Liturgical Order and Glossolalia: 1 Corinthians 14:26c-33a and its Implications

William E. Richardson
Andrews University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations

Part of the Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations/138

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Research at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.
Thank you for your interest in the

Andrews University Digital Library
of Dissertations and Theses.

Please honor the copyright of this document by not duplicating or distributing additional copies in any form without the author’s express written permission. Thanks for your cooperation.
INFORMATION TO USERS

This reproduction was made from a copy of a document sent to us for microfilming. While the most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this document, the quality of the reproduction is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help clarify markings or notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting through an image and duplicating adjacent pages to assure complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a round black mark, it is an indication of either blurred copy because of movement during exposure, duplicate copy, or copyrighted materials that should not have been filmed. For blurred pages, a good image of the page can be found in the adjacent frame. If copyrighted materials were deleted, a target note will appear listing the pages in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., is part of the material being photographed, a definite method of "sectioning" the material has been followed. It is customary to begin filming at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. If necessary, sectioning is continued again—beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. For illustrations that cannot be satisfactorily reproduced by xerographic means, photographic prints can be purchased at additional cost and inserted into your xerographic copy. These prints are available upon request from the Dissertations Customer Services Department.

5. Some pages in any document may have indistinct print. In all cases the best available copy has been filmed.
Richardson, William Edwin

LITURGICAL ORDER AND GLOSSOLALIA: 1 CORINTHIANS 14:26C-33A AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Andrews University

Ph.D. 1983

University Microfilms International

Copyright 1983

by

Richardson, William Edwin

All Rights Reserved
Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

LITURGICAL ORDER AND GLOSSOLALIA:
1 CORINTHIANS 14:26c-33a
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
William Edwin Richardson
June 1933
LITURGICAL ORDER AND GLOSSOLALIA:
1 CORINTHIANS 14:26c-33a
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

A dissertation presented
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
William E. Richardson

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE

Ivan T. Blazen, Chairman
Professor of New Testament
and Biblical Theology

Fritz Guy, Professor
of Theology

William H. Shea, Professor
of Old Testament

Abraham Terian, Professor
of Intertestamental and
Early Christian Literatures

Robert Jewett, Professor
of New Testament Interpretation
Garrett-Evangelical Theological
Seminary

George F. Hasel, Dean
SDA Theological Seminary

Aug 5 1983
Date Approved
TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS ................................................................. vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ..................................................................... vii
INTRODUCTION ............................................................................... 1

Chapter

I. PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS ................................................... 9

Books on the Topic ................................................................. 9
Exegetical Expositions .......................................................... 25

II. THE CONTEXT ......................................................................... 41

The Cultural Context ............................................................. 41
The Gnostic Hypothesis ........................................................ 44
The Hellenistic Influence ....................................................... 48
The Influence of the Local Cultus ......................................... 52
The Biblical Context ............................................................. 56
Spiritual Gifts or Spiritual People? ........................................ 59
The Body Figure and Diversity of Gifts ................................. 67
Conclusion ............................................................................... 71

III. PAUL'S DIRECTIVES: 1 CORINTHIANS 14:26c-33a .............. 73

τάντα τρóς αὐξομένην γυνέων (14:26c) 
"Let all things be done for edification" ......................... 77
εἶτε γλώσση τὰς λαλεῖ (27a) 
"If anyone should speak in a tongue" .......................... 86
Intelligible or Unintelligible Speech ................................. 87
The Nature of Glossolalic Ecstasy ................................. 110
κατὰ δύο ἢ τὸ πλεῖστον ἕνες, καὶ ἀνὰ μέρος (27b,c) 
"Let it be in this manner: two, or at most, three, and one at a time" .................................................. 119
Paul's Positive View of the Gift ........................................ 120
The Need for Control ......................................................... 128
The Nature of the Control ................................................ 132
καὶ εξ ἐξελευνοῦμεν (vs. 27d) 
"And let one interpret" .................................................... 138
Translation or Interpretation ............................................. 139
Verbalizing the Non-verbal ............................................. 142

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Chapter

III. (Continued)

δέ ν δὲ μὴ διέρμηνευτῇς, συγήτω ἐν εὐχαρίστῳ,
ἐπιτυγχανέται καὶ τῷ Θεῷ (vs. 28)
"And if there should be no interpreter, let
him keep silence in church, and let him speak
to himself and to God" ....................... 151

Implications of the "Body" Figure
for the ἐκκλησία ....................... 153

Mystical Aspects of Christian Expression ............ 154

τορόθται δὲ δύο ἢ τρεῖς λαλεῖσθαι (29a)
"Let two or three prophets speak" .................. 169

The Old Testament Concept of Prophecy ............. 170
The New Testament and Early Christian
Concept of Prophecy ............................ 174

The Spontaneity of Prophecy ...................... 177
The Predictive Element of Prophecy ................. 178
The Source and Control of Prophecy ................ 180

καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι διώκοντας (vs. 30)
"And let the others evaluate" ...................... 184

Evaluation of the Message and the Man ............. 185

Identity of the "Others" ............................ 188

δέ ν δὲ ἄλλῳ ἀποκλαμφθῇ καθημενῷ, ὁ τρόπος
συγήτω (vs. 30) "And if (something) should
be revealed to another sitting by, let the
first keep silent" ................................. 190

The Nature of Prophetic Inspiration ................ 194

δύοσί ὁδὲ καθὼς ἐνα δὲντες τοσοῦτον (vs. 31a)
"For you can all prophesy one at a time" ............. 196

ἐνα δέντες μανθάνοντες καὶ δέντες τασακαλύπτων
(31b) "That all might learn and all
might be admonished" ............................. 197

καὶ τυγχάνει τροφής τροφής ὑποτάσσεται
(vs. 32) "And the spirits of the prophets
and subject to the prophets" .................... 201

τυγχάνεις ἡς ἡμῖν ἦθος καὶ υἱός
τυγχάνεις as Divine Influence .................. 202
τυγχάνεις as Divine and Human .................. 204
τυγχάνεις as Angels ............................... 206

Concluding Comments Regarding Prophets
and Spirits ........................................ 208

οὐ γάρ ἔστω ἰδιωτικάσας ἢ θεος ἄλλα ἐξήνθης
(33a) "For God is not of confusion but of peace" . 209

IV. THE HISTORICAL CONTINUUM .................... 213

The Early Silence ............................... 213
The Resurgence ................................. 221

Implications of the Pauline Counsel .................. 223

The Continuing Appropriateness of ταχεύματα 223
Changing Needs and Changing Gifts ............... 226
Chapter

IV. (Continued)

The Continuing Need of the Mystical ............ 231
The Need of Balance in the Worship Experience . 234

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION ......................... 237

Summary ...................................................... 237
Conclusions .................................................. 249

BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................. 255
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ECSTASY: A state of emotional excitement or animation for which intelligible words are neither adequate nor necessary. The excitement may or may not spill out in some form of audible expression.

VOCALIZATION: Any audible human expression. It may or may not be intelligible.

GLOSSOLALIA: Ecstatic vocalizations of prayer and praise. Though intended as a private experience, the happy believers' emotions sometimes spilled over in unintelligible vocalizations such as is common in intense grief (audible sobbing), or unusual happiness (Whee!).

