

MODERN DAY
TONGUE SPEAKING



IN THE
CHURCHES OF CHRIST

by

John T. Polk II

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This tract is dedicated to
Guy Hester,
a faithful, sound, Gospel Preacher
for some 60 years

There are two kinds of “tongue speaking” that should not be found in the churches of Christ:

1. Fake efforts to preach the Gospel in languages the speaker hasn’t learned; and
2. False witness that hurts and destroys Christians.

1. FAKE “TONGUES”

Given the limitations that the Holy Spirit placed upon Himself in His completely inspired Bible, *there is no Holy Spirit-driven tongue speaking in the churches of Christ today* (not even in those *claiming* to be a part of the church of Christ!).

THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD IS COMPLETE,
VERBALLY INSPIRED, AND FULL OF THE MIRACLES
NECESSARY TO CONVINCING THE HONEST SOUL.

The Bible claim for accuracy is because:

Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21)

And this claim is made for “All Scripture”:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.
(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

And this is also true for the New Testament Scriptures, we read in Paul's writings:

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles-- if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,"
(Ephesians 3:1-6)

The New Testament was Holy Spirit inspired, revealed in its message, guided in its words, and protected in its longevity.

***Tongue speaking* was a miraculously-given ability to speak the message from God in a native language to the**

hearer, but which was unfamiliar (hence unknown) to the speaker.

Following Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead:

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ([Acts 2:1-4](#))

The surprise came because "Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven" ([Acts 2:5](#)) now heard the Apostles' gospel message "in his own language" ([Acts 2:6](#)). But all those who spoke were "Galileans" ([Acts 2:7](#)) and not schooled in other languages than their own. That this was a miracle of the speakers' tongue and not the hearers' ears, we read:

And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them speaking in our own

tongues the wonderful works of God.
(Acts 2:8-11)

Before there was “hard copy” of New Testament Scripture, the miraculous gift of foreign language permitted God’s Word to be preached to visitors in the worship of the church of Christ, for Paul wrote:

In the law it is written: ‘With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; and yet, for all that, they will not hear Me,’ says the Lord. Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.
(1 Corinthians 14:21-22)

The “law” of which he wrote must be **Isaiah 28:11** and shows us that God foresaw when “other tongues and other lips” would be necessary to communicate with those who were not yet His people. To those “called *to be* saints” in Corinth (**1 Corinthians 1:2**) Paul showed this was the stated purpose for miraculously given languages.

Jesus had listed this as a sign that He was “confirming the word through” His believers (**Mark 16:15-20**). But as the New Testament writing was completed, the signs upon which faith in Jesus Christ is to be based are “written” (**John 20:30-31**), and the Word of God “was confirmed” (**Hebrews 2:3**). Now, we must “remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ” (**Jude 17**). Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit has written, the miraculously given foreign languages are no

longer available from Heaven. *The written Word of God is complete, inspired, and full of miracles to convince the honest soul.*

The Devil continues to counterfeit God's miracles, including tongue speaking, and misleads many away from the Holy Bible. Be warned from Jesus' mouth to your ears:

Then His disciples came and said to Him, 'Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?' But He answered and said, 'Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.' (Matthew 15:12-14)

2. FALSE WITNESS

Learn from Jesus and the Apostle James the tongue's conversational potential for both good or evil:

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole

body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. (James 3:1-10)

When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear and understand: 'Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.'" (Matthew 15:10-11)

Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. (Matthew 12:33-37)

These passages clearly show:

1. Though little, the tongue can do unspeakable damage or powerful good;
2. The tongue can be “fired” by “hell;”
3. The tongue can be deadly in its effect;
4. One is not consistently Christian who blesses God and curses man;
5. The mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart;
6. An evil man speaks evil things from an evil heart;
7. Words can condemn forever.

**THE DEVIL YET INFLUENCES CHRISTIANS' TONGUES TO
BE USED CORRUPTLY!**

With the gravity of the use of the tongue set before us, we understand who is behind the misuse of the tongue. *Every falsehood originates with the Devil.*

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a

murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. (John 8:44)

All the Devil has to present are accusations without proof!

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 'Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.' (Revelation 12:9-10)

Is it any wonder that “the LORD hates... a lying tongue... a false witness *who* speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren” (Proverbs 6:16-19)? *To accuse is not to prove*, but we live in a tabloid mentality, wild feeding frenzy of a headline-reading public who draws conclusions based upon what they are told on the surface. Talebearers (a.k.a. “gossips”) feed such lazy minds. Hear Solomon’s wisdom:

A talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter (Proverbs 11:13);

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He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips (**Proverbs 20:19**);

A faithful witness does not lie, But a false witness will utter lies (**Proverbs 14:5**).

