the Lake of Fire ...And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*"

What is the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? The sin of blasphemy or sacrilege against the Holy Spirit that cannot be forgiven is to reject Christ's Messiahship as the anointed Son of God who came to provide Salvation full and free through His Blood-bought offering of forgiveness as full payment for sin, past, present and future. If one denies these truths, or attributes Christ's Divine power as Satan in origin, that person cannot be pardoned since he or she has rejected the Savior and must face God alone at the White Throne Judgement without Christ as their sin-bearing advocate. (*Acts 4:12, Revelation 20:11-15*)

What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? To be filled with the Spirit, speaks of the similitude of being drunk with wine, as expressed in Ephesians 5:18. When one is *filled* with wine, his actions and words show that he is under the control and influence of the wine. Conversely, when one is filled with the Holy Spirit, his actions and words show that he is under the control and influence of the Holy Spirit. Incidentally, this verse is a command (Imperative mood) in the Greek, meaning a scriptural command allow the Spirit of God to maintain control of your life. Synonymous terms for this command can be seen other similar passages: Walk in the Spirit; Walk by faith; Walk in newness of life; Walk in Christ (Col 2:6); Be led by the Spirit (Rom 8:14). The same principle is seen in the parallel passage of Galatians 5:18-26 speaking of the works of the flesh-life versus the fruit of the spirit. It admonishes the believer to allow the Spirit control one's life so that the fruit of the Spirit may be evidenced, not the flesh.

What is the biblical gift of tongues? The biblical gift of tongues is the God-given ability to proclaim the Gospel message to the unreached or uninitiated, communicating to them in their own language or dialect which the speaker did not know. This is clearly seen in Acts 2:1-12. Concerning the various passages in Corinthians, we see the Apostle Paul seeking to correct the wrongful use of *Tongues*. Tongues, along with the other supernatural sign gifts (Miracles, Healings), were given by Christ specifically to the twelve Apostles at the onset of the Church age, when the New Testament Scriptures were not yet complete. When these were nearing completion, these Apostolic *Sign Gifts* ceased to be in operation.

Important Note: All spiritual gifts are given by the Spirit for service. They *cannot* be prayed for or strived after, because they are given according to God's Sovereign choice, "... *distributing to each individual as He decides.*" (1 Corinthians 12:4-11 RLMV) Dr. W.F. Pickering, ThM, PhD and retired Bible translator with Wycliffe/SIL puts it this way: "*No one gets a gift just because he wants it; the Holy Spirit has His own criteria for distributing them.*"

What is spiritual power? We see examples of true spiritual power exhibited throughout the book of Acts. It is generally associated with the **bold and fearless proclaim the Word of God**, often in the face of imminent personal danger. We see this in the life Peter, who stood before the Jews and **boldly** proclaimed the Gospel message at Pentecost, whereupon three thousand souls came to Christ (*Acts 2:14-41*). Then, we see the **boldness** of both Peter and John, whom God used to heal the paralytic man and were warned by the Jewish authorities not to speak in the Name of Jesus again. Yet they continued to speak of the resurrected Christ with **great power and authority**, whereupon many praised God in one accord. (*Acts 3:1-4:33*)

We also see the **boldness** and **wisdom** of Stephen, the recently appointed Deacon. He was **full of faith and power** as he confounded his detractors as he cut the hearts of the enemies of the Gospel to the core and was stoned for his unflinching testimony. (*Acts 6:5–7:60*) We then see Paul, who **witnessed to others** of the miracles and healings that occurred on his sea journey to Rome. We then see his **preaching** and **teaching** with **confidence** and **boldness** in his rented residence in Rome for a two-year period, before being martyred for his unflinching testimony. (*Acts 28:1-31*)

What is spiritually? According to Dr. Charles Ryrie: "*Spirituality, is Christlikeness that is produced by the fruit of the Spirit. What better portrait of Jesus Christ is there than love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22–23)? These characteristics describe the fruit of the Spirit, and they picture our Lord. Spiritual power is not necessarily or usually the miraculous or spectacular but rather the consistent exhibition of the characteristics of the Lord Jesus in the believer's life. And this is the activity of the Holy Spirit of whom the Lord Jesus said, 'He shall glorify Me.'*" (John 16:14)

Either God is behind the present-day *tongues* movement or He is not; it's that simple! Those who claim that the Holy Spirit is the empowering agent are quick to accuse those who don't agree as blaspheming the Holy Spirit according to *Matthew 12:31-32* and *Mark 3:28-29*. Is this truly the case? Is that what these verses are referring to, contextually speaking? Can a believer truly commit the unforgiveable sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit? Sound Bible scholars don't believe so, nor does this writer, since they describe those who reject the Holy Spirit's wooing to accept His Deity as being the *Incarnate Son of God* and their prophesied *Messiah*.

The willful sin is rejecting Christ after receiving the truth. (*Hebrews 3:2, 10:26-29*) Furthermore, how could Christ be offering God's Kingdom the people by the power of Satan? In their rejection, Christ's detractors arrogantly claimed that His power to exorcize demons was from Satan, when in fact He was empowered by the Holy Spirit. In driving out the Legion of demons, Christ was visually demonstrating that He had far greater authority than Satan and the demonic world. What's more, when this passage is studied within its context, it contradicts Charismatic assertions that these verses refer to persons questioning the validity of the present-day *tongues* movement. Their assertions are not only false, but contextually inaccurate.

Back when my wife Cheryl and I were in training for the ministry, preparing for service in Thailand under the auspices of New Tribes Mission (NTM), all things Charismatic were still in their infancy. The time was the early 1970s and there weren't any clear-cut lines of demarcation drawn, so we were all waiting and watching at that juncture. Many conservatives, including myself, were wondering if the reports being bandied about might actually be of the Lord's doing.

In focus at the time were the events spoken of in a new book: *Like a Mighty Wind* (ISBN B0006WFSO0). Our bookstore even had the book in its display racks. It described accounts of various supernatural or miraculous manifestations—purported to be taking place on the Indonesian Island of Timor—as the Gospel made its way into remote, yet-unreached regions. We knew that God often shows Himself real in special ways where the Gospel is being proclaimed for the very first time. So, we obviously wondered whether these Timor events might be authentic.

My position on the subject at that initial juncture along with others, was, if God is truly in this, then He can surely engift me with the Thai language, saving me much time by totally by-passing the need to spend years of in-depth language and culture study trying to master a difficult tonal language. However, I didn't seek after anything, like an experience, etc. I'm simply stating here that I was open to the Lord's supernaturally giving me the Thai language, if He so chose.

If anyone could use biblical tongues, it's pioneer church-planting missionaries as they seek out and evangelize yet-unreached people groups following Christ's admonition in *Matthew 28:19* and *Mark 16:15*. Needless to say, that didn't happen for me. What God did give me, though, was the desire, perseverance and an amount of natural ability to help me gain mastery in, not only the Thai language, but three other local-area languages as well. I spent countless hours and even years of language and culture studies and practice as I sought to identify with the people in their daily lives, so as to effectively communicate the Gospel cross-culturally.