INTERPRETATION: Putting into intelligible words the meaning and significance of the unintelligible vocalizations of a glossolalic experience.

XENOGLOSSIA: A sudden ability to speak a known foreign language one has never taken the time to learn.

CRYPTOMNESIA: Occasional vocalization of a word or phrase from a known foreign language made possible by a previous but forgotten contact with that language.

CHARISM: A gift of grace intended for the spiritual uplift of individuals or the Church. In Corinthians, emphasis is heavily on the latter.

PNEUMATIKOS: Usually an adjective which indicates that the person or thing described derives from or partakes of the characteristics of the Holy Spirit.

MYSTICAL: Deep, emotional human feelings and experiences that transcend articulation; they can only be felt and experienced.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is with a sense of indebtedness that I put the finishing touches on this dissertation. Though I cannot mention here all those whose influence has guided me in this direction, there are several persons whose encouragement and help deserve special acknowledgment.

First, I pay tribute to Sakae Kubo, whose careful scholarship and dynamic teaching instilled in me the desire to do New Testament exegesis. In a different way I am indebted to Carl Coffman, who did all in his power to keep my teaching load bearable while I worked on this project. Also, I want to thank my committee, and especially Ivan Blazen, for the many valuable suggestions that have helped to make this a better dissertation. In some of the early research, Hans Killius provided welcome assistance in the translating of several German articles, while in the late stages, Joyce Campbell sacrificed many hours of sleep in the sometimes frantic drive to meet the typing deadlines.

Perhaps the greatest debt of gratitude is that which I owe my patient wife, Sandra, who not only gave support and encouragement, but also repeatedly postponed personal plans for the sake of this dissertation. Also, I am grateful to my daughters, Cindy and Cheri, who, when faced with separation from friends in California at a particularly sensitive time in their lives, reacted with maturity beyond their years.
ABSTRACT

LITURGICAL ORDER AND GLOSSOLALIA:
1 CORINTHIANS 14:26c-33a
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

by

William E. Richardson

Chairman: Ivan T. Blazen
Problem

Though the practice of glossolalia, understood as continuing the phenomenon described in 1 Corinthians 14, has spread through both Catholic and Protestant denominations, it has remained something of a puzzle among Christians, some of whom regard it as a mark of genuine faith, while others look upon it as a repellent distraction. Inasmuch as 1 Cor 14:26c-33a highlight and summarize the directives by which Paul sought to regulate the practice among the Corinthians, a careful exegesis of these verses provides a basis upon which the topic of glossolalia in the chapter as a whole might be most clearly explicated and proper contemporary applications might be drawn.
Method and Results

The examination of previous works in chapter one indicates that major monographs on tongues lean toward topical or phenomenological approaches, while exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14 is virtually confined to commentaries and articles. The topical studies show little agreement concerning the function of glossolalia, while the exegetical works show remarkable agreement concerning the importance of Corinthian tongues as an ecstatic prayer experience.

Chapter two attempts to reconstruct aspects of the context that affected Corinthian attitudes. It appears that several influences created a predilection toward enthusiasm among Corinthian believers so that they fell easy prey to over-emphasis and lack of order which Paul attempted to correct, while at the same time preserving the value of charismatic gifts.

The exegesis in chapter three suggests that glossolalia as a charism was intended as a personal, spiritual uplift which was both a gift from God and a glorification or praise directed to God. The exegesis also indicates that while Paul's directives disapprove of uncontrolled public glossolalia, they do not deny that the phenomenon, practiced privately (or interpreted for the church), had value.

From the exegesis in chapter three, several applications for the contemporary church are made in chapter four. For example, the diverse gifts Paul listed indicate his acceptance of diversity in the procedures of orderly worship. So, although the temptation to exploitation is close at hand, modern Christians should be cautious about criticizing fellow-Christians who express their spiritual vitality in enthusiastic ways.
INTRODUCTION

In a recent article, Kenneth Kantzer set forth the results of a Christianity Today-Gallup poll that makes clear the continuing good health and vigor of the American Charismatic movement. In contrast with some current opinion that the movement is on the wane, Kantzer demonstrated that it is firmly rooted and growing in both Catholic and Protestant denominations. The article points out that although only a small fraction of the Pentecostal/Charismatics have actually spoken in tongues, nevertheless that phenomenon remains as the enigma that, as in Paul's day, both repels (cf. 1 Cor 14:23) and edifies (cf. 14:4). In the words of A. J. Wedderburn,

... it (glossolalia) remained, then as now, a puzzle, its devotees like some grumbling appendix among the limbs of the body of Christ. Today it is still puzzling, troublesome, divisive; for some it is of the essence of the Christian faith, to others it is incomprehensible and repellent.2

So glossolalia and its discussion have consistently had this polarizing effect upon the discussants. Just as the activity itself is usually emotionally charged, so also is the discussion of it. From early Christianity to the present, "tongues" and other ecstatic manifestations have been interpreted in terms of either

---


"divine or devilish supernatural forces."¹ And, as Simon Tugwell has observed, "There has been remarkably little attempt to rescue the discussion from the machinery of propaganda."² One way to accomplish this is to make certain that any extended discussion of the topic is solidly based upon exegesis of the appropriate biblical passage. But, if the relative number of monographs produced is any indication, interest in the phenomenology of inspired speech has transcended interest in exegesis, for one has only to scan relevant bibliographies³ to observe how phenomenological studies predominate over exegetical ones. Of course, questions of phenomenology are legitimate, and many of the psycho-linguistic studies have sharpened the focus on an otherwise blurred aspect of this manifestation. For example, the studies by William Samarin, John Kildahl, Mansell Pattison, and others have pointed out the vast extent to which psychological dynamics are operative in modern tongue-speaking.⁴


² "The Gift of Tongues in the New Testament," Expository Times 84 (1972-73):137. Father Tugwell further suggests that if we are to accurately assess what place the gift of tongues may have in Christian spirituality, we must detach it from the "Pentecostal question." But his article does not amplify his observation well, as it spends considerable time evaluating the phenomenology of tongue-speaking and virtually no time on exegesis.


At the same time, these scholars have not attempted to do exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14 as a basis for their conclusions. This is not to fault them, for exegesis was not their primary concern. On the other hand, while considerable exegesis has been done on the chapter, most exegetes have stopped short of making applications to the contemporary church. Again, this is not to say their work is flawed, as exegesis need not include contemporizing. But exegesis and application go well together, provided the latter grows out of the former; but it is this combined approach that is hard to find in the literature on glossolalia.

Accordingly, the first purpose of this dissertation is to do an exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14 by which the topic of glossolalia in the chapter as a whole may better be explicated. Inasmuch as vss. 26c-33a highlight and summarize the directives by which Paul sought to regulate the Corinthian worship service, these verses provide the avenue of approach to the chapter and the topic.\(^1\) While there is some question as to whether Paul intended these directives to encourage or discourage the practice of glossolalia, the fact remains that these phrases are regulations not prohibitions. Hence, this approach to the chapter puts emphasis where Paul puts it: on a proper rather than on an improper use of tongues. To put it another way, when one focuses on what is to be done rather than on what is to be avoided (which is what these summarizing clauses do), the perspective becomes positive rather than negative.

