



## Part 1: TONGUES: Is that Lady Speaking Gaga?

### INTRODUCTION — Pentecostal Power

Acts 2:1-21

1 Cor 14:1-19

### DINE IN - Corinth: A Perfect Storm of Immaturity

Silencing into leadership factions (ch. 1 & 3), jealousy & strife (ch. 3), spiritual arrogance (ch. 4), sexual immorality (ch. 5), law suits amongst believers (ch. 6), abuse of the Lord's Supper (ch. 11), misuse of spiritual gifts (ch. 14), wrong theology concerning the resurrection (ch. 15)

#### A Primer on the Gift of Tongues

- Tongues in the New Testament appear to fall into two different kinds or types:
  - The ability to speak in other human languages that were previously unknown to the speaker but can be understood by the listener (Acts 2:5-13).
  - The ability to speak in a type of "heavenly" or non-human prayer language that can't be understood by the speaker or the listener, unless they have received a gift of interpretation (1 Cor 13:1; 1 Cor 14:2; 9-13).
- Paul valued the gift of tongues – but he is clear that not everyone possesses it (1 Cor 12:30).
- Paul encouraged those with the gift of tongues to pray that they may understand what they are saying so that their mind can also benefit (1 Cor 14:13-14).
- The use of tongues is not presented as an indicator of spiritual maturity. Paul viewed gifts that focused on the building up of others in Christian community as greater than gifts that are used only for self-edification (1 Cor 14:1-5).
- Tongues should not be used as part of corporate worship gatherings unless interpretation is also provided (1 Cor 14:26-28). Remember, at The Meeting House, Home Church carries the freight of church in the best sense of the word, not Sunday mornings.
- Tongues that are used without the context of love (for God and one another) is nothing more than a loud clanging noise – all style and no substance (1 Cor 13:1-3)!
- There is little in the biblical text that would lead us to believe that tongues was a gift for only a fixed time in history – although it does seem that we won't need it when the Kingdom of God is fully manifest in the new creation (1 Cor 13:8-12).
- There are some historical accounts of tongues since the days of the Apostles, however, tongue speaking took on a much broader practice in the life of the church since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the phenomena known as the Azusa Street Revival (Los Angeles 1906). This was an event that many consider to be the birthplace of the modern Pentecostal movement.

### TAKE OUT #1 – Loving People in Dysfunction Junction

The misuse of tongues is just one flashpoint of immaturity in a litany of dysfunction within the Corinthian church. Despite the many places where they continued to "miss the mark", Paul demonstrated true maturity and leadership through his tenacious love and commitment toward these very broken people. While there may be appropriate and healthy reasons to transition from a church community, we must be careful to resist the urge to "cut and run" at the first sign of immaturity in others. **The best gift that we can give dysfunctional Christians is the committed love and influence of mature Christ Followers.**  
Romans 15:1-6; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

### TAKE OUT #2 – Lost in Translation?

While we can privately enjoy our relationship with God in a variety of creative and meaningful ways (including speaking in tongues), Paul stresses the importance that our public gatherings be places where prayer and teaching is intelligible and clearly understood. **Insisting on praying, speaking or worshipping in a way that is personally beneficial but confusing to others lacks love, and is a marker of immaturity not "super-spirituality".**

1 Corinthians 13:1-2; 14:16-18; 14:23; Philippians 2:3

### TAKE OUT #3 – Refreshed in Order to Serve

While not every believer speaks in tongues, many do long for a greater experience of God's love and power in their personal lives. Our active trust in God is not dependent upon our feelings and emotions, but the Holy Spirit has been given to us for strength, comfort and encouragement, enabling us to love and serve others. **Consider inviting the Spirit to equip you with fresh resources, gifts and insights that can ultimately be used to refresh and edify others** – remember to be "open handed" as to how this may manifest itself in your life.  
John 7:38-39; Ephesians 3:14-21; 2 Timothy 1:6-7

### CONCLUSION – Babel Undone: Inclusive Language

Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:1-21

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### HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS

#### Warming Up...

- In general, would you say that the topic of "tongues" intrigues you, scares you or encourages you, based on your personal experience? Why?

#### Look to the Book...

- Read **1 Corinthians 13** and then **1 Cor 14:1-19**. A) Why is chapter 13 so important as we understand the correct use of tongues and prophecy? *Note: more on prophecy to come!* B) Looking at **1 Cor 13:4-7**, list all of the attributes of love, making connections as to what these attributes could practically look like in terms of a healthy and loving community in your Home Church context. C) Looking at **1 Cor 14:20**, how does the misuse of tongues in the public gathering reflect childish thinking? D) Building on **1 Cor 13** and also reading **Philippians 2:1-8**, what are the markers of someone who is spiritual mature in community?

#### So What?...

- Read Take Out #2 – A) As we think about language, is there anything in terms of our practice or approach at Home Church where we could do a better job of "translation" for the sake of visitors or seekers? B) How does the fact that God became one of us in the person of Jesus, demonstrate the importance of providing clear communication to those who are seeking?
- Read Take Out #3 – Is there someone in the group who is particularly feeling dry and in need of refreshment? Take a moment to pray for these individuals, keeping in mind Paul's prayer in **Ephesians 3:14-21**.

The Meeting House | Sunday, March 21/28, 2010 | Paul Morris

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