And in the New Testament, “whisperers, backbiters” are sins equal with “haters of God,” “covetousness,” “murder,” “evil-mindedness,” and “violent:”

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. (**Romans 1:28-32**)

There is no way one may recklessly do the Devil’s work without jeopardizing his/ her own soul. If someone libels or slanders the reputation of a Christian, he/ she is the Devil’s agent! According to Romans 1, God has even turned such people over to their own condemnation. And those

who “approve of those who practice” such sins are included in the condemnation. *That means that all who base a decision on the information of false witnesses have become participants in their sin and are just as guilty!* Hence, Paul’s warning to Timothy:

Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people’s sins; keep yourself pure. (1 Timothy 5:22).

This last statement came to a young preacher. It’s too bad that such advice is not given today.

There are some who have convinced themselves that they become “sound” when they can make someone else look “unsound,” and have blinded themselves to Bible truth: they are talebearers and whisperers, and do the work of the Devil, not God!

Instead of teaching young preachers what the Scripture says, they fill their hearts with hatred, suspicion, fear, and loathing for their brethren in Christ, including preaching brothers! They deal in dossiers rather than sound doctrine; past sins rather than Divine forgiveness; back-stabbing rather than the loving crucifixion of Christ; and others’ transgressions rather than their own! This results in a resurrection of the sect of the Pharisees rather than in exultation over the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Their heart is wrong, spirit is hateful and destiny is doom. Jesus would say, “I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you” (John 5:42).

This conclusion is based upon the Holy Spirit’s Word:

An ungodly man digs up evil, and it is on his lips like a burning fire. A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends (Proverbs 16:27-28);

A wrathful man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger allays contention (Proverbs 15:18);

“Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases. As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife. The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body. (Proverbs 26:20-22)

Their work is not to preach the righteousness of God, salvation of souls, or forgiveness of the fallen, it rather is to expose the sins of others that they themselves might appear as “saviors of the church!” Hear the Holy Spirit:

He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD (Proverbs 17:15);

For a righteous *man* may fall seven times and rise again, but the wicked shall fall by calamity. Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; Lest the LORD see *it*, and it displease Him, and

He turn away His wrath from him.
(**Proverbs 24:16-18**).

Have Christians sinned? Oh, yes. But NOT ONE WORD from these Pharisees is ever included in their “dossiers of drivel” about those who sinned repenting, being reconciled with those they sinned against, or of their “works of repentance” which they have done since their sin! These “Pharisees” rejoice to know their supposed “enemy” has sinned and willfully know nothing about salvation and forgiveness. Hence they do the Devil’s one-sided work and align themselves with unbelieving Jews who followed the Apostle Paul:

But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.
(**Acts 13:50**)

But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren.
(**Acts 14:2**)

Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. (**Acts 14:19**)

But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house

of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. (Acts 17:5)

And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. (Acts 17:8)

Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, 'Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.' (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) (Acts 21:27-29)

When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove, while he answered for himself, 'Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all.' (Acts 25:7-8)

The practice of the unbelieving Jews is being followed today when they:

1. Make a faithful Gospel Preacher undesirable even in the minds of the "devout" in a community;
2. Poison the minds of unbelievers against the church of Christ;

3. Make their appeal to “evil men of the marketplace” but not to the truth;
4. Appeal to and use evil men to further their cause and create uproar;
5. Cause trouble and chaos in the community;
6. Misrepresent the teaching of the church of Christ and Christians, generally;
7. And after the contention decreases, they still have not given proof of their accusations!

Thus, they show themselves to be guilty of being “undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful” (**Romans 1:31**). *They are without:* discernment (intelligence), trustworthiness, love, forgiveness, mercy. These are all important qualifications for a Christian, especially one who is a Gospel Preacher! Is anyone saved without these? Jesus and His Apostles John and James taught:

For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you. (**Matthew 7:2**)

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. (**1 John 3:14**)

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (**Matthew 6:14-15**)

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For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. (**James 2:13**)

These brethren have chosen a path of destruction and will face God on the Judgment Day to be judged with the same harsh, unforgiving, and merciless manner with which they have judged others.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (**2 Corinthians 5:10**).

Unless they repent, their tongues will place them in the hell from which they have been influenced (**James 3:6**).

False tongue speaking, whether leading away from God's Word, or persecuting God's people, should not be heeded by any right-thinking person.

----- **John T. Polk II**

All Scriptures and comments, unless otherwise noted, are based on the New King James Version (NKJV).

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who loves you.