A second purpose of this dissertation is to examine the

\(^1\)For more on the significance of these verses for the understanding of 1 Cor 14 as a whole, see pp. 69,70 below.
positive statements by Paul in 1 Cor 14 with a view to determine if the negative attitudes toward glossolalia held by many non-Pentecostals are supported by the evidence in the text.

Finally, a third purpose of this dissertation is to make certain contemporary applications of the instruction given. Though the emphasis of the dissertation is on exegesis, where the implications of the Pauline counsel seem especially pertinent, some contemporizing is done.

The method of approach is to describe in the first chapter several previous works which are often referred to in literature as significant contributions. These works will be treated in two distinct categories: (1) topical studies on tongues which occasionally include some exegetical treatment and (2) strictly exegetical expositions of the text. The list of sources examined is not exhaustive but is designed to provide a balanced picture of approaches taken and conclusions reached on both the topic and the text. Chapter II follows with a brief reconstruction of the historical and social context in Corinth that contributed to the problems associated with glossolalia in the Corinthian Church. Chapters three and four present the major contributions of the paper. The former chapter offers a systematic and detailed exegesis of 1 Cor 14:26c-33a and the latter draws contemporary applications from the exegesis.

When doing an exegetical study of this nature, one must guard against the assumption that once the exposition is carefully done, there will be unanimous agreement as to results. Using Scripture as the basis of reasoning, scholars still have come to
widely divergent conclusions.\textsuperscript{1} Even if one operates on the principle that the Bible must be interpreted literally, there remains the problem of how to deal with the historical context. For example, in Protestant scholasticism, it was felt that in Scripture, divine truth was revealed in propositional form, and thus had universal validity. Accordingly, Paul's instruction about women wearing veils in church (1 Cor 11:5-15) was applicable to all women for all time. But such a view only leads to a host of questions concerning the meaning of veiled women then and now. A more reasonable hermeneutic is to acknowledge that Scripture is situationally oriented; that is, there is a literal, primary meaning, which is the meaning intended by the author in relation to the situation he is addressing, but which may or may not transfer easily to another time and place. However, there may be an ultimate intent that lies behind the particular instruction. Thus, in 1 Cor 11 Paul intends to engender an attitude of worshipful respect and decorum. This attitude is the basic principle which receives concrete application in Paul's words about veiling.

If a passage of Scripture is thus situationally oriented, we are obliged to make a reasonable attempt to learn about that situation. With regard to the Corinthian tongues phenomenon, it is, no doubt, this very concern to learn about the local situation that has given rise to many of the behaviorist approaches. Thus, some have attempted to understand the behavioral dynamics of the

\textsuperscript{1}For a particularly helpful article that makes this point, see Ernest Best, "The Interpretation of Tongues," \textit{Scottish Journal of Theology} 28 (January 1975):45-52.
Corinthian worshippers by analyzing similar contemporary manifestations. But the procedure has been less than decisive, for the sociological studies that have been made on modern glossolalists have come to quite varied conclusions. We are forced, then, to acknowledge that there is some danger in attempting to formulate conclusions about the tongues phenomenon on the basis of seeming sociological or phenomenological similarities between Paul's day and ours. If Scriptural instruction is indeed situationally oriented, then one must be prepared for a certain amount of inconclusiveness in contemporizing, no matter how carefully the exegesis is done.

Clearly, certain Christian fundamentals are universal—for example, both the Corinthian and contemporary Christian stand in the same position before God's justifying grace. But when we go beyond such basic realities to deal with specific questions of behavior, Paul's literal and primary meaning for the Corinthians may need considerable "interpretation" when applied to Christians in a different time and place. In other words, one must be open to the

---

1 Earlier studies such as that done by Eddison Mosiman, Das Zungenreden geschichtlich und psychologische untersucht (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1911), concluded, among other things, that glossolalia was akin to a hypnotic state, whereas later studies by John Kildahl, Mansell Pattison and others generally conclude that there is little difference between the mental state of glossolalists and that of non-glossolalists.

2 Willi Marxsen illustrates this point by hypothesizing what might have happened had Paul written his passionate letter to the Galatians and his sober First Letter to the Thessalonians at the same time but somehow mixed up the addresses. Both Churches would have had difficulty accepting Paul's words as a personal message. "In order for the message to come alive, each church would need to think about how the ideas intended for the other were to be applied to its own situation" (The New Testament as the Church's Book, trans. James Mignard [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972], p. 52).
possibility that Paul's instruction on tongues may not transfer directly to our contemporary situation.

Another important hermeneutical principle is that the Scripture is to be its own interpreter. This principle assumes that all parts of Scripture are equally inspired and authoritative. But here again, the expositor must be prepared for some disappointment if complete unanimity of understanding is the goal, for all interpretations are still human interpretations that must be put into human terms and explanations. Also, although a word or concept often takes on a special meaning within the writings of a given New Testament author, the biblical languages were also used for a host of other writings. Consequently, word meanings are often fluid and are informed by both biblical and extra-biblical sources, so that "as an absolute rule the principle that Scripture is its own interpreter is not rigid."

Still, this dissertation draws predominantly upon the biblical materials, even though the relevant passages are few. In fact, outside 1 Cor 14, specific reference to a tongues phenomenon can be found only in Acts 2:4-13; 10:46; 19:6; and Mark 16:17,18. The Acts passages are all very similar and thus reveal a unity all their own. Moreover, the different terminology and problems of the Acts passages deserve full treatment in a separate study, apart from one on Corinthians. Consequently, the Acts passages are cited for purposes of comparison and contrast, but an exegesis of those texts

\[^1\] Also expounded by Best, "The Interpretation of Tongues," p. 53.

\[^2\] Ibid., p. 54.
is not done. Because of its dubious textual authority, the Mark passage will not be examined.
CHAPTER :

PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

In this chapter two distinct groups of studies are cited; books on the topic of glossolalia and works that do exegesis of the text. The topical studies are a sampling of books frequently alluded to as significant contributions, and are indicative of the way the tongues discussion has often been approached. The brief evaluations will give the reader an overview of both the topic and the kinds of monographs that have predominated. The works of an exegetical nature are nearly always commentaries in which the pertinent section is only part of a larger whole, or they are short articles on parts of the text. This sampling of exegetical studies will provide comparisons with and contrasts between, such works from the late nineteenth century to the present. The works are considered in roughly chronological sequence.

Books on the Topic

Previous monographs on the topic of glossolalia are heavily weighted toward phenomenological studies. Regarding such works, Larry Hart, in his recent dissertation, said: "It is impossible to stay abreast of the literature being produced in this area. Analyses of the charismatic movement are virtually out of date upon
Fifty years earlier, George Cutten began his preface with this assertion:

There are two adequate treatises on the subject of speaking with tongues, viz.: E. Lombard, De la Glossolalia chez les premiers chrétiens et des phénomènes similaires, and E. Mosiman, Das Zungenreden, geschichtlich und psychologische untersucht. Unfortunately, while numerous articles have been written on the subject, there is no book available to English readers which covers the ground.

