

Tongues Throughout Church History

By Rev. Mel C. Montgomery

INTRODUCTION

Some Christians believe that speaking in tongues was a temporary experience that ended with the Apostles.

I do not believe that.

I find no Scriptural support for cessationism.

But I do not consider cessationists to be my enemies. They are legitimate fellow believers who see things a little differently than I do, on one subject. Reasonable people can disagree without being enemies, or slinging the "h"-word (heretic) at each other.

All Scripture I can find clearly shows that these wonderful spiritual gifts were to continue to the honor and glory of Jesus Christ to this day, and until the Rapture.

Cessationism is Refuted by Scripture and History.

A visitor to my website asked me recently to show proof from Early Church records, written by legitimate, orthodox Christian leaders, that speaking in tongues continued after the last apostle died, and to furnish the specific references so that he could look them up for himself.

I found this study to be an interesting journey indeed, that has bolstered my faith in the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in our day and hour.

As you will read in the next paragraphs, there are numerous ancient, reliable, orthodox references to speaking in tongues continuing centuries beyond the lives of the Apostles.

As we read these ancient eye-witness accounts, you will see that genuine speaking in tongues continued directly from the Day of Pentecost, through the lives of the Apostles in Acts, then onward in the Early Church, to the Medieval Church, to the Reformation Era, to the present.

Examine the evidence for yourself.

HISTORICAL RECORD

Cessationists argue that the moment the last Apostle died, or when the final sentence of the last book of the Bible had been written, all miracles including speaking in tongues ceased.

Are they correct?

Let's first establish the date that miracles supposedly ceased:

The Apostle Paul died somewhere between 64 AD and 69 AD, and the last Apostle, the Apostle John, died in 110 AD.

So let's compare the cut-off date, the year of the last Apostle's death, with the timeline of events in the Early Church:

Justin Martyr (100 ad--165 AD) was only 10 years old when the Apostle John died. He was an early Christian apologist. His works are the earliest Christian apologies, of substantial size, to survive to today.

Forty years after the Apostle John's death, he writes in 150 AD:

"For the prophetic gifts remain with us, even to this present time." (Dialogue with Trypho, Chapter 82).

And, "Now, it is possible to see amongst us women and men who possess gifts of the Spirit of God;" Dialogue with Trypho, Chapter 88.

It is simply beyond dispute that the prophetic gifts continued until 150 AD.--40 years after the last Apostle died.

Justin Martyr was no heretic. His writings are still accepted to this day by all theologians I know of, as sound teachings.

Irenaeus (c.130-202 AD) was born 20 years after the last Apostle died.

He was bishop of Lugdunum in Gaul, which is now Lyon, France. His writings were formative in the early development of Christian theology. Like Justin Martyr, he was an early Christian apologist. His writings carry significant weight because he was a disciple of Polycarp, who had been a disciple of the Apostle John.

Irenaeus writes of believers in his day:

"Wherefore, also, those who are in truth His disciples, receiving grace from Him, do in His name perform [miracles], so as to promote the welfare of other men, according to the gift which each one has received from Him. For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe [in Christ] and join themselves to the Church. Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions. Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and remained among us for many years. And what shall I more say? It is not possible to name the number of gifts which the Church, [scattered] throughout the whole world, has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ," Irenaeus Against Heresies, Book II, Chapter 32, section 4.

Additionally Irenaeus writes:

"We speak wisdom among them that are perfect, terming those persons "perfect" who have received the Spirit of God, and who through the Spirit of God do speak in all languages, as he used Himself also to speak. In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God," --Irenaeus Against Heresies, Book V. Chapter 6. section 1.

The writings of Irenaeus carry significant weight, especially concerning spiritual gifts considering:

Irenaeus had learned directly from Polycarp who had sat under the instruction of the Apostle John.

John had traveled with Christ and had spoken in tongues at Pentecost.

Surely the Apostle John knew genuine prophecy and genuine speaking in tongues when he experienced them and heard them in others.

It is only reasonable to assume that John passed clear teachings on to Polycarp, who in turn, passed such teachings and understandings on to Irenaeus.

Had John given any warning that the gifts would cease upon his death, both Polycarp and Irenaeus would have known of it.

Irenaeus testifies, in writings that exist to this day, that "prophetic expressions" and believers "who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages" were so common and widespread in his life (130 - 202 AD) that "...it is not possible to name the number of gifts..."