Concerning the purported signs and miracles on the Island of Timor, I later learned that they were debunked by missionaries ministering in the general vicinity. I knew one missionary personally, both of us being in the same mission organization, New Tribes Mission. He told me how numerous people who had read the book came there and traveled throughout the area, seeking out the people and villages where these things were said to have taken place. He went on to say that, to the best of his knowledge, none were ever found, and none of the locals ever heard of any names or places mentioned in the book, likely because they did not exist. I view these types of reports as being in the same category as what the Scriptures call "lying wonders." (2 *Thessalonians* 2:9) My missionary friend added that a Pentecostal husband and wife team serving there had become disillusioned over the whole scenario and left the Pentecostal-tongues movement altogether, reportedly later serving under a conservative organization.

NOTE: I have heard other New Tribes missionaries share how they (*being fluent in various remote South-American Indian languages*) attended different Charismatic *tongues* meetings while home on furlough, done as an experiment. Standing during these meetings they spoke briefly in the various remote tribal languages that they knew. Each missionary attested to the fact that in each instance any alleged interpretation given didn't even slightly correspond with the message given while speaking in a remote South American Indian tribal language. This also attests to the dubious validity of both Pentecostal and Charismatic claims of possessing the Apostolic spiritual gift of "Interpretation."

On a side-note, concerning speaking in actual languages, consider the fact that this writer, and many other non-Charismatic missionaries are more fluent and able to teach or converse in spoken Thai than most of the Pentecostal or Charismatic missionaries in Thailand whom I know. Now, if claimants really and *truly* possessed the biblical gift of tongues and healing, they should be able to speak absolutely flawless Thai, like a native-born national. They would also likely be going from hospital to hospital healing the incurably sick, instead of putting on staged events, where purported claims of miraculous healings—upon undergoing post-event scrutiny—have been proven to be of dubious validity.

Furthermore, the focus of the modern-day tongues and healing movement has nothing to do with proclaiming the Gospel to the unreached as occurred in the Book of Acts, because they aren't actually spoken languages. If anything, some might say that it's more about self-edification or personal egotism, as having attained or received some higher level of spirituality.

As time passes, I tend to lean more towards the ††*Cessationist* view than not. After careful consideration, I have concluded to my own satisfaction that the various modern-day tongues movements, including assertions of the miraculous, are more fallacious and of uncertain origin than they are genuine, no matter what its dedicated adherents may claim. They are typically either emotional or fleshly grandstanding at best, or of demonic influence at worst, but *not* of Divine origin. Those who openly practice and advocate these things (or *fellow travelers* who help to propagate them) spread misinformation and confusion, mixed with just enough truth to confuse and mislead innocent seekers and bystanders. Keep in mind that all true spiritual gifts are given to each individual believer by God as He decides to give; not acquired by being sought after, pressured into, or prayed for, and He doesn't pass out fraudulent ones either. Biblical tongues were actually a sign for the unbeliever—*essentially Jews who seek after God-given signs*—to convict of sin and convince to repent and believe after hearing the Gospel, declared to them supernaturally in their own mother tongue or dialect. (*Acts* 1:5-8; *1 Corinthians* 1:22, 12:11, 14:22; *Hebrews* 2:3-4)

The whole matter rises and falls on the fact of biblical authenticity or lack thereof. If present-day manifestations were truly authentic, it would be as a result of God reestablishing genuine New Testament Apostleship. Unbelieving Jews would likely be present, experiencing actual Divine miracles. They would also hear the Gospel about their Messiah's wondrous acts on their behalf, spoken in their own native tongues or dialects, unknown by the speakers (*as seen in Acts chapter 2:5-8*), not the dubious ecstatic utterances that are being propagated today.

On the other hand, some conservatives today who deny the validity of biblical tongues altogether, claim that the Apostles did not actually announce the Gospel supernaturally (*Acts* 2:4-12), i.e., declaring the wonderful works of God to the visiting Jews by speaking in the visiting Jews' own languages or dialects—which the speakers did not personally know. No, they assert that it was

actually the visiting Jews who simply "heard" the message in their own languages—emphasizing *heard*. They imply that the miracle was in the *hearing* and not in the *proclamation*. This is clearly an intentional misinterpretation of the passage, based on personal denial of the text and faulty hermeneutics. In other words, they disavow the miraculous; that God's empowering the Apostles to declare the Gospel in other languages unknown to them never took place on that day at Pentecost.

On the other hand, those who claim to be modern-day Apostles—sincere as they might be—are self-deceived at best and liars at worst, deluding many, including themselves. It is clearly evident, according to the prophetic Word recorded in Revelation 21:14, that there are only *twelve* God-ordained Apostles. For proof, just count the foundations containing the names; *"And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."* Note the definite article "the" that precedes the word *Apostles*, which denotes the exact number: "twelve" (*Luke 6:13*). So, anyone claiming biblical Apostleship today is at best personally deceived, and at worse a con-artist.

Furthermore, I maintain that *if* these present-day miracle-working "healers" were truly anointed or empowered of the Lord, would they not be seeking out hospitals and hospices throughout the land and go up and down the halls and into every room, healing the sick, the crippled, the infirmed, and the dying? More than that, even into funeral homes and mausoleums where bereaved relatives are sorrowing; walk up to the caskets of the dearly departed and command them to arise? No, instead, not being truly anointed or empowered of God, they put on staged fakery; further deceiving the misinformed and the weak in faith. I *do not* believe their staged healings (*so-called*) are produced through the power of the Spirit of God, but by slight-of-hand, trickery and the power of the flesh—some even being deceitfully demonic in nature! As the scriptures tell us: *"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their consciences seared with a hot iron."* (1 Timothy 4:1-2)

I was directly exposed to some of this "pseudo-apostolic" Charismatic behavior while strengthening a dwindling city church in my adopted home province in Northeast Thailand. Its pastor had resigned and its membership had fallen until only one family remained. This occurred in the early 1980s, when various undesirable groups were eyeing this church, as well as our surrounding village works, hoping to assimilate whomever they could into their fold in typical sheep-stealing fashion. (*I saw that occur again and again in the region where I ministered.*)

I had just moved into town and planned to spend all my time specifically on the Isan New Testament translation. However, it was not to be, since our village folks looked to this church (*rightly or wrongly*) as their elder in the faith. With that in mind, we could not afford to see the city church flounder or become another Charismatic outpost. I was friends with that particular mission's field director, who welcomed my presence and willingness to intervene.

I became interim pastor-teacher, sharing leadership responsibilities with the person I was discipling—my gifted translation assistant, Pastor J. The congregation grew in strength and number as I taught foundational truths. Pastor J later assumed full responsibilities when I returned to the States on furlough, , under which the church continued to thrive and grow through his capable leadership. Before I left, we had shared Sunday morning teaching responsibilities, worked on the Isan translation and visited members during the week, and evangelized unreached villages on Saturdays.

Things were going quite well. The group was growing stronger in faith and in number as it got back on its feet. Then, one Sunday morning when I arrived, there was a panel truck parked out front and an unknown group conducting an impromptu meeting without our knowledge or permission.

There were at least 10-12 of them, all sitting in a circle, simultaneously jabbering away in what they called *tongues*. I remember that it sounded very strange, more like the chirping many birds than any actual language. They were also trying to force our people to speak in these so-called *tongues* as well. Stepping up to intervene, I asked what they were doing. As I did, a couple of their group approached me, loudly imploring God specifically to *"cast out the demon"*... meaning me! These invaders were being demonically led and needed to leave, not me.