Either there was a dramatic increase in interest in the topic from Cutten's time to that of Hart's, or else they were describing different topics. In actual fact, rather than either/or, it is a both/and situation. In Cutten's time, little of substance had been written on the topic, while in recent times, a great deal has been written. Although Cutten's analysis is no longer accurate, it is still true that few works have been produced that could be considered thorough. Of these, there are, for English readers, at least three works of note, two of which remain in xeroxed dissertation form.

---


3 N. I. J. Engelsen, Glossolalia and Other Forms of Inspired Speech According to 1 Corinthians 12-14 (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1971). This was a dissertation written for Yale University. Watson Mills, A Theological Interpretation of Tongues in Acts and First Corinthians (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1968). This dissertation was written for Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Wayne Grudem's dissertation, The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), was written for the University of Cambridge, England. An Italian dissertation, Scippa Vincenzo, "IL Carisma della glossalalia nel Nuovo Testamento," Naples, D.Th., 1981, was not available at the time this research was being done.
The earliest book of significance is Das Zungenreden geschichtlich und psychologische untersucht (1911), by Eddison Mosiman. Although Mosiman gives attention to the psychological aspects of tongue speaking, even going so far as to identify some manifestations with hypnotism, he takes seriously the charism aspect, which many recent psychological studies do not do. In fact, he spends considerable time on the miraculous element, stressing that both glossolalia and its interpretation are the result of supernatural gifts. Mosiman also spends time defining the experience and concludes that according to Acts, the Pentecost gift was a miraculous ability to speak unlearned foreign languages, while the Corinthian manifestation was the gift of an ecstatic, unintelligible, pneumatic experience. At the same time, he believes that this definition needs further clarification. Mosiman maintains that the earliest tongues experience was the kind of unintelligible ecstaticism discussed in detail in Corinthians, and it was this same experience that took place at Pentecost. However, by the time Luke wrote of the Pentecost experience, the accepted traditional understanding of that incident had turned ecstaticism into a miraculous speaking in unlearned foreign languages, and although Luke knew that miraculous foreign languages did not quite harmonize with the customary ecstatic form, he left the traditional explanation intact, since both forms were Spirit-induced. Mosiman neatly summarizes his position:

Briefly stated: Speaking 'in other tongues' at Pentecost was essentially the same phenomenon as that at Corinth and modern

1(Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1911).
2Ibid., p. 101. 2Ibid., pp. 14, 15.
tongues-speaking, namely, unintelligible ecstatic speech; tradition, however, has embellished it to a miraculous speaking in unknown foreign languages, and the author of Acts, then, has in turn transmitted it in this form.

Although he freely uses the Greek terminology, Mosiman does not engage in a detailed exegesis of 1 Corinthians. At the same time, he uses the passage as the basis of his reasoning and assumes that what is described is a legitimate, supernatural, ecstatic event which is in some way being abused by the Corinthians.

Although it also is old (1913), the little work by D. A. Hayes, *The Gift of Tongues*, addresses the primary issues well. Hayes unequivocally asserts that the Corinthian gift of tongues was an ecstatic experience and in no way related to intelligible foreign languages. He gives evidence for his conclusion that throughout the New Testament the gift, wherever manifested, was always the same—an ecstaticism characterized by unintelligible speech. His analysis of the Pentecost phenomenon is methodically presented. In contrast to some writers, he supports the historicity of the Lukan account while at the same time showing its continuity with the Corinthian experience. He gives eight points in support of his conclusion that the tongues experience at Pentecost was essentially the same as that in Corinth.

He follows this with a short history of the outstanding tongues manifestations, referring briefly to the Montanists and the Camisards and a bit more thoroughly to Edward Irving. This is followed by detailed first person descriptions of numerous meetings where tongue-speaking was practiced.

---

1 Ibod., p. 130, translation supplied.
2 (Cincinnati: Jennings & Graham, 1913).
It seemed to us that the speaker resorted to the tongue when he could think of nothing else to say. It gave him time to collect himself and get a fresh start. In other meetings we have seen speakers seemingly exhaust their line of thought and then fall to leaping and shouting hallelujahs until the meeting warmed up a little and they had thought of something else to say.¹

It soon becomes clear that Hayes holds the gift in less than high esteem and suggests that it is only a temporary phenomenon that will "run its course in a few months or a few years."² Subsequent history shows that he underestimated the situation. In his fifth chapter, however, Hayes lists five of the then-current reasons commonly set forth in favor of the phenomenon and follows each with his personal rejoinder. He then gives four principles for controlling tongues, two of which he gleans from the verses being considered in this dissertation:

1. Proportionate Value. A known, intelligible expression is proportionately of much greater value than an unintelligible one. (1 Cor 14:19, 5 words against 10,000.)

2. Edification. (14:26). All things be done to edifying. Whole congregation is to be blessed.

3. Orderliness. (1 Cor 14:40). Let all things be done decently and in order. God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

4. Self-Control. Loss of self-control is often looked upon as evidence that the Spirit is in control. But Paul says, "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (1 Cor 14:32). It was a heathen conception that possession by the Spirit was compatible only with the abnegation of the reason. The Christian conception is that possession by the Holy Spirit simply strengthens and enforces the natural powers.³

In the preface to Speaking with Tongues (1927), George Cutten asserts that "there is no book available to English readers which covers the ground,"⁴ then he offers his book as the one that

---

¹Ibid., p. 89. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 113. ⁴P. xi.
will fill that void. But those who write from within the Pentecostal framework have been slow to accept his contribution, inasmuch as his approach does not exalt the subject. For example, he asserts that in the process of human development, vocal expression came about much earlier than thinking, since thinking is a difficult process. Accordingly, it is not uncommon for speech (which is easy) to continue after thought (which is difficult) has ceased, and when this occurs, the Pauline type of speaking with tongues results.\(^1\)

The following statement demonstrates Cutten's style of making evaluative comments regarding the phenomenon at his time, which throws little light on an understanding of the Corinthian passage:

> In addition to excitement and low mentality, one other factor is likely to be present in those who speak in tongues, and that is illiteracy. The illiterate naturally have poor power of expression and a limited vocabulary. . . . When we have, then, these three elements (excitement, low mentality, and illiteracy), and added to them the power of suggestion and expectancy, we can prognosticate speaking with tongues as a result.\(^2\)

Cutten then adds that since human nature has not changed over the years, we can be quite certain that when we thus explain the modern phenomenon, we "are at the same time, helping to explain the phenomena which the apostle tried to control."\(^3\) Thus, his method is clear—he seeks to understand the biblical phenomenon by evaluating the current manifestations. Even if that methodology were legitimate, his presuppositions preclude his finding any value for the gift (e.g., "It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a more

---

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 5. In addition to his negative presuppositions, Cutten underestimates the neuro-anatomic and neuro-physiological complexity of the act of speech.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 7.

\(^3\)Ibid.
useless gift”). But his language has a note of dissonance in that the idea of a gift of pneumatic charism is difficult to harmonize with uselessness.