His comments were written probably 80 to 90 years after the last Apostle died.

If these gifts ceased 90 years previously, then to what was Irenaeus referring?

Tertullian (ca. 155-230 AD) was an Early Christian leader, and apologist.

In writing against the heretic Marcion, Tertullian writes:

"Let Marcion then exhibit, as gifts of his god, some prophets, such as have not spoken by human sense, but with the Spirit of God, such as have both predicted things to come, and have made manifest the secrets of the heart; let him produce a psalm, a vision, a prayer--only let it be by the Spirit, in an ecstasy, that is, in a rapture, whenever an interpretation of tongues has occurred to him;... Now all these signs (of spiritual gifts) are forthcoming from my side without any difficulty..."--Tertullian Against Marcion, Book 5 Chapter 8.

Tertullian wrote this 65 to 110 years after the last Apostle died. If these gifts were not inspired by the Spirit of God, then from whom did they come?

Asterius Urbanus (ca. 232 AD) writes:

"For the Apostle [Paul] deems that the gift of prophecy should abide in all the church up to the time of the final advent."--The Extant Writings of Asterius Urbanus Chapter X.

Urbanus explicitly denies the theory of cessationism.

Novatian (d. 258AD), was a theologian, scholar, and writer.

Novatian wrote:

"This is He who places prophets in the Church, instructs teachers, directs tongues, gives powers and healings, does wonderful works, often discrimination of spirits, affords powers of government, suggests counsels, and orders and arranges whatever other gifts there are of charismata; and thus make the Lord's Church everywhere, and in all, perfected and completed."--Treatise Concerning the Trinity Chapter 29.

This was written as late as 140 years after the death of John the Apostle.

If Novatian was not witnessing genuine charismata, true healings, and genuine tongues, then what was he witnessing?

Hilary (c.300-367 AD), born 190 years after the last Apostle died, was bishop of Poitiers and considered an eminent Doctor of the Western Christian Church. He testified that speaking in tongues and interpreting were present in the Church in his lifetime.

Hilary wrote:

"For God hath set same in the Church, first apostles...secondly prophets...thirdly teachers...next mighty works, among which are the healing of diseases...and gifts of either speaking or interpreting divers kinds of tongues. Clearly these are [not were] the Church's agents of ministry and work of whom the body of Christ consists; and God has ordained them."--On the Trinity, Book 8 Chapter 33.

Hilary wrote this nearly two centuries after the last Apostle died.

Hilary was writing of speaking in tongues and interpreting occurring in orthodox Christian circles. He approved of them, calling tongues and interpretation and other gifts, "the Church's agents of ministry...and God has ordained them."

If the gifts ended with John's death, then this eminent Doctor of the Western Church was absolutely deceived.

What was he observing if not the genuine gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Ambrose (c.340 – 397 AD), Bishop of Milan, was one of the most eminent bishops of the 4th century. Together with Augustine of Hippo, Jerome, and Gregory I, he is counted as one of the four doctors of the west of antique church history. (Wikipedia).

Ambrose wrote:

"As also the teacher of the Gentiles [Paul] tells us, when he says: "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers; then miracles, the gift of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues.

See, God set apostles, and set prophets and teachers, gave the gift of healings, which you find above to be given by the Holy Spirit; gave divers kinds of tongues....Not all, says he, have the gift of healings, nor do all, says he, speak with tongues...as the Father gives the gift of tongues, so, too, has the Son also granted it."--Of the Holy Spirit 8, 149-151.

Written nearly three centuries after John's death.

Ambrose is not considered today to be a heretic. On the contrary, he is acknowledged as one of the first Doctors of Theology of the Early Church. And he writes of the gift of tongues in the present, not the past, tense.

Was he deceived also?

Error in the Early Church

In the Early Church, as with the Modern Church, various schools of thought evolved into different groups. Some of these groups remained orthodox, some were mostly orthodox with a few doctrinal oddities or errors, and others fell off into deep error.

Tongues speaking Christians were not immune to the same failings experienced by the rest of the body of Christ.

Montanism

After so many centuries have passed, combined with the fact that none of the original Montanist writings survived to today, our understanding of the Montanists is sketchy. But what little we know is disturbing.

Montanists followed the teachings of Montanus who claimed to be a Christian, and a prophet of sorts. He traveled through Asia Minor, teaching and operating in his gift, with two female companions Prisca, and Maximilla.

These two women claimed to be the embodiment of the Holy Spirit.