Pastor J was just arriving at that juncture, who was just as surprised as I. We started to extract our people out from the circle. These were mostly new believers, ignorant of the implications of what was happening. He promptly called the local police, who came and carted all these uninvited strangers off to the local police station for detention and questioning. What they had done was a chargeable offense under Thai law, *disturbing the peace!*

Talk about disrespect. We later found out how this group had gotten there. A young Christian lady in our congregation who worked locally had taken it upon herself to invite them, without checking with us first. She had recently arrived from Bangkok and had earlier come to faith through this Charismatic group, some of whom were her friends. We were aware of her background and had admonished her about these teachings. Yet, it was obvious that she was not convinced, and remained deeply influenced by her friends.

Pastor J and I were concerned that she had been offended by how things had gone down. However, the next Sunday she came to the service seemingly as happy as ever. She gave testimony that she had gone along with her friends the previous Sunday afternoon to hold a meeting at the local prison. She praised the Lord how one of the prisoners had been "healed" of a condition where one leg was supposedly shorter than the other from birth—an oft-repeated Charismatic claim.

During the following week I made it a point to contact prison officials whom I knew, asking them if anything had occurred out of the ordinary during the group's visit. None of them had heard or seen anything. I then asked them specifically about the alleged short leg *healing* incident. They denied that anything had happened, to the best of their knowledge. These officials were honorable men. If anything had truly occurred in the realms of the miraculous, as was claimed, news of it would have surely spread far and wide. But no, there was nothing, yet these types of stories get bandied about as being truth, which helps preserve and spread the lies of false doctrines and false practices.

In conclusion, I don't presume that this dear young lady, whom I love in the Lord, was lying when she stood up and shared that following Sunday. However, I do believe that she was being deceived by spiritual lies (*lying wonders*), as were her Charismatic friends. That was the last we heard of them. The young lady forgave us and was later joined in marriage by an Isan pastor friend of mine to an Isan Army Sergeant, whom I had led to faith during their courtship days. He is now a retired Colonel and acting lay-pastor of a village church that was established under my earlier village ministry.

Years later, after the church was well on its own again, this young lady, now a mature married woman with a family, declared herself to be a spiritual leader there. From that self-appointed position, she has propagated this personal *tongues* thing (*ecstatic utterances*) to about everyone who still attends—despite our clearly teaching and warning to the contrary. She has proven herself to have a strong, unteachable personality behind her winning smile, as she appointed herself a position of pastoral spiritual authority, and has spread this tongues doctrine to all, in direct disobedience to Scripture—as many other Charismatic women have done and continue to do. I'm told that meetings there have now been reduced to speaking in euphoric ecstatic utterances (A So-called Personal Prayer Language). As I stated previously, whatever happened to "*Let all things be done decently and in order*" as a standard for meeting together to worship the Lord? (*1 Corinthians 14:40*)

Note: I refer to my remarks in, *An exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 14*, starting at the bottom of page 17. It concerns women holding positions of spiritual authority over men, and propagating or speaking in tongues. Note also that women continue to play a major leadership role in advancing this movement, starting with Ms. Agnes Ozman at the onset of Pentecostalism in January, 1901. (See **Present-Day Events**, pg. 3)

Charismatic Practices: Typical Charismatic practices include the following:

- ❖ Spreading false or highly-exaggerated reports concerning tongues, healings and miraculous occurrences
- ❖ Using the term Spirit "Anointed" (*chosen or consecrated*) among themselves—Jesus Christ is the Chosen One, Anointed of God
- ❖ Seeking out non-Charismatic churches and believers with their message of attaining a higher level of spirituality
- ❖ Attempting to convert churches by forming a subversive *fifth column* groups within, eventually splitting or claiming the church
- ❖ Making incredulous claims of the miraculous on Charismatic TV shows which are applauded without any doubt of validity
- ❖ Coaxing or cajoling non-Charismatic Christians to try speaking in tongues by mouthing disjointed sounds

Charismatic Claims: Typical Charismatic claims include, *tongues* is:

- A personal prayer language whereby to speak to God. (*Note: God & Angels always spoke in human languages when visiting people.*)
- Praying in the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26, Ephesians 6:18, Jude 1:20) means speaking to God in Tongues
- Evidence of salvation, the implication being: *no speaking in tongues equals no salvation*
- Evidence of being "baptized" *with* the Holy Spirit (*Compare this to the ministry of the Holy Spirit on page 4*)
- Evidence of possessing "*Name It – Claim It*" faith (*Preaching a false "Prosperity Gospel"*)
- Evidence of their being modern-day Apostles or Prophets with alleged ability to heal and perform miracles
- Also, claims of supernatural healings of various injuries

Typical Charismatic or Pentecostal Signs of the Miraculous Include: (*often broadcast or staged before large audiences*)

- ✓ When one is full of the Spirit, gained through intense Bible study and prayer, that one receives a supernatural anointing of power
- ✓ Heal the weak and sickly by having them touch an "*anointed*" piece of their clothing—handkerchiefs, neckties, etc.
- ✓ Drinking free packets of "*anointed*" *holy water* that causes miracles to occur in one's life.
- ✓ Heal the weak and sickly by sprinkling them with their *anointed holy water*
- ✓ Make wheelchair-bound paralytics or cripples walk normally again
- ✓ Cause the deaf and dumb to speak and hear
- ✓ Raise the dead back to life (the most dubious claim)
- ✓ Restore sight to the blind
- ✓ Make short legs grow, etc., typically canes, crutches or wheelchairs are tossed aside—typically retrieved later.
- ✓ Receive *new* extra-biblical visions, revelations and messages "*directly from God!*"
- ✓ No one can predict what new and strange manifestations might occur in the future

Those who claim they receive new revelations directly from God like the Prophets of old tread on dangerous ground. The Word of God is complete as God gave it through direct inspiration, contained in the 66 books of the Old and New Testament canon. Yet, these types allege that any *new truths* they receive are valid and equal to how the Apostle Paul received the Gospel in a vision directly from Jesus Christ. (*Galatians 1:12*) These assertions only bring glory to themselves, not to God. Even worse, they add to and undermine the final authority of the written Word of God! The warnings in 2 Corinthians 11:13-14 says it well, "*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*"

A prominent Charismatic pastor-teacher claimed in writing that: "*Once the Holy Spirit releases [sic] to come up into your soul, you are going to be as close to Him, God, and Jesus as you possibly can get while living down here on this earth. Through the Holy Spirit, you will have direct access, a direct connection to both God and Jesus in heaven. This gift is just going to bring you that much closer to the Three of Them due to the fact that He will now be residing with you up in your soul area. You will be truly Spirit-filled when this happens.*"

As inviting as this may sound to the untaught seeker, do not be misled! This is pure conjecture; disprovable by numerous Scripture passages concerning the believer's spiritual inheritance and authority based on our unchangeable position *In Christ*. First, God's inspired Word plainly states that, at the moment of salvation and being *born again* into God's forever Family, we have been blessed by God Himself with *all spiritual blessings* in Christ (*Ephesians 1:3*), as well as *everything pertaining to life and godliness*, and *great and precious Promises* whereby we are partakers of the Divine Nature through the knowledge of Him. (*2 Peter 1:3-4*)

Also, what does this man mean by *Up In Your Soul Area*? What scripture passage does that come from? ...most likely a new Charismatic revelation. Without trying to sound patronizing, the Apostle Paul said he was given the authentic, certified Gospel directly in a vision by Jesus Christ Himself (*Galatians 1:11-12*), yet Paul never mentioned anything about a Soul Area concept in his letters to Timothy or the churches, as claimed here. Giving this pastor the benefit of the doubt, I am left to assume that he means one's "Life Breath," a composite of the original Greek and Hebrew terms concerning the term, *soul*.