Cutten quotes the scriptural passages that refer to tongues (Acts 2, Mark 16, and 1 Cor 14) and then follows with a light treatment of the Pauline section and no exposition at all of the other passages. However, his historical treatment is more thorough and resembles that of D. A. Hayes. His examples from "modern" times date from the first two decades of this century and add little to our understanding of the phenomenon. He relates several incidents of speech in a previously unlearned language, as well as incidents of ecstatic speech, but throughout his account, he maintains his low view of the gift: "Beyond a doubt such extreme indulgences have unsettled many, and predisposed them to weakness and sin rather than to strength and godliness. . . ." He interprets the phenomenon as unquestionably one of ecstasy and allows no possibility that it ever includes speaking in a foreign language.

Cutten's work sets forth an acceptable history of the tongues movement, but it is flawed by its superficial treatment of the biblical passages and by the author's unabashedly low view of the experience. Furthermore, although he gives much space to the phenomenological aspects of the experience, the 1927 date limits its value for research into current practices.

In Glossolalia in the Apostolic Church (1960) Ira Jay Martin spends considerable time analyzing the early tongue-speakers. His

\[\text{^1Ibid., p. 10.} \quad \text{^2Ibid., p. 134.}\]
objective is to study the phenomenon in the context of the Apostolic age so as "to contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon not only for the sociologist and psychologist, but also for the pastor, church school teacher, and the Bible student."^1 But as he proceeds, he connects the experience to the psychological weaknesses of the participants. For example, he asserts that "tongue-speaking appeared primarily among those individuals and groups who were economically under-privileged, socially subjugated, academically deprived, and religiously ostracized."^2 Some of his terms seem more pejorative than the case warrants, and he attributes tongue-speaking to an inability to express oneself due to limited vocabulary and intellectual handicap with the result that frustration gave rise to an unintelligible expression of "almost ceaseless jargon."^3 He later adds, "Glossolalia therefore became merely a passing symptom of personality readjustment."^4

Martin has little regard for the gift concept, as he explicitly states: "The phenomenon only has the appearance of a gift; it is not a gift. . . . Rather, we must consider it as an extreme type of exhibitionism like 'weeping for joy', or hysterical laughter in the midst of mourning."^5 In summary, he seems too ready to attribute the entire experience to psychological processes.

In a bibliographical article, "Literature on Glossolalia," Watson Mills refers to a dissertation entitled simply Glossolalia

^2Ibid., p. 51. ^3Ibid.
^4Ibid., p. 53. ^5Ibid., pp. 59,60.
(1960) which he calls "one of the most significant unpublished items for the study of glossolalia."\(^1\) The work was done by a medical doctor, Lincoln Vivier, who, like Martin, approached the topic from a psychological stance. Although he describes the three sections of his study as "Biblical, Historical and Psychological,"\(^2\) his emphasis is on the last of these (which is not unexpected, given Vivier's medical background). The bulk of his dissertation is devoted to giving the results of his surveys, from which he concludes that glossolalists are somewhat below average in their psychological adjustment. His treatment of the biblical evidence is superficial and seems to have been done as a backdrop for his psychological evaluation. The work contains no footnotes and refers repeatedly to outdated works for support. For example, he refers often to G. B. Cutten's work as authoritative, yet that book was published in 1927 and its bibliography contains no book written since 1923.

As his title indicates, Tongue Speaking: An Experiment in Spiritual Experience (1961) Morton Kelsey gives extensive coverage to the experiential aspects of tongue-speaking. Although he devotes seventeen pages to "the Biblical Evidence," he does so only as a backdrop against which he can proceed to discuss the varied experiences of the tongue-speakers. His "biblical evidence" is primarily composed of verbatim quotations of passages in Acts, Mark, and

\(^1\)P. 173.

1 Corinthians, with virtually no attempt to explicate these sources. The strength of his work lies in the way he traces the history of the tongues movement from New Testament times through the Church Fathers down to the recent manifestations of charismatics in the traditional churches.

In contrast with Hayes, Cutten, and others, Kelsey takes a much higher view of the gift and its spiritual impact upon the participants. Although he is not naive concerning the "spiritual pride and arrogance" it is capable of fostering, he asserts that speaking in tongues is "one of the gifts of the Spirit . . . a true Christian phenomenon. It is one entrance into the spiritual realm; by giving access to the unconscious, it is one contact with non-physical reality which allows God to speak directly to man."^1

Glossolalia in the New Testament (probably early 1960s) by William G. MacDonald^2 is regarded by some as an excellent exegetical analysis of the tongues passages in the New Testament. However, it deals with the major NT passages in a mere twenty pages, so the work is understandably superficial. MacDonald consistently defines the phenomenon as a gift of speaking foreign languages. He suggests that at Pentecost and following, the manifestations described in Acts were given to attest the validity of the gospel, while in Corinth, the phenomenon was, through interpretation, to give edification to the church. In the Pentecost incident, no interpretation was required inasmuch as the apostles all spoke at once.

Though MacDonald has a section called "Problem Passages," he does not deal adequately with such verses as 1 Cor 14:2 ("no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit").

Robert Gromacki's book, *The Modern Tongues Movement* (1967) gives a thorough though concise history of the tongues phenomenon from the "Report of Wenamon," written about 1100 B.C.,\(^1\) down through Christian history to the mid 1960s. His position is that the only genuine gift is a gift of known languages, and since that gift disappeared within the first century, whatever subsequent manifestations have appeared have been spurious.\(^2\) At times his language is quite polemical against the tongues movement, occasionally even hinting at satanic involvements. He deals with 1 Corinthians by means of dialoguing with secondary sources about the text and thus offers little exegetical help. Nevertheless, his historical survey is helpful for seeing the pervasiveness of a glossolalic phenomenon that has repeatedly surfaced in both pagan and Christian writings.

Arnold Bittlinger's *Gifts and Graces, A Commentary on* 1 Corinthians 12-14 (1967) was translated from German into English


\(^2\)At one point, to support his contention that a continuation of tongues after Pentecost was not necessary he draws an interesting analogy between the giving of the law to Israel, and the gift of the Spirit in the early church. "When the law was first given by God, the event was accompanied by thunder, lightning, fire, smoke, and an earthquake (Ex 19:16-18). However when God gave Moses the second tables of the Law after the first had been broken the phenomena were not repeated (cf. Ex 34). The first experience of Israel with God and the law did not become a normal pattern. Neither should the first experience of the church with the Holy Spirit be expected to become a normal pattern" (ibid., p. 96).
by Herbert Klassen. Originally, it was a series of Bible studies delivered at an ecumenical conference on "Charismatic Church Life." In keeping with its original purpose, the book is not a part of the genre of serious commentaries on Corinthians. For example, it accepts without challenge or discussion Werner Meyer's definition of glossolalia as a speaking in known foreign languages, and then proceeds to interpret these three chapters in Corinthians on the basis of this assumption. Consequently, the analysis of numerous important verses is quite truncated. Though he makes passing reference to such verses as 14:2, "For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; he utters mysteries in the Spirit," Bittlinger does not attempt an explanation that might harmonize with his foreign language interpretation. Rather he goes on to speak of the psychological value of the experience. In so doing, he refers to Lincoln Vivier's dissertation but draws quite different conclusions from it than did Watson Mills. In sum, it is an acceptable series of Bible studies, but does not merit the term "commentary."

In The Pentecostal Movement (1964), Nils Bloch-Hoell has

---

3 Vivier, Glossolalia.
4 In his article, "Literature on Glossolalia," Mills remarks that Vivier concludes that "glossolalists are somewhat below average in their psychological adjustment," p. 171. However, Bittlinger maintains that Vivier found the glossolalists "completely healthy and normal people, but also . . . better equipped to endure tension. . . ." Gifts and Graces, p. 100.
provided a carefully documented history of the modern Pentecostal movement. He traces its emergence in Kansas in 1901 and follows its expansion to international scope in Los Angeles in 1906, and then its explosion into a world mission in the 1960s. He does more than give a names-dates type of history, methodically evaluating the theology, eschatology, sociology, psychology, and even hymnology of the movement. Along the way he gives short biographies of four early Pentecostal leaders: Thomas Battatt, Anna Bjorner, Aimee McPherson, and Petrus Lewi Pethrus. His detailed documentation is seen in fifty-four pages of end notes. However, since the emphasis of the present study is on exegesis, Bloch-Hoell's work is of limited help, although his theological evaluations provide useful insights.

Laurence Christenson's little book Speaking in Tongues (1968) is written from within the Pentecostal movement. While the analysis of the phenomenon is positive, the handling of the biblical text is somewhat superficial. For example, Christenson translates the word γλωττία in 1 Cor 14:2 "unknown tongue" almost as if he were following the KJV. Christenson believes that following conversion a baptism of the Holy Spirit enables the believer to receive spiritual gifts. But he points out that the emotional atmosphere of the prayer meeting is not essential for a successful tongues experience. Rather, he gives a detailed step-by-step procedure whereby a person may speak in tongues in the quietness of his own home. Christenson differs with the idea that the Holy Spirit comes upon a person and thereby initiates glossolalia. In contrast, he suggests that it is the ______

---

person himself who initiates the experience, and only afterward does
the Spirit respond to that act of faith by forming words. "Many
people wait and wait for something to 'happen', not realizing that
the Holy Spirit is waiting for them to speak out in faith!"\(^1\) He
adds that though the first experience may seem contrived and
difficult, thereafter, the person will be able to speak "at will."\(^2\)
He maintains that the tongues experience is an end in itself, a
goal to be sought after, the crowning experience for the Christian.\(^3\)

In 1968, Watson Mills produced a doctoral dissertation
entitled *A Theological Interpretation of Tongues in Acts and First
Corinthians*. Done at a time when the Neo-Pentecostal movement was
enjoying phenomenal growth, Mills' work is a calm bit of research
into the on-going Pentecostal activities, tracing briefly the roots
of the modern movement but moving quickly into the theological
relevance of glossolalia for the church today. He describes his
work as an "exercise in biblical theology."\(^4\)

After showing that ecstaticism had many different faces
before and after the Corinthian manifestation, he discusses 1 Cor
12-14, but not in the nature of exegesis. His procedure is to
condense the thought of a text and simply give the reference as a
footnote. In the process of his work, Mills takes a mediating
position with regard to the phenomenon, making clear both the
positive aspects of the experience and the dangers of an excessive
emphasis on non-rational phenomena.

More recently, Mills edited *Speaking in Tongues, Let's Talk*

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 130. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 131.
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 132. \(^4\)p. 25.
About It (1973), a series of essays which look at the many sides of glossolalia as a vocal phenomenon. The first chapter, which is Mills' own contribution to the work, analyzes glossolalia as a possibly legitimate expression of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in human experience. Other chapters, each by a different scholar, deal with such aspects as the significance of glossolalia in the history of Christianity, its place in Neo-Pentecostalism, and its meaning for the church today. The book is written in a language and style that appeal to laypersons, and though it treats the biblical material lightly, it is helpful in evaluating the current phenomenon.

Another dissertation is by N. I. J. Engelsen, Glossolalia and Other Forms of Inspired Speech According to 1 Corinthians 12-14 (1971). Though Engelsen does some exegesis of the pertinent passages, his work is especially thorough in tracing the development of prophetism—a term he uses for various forms of ecstaticism prior to Paul—from ancient times to the end of the first century A.D. In fact, approximately half of the dissertation is devoted to prophecy. But the rich historical background is a helpful prelude to his attenuated exegesis. He refers frequently to several older German works for support, but he makes limited reference to periodical articles or American scholarship.

The most recent work is a dissertation by Wayne Grudem, The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians (1982). As the title suggests, Grudem's goal is to define in detail the nature of prophecy as found
in 1 Corinthians, and to "analyze that type of prophecy in much greater detail than has previously been done." As he traces the roots of prophetism in the Old Testament, he gives no clue that he was aware of the work by Engelsen and re-plows some of the same ground. But as he narrows his study to 1 Corinthians, he is more creative, and quite careful in his handling of the biblical passages. Central to his work is the distinction he maintains between the authority of the general content of a prophet's message, and the authority of the actual words of a prophet. He suggests that Corinthian prophecy, though a gift from God, had only the former authority. Consequently, the status of prophets in the Corinthian community was not that of a recognized office in the church organization, so there was no elite guild of prophets such as existed in Old Testament times. Instead, Grudem suggests, any member of the church might prophesy if God so ordered it. Consequently, a person in Corinth was termed prophet because he had been given a message; he was not given a message because he was a prophet. Furthermore, since his authority was only of general content, not of actual words, his message was subject to careful evaluation, and perhaps even correction at times. All of this leads Grudem to three major points regarding the content of Corinthian prophecy: (1) It does not include any claims that the divine authority extends to the actual words; (2) it includes material which seems to have come through a "revelation" from God;

---

1p. 5.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
(3) it will edify other members of the congregation. He then adds, "Within these bounds, a prophecy could apparently speak to any subject and contain any kind of material which would contribute to its purpose." His work highlights a number of important aspects of Corinthian milieu of prophetism but, as might be expected, does not address the tongues passages.

As mentioned above, this brief list is intended only to provide a sample of the kinds of books that have been produced on this topic. Since the mid-sixties, when the neo-Pentecostal movement came into flower, a plethora of books and articles has been produced that has shed much light on the modern-day manifestations. Watson Mills categorizes all such writings under three headings:

1. Exegetical studies, dealing with the Old Testament, with interbiblical and Greek parallels as well as with several New Testament references;
2. Historical studies, examining the phenomenon as it has occurred throughout the ages of the church;
3. Psychological studies, including actual clinical research and first-hand accounts by involved persons.

If the preceding list is a fair sampling of the pertinent books and dissertations, it is readily seen that the emphasis lies overwhelmingly on the last two of Mills' categories. Furthermore, of those works examined, it appears that some which Mills designates "exegetical" do not really fit that description.

**Exegetical Expositions**

But exegesis of 1 Cor 14 has been done, not as major monographs on the subject, but usually as part of a larger commentary.

---

1. Grudem, pp. 219-21. 2. Ibid., p. 221.
3. A Theological Interpretation of Tongues, pp. 19, 20.
In addition, articles have been written that do credible exegesis of portions of the text. Several brief evaluations of such works follow.

In 1838, H. A. W. Meyer published a technical, scholarly commentary on 1 Corinthians.\(^1\) Other than his brief introduction (7 pages), the work is very thorough and shows great concern for careful exegesis of the text. Meyer not only used the technical terminology of Greek syntax, but also frequently referred to textual variants. Concerning glossolalia, Meyer made a point of differentiating between this charism and the gift of foreign languages. This commentary has gone through several editions and revisions, first by C. A. G. Heinrici, then by Johannes Weiss, and later by Hans Conzelmann. Although the later editions greatly expanded the introduction and revised many of the comments, Corinthian glossolalia is consistently defined as a mystical experience of prayer and praise that is personally edifying.

Though it is not really an exegetical commentary in terms of grammar and syntax used, the work by Charles Hodge, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1857),\(^2\) is one of the very few expositions that has been written with the assumption that Corinthian glossolalia was a foreign language. The introduction of the commentary is helpful in providing not only a reasonably thorough historical context but also in making at least tenuous connections between the turbulent surroundings of the church and the members' experiences.

\(^1\) *Kritisch-Exegetischer Handbuch über das Neue Testament* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1838).

disorderly worship practices. Hodge does not attempt to outline the epistle but follows a simple style of quoting one verse, followed by his commentary on that verse. His emphasis is often devotional, and though he cites an occasional Greek word, his exegesis is rather truncated.

He precedes the tongues passage with a short essay in which he summarizes and paraphrases the ideas of 1 Cor 14, whereupon he then divides the chapter into two sections headed: "Superiority of the Gift of Prophecy to that of tongues," vss. 1-25, and "Special directions as to the mode of conducting their public assemblies," vss. 26-40. Hodge never really attempts to build a case for xenoglossia (tongues as a foreign language): rather he assumes that to be the correct understanding of Paul's phrase, "to speak with tongues," and simply interprets all the problem verses from that presupposition.

After a rather brief introduction, Charles Ellicott (St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, 1887)\(^1\) works through the Greek text in a detailed phrase by phrase method. He gives no outline of the letter and thus makes no reference to any topical organization of the material. Though his exegesis of each verse is concise, he faithfully comments on virtually every significant word or phrase, making extensive use of the learned syntactical vocabulary of the time.

His comments on the actual nature and use of glossolalia are brief. In an almost off-hand manner in connection with his

\(^1\)(London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1887).
comments on vs. 7, he defines the phenomenon as ecstaticism and
does not further elaborate the point. In harmony with the emphasis
of this dissertation, Ellicott sees in vss. 26ff., a passage with
summary force that calls "the reader's attention to what has been
stated, and what naturally flows from it."  

There are similarities of both style and content between
the commentary by Ellicott and that done about the same time by
F. Godet (Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians,
1889). Like Ellicott, Godet gives only a rudimentary outline of
the Corinthian letter, though his introduction is more detailed
than that of Ellicott. Though Godet does not include the Greek
text, he makes constant references to the Greek words and phrases,
and even includes marginal references to the major MS variants.
He is not so prone to use the jargon of syntax as is Ellicott,
though this in no way diminishes the effectiveness of his exegesis.
He defines glossolalia as a "spiritual soliloquy" between the
person and God, but does not address himself to the continuing value
of the gift. In fact, he simply asserts that without interpretation,
the gift is entirely useless.

---

1 "It is certainly probable that the γλῶσσας λαλεῖ in this
Epistle is commonly used in reference to ecstatic forms of prayer
..." (ibid., p. 262).
2 Ibid., p. 277.
4 It is interesting to note that a few years later, Robertson
and Plummer used this exact terminology with no indication that they
borrowed it. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, First Epistle of St. Paul
to the Corinthians. International Critical Commentary (New York:
5 Godet, p. 288.
In 1907, J. H. Michael addressed, by means of exegesis, the somewhat limited question of the nature of glossolalia. His stated objective was simply to ascertain "whether his (Paul's) words give any countenance to the view that the use of foreign languages formed any part of the phenomenon at Corinth." Reasoning from several of the pertinent Greek phrases in chap. 14, Michael concludes that glossolalia was an "ecstatic spiritual rapture--a state of deep emotion during which utterance was given to meaningless incoherent sounds, such sounds not taking shape in the intelligible words of any language." He says little in favor of the phenomenon, but observes that since Paul is very concerned for the conversion of "outsiders," the gift of tongues had "no great value."

Shortly after the turn of the century, some expositors seemed to put more emphasis on questions of introduction and organization before doing exegesis of the text. Thus G. G. Findlay (Expositor's Greek Testament, 1908) has twenty-four pages of introduction, while Robertson and Plummer (The International Critical Commentary, 1911) have fifty-nine pages of introduction including a detailed outline of 1 Corinthians with extensive background information. Both of these sources work directly with the Greek Text. Although the exegesis of both is thorough, Findlay is more concise, frequently offering a solution without the benefit of the more extended

2 Ibid., p. 254. 3 Ibid., p. 266. 4 Ibid., p. 265.
discussion of options which is characteristic of Robertson and Plummer. Both of these sources define Corinthian tongues as an ecstatic spiritual experience and both treat 1 Cor 14:26-33 as a block of verses that summarize Paul's previous line of reasoning. While both sources acknowledge the gift as genuine, neither spends time on its function or usefulness.

In 1917, a four-volume series of commentaries entitled *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments* was published. A number of different German scholars collaborated, with Wilhelm Bousset writing the exposition of the Corinthian letters. The format of the series is simple and well organized, in that four or five verses of text are immediately followed by exposition of those verses. The comments by Bousset are pertinent and clear, and though he quotes no sources, his scholarship is creative and sound. He makes virtually no reference to the Greek text or to Greek grammar, yet his logical comments on the tongues passage are worth the investigation. He treats chaps. 12-14 as a unit under the general heading of "Gifts of the Spirit," then subdivides the section under three heads, "Differing Gifts of the Spirit through a Single Source," "The Eulogy of Love," "The Superiority of Prophecy over Tongues," and "Instructions regarding Order in the Worship Service."  

---

1An example is the statement by Robertson and Plummer: "Verse after verse shows that speaking in foreign languages cannot be meant. Tongues were used in communing with God, and of course this was good for those who did so (v. 4)" (A. Robertson and A. Plummer, p. 306).


3Ibid., pp. 134-45.
In the process of defining the various gifts of the Spirit, Bousset explains that tongue-speech is entirely unintelligible to men, but the speaker carries on a conversation with God by which he is built up, but in the process, the community receives no encouragement. "Tongue-speech is therefore, an ecstatic prayer, which . . . no one understands."\(^1\) In contrast, he points out that while prophecy similarly originates from the Spirit of God, it is understandable by the community. In fact, Bousset spends considerable time discussing the importance of the edification of the entire group of believers and then asserts that uninterpreted tongues are not understood by the speaker himself, so they can hardly be of benefit to the church.\(^2\)

It is interesting to note that Boussst sees in vss. 26-36 a special section which he entitles "General Instructions concerning Worshipful Order."\(^3\)

In contrast with the brief treatment of introductory issues by Bousset, Adolph Schlatter, in his commentary entitled *Paulus Der Bote Jesu* (1934),\(^4\) gives a thorough introduction of some forty-eight prages. In the process he shows the possible connection between the Corinthian Christians' penchant for enthusiasm in their religion and the pervasive influences of the Hellenistic cults in the vicinity. Schlatter makes occasional reference to a Greek word or phrase, but does not often make use of grammar or syntax as a basis of his explanations. His comments are, nonetheless, very extensive, and

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 143 (translation supplied).

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 136.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 145 (translation supplied).

\(^4\)(Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1934).
reflect a thorough knowledge of the issues. He does not follow a verse-by-verse analysis, but his comments are very complete.

Accordingly, his discussion of tongues is extensive, so that he brings out issues that commentaries with a more "exegetical style" often miss. For example, he addresses the question of how the Corinthians, concerned with rationality and wisdom, could also be enamored of something so different as ecstatic excitement in their religious expression. He concludes that although some in the group gave lip service to the idea of wisdom and rationality, that element in the church did not dominate the group.

Schlatter sees Paul as taking a very positive view of the phenomenon, forbidding the Corinthians to scold those who spoke in tongues. Schlatter also asserts that the phenomenon was not considered useless since the speaker was edified by the knowledge that the Spirit was thus active in him. He describes glossolalia as an experience solely between the individual and God and thus as a prayer. However, he maintains that it was not a typical prayer, characterized by the expected human requests and wishes. Rather it was an experience in which the one praying was brought by the Spirit into oneness with the still hidden will of God.¹

James Moffatt in The First Epistle to the Corinthians (1938),² gives a thorough introduction to 1 Corinthians. Though he works only with English translations of the Greek, he deals quite well with the most significant issues. He spends considerably

¹Ibid., p. 372 (translation supplied).
more time on the positive role of tongues than several of his predecessors. Accordingly, he suggests that the gift, which he identifies as an ecstatic experience, was "not only good but exalted ... a divine manifestation of the Spirit, not a hallucination."\(^1\) He even adds that unintelligible raptures or involuntary seizures of ecstasy now and then are to be preferred to "calm indifference." But in common with many expositors, Moffatt looks upon the ecstatic aspect as an element of private devotions to be shared with the congregation only through an interpretation.

In the 1940s, R. C. H. Lenski\(^2\) made his considerable contribution to the collection of expository commentaries. His treatment of 1 Corinthians is similar to some of the early works mentioned, in that his introduction is quite brief (10 pages) and he handles the Corinthian material in a simple verse-by-verse method without the benefit of an outline. Though he does not include the Greek text, he makes frequent reference to the Greek words and syntax, but many of his explanatory comments seem to be based on personal reasoning rather than on exegesis of the text. Without making a specific case for it, he maintains that Corinthian glossolalia, like that at Pentecost, was a gift of foreign languages. Though he occasionally casts the concept of ecstatic utterance in a poor light, he does not make a serious attempt to refute it.

The 1950s saw the publication of several noteworthy

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 271.

\(^2\)The Interpretation of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (Columbus, OH: Wortburg Press, 1946).
commentaries, one of which was F. W. Grosheide's *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1953), which was part of the *New International Commentary* series. Perhaps the major characteristic of this volume is its organization and readability. His outline of the Corinthian letter is clear and concise, but for a major commentary series, his introduction is brief (6 pages). While his exposition is quite thorough, the infrequent reference to the Greek words or syntax gives one the impression that the work was done with laymen primarily in mind. He interprets the tongues phenomenon as an ecstatic language given by the Holy Spirit, and treats 14:26-33a as a unit which summarizes rules for "order in the assembly."^3

Later in the decade, an especially thorough French commentary was published entitled *Saint Paul Premiere Epitre Aux Corintiens* (1956), by Le P.E.-B. Allo. His nine-chapter, 107-page introduction addresses in a well-organized fashion such issues as the reliability of the text of 1 Corinthians, the grammatical style of the letter, the relevant literature on the Epistle, as well as the expected introductory questions of unity, integrity,

---


^3 Ibid., p. 334.

date, and organization. He works directly with the Greek text and leaves few syntactical stones unturned. Allo uses 1 Cor 14:26-40 as a focal point for making rather extensive comments (10 pages) on the contrasting nature of Corinthian ecstatic tongues and the Pentecostal experience. He maintains that the Corinthian phenomenon was unintelligible, but that the unintelligibility arose out of the emotionalism and chaos that was characteristic of the Corinthian worship service. He does not rule out the possibility that occasional Aramaic, Latin, or Greek words or phrases constituted part of the manifestation.

There have been few attempts by scholars to argue the case for glossolalia as a foreign language. One such attempt is that by Robert Gundry, "Ecstatic Utterance (N.E.B.)?" (1966). In his article, Gundry associates the foreign language argument with the "older commentators," and the "ecstatic" concept with the "history-of-religions" approach, which he implies has influenced "practically all modern commentators." Gundry builds his case for foreign languages on three primary points. First, he suggests that the use of the term γλώσσα for understandable language far exceeds its use for obscure speech, so only very strong evidence to the contrary can overthrow the natural sense of tongues as a language. Second, he asserts that the term διερμηνεύω in 14:28 is normally used for the idea of translating a language, thus that must be the sense in

\[\text{1}^\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 383.}\]
\[\text{2}^\text{Journal of Theological Studies n.s. 17 (1966):299-307.}\]
\[\text{3}^\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 299.}\]
1 Corinthians. Third, he points out that the tongues referred to in Acts is clearly foreign languages, and Luke's close association with Paul makes it likely that Luke reflects Paul's understanding of the phenomenon. Gundry discusses several other points that he believes favor the foreign-language understanding of tongues, but these are mostly in the form of rebuttals of positions favoring ecstaticism. Gundry's article is helpful in that it clearly sets forth most of the pertinent issues in the debate. However, a defensive tone, plus uncertainties about some of the positions rebutted\(^1\) result in a case that is less than thoroughly convincing.\(^2\)

In the 1960s and 1970s several commentaries were produced that varied considerably in emphasis and quality. One of the outstanding ones was that by C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1968).\(^3\) Barrett has his own translation of the Greek text printed in bold type followed by his exposition. His explanations are grounded in Greek grammar and syntax, yet his expressions are not overly technical. Though he alludes to the presence of Gnostic elements in Corinth, he does not attempt to give an exhaustive picture of that phenomenon nor tie it too closely

\(^1\)For example, Gundry seeks to show that the phrase "tongues of angels," in 1 Cor 13:1 does not mean that the tongues phenomenon of chapter 14 is ecstatic. But few expositors set forth as a convincing reason why glossolalia is unintelligible. Also, he argues that the reason tongues are unintelligible is not because they are ecstatic, but because there is no interpreter. However, this is circular reasoning, based upon his previous assertion that interpretation means translating a language, not interpreting the significance of it.

\(^2\)See pp. 85-98 below where many of these points are discussed in detail.

to Christian tongue-speech. He regards Corinthian glossolalia as an experience of genuine prayer that only the speaker can fully appreciate. Accordingly, he calls it an ecstatic experience that is meaningful but unintelligible and "of no use to those who hear him." In his outline he treats 1 Cor 14:26-33 as a unit that gives "final instructions on the conduct of a church assembly, in which speaking with tongues and prophecy take place."^1 Hans Lietzmann authