

"What I believe About Tongues"
Adapted by Pastor Randy Lawrence
October 2004

- We do not believe that a person speaking in tongues is *the* evidence of the baptism of the Spirit. It can be *an* evidence, but it is not the only evidence. (See Paul's discussion in 1 Cor 12-14)
- We believe that speaking, praying, or singing in an unknown tongue to God without understanding can deeply edify one's spirit.

Those possessing the gift of tongues or prayer language have expressed that when they do not know what to pray or are feeling troubled, they have experienced the Holy Spirit interceding with their prayer language, and that it has set them at peace. (Rom. 8:26; 1 Cor 14:2)

- We believe that there are greater spiritual gifts offered by the Holy Spirit and that we are encouraged to desire the greater gifts.

Tongues is last in both lists of spiritual gifts where it is included. (I Corinthians 12:7-11 and 12:28-31.) In I Corinthians 14 it is impossible to miss the point that believers are to desire and seek gifts that edify and build up the rest of the church, especially the gift of prophecy (used for edification, exhortation, and consolation. (I Corinthians 14:4)

- We believe that I Corinthians 14:39 is one of the clearest statements in the New Testament regarding tongues being a gift that should be encouraged.

"Do not forbid to speak in tongues." That instruction was issued in spite of grave abuse. I will not add to nor take away from God's Word. If you would like to talk with me personally about this subject or any other, please feel free to call me.

- We believe there *may* be two kinds of tongues:

I Corinthians 12:10, 28 speaks of more than one kind of tongues. This may mean not only more than one language, but also more than one kind of language. The word for "kind" in v.28 is the Greek work "genos" often meaning "species". The two kinds seem to be:

- a. The miraculous sign gift. This is the miraculous ability to speak an unlearned language given by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the truth to people within one's hearing. (Acts 2:4-6)
 - b. A heavenly prayer language where the Holy Spirit intercedes in prayer for an individual. "Praying with one's spirit" is one way to describe this phenomenon. (1 Cor. 14:15)
- We believe that tongues can be counter-productive in public church services.
 - a. Tongues began as a sign to the Jews. (1 Cor. 14:20-22; Isaiah 28:11). The miracle was not unintelligible words that outsiders would perceive as weird, instead "each one heard them speaking in his own language." (Acts 2:6-7)
 - b. The prayer language tongue (If there are two different kinds as noted above) will have the opposite effect on newcomers. It will confuse them and cause them to think Christians are crazy.

So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind?

(1 Cor 14:23-24)

- b. Tongues is the least effective of the speaking gifts. The apostle compares five words of prophecy as worth ten thousand words in a tongue. (1 Corinthians 14:19.)
- c. Speaking in tongues is the only spiritual gift that was restricted as a result of abuse. (1 Cor. 14)
- d. Speaking in tongues as a group address in the public service is detrimental for outreach. Paul says, "If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying?"

Conclusion: The issue is often the heart condition of the Christian

- a. If the apostle Paul gives instruction for the use of tongues in the church then it is appropriate for a local church to also have instruction on its use in the service.
- b. Is there submission to authority evidenced in the person's life?
- c. Is the Holy Spirit being permitted to bring the individual's life into line with the truth?
- d. Is Christ Lord and in control?