Note: Divine access has already been freely granted through Christ, our Intercessory High Priest and Advocate. (*Hebrews 4:14-16*) This occurred when the thick veil in the Holy of Holies was torn apart from top to bottom by the Heavenly Father as Christ's body went limp of the Cross (*Mark 15:38*). This Divine access includes the gift of God—New Life in Christ—given through the indwelling Holy Spirit at the time of Salvation, making all believers accepted in the presence of God the Father through the *Beloved One*, Jesus Christ. (*Romans 6:23; Ephesians 1:6, 2:8-9*)

Another very misleading as well as alarming Charismatic claim is that born-again Christians can allegedly become "demonized" unawares. Supposedly not fully possessed, just *partially* infested. I'm not sure how or what the leader knows as to when the hapless Christian has been infested, or delivered, or how they supposedly got that way in the first place. They go through all sorts of contortions and all-night prayer vigils to deliver the so-called *demonized* Christian. I have seen them in action over many days and nights. This belief and practice is without substance, for which Satan himself is probably quite amused, since he has been able to get Christians *off-track* once again. Granted, a believer can be influenced, tempted, or misled, but never indwelt, i.e., demons taking up residence alongside the Holy Spirit of God? Never! Since God's Spirit dwells in the hearts and lives of every Born-again believer. Pure darkness and evil cannot exist alongside the pure light of God's Spirit, no matter what they might claim, be it *possessed* or *demonized*. (*John 8:12, 14:30; Ephesians 1:13; 1 John 4:4*)

In another instance, one Charismatic healer—visibly frail and sickly in physical appearance—frequented some of Thailand's churches on an annual basis to promote his healing *gift*. I recall how he once held a staged event in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, shortly after the brutal Pol Pot *Killing Fields* regime had fallen and the country had newly reopened to the outside world—too bad things can't be better regulated. The typical colorful flyers filled with grandiose claims were distributed, along with blanket advertising campaigns.

The event was packed, it was reported, and the typical healing show began. The hapless yet hopeful Cambodian people—who had just endured years of devastating terror and heart-wrenching sadness—were hungering for genuine hope and truth. What a wonderful opportunity it would have been to communicate the Gospel of God's lovingkindness, grace and deliverance from sin and death through the Lord Jesus Christ! However, all the Cambodians got that day were the staged scams of the so-called healers, which they immediately saw through. In near-riotous fashion, they drove the impostor and his crew off the stage and out of town ...to the point where the authorities were mobilized to protect them as they fled the country.

NOTE: This is not to say that God cannot or does not heal or perform the miraculous today, because He can and does, for which I (the writer) can readily attest to first-hand accounts of things that I have personally experienced and witnessed while serving among unreached people groups in the regions beyond. However, be assured that God does not operate on a stage, or before an audience, where prideful men or women are seeking glory and deceitfully gathering wealth unto themselves—for He will not share His Glory with another. (*Isaiah 42:8*).

These present-day claims and pseudo-manifestations typically occur where misinformed and misled people become deceived and drawn in. (*2 Timothy 3:13*) Those who willingly deceive these ones—as well as themselves—try to emulate in the strength of the flesh what God's Holy Spirit chose to do by Sovereign design through His chosen Apostles at the advent of the Church Age, before the New Testament canon was fully compiled in the 27 books we enjoy today, and as recorded in the Book of Acts by Dr. Luke, who was the Apostle Paul's constant traveling companion. (*Colossians 4:14, 2 Timothy 4:11*)

NOTE: As previously stated, the Book of Acts was written as an historical account, recorded by Dr. Luke to inform his friend Theophilus of events that were taking place during the birth and growth of the Church, just as he did in the Gospel of Luke concerning The Living Christ. Therefore, Acts is *not* a teaching or didactical book, as are Paul's Epistles. Also, events about Paul's life recorded in Acts were narrative, penned by his companion Dr. Luke, not teaching examples. Nor is Acts a behavioral manual or handbook (such as Proverbs or the Book of James), but remains an historical account of the ministry of the Apostles at the onset of the *Church Age*, under the empowerment and guidance of the Holy Spirit!

To their credit, some Charismatic leaders correctly believe that biblical tongues are *not* meant for believers, but are a sign for unbelievers, as seen in Acts 2:4-11 and 1 Corinthians 14:22. However, the majority are high-profile hypocrites; spiritual con-artists who peddle the Word of God deceitfully for personal gain and not for God's Glory. (*2 Corinthians 4:2, Philippians 3:19*) These types are clever stage actors, hypocrites

who ply their *Prosperity Gospel* message over the media. They appeal to the flesh through convincing tales of how one can enjoy prosperity by sending a generous *seed gift* to their ministry. They're the only ones who get rich by means of deceiving ignorant and naïve people who find these get rich quick schemes believable! All this is presuming on God's glory, who will not share it with another. (*Isaiah 42:8*)

Notwithstanding, if in fact these are truly born-again believers, I am obligated to count them as my brethren in Christ, even though they teach what I consider to be unbiblical views on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Some would say this is a secondary fellowship issue. I do not, because false doctrines lead good people astray. Therefore, I cannot in good faith fellowship or work together with them in their endeavors in the light of their church-stealing, divisive and heretical views, doctrines, and goals—things that confuse and mislead believers. The principle is not fellowshiping with false teachers, wolves in sheep's clothing who cause strife and division, and who deceive the hearts of the simple, which I believe clearly applies here. (*Matthew 7:15-20, Romans 16:17-18*)

Also, the principle of: "*How can two walk together, except they be agreed?*" (*Amos 3:3*) They cannot! What these types promote opposes the clear teachings of God's Word—complete Salvation by Grace alone, including the fullness of the indwelling Holy Spirit and the believer's faith-rest walk in Christ. Rather, these people clearly pervert and add to the Gospel of Grace, promoting emotionally-charged ecstatic exhibitions and other clearly unscriptural phenomenon, which they readily approve of; such as women speaking in tongues, yet who are commanded to be silent and not hold spiritual authority over men. (*1 Corinthians 14:34, 1 Timothy 2:12*) As such, they place themselves in line for God's reproof. (*1 Corinthians 1:31-32, Galatians 1:8, 1 Timothy 4:24-25, Hebrews 12:5*)

These types show no respect for others who don't adhere to or help promote their corrupted doctrines and practices. They employ deceptive tactics as they seek out and infiltrate established churches using *Fifth Column, Trojan-Horse* methodologies. They gain followers on the mission field by tempting the destitute and poor through giveaway programs, causing disruption, confusion, splits and division in the ranks as they sheep-steal and spread their false doctrines to gain new adherents to their extra-biblical ways.