Montanus claimed also to be the Holy Spirit and related to others various visions, revelations, and prophecies he believed God had given him. Montanus and these two women were known as "the Three."

Prisca claimed to have seen Jesus Christ in a female form in a vision.

The teachings and prophecies of Montanus, Prisca and Maximilla were initially welcomed by the Church, but upon closer examination, and as the prophecies and teachings became more and more bizarre and unscriptural, they were properly rejected by the major Church leaders of the time. However, their false teachings and prophecies spawned a movement that lasted several centuries.

It is interesting to note the reason that their prophecies were rejected by the majority of the Church. They were rejected, not because the Church believed that the Gifts had ceased. No, these prophecies were initially welcomed, with the assumption that they were genuine. Prophecy was not unknown in the Church at the time. But these prophecies and teachings were rejected because the content of them were clearly unbiblical.

The question arises in my mind, did these three start out as orthodox Christians to whom God began to reveal Himself, and by giving God's written Word no heed, did they then slowly drift off into error? Or were they false prophets from the first day? After so many centuries, and with so little direct documentation, I can not say nor can anyone else.

Either way they are perfect examples of what Brother Hagin, Sister Goodwin, old-time Pentecostal leaders, and I have warned about. They were apparently open to every supernatural experience that came along, and they gave little, if any heed, to God's written word.

Brothers and Sisters, I don't care how supernatural the experience seems, how inspiring it seems, any vision, dream, revelation, prophecy, or message in tongues and interpretation that does not agree with the foundational doctrines of Christianity, is simply not from God and must be rejected.

I will repeat the point I make in other articles: We are to build our lives, ministries, and churches on the

preaching and teaching of God's written Word. We are to hold fast to sound doctrine. Then, if God gives an utterance or revelation or miracle, we will know it is from God because such will always be in agreement with the Scriptures. If something supernatural manifests in our midst, and it glorifies man, leads away from faith in Jesus Christ, or contradicts God's written Word, it must be rejected without a moment's hesitation and without a second thought.

Montanus and his two companions did not hold fast to God's written Word and the teachings of the Apostles. They believed that their prophecies equaled or were greater than Scripture. That is gross error. No prophecy given after the completion of the Scriptures in the First and Second Centuries, to this day, is equal to Scripture.

These three made claims that I have never heard made in 26 years of attending Charismatic services. They claimed that they were God, or that they were the Holy Spirit. Prisca is quoted as saying when she was excommunicated, "I am driven away like the wolf from the sheep. I am no wolf: I am word and spirit and power." Such claims made by them or any other Christian is blasphemy, heresy, and nonsense.

People who flow in the Gift of Prophecy or tongues, are simply mere mortal Christians, vessels, through whom God chooses to flow in that moment to bless others. Only God is God. Our God is a jealous God, and He will not share His glory with another.

There are indications that Montanus and his followers, placed a gross over-emphasis on prophecy, and the prophetic office, and taught others to do the same.

No.

We place all of our emphasis and attention on the preaching and teaching of God's written Word. Then if the Gifts of the Holy Spirit come into manifestation, they are like icing on the cake. If they don't come into manifestation, then that is fine too. We just go ahead and continue to teach and preach God's Word.

Some who argue against speaking in tongues as a current-day experience, try to equate the current Charismatic Movement with Montanism. I believe they do this sincerely, but in ignorance.

They have never personally experienced speaking in tongues or prophecy. Nor have they been in our services frequently enough to observe over time what our actual teachings are, and how we apply them. When they attack Charismatics they are doing so out of fear and ignorance of something they have not experienced and do not understand.

I likewise, thought I knew all about salvation, when I was still a sinner. But I found that when I finally humbled myself, bowed my knees before the crucified Lord and accepted him into my heart, salvation was a much deeper, transforming experience than I had assumed it would be. Similarly, when you put aside misinterpretation of Scripture, ignorance of Church history, and see these wonderful gifts in

operation where they are genuine and operate under close oversight so that everyone stays within Scriptural bounds, you find them to be far different than the opponents purport them to be.

Lessons to be Learned

From the Montanists:

Over the years, many Spirit-filled Christians have made the same mistake that the Montanist movement made including:

1. Being open to practically any supernatural experience.

2. Submitting to no seasoned oversight.

3. Receiving correction from no one.

4. Rejecting repeated warnings from other

Charismatic leaders of the time.

5. Giving God's written Word only casual

attention at best.

6. And veering from sound doctrine and

common sense.

Montanism was at its peak from AD 185 to 212. The bulk of Irenaeus' ministry and writings occurred at the same time.

So we see the steady stream of genuine speaking in tongues flow from the apostles, to Polycarp and other second-generation Christians, directly to Irenaeus and other third-generation Christians, while separately spiritual events took place among the Montanists and died out. But genuine spiritual gifts carried on outside of the Montanism--before, during, and after that heretical movement--in orthodox Christian churches as witnessed by Irenaeus, Urbanus, Novatian, Hilary, and Ambrose.

Tertullian is the only orthodox leader whose witness can be legitimately questioned because he became caught up in the Montanist movement for a period of time in his life. Thankfully though, historical accounts imply that he repented of these errors and returned to genuine Christianity at the end of his life.

So when Tertullian wrote of tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy being "forthcoming from my side without any difficulty," we do not know if he was referring to these gifts operating in the orthodox church he came from, or the heretical church he entered into.

So, for the sake of argument, let's assume the worst. Let's assume he was writing of the heretical sect he eventually joined, and let's set aside his testimony for the time being.

That still leaves us with the testimonies of those who remained orthodox, recounting virtually the same observations:

Justin Martyr (100-165 AD),

Irenaeus (130 - 202 AD),

Asterius Urbanus (c. 232 AD),

Novatian (d. 258 AD),

Hilary (c. 300 - 367 AD),

and Ambrose (340 - 397 AD).

If the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and speaking in tongues in particular, ceased with the last Apostle, what explanation do we give for the falsity of these eye-witness accounts left to us by Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Novatian, Hilary, Ambrose?

Did they deliberately deceive us?

Were they so gullible that each and everyone were hoodwinked by passing spiritual snake-oil salesmen?

I have yet to read a persuasive Cessationist explanation for these historical accounts.

Reasonable people may disagree on whether tongues is a present day experience.

But no fair-minded Christian can absolutely ignore Church history.

It is a historical fact, attested to by respected Early Church leaders, who left to us a written record of eye witness accounts, that speaking in tongues was taking place in their midst until the mid to late Fourth century.

This is beyond dispute.

The Cessationists' claim that tongues ceased with the Apostles is clearly proven wrong by the historical record.

With that argument failing, Cessationists fall back on the argument that tongues continued only among those who knew the Apostles. But this argument falls short also when we note that the generation who knew the Apostles all died off, their children's generation died off, and their grandchildren's generation all died off, and tongues was still manifesting among orthodox believers three centuries after the Apostles.

With their secondary argument failing, Cessationists retreat into ambiguity, claiming that tongues and the other gifts "ceased somewhere back then."

"Somewhere" simply isn't good enough.

Extraordinary claims call for extraordinary proofs.

It would be extraordinary indeed for God to operate all but two of these gifts through men from the first chapters of Genesis, through the Law, the Prophets, the Gospels, then adding tongues and interpretation in Acts, and continuing all nine gifts through the Epistles, through the first Four nearly Five centuries of the Early Church, and then to abruptly withdraw them.

To accept such an astounding proposition, we would need substantial proof, certainly something more than sketchy theories, and historically inaccurate assumptions.

In 25 years of studying extensively the subject of spiritual gifts and speaking in tongues, I have yet to find a single anti-tongues argument that stood up to scriptural examination. Nor have I found one that fit with the clear historical record.

It is indisputable that the Gifts continued.

It is also indisputable also that the Gifts waned.

They did not "cease."

They could not have been "withdrawn," for:

"The gifts and calling of God are without repentance."--Rom. 11:29.

Or as the Amplified Bible translates it,

"For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable--He never withdraws them when once they are given, and He does not change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom He sends His call."

The Gifts did not cease, and could not be withdrawn, but they did eventually wane.

By the time of John Chrysostom, they were virtually unknown.

John Chrysostom (347 - 407 AD) was a notable Christian bishop and preacher from the 4th and 5th centuries in Syria and Constantinople.

Chrysostom was baptized in 370, and was ordained a deacon in 381. Sometime between 381 and his death in 407, he wrote of the waning of the Gifts of the Spirit in locales with which he was familiar, and the general backslidden state of the Church. We will look at three quotes from his "Homilies of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians."

Commenting on:

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant."--I Cor. 12:1,

John Chrysostom writes of the lack of these spiritual gifts in his day and locale:

"This whole place is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place. And why do they not happen now?...why did they then happen, and now do so no more?

...Well: what did happen then? Whoever was baptized he straightway spake with tongues and not with tongues only, but many also prophesied, and some also performed many other wonderful works... they [the Corinthians] at once on their baptism received the Spirit...And one straightway spake in the Persian, another in the Roman, another in the Indian, another in some other such tongue: and this made manifest to them that were without that it is the Spirit in the very person speaking.... For as the Apostles themselves had received this sign first, so also the faithful went on receiving it, I mean, the gift of tongues; yet not this only but also many others: inasmuch as many used even to raise the dead and to cast out devils and to perform many other such wonders: and they had gifts too, some less, and some more. But more abundant than all was the gift of tongues among them..." ("Saint Chrysostom: Homily on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians," Phillip Schaff, 1889. Volume 12, Homily 29 NPNF 168-169).

"...For there were of old many who had also a gift of prayer, together with a tongue; and they prayed, and the tongue spake, praying either in the Persian or Latin language, but their understanding knew not what was spoken. ("Saint Chrysostom: Homily on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians," Phillip Schaff, 1889. Volume 12, Homily 35 NPNF 211).

In the same book in which Chrysostom laments the absence of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, he ties this loss in with the backslidden, corrupted state of the Church at that time:

"What now can be more awful than these things? For in truth the Church was a heaven then, the Spirit governing all things, and moving each one of the rulers and making him inspired. But now we retain only the symbols of those gifts...they thus used to speak, not of their own wisdom, but moved by the Spirit. But not so now: (I speak of mine own case so far.) But the present Church is like a woman who hath fallen from her former prosperous days, and in many respects retains the symbols only of that ancient prosperity; displaying indeed the repositories and caskets of her golden ornaments, but bereft of her wealth: such an one doth the present Church resemble. And I say not this in respect of gifts: for it were nothing marvelous if it were this only: but in respect also of life and virtue." ("Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians," Phillip Schaff, 1889. Homily 36, NPNF 219-220).

This is the first written account we have of the Gifts of the Spirit no longer manifesting prolifically in the Church.

And the author--a Doctor of Theology, not a heretic--describes a Church not only lacking in the supernatural Gifts, but also bereft of life and virtue.

Augustine (354-430 AD) concurs that the Gifts of the Spirit and speaking in tongues are unknown in his day. He writes around the year 400 AD:

"For who expects in these days that those on whom hands are laid that they may receive the Holy Spirit should forthwith begin to speak with tongues?" (Augustine, On Baptism, Against the Donatists, Section 3, Chapter 16, NPNF 443).

When the Church had "life and virtue" from Pentecost to the mid to late Fourth Century, the Gifts of the Spirit were present and widespread. By the late Fourth to early Fifth Centuries, the church was "bereft of life and virtue" and gifts.

Why the Gifts Waned

The more you see the written Word of God replaced by the ideas of men in the Church, the less life, virtue, and spiritual gifts are present.

Jesus said of the Jews of his day:

"For God commanded...But you say...So for the sake of your tradition (the rules handed down by your forefathers), you have set aside the Word of God--depriving it of force and authority and making it of no effect. You pretenders--hypocrites!...Uselessly do they worship Me, for they teach as doctrines the commands of men."--Mat. 15:4-9 (Amplified).

There is a correlation here that most overlook. It had been God's will to heal the sick and work miracles throughout the Old Testament, and His will had not changed in Christ's day. But healings and miracles had largely disappeared from the Jewish experience by the time Christ began his ministry. The religious people then, like today, made excuses for the lack of miracles.

Had the Lord been like some Christians today, he would have began his ministry by preaching that miracles were only for Old Testament times, and that they were not needed in post-Old Testament Israel.

But he did not do that.

Instead, in the Scripture we just read, Jesus attributed the decline in miracles to hypocrisy, corruption, and the abandonment of God's written Word.

Note also that he did not allow the unbelief around him to stop him from working miracles. No, he went right ahead and healed the sick, cast out devils, and worked miracles.

For his trouble, the Pharisees claimed,

"He casts out devils through the prince of the devils."--Mat. 9:34.

That accusation is still around today: "Those Charismatics! I tell you, that's all of the Devil! God just don't heal anymore. The days of miracles are over. Speaking in tongues ceased long ago. These are all false miracles! False signs and wonders!" Christ did not allow similar accusations of false ministry to stop him in his day, and we can not allow them to stop us today.

As more and more of the philosophies and traditions of men were brought into the Church and given equal or greater standing than God's written Word, you see less and less life, virtue, and manifestations of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit.

They never completely ceased, but they did steadily reduce to a mere trickle.

By the Middle Ages, the Church had reached the point where it lacked life, virtue, and power. Church leaders could have humbled themselves, addressed the corruption, and returned to the literal interpretation of God's Word. Instead, they began to claim that speaking in tongues and miracles were

rare at best, and demonic at worst. "In fact by A.D. 1000 the *Rituale Romanorum* (Roman Ritual) defined glossalia as prima facie evidence of demon possession." (Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, page 20).

Today some Christians actually have adopted the same position and claim that speaking in tongues occurs now only when a person is under the power of demons.

Filled with corruption, greed, sin, and hypocrisy, and actively denouncing speaking in tongues, it is little wonder that speaking in tongues waned in the Medieval Church even further.

Some try to argue that after the Apostle John died, speaking in tongues continued only in heretical sects. But even one of the most determined critics of modern speaking in tongues has to grudgingly admit that tongues continued on in legitimate Christian churches long after the original apostles died:

"after the apostles tongue speaking was almost entirely isolated to the Gnostics and the Montanists." (Charismatic Chaos, John F. MacArthur, 1991, p. 234)

Please note that he states "almost entirely."

Even MacArthur does not claim and can not prove that tongues entirely died out in the Church after the last Apostle died.

If even the most virulent critic acknowledges that genuine speaking in tongues continued--no matter how rarely--in the true Church after the Apostles, I really don't understand why some continue to adamantly oppose speaking in tongues today.

In the Medieval Church, holiness waned and corruption increased. Do we therefore argue that holiness is not for today? Of course not.

Literal interpretation of God's Word became virtually non-existent at that time. Do we argue that literal interpretation is not for us today? No.

Then why do some argue that since speaking in tongues waned in the corrupted Church of the Middle Ages, tongues are therefore not for us today?

I fail to see the validity of that argument.

From the Fifth Century to the present, whenever the Church repented of its sin and backslidings, humbled itself, returned to faith in God's Word, and became passionate for Jesus Christ, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit including speaking in tongues usually returned.

I will write in detail of these in another post, but I will give a quick synopsis here. Tongues "T"--or other

strong manifestations "M" of the Holy Spirit--occurred in or among:

- Waldenses in 1100's, Europe. Tongues "T".
- Albigenses in 1100's, Europe. "T".
- Franciscans in 1200's, Europe. "T".
- Anabaptists in 1500's, Europe. "T".
- Prophecy Movement in 1500's England. "T".
- Camisards, 1600's and 1700's, France. "T".
- Quakers, 1600's, in England. "T" "M."
- Jansenists, 1600's and 1700's in France.
- Pietists, 1600's in Germany.
- Methodists 1700's England. "M" but no "T."
- Second Great Awakening, 1800's, USA. "M" no "T".
- Irvingites, 1800's in England and USA. "M" and "T."
- Pentecostal Revival, USA, Europe, Asia, Africa, early 1900's miracles, healings. "M" and "T."
- Healing Revival, 1940's - 1950's, world-wide miracles, healings. "M" and "T".
- Charismatic Renewal, 1960's - 1970's, Protestants and Catholics, world-wide, miracles. "M" and "T."
- Word of Faith/Teaching Revival, 1970's - 1980's, worldwide, healings, miracles. "M" and "T".
- Currently 537 MILLION Christians world-wide, in all major denominations, Protestant and Catholic, speak in other tongues.

Opponents to tongues disdain several of these groups that arose from the years 1000 to 1900 because some of them deviated sometimes slightly, sometimes greatly, from sound doctrine. Critics conclude therefore that speaking in tongues lead them into error.

No, speaking in tongues did not lead them into error.

Tongues did not lead the original Apostles, or the Early Church into error. Speaking in tongues, like prayer, baptisms, worship, and receiving communion continued in orthodox and non-orthodox Churches alike.

Many Christian groups and denominations that never spoke in tongues fell off into error over the centuries.

Among the many inaccurate positions the opponents to tongues take, is their assumption that if a person truly spoke in tongues, they would do so only in a state of extreme holiness, which would enable them to never sin, make a mistake, or be misled.

This uninformed argument expects far too much from speaking in tongues.

Praying in English won't keep you from error.

Praying the Psalms won't keep you from error.

Praying various prayers from a prayer book won't keep you from error.

Neither will praying in tongues prevent you from going into error.

The Apostle Peter himself prayed in tongues, but fell off into error at one point in his ministry. Paul had to rebuke Peter for misconduct:

"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision."--Gal 2:11,12.

If the Apostle Peter could speak in tongues, and yet slip into error, how are we any different?

Lastly, opponents of tongues argue that because false religions and cults make claims of speaking in tongues today or in the past, that we should conclude therefore that all speaking in tongues is false.

We have seen from the ancient references we quoted above, and MacArthur conceded as do we, that speaking in tongues occurred simultaneously in both orthodox Churches, and in heretical sects.

Just because tongues occurred among Montanists and Gnostics, while at the same time occurring in the true Church, no one denounces Irenaeus--a true Church leader of that day who witnessed and approved of tongues--as heretical.

Nor does anyone consider the Churches he was a part of--that did speak in tongues--as heretical or false churches.

No one argues that those genuine Christians spoke in demonic tongues simply because other false Christians claim to have spoken in tongues.

Claims of supposedly speaking in tongues among a tiny minority of the cults of the last 200 years do not trouble me. Some argue that the early leaders of the Mormons, the Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Christian Scientists, claimed to have spoken in tongues.

My response?

I doubt it.

I doubt that the leaders of these cults ever had any genuine experience with God, much less that they spoke in tongues. Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormons, claimed to have received his heretical teachings from the visitation of an angel from God.

Did an angel from God appear to him?

No.

Charles Russell, and Mary Baker Eddy, claimed likewise that the true Gospel had been lost for centuries until they rediscovered it through study and divine revelation.

Was the Gospel lost until those two fruitcakes rediscovered it?

Of course not.

That they throw in speaking in tongues along with all their other ridiculous claims carries no weight with me.

All three also baptized people. But I'm not going to let that stop me from baptizing new converts.

All three married people. That won't stop me from sanctifying marriages.

All three supposedly prayed, worshipped God, and read the Bible. That isn't going to stop me from doing the same.

There have been and always will be false apostles, false prophets, and false teachers.

Moses encountered two false prophets in Pharaoh's court, which were able to perform miracles similar to those Moses performed. (II Tim. 3:8). But Moses didn't run out of the throne room in a panic, give up on being a prophet, and say, "I'll tell you what! That miracle working stuff is of the Devil!"

No.

He simply performed a series of far greater miracles than could those sorcerers. God can outdo the Devil any day of the week, and twice on Sunday.

Paul was confronted by a Jewish false prophet at Paphos. (Acts 13:6-11). But that didn't stop Paul from going ahead and operating in his prophetic and apostolic ministry there, and for many years afterward. He didn't say, "Gosh! I guess the days of miracles are over!"

No.

Paul just struck the false prophet blind, and demonstrated before all, whose god was bigger.

If Paul and Moses both refused to cower before false prophets, and give up on God's ability to work

signs and wonders, I don't see why we should tremble either.

In Summation:

1. Multiple quotations from legitimate Early Church leaders, drawn from ancient writings still in existence today, show beyond any doubt that genuine speaking in tongues continued in Christian churches for centuries after the last Apostle died.
2. Those original sources expected all of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit including speaking in tongues to continue until the return of Christ.
3. Although speaking in tongues occurred both in orthodox Churches and in heretical sects, Early Church leaders did not use this as an occasion to reject all speaking in tongues. Neither should we.
4. Early Church leaders continued approving of tongues. So should we.
5. By the end of the Fourth Century, the gifts had waned.
6. It was believed at the time that the gifts had declined due to corruption and lifelessness in the Church.
7. Messages in tongues, prophecies, or revelations that do not agree with the foundational doctrines of Christ or any other part of God's Word, are simply not from God and must be rejected.
8. Speaking in tongues, or signs of various sorts, have revived with the majority of revivals that have come to the Body of Christ from the Fourth Century to today.
9. Speaking in tongues will not, nor will anything else, keep Christians from going off into error.
10. Cults then, and cults now, sometimes claim to have spoken in tongues. That should not stop us from allowing the Holy Spirit to manifest tongues in our midst.

Copyright Mel C. Montgomery All rights reserved. Material may be copied and shared with others as long as it is done so without charge, in entirety, and if attribution is given.