They then claim to their supporters that they have just "planted" a *new* church, taking down any previous name placard and nailing up their own while taking pictures. When confronted, they have freely admitted to this writer that planting totally new churches among the unreached is *too hard*, so they resort to, and justify, sheep-stealing—not unlike various cults, like Mormons (LDS) and Jehovah's Witnesses' Watchtower Society, who seek out and prey upon untaught or naïve believers.

They also seek out and readily accept disfellowshipped Christians without addressing their sin issue. That is, those who are under discipline by their leaders, having been found to be living in sexual immorality or practicing other types of unacceptable and unrepentant behavior. These unrepentant ones are often carrying deep-seated grudges for being exposed and humbled. They often swear to get revenge by further assisting in sheep-stealing programs, splitting or destroying as many established churches as they can. This writer as personally watched it happen!

The Apostle Paul clearly warned: "*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*" (*Romans 16:17-18*)

As I stated above, believe and fully accept as divine truth all the miraculous accounts recorded in God's Word. God, who dwells in the supernatural, is all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful and sovereign throughout all ages and dispensations—from eternity past through eternity future. I also believe that God is just, full of loving kindness, compassionate mercy and grace. He is ready to forgive all who come to Him in repentance with faith towards the Name, Person, and atoning Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. (*Acts 20:21*)

I fully realize that God does many miraculous things yet today, typically behind the scenes. There are numerous accounts—this writer having been personally involved in some—where God has gloriously revealed His presence, power and protection to missionaries and in the local church body; as well as in the midst of totally-unreached primitive peoples where the Gospel message is only just arriving. These manifestations tend to decline once the Gospel gains a firm foothold and self-governing, growing churches have been established.

I also know that God does not work through, or share His glory with unscrupulous people—men who promote a false gospel for financial gain: "*deceiving others and being deceived.*" (2 Timothy 3:13) These types arrange staged, emotion-packed meetings where people are often brought up from of the audience prearranged, tapped on the forehead, and said to be *Healed* or *†Slain in the Spirit*, or whatever, through the spiritual power supposedly vested in the performers—who typically gain fame and fortune at the expense of their highly impressed followers.

Again, I view these unbiblical types of staged quasi-manifestations as being very-much akin to lying wonders of the last days, in that they deceive and mislead the unsuspecting. (2 Thessalonians 2:9) Biblically speaking, the only people recorded in Scripture who were truly *slain in/by the Spirit*[†] were Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10), i.e., the husband and wife team who conspired to lie to the Holy Spirit and paid for it immediately with their lives.

[†] **Dictionary definition:** To be "slain" simply means to be *killed* intentionally with premeditation. It *does not* mean to get tapped on the forehead and, upon cue, fall backwards onstage into a catcher's waiting arms before returning to one's seat in the audience, which occurs by prearranged design. Granted, some may even be overcome with the emotion of the moment and faint or swoon and have to be awakened. Where is that found in Scripture?

The Scriptures clearly teach that ALL born-again believers are *sealed* with the Holy Spirit in His Divine fullness at the moment they believe. (Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30) The Greek verb here is *sphragizō* in the Aorist tense, Passive voice (*meaning done once for all time by God*). The Scriptures also state that, if anyone does not have the Spirit, that person is not one of God's redeemed *Holy Ones* or *Saints*. (Romans 8:9) These passages counter the theory that "ecstatic utterances" (*tongues*) are required as a sign of having received Salvation or the *fullness* of the Spirit, nor does it have anything to do with it—as espoused by Pentecostal and Charismatic adherents, whether they acknowledge it or not. In the light of these verses, they acquiesce that we who do not accept *tongues* "might" possess the Holy Spirit, yet only in part because we supposedly do not experience the fullness of His power in our lives. This claim is indefensible and unsupported by Scripture. How can one divide God? As Born Again Christians, we either have the Holy Spirit or we don't. And, His power is revealed through the lives of those who walk in truth and maintain consistent fellowship with the Lord, something often missing in the lives of those who claim such things.

I had the opportunity to know personally two men of God who are successful pastors, both of which at one time were heavily involved in the Pentecostal and the Charismatic movements. One, a close friend, Pastor G, had once pastored Pentecostal mega-churches. He even held large tent meetings where the things mentioned in this paper were practiced. During his involvement, he told me that he began to realize that their key doctrines and practices concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer weren't aligned with scripture. In his quest, the more he studied God's Word the more convinced he became, to the point he could no longer continue in the Pentecostal camp. He also realized that the doctrines and practices that Baptists or Conservatives espoused were more attuned to scripture. He forsook his former associations and became a staunch, loving, caring, and doctrinally correct Baptist preacher and a trusted friend of this writer.

The other friend of whom I speak was my next-door neighbor, Pastor C, who pastored a conservative Bible Church located nearby. I didn't realize it until he told me one day of the extent to which he had been deeply involved in the Charismatic Movement.

"What happened?" I asked. He went on to say how he began to sense the things they were practicing and promoting were like empty window dressing. And, that all involved seemed to be trying to keep up a facade to maintain acceptance within their in-crowd. It was then that he came face-to-face with the error of the whole thing and left the Charismatic Movement altogether, along with his wife and family. Pastor C once wrote: "*Grow in your relationship with God through a true knowledge of His Word.*"

During our conversation he touched on the fact that, as human beings, those who lack a sense of personal self-worth, tend to seek acceptance within a group, often conforming to that group's norms, including behaviors, attitudes, speech patterns and dress codes, all to earn their approval. As if saying: "*My friends are doing it, why shouldn't I? I don't want to miss God's best for my life, or be left out. What if they don't like me anymore?*" In other words, positive self-worth in the life of many Christians is often directly attributed to acceptance by one's peers and societal surroundings, more than seeking God's approval. (2 Timothy 2:15)

Given fully and freely, Scripture tells us that the indwelling Holy Spirit (*our helper, teacher, comforter and guide*) takes up residence within the heart and life of every believer at the moment of Salvation. (Ephesians 1:13-14) He engifts us with eternal life as He regenerates us into *New Creatures in Christ* (2 Corinthians 5:17) upon our demonstrating "*repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (Acts 20:21) Whereupon, He saves us to the uttermost, seals us, and places us into the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13), and keeping us eternally safe and secure by the power of God unto the Day of Redemption—Christ's return in the air (*the Rapture*) to receive all believers unto Himself for Eternity. (1 Peter 1:3-5)

Therefore, we who are *born-again* are born into God's eternal Family of Redeemed Saints through the experience of the *New-Birth* (John 1:12-13; John 3:3-7, 1 John 5:10-13). Whereupon, we have the Holy Spirit in all of His fullness abiding within, not just in part as these types would wrongly claim if we don't receive their *tongues* teachings. How does one dissect God? The real question is; does God have all of us? As we yield our lives to His will (Philippians 2:13), we grow in grace and knowledge as we mature and gain godly wisdom (Phil 3:10, Colossians 2:6-7). This entails maintaining spiritual fellowship through keeping short accounts with God through confession of sin; consistently maintaining fellowship through living by faith as we walk in the light of the truth. And, as believers, our eternal position (*or standing*) and inheritance is "In Christ" and can never be lost. (John 3:16, 3:36; 10:27-30) Hence, the indwelling Holy Spirit seals us, matures us, comforts us, convicts us, guides, teaches and uses us as He fills our hearts with His peace and joy until Christ's return. (Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30)

Truly, the most powerful and convincing example of God's manifestation of the miraculous is the supernatural spiritual *new-birth* experience, which transforms an unrighteous hell-bound sinner into one of God's *Holy Ones*, having received forgiveness and declared justified by the Righteous Judge Himself. (Romans 5:1) At that moment, an instantaneous change occurs when one is transformed from condemned sinner to redeemed Saint and placed in the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13) These ones have become regenerated into a new persons in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), being born-again into God's family of the redeemed; *not* evidenced through mouthing ecstatic utterances (*tongues*), baptism, communion, or trying to keep themselves saved by following a list of manmade rules or admonitions, but by the power of God. (1 Peter 1:5)

After having received Christ (August 1963), this writer was invited to a Sunday evening meeting at a Pentecostal church in a nearby city. These folks were certainly more animated than the little country church where I attended, and they all seemed to be enjoying themselves. The sporadic organ and piano riffs were loud and lively between lulls. During the preaching, a woman sitting near the front began to noticeably sway and shriek at intervals, all with the pastor's vocal encouragement. Soon, she jumped up and rushed to the altar where she shouted something I couldn't follow. She then returned to her seat, noticeably spent. That was strange, I thought. It was emotionally-charged ecstatic utterances or *tongues* that she was shouting out. After the service, another woman approached me, saying that she had once been a *Baptist* until she received the *gift of tongues* and would never go back—as if I was missing out on something special. Go back from what? From these carryings-on? (Note the heavy emphasis on women being highly involved.) Frankly, it's not about being a Baptist or anything else, but about salvation by Grace and living a God-honoring lifestyle according to the truth of God's Word. (2 Timothy 2:15&16)

According to John 3:16 & 36, God loves me, and has forgiven and saved me to the uttermost from a Hell-bound eternity as spoken of in Hebrews 7:25. Ephesians 3:17-21 says Christ now dwells in my life by faith and I am rooted in God's incomprehensible Love. First Corinthians 12:13 says I am baptized into the Body of Christ, having drunk deeply of the Water of Life in the Holy Spirit—John 4:14 and Revelation 22:17. Second Corinthians 5:17-21 says I am a *new person* in Christ, who made me His ambassador, and has taken all my sin upon Himself, giving me His own Righteousness in return. Second Corinthians 1:3 says I have fellowship of the Holy Spirit, who gives me peace, comfort, guidance and joy. Hebrews 7:25 reassures me that I am saved eternally to the uttermost! Ephesians 1:3-4 tells me I have been given every spiritual blessing and stand holy and blameless before a Righteous and Holy God. 1 Peter 1:3-4 says I have been given a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and an unfading inheritance reserved for me in Heaven. 2 Peter 1:3 says I have been given all things pertaining to life and godliness and called to live a virtuous lifestyle. All these things and more, since Ephesians 3:20 says that He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that I could ever ask or think by the powerful indwelling Holy Spirit who works in me. Finally, 2 Corinthians 5:18 says I have been given the ministry of reconciliation to lead others to Christ. What else could anyone ever want of need in light of the horrifying alternative—The Great White Throne Judgement Resulting in an Eternal Torment in the Lake of Fire!! (*Revelation 20:11-15*)

Concerning the desire to see or experience present-day wonders and miracles, the greatest of all is the spiritual new birth, exemplified in a transformed lifestyle of any sinner, and evidenced by a yielded life and a consistent walk in fellowship with God under the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. (*2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 2:10, Philippians 2:12, Colossians 2:6-7*) Striving to attain anything more is futile because, strive as one may, there is no more. God's Word says we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ (*Ephesians 1:3*); we are complete in Him, the head over all things (*Colossians 2:10*); and we've been given everything pertaining to life and Godliness. (*2 Peter 1:3*) The changed life in Christ is a *bona fide* living, walking, miracle—from death to life, darkness to light. Unexplainable by the world yet manifested before all onlookers—the outworking of new life in Christ is a growing, maturing process. Like a new-born infant, who doesn't attain adulthood during the first days of his or her little life; neither do Christians. (*1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 1:5-9, 3:18*)

IN CONCLUSION: Consider the Apostle Peter's statement concerning trusting in the final authority of the written Word of God over all else, including visions, dreams, emotions and experiences. Peter saw it all yet he wrote, "*For we have not followed cunningly devised fables (fictitious or hearsay accounts) when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but were eyewitnesses of His majesty (on the Mount of Transfiguration). For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'* And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount. Yet we have also a more-sure word of prophecy (God's inspired, written Word); *whereunto ye do well that ye take heed...*" (*2 Peter 1:16-19*)

Mimicking the Apostle Peter's timeless statement, in a blog called he calls A journey into, through, and out of Charismania, a former Charismatic has very succinctly stated: "*Now that I'm in a different place in my Christian faith and no longer put much stock in the idea that we should be focusing so much on 'hearing from God' but instead ought to focus on the written Word He's already given us.*" To that I say, Amen.

That being said, as a matter of clarification I need to state that I fully realize there are many dedicated and sincere Christians who love the Lord deeply and serve Him with whole hearts; and yet, find themselves involved with various aspects of either the Pentecostal or Charismatic Movements, i.e., *tongues, healings, miracles, etc.* These folks are often unsuspecting recipients of misleading and erroneous teachings on the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer (*which is what it actually is*) and are not necessarily cognizant perpetrators of the practices described above—of which there are also many. Typically, they might have grown up within these denominations or belief systems; or became persuaded through naïveté or pressured into it later on—someone trying to force them to speak in so-called tongues, as is typical.

As I stated in the FOREWORD; upon reading this paper, you may be in full agreement. Or, you might dismiss my conclusions as being biased, mean-spirited, hyper-conservative, or out of touch—all of which I'm aware and sought to avoid. However, you might be inclined

towards my findings, yet not ready at this time to go as far as to say that some of these things I describe *might not* be of the Lord, since you know some really nice people that are involved in this sort of thing. It's certainly your prerogative to feel that way.

However, that's like asking: "*What's wrong with Catholics, Mormons, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Humanists, Atheists, or just plain unsaved Church-goers?*" As I said, you may know some really good people who are of these persuasions; maybe even a spouse, friend or someone whom you highly esteem. I realize that good people *can* be led astray by teachers of unsound doctrine, so we should all be vigilant; yours truly included. (*Col 2:8; 2 Tim 2:15, 4:3-4; 2 Pet 3:17*) I have intentionally *not* named any of the major players here; only pointed out their beliefs, claims, and practices that violate the truths of God's Word—some overwhelmingly so.

Concerning the ladies, by God's design, they are more sensitive and emotionally attuned to things than their male counterparts. That's a *positive* trait for their family role as wives, mothers and housekeepers, which also makes them strong and resilient persons. Although equally as intelligent and capable as men and maybe even more-so in certain situations, God also blessed them with the role of *followers* in the marriage relationship. On the *con* side (*my apologies ladies*), due to their emotional makeup they *can or may be* more susceptible to suggestion, since they are often the first to succumb to things like *tongues*. Please understand, this is not a gender-bashing thing, because men can succumb to things as well; yet they tend to hold back, being a more cautious type by nature.

For example: Adam *purposefully* followed Eve's lead—*of which this writer is not sure why, although I've heard all the plausible explanations*—who, being deceived by Satan's lies and subtle suggestions of grandeur, succumbed and disobeyed God's direct command against doing so, resulting in *The Total, Irreversible Fall and Separation of Humankind from God!* Consequently, God, in His Divine Wisdom and Sovereignty, has declared the husband as head and leader of both the household and the local church setting, with both husband and wife being in submission to each other, and to Christ. (*1 Corinthians 14:34; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:21-28; 1 Timothy 2:14*)

An exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 14 will show that: ⁽¹⁾Chapter 14 is a continuation or follow-up of chapter 13, where Paul makes an important distinction, first speaking hypothetically: "if, if, if." (*vv. 13:1-3*) He then gets to the heart of the matter—spiritual understanding and maturity, where Love supersedes all else. (*vv. 13:4-13*) CHAPTER 14: (*not necessarily in order*) ⁽²⁾Prophesying is of prime importance in the church, for teaching, comforting, edifying and guiding believers. (*vv. 14:3, 22-25*) ⁽³⁾Tongues is a sign for unbelievers—declaring the Gospel in languages of the surrounding unreached areas, unknown to the speaker; ⁽⁴⁾The operation of tongues is not intended for a Church setting. (*vv. 14:22*) ⁽⁵⁾When Paul said "*I wish you all spoke in tongues*" (*like him*), he did *not* mean mouthing meaningless ecstatic utterances (**See Note-2 below**) but *human languages* as he did as an Apostle, a miraculous sign or proclamation of the newly revealed *Good News* to unbelievers, essentially suspicious Jews, who are always looking for a sign from above to validate anything new as being from God. (*Acts 2:4-12; 1 Corinthians 1:22; Hebrews 2:3-4*)

Note: Remember, Paul told the Corinthians that he was headed for the yet-unreached *regions beyond* their location (*2 Corinthians 10:16*), where, what with the many potentially unique, unknown languages, his God-ordained Apostolic gift of biblical Tongues would surely be put to good use. For instance, concerning the countless unique languages in the world today, on the remote Island of New Guinea, there are hundreds of uniquely different languages, even different from valley to valley and hilltop to hilltop! These, let alone the countless myriads of unique tribal languages throughout Indonesia, Philippines as well as among the North- and South American Native tribal groups—namely missiology's whole 10-40 window!

In Thailand alone, there are known to be well over fifty different separate language groups, in different language families, along with their various subdialects, four of which this writer has learned to be able to effectively proclaim the Gospel cross-culturally in the language of the hearers. Wouldn't the Apostolic gift of tongues be of great value today to reach these unreached people groups?

Personally, and without any hesitation or doubt, this writer would certainly be open for that! And yet, God in His infinite Wisdom has chosen not to make that Apostolic gift available for today.

⁽⁶⁾Due to their spiritual immaturity and lack of discernment, Paul admonished them to "Grow Up" in their misuse of spiritual gifts. I have heard numerous untaught people exclaim: "*Forget the theology thing, just give me Love.*" The answer to that is; understanding God's fathomless Love comes from studying correct doctrine, and is not separate from it. ⁽⁷⁾Women are not to teach or hold positions of spiritual authority over men. However, there is no admonition concerning not teaching or holding positions of spiritual authority over other women and children, or even giving their personal testimony, which I've seen done, standing alongside their husbands on the podium. ⁽⁸⁾Women are to remain in silent submission in church. (*1 Corinthians 11:3, 14:34; 1 Tim 2:12-14*) ⁽⁹⁾The operation of tongues is restricted to men. (*The Greek male pronoun is used or intended here, as seen in: 1 Corinthians 14:2-4, 13, 21, 28*) ⁽¹⁰⁾During a time of prophetic revelation, no more than three men should speak in succession, with intervals so all may consider, be edified, enlightened and comforted. (*1 Corinthians 14:3*)

Paul closes with this admonition: "*Did you write God's Word, or are you just the recipients? If you consider yourself a Prophet or a spiritual person, realize that what I (Paul) am writing here are the Lord's commands, not mine. Therefore, highly regard prophecy over tongues, and be sure to maintain orderly discipline in all things.*" In summary, Paul was saying that clear, effective communication is of the utmost importance for believers to understand God's Mighty Greatness, His Plan of Salvation, and the Eternal Heritage He has given to all believers, *In Christ*. Each of Paul's prayers for believers in his other letters to the churches contain this same criterion, which is obviously of the utmost importance for the believer's spiritual growth and maturity, else why would he have kept repeating himself. (*Ephesians 1:15-23, 3:14-21; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-12, etc.*)

Note-1: The setting here in Corinth, as in all the other cities where Paul preached, was during the Apostolic age, when the New Testament Canon was not yet complete or compiled. (*1 Corinthians 13:9-10*) Meanwhile, New Testament truth was given through:

^(A)**Tongues:** a miraculous sign designed specifically for unbelievers and was a supernatural proclamation of the Good News to those in the many local unreached peoples whose languages were unknown to the speaker, namely Jews (*1 Corinthians 1:22, 14:22; Hebrews 2:3-4*);

^(B)**Prophecy:** a sign or spiritual ministry for believers, was a Holy Spirit-prompted method of teaching for the clarification of God's revealed truth in a church setting, spoken with the full knowledge of the speaker and in his own language previous to the New Testament canon's completion. (*1 Corinthians 14:3*)

Note-2: *Ecstatic utterances* were prevalent among witch doctors in the surrounding heathen populace in those days. Immature Corinthian believers were likely affected by these surrounding influences, some likely having been practicing witch doctors in the past, all of which was the emotionally or even Satanically-induced meaningless ecstatic utterances that Paul was warning them about as being unintelligible. However, note that every instance in scripture where the word tongue occurs (*Greek: glossa*) it refers to known human languages. (*Bible Knowledge Commentary Volume II; John Walvoord and Roy Zuk*)

God's Word is crystal clear concerning avoiding false doctrines or practices and those who propagate them, admonishing us to: "*Come out from among them...*" (*2 Corinthians 6:14-18*) Simply stated, it means to not continue to follow alongside the things of darkness, or under the sound of false teachings and extra-biblical beliefs and practices—things that confuse and lead people astray from the truth of God's Word. This would include any unscriptural cult or group that adds to or subtracts from to the foundational truths of Scripture. As I previously stated, I have friends who left the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, and who affirm that many beliefs and practices were erroneous; a self-edifying facade which they had to maintain to retain acceptable status within the group.

IN SUMMARY, as I stated above, far be it from me to deny or pervert God's Holy Word, or seek to limit Him in any way. That said, when all the facts are considered, I just don't see the preponderance of evidence supporting their claims of Biblical *signs* and *wonders*. Do its adherents exhibit zeal and heartfelt conviction? Yes. Very much so! And yet, all too often its exhibitions are a façade with a strong emphasis on things not supported by God's written Word. They promote and do things they call scriptural that Scripture *does not* confirm. That is the crux of the matter. Not unlike Paul's assessment of the Jews as he described in Romans 10:2, "*They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.*" So, are Charismatic Beliefs, Claims and Practices Biblically Sound? When the pros are weighed against the cons the evidence says, *No*. With this, I believe I have proven my point. Not convinced? I invite you to examine the evidence from an impersonal position and decide for yourself.

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ADDENDUM: What Does the Term *Cessationist* Mean?

†† In theological terms, the Cessationist view holds that the "miraculous sign gifts" spoken of in the New Testament (Tongues, Healings, and Miracles) were given by God to His chosen Apostles at the onset of the church age for three distinct reasons:

1. Provide supernatural confirmation of Apostolic authority over the early church, consisting mainly of Jews who require signs (1 Cor 1:22)
2. Helped spread the Gospel and lay the foundation for the early church; and
3. Gave divine guidance and affirmation to early believers while the New Testament Canon was not yet complete.

Note: In that the authority of the early church has been established, and the New Testament Canon is now complete, Cessationists believe that the Apostolic sign gifts ceased to operate with the passing of the last of the twelve apostles and are no longer in operation today. However, God's power and Divine authority is not lessened whatsoever, or His ability to do whatsoever He pleases in the way of the miraculous for His glory.

In Evangelical Christianity, just as *Creationists* believe in a literal Creation, *Cessationists* believe that the manifestation of the miraculous sign gifts (*tongues, prophecies, miracles and healings*) ceased to be in operation at the close of the Apostolic age and the completion of the New Testament (*circa 96AD*). (*1 Corinthians 13*) However, present-day spiritual gifts are given by God freely to each believer according to His will, designed for the function and interaction of the Church Body—not strived after or pray for. (*1 Corinthians 12:11*)

This is in direct contrast to the *Continuationists'* view, who feel that the Holy Spirit bestows all of the Apostolic miraculous sign gifts on persons even today, not just on the original twelve Apostles. And, that *tongues* can be attained by seeking after, coaxing or forcing one to empty their mind, and mouth meaningless sounds to get it started. These views are clearly unsubstantiated or supported by any Scripture, especially when compared alongside the Apostle Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 14:22, that Tongues are a sign for the proclamation of the Gospel to unbelievers, and not for believers.

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REVIEWING PASTOR JOHN MACARTHUR'S POSITION ON THE SUBJECT:

Pastor John MacArthur—founder of Grace Community Church (1956), president of The Master's Seminary (both located in Sun Valley, California), and author of the award-winning MacArthur Study Bible—is a strong *Cessationist* and a prominent voice rebutting *Continuationist* beliefs held by both Pentecostals and Charismatics. MacArthur has written three books in support of his position: *The Charismatics* (1978), *Charismatic Chaos* (1993), and *Strange Fire* (2013). In October 2013, he hosted a conference at Grace Community Church called "Strange Fire," to mark the launch of his book of the same name. The event featured a number of speakers who contended for a Cessationist position and strongly critiqued the Charismatic Movement's Continuationist position.

In the conference's opening remarks, Dr. MacArthur stated that: *"Watching the behavior of Hindus of the Kundalini cult, it appears that their body movements are almost identical to those of some Charismatics, who mimic the extreme behavior of pagans. This is the work of Satan; it is the work of darkness, and not to be attributed to the Holy Spirit."*

He added that: *"The Charismatic Movement has made no contribution to biblical clarity, interpretation, or sound doctrine. It detracts and confuses, and has only produced distortion, disarray, and error. People have been saved in Charismatic churches, but nothing attributed to the movement has been the reason they received Christ. Unfortunately, Evangelicalism has thrown open its arms and has welcomed the Trojan horse of the Charismatic Movement into the city of God. Its troops have taken it over and placed their own Charismatic idol there."*

MacArthur believes that modern-day visions, revelations, voices from heaven, dreams, tongues, prophecies, out-of-body experiences, trips to heaven, special anointings and pseudo-miracles are deceptive lies, wrongly attributed to the Holy Spirit. And, that Charismatics have essentially kidnapped the Holy Spirit and created a golden calf, which they all gather around in worship. Dr. MacArthur believes in Spiritual Gifts for today, but holds that the miraculous sign gifts no longer have a function, having ceased with the conclusion of the Apostolic Age and the completed New Testament canon.

He acknowledged that there were those within the Charismatic movement (*like Pastor Chuck Smith, 1927–2013*) who believed in the authority of Scripture, honored the Lord, and pursued Godly living. And, that the Movement retained enough Gospel truth so that souls could be saved. However, he saw its interdenominational inclinations as being a testimony to the absence of any sound theological position, and charged that its theology is both heretical and a departure from orthodoxy. Since everything is defined by experience, the average adherent has a weak view of Scripture, which defines the Charismatic Movement in general.

Dr. MacArthur once expressed approval of Chuck Smith in that Smith—of *Four-Square* Pentecostal heritage and founder of the Calvary Chapel movement in Costa Mesa, CA, (1965), as well as the *House of Miracles* commune to reach the counterculture *Jesus People*—had authored: *A Straightforward Critique Of Charismatic Extremism*. Concerning Smith's exposé, MacArthur commented that:

"I am grateful that some in the Pentecostal tradition have the courage to confront error in their movement and call all charismatics to a biblical perspective--and I wish more of them would do that. I am grateful for those who will speak out against these evil things. One of the pamphlets that first alerted me to the terrible, terrible teaching in the Health-Wealth movement was written by Chuck Smith, pastor of Calvary Chapel, a straightforward critique of charismatic extremism. There are many like him who have taken their stand and I thank God for their courage and their desire to be biblical, and I don't want for any moment for people to think that I don't believe there are such people in that Pentecostal tradition because, in fact, there are. But listen carefully..."

He goes on to say, *"I also believe that the seeds of these errors that they wish to fight are sometimes inherent in the very doctrines that they believe. If you believe that the Baptism of the Spirit is subsequent to and separate from salvation, you have now created two classes of believers. If you believe in mystical experience, transcendent esoteric kinds of supernatural things, then what you will do is depreciate study, spiritual discipline and the means of grace by which you grow. If you exalt feeling you will denigrate reason, and open the mind and the spirit to powers that people cannot understand or deal with. As long as these kinds of things lie at the core of Pentecostal tradition the potential for disaster is there, and if you believe that God is still giving revelation of any kind--the lid is off.*

"Chuck Smith's book is not only a statement of truth to people who already believe it but an appeal to my Charismatic friends to examine what they believe, as well as an appeal to non-Charismatics to see the difference and to see that the differences are not inconsequential."

However, MacArthur later criticized both Smith and Calvary Chapel in that they helped to birth the Charismatic Movement. He explained that: *"In 1967, a group of 'Jesus Freak' hippies in the beach areas of Southern California got involved in Calvary Chapel, of which the church let their hippie subculture dictate what it would become. Out go the suits and ties, out go the meaningful hymns, out go all the normal, traditional things and in comes the hippie culture—drugs, communal living, free sex, and all that kind of casual thing. That's a Charismatic church, the movement that came from Calvary Chapel. Calvary Chapel leadership essentially said, 'We'll let the culture tell us what we need to be.' Thus, the Charismatic movement is comfortable in Roman Catholicism, it's comfortable in dead denominationalism, et al. I think it's a false form of Christianity."* (Pastor John MacArthur, BA, MA, Th.D)

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COMMENTS: Although this may seem overly harsh or controversial to some people's way of thinking; this writer understands the validity and pastorally-inspired purpose of Dr. MacArthur's position, who has obviously observed the Charismatic Movement's growth and progression from its onset to the present. (Ron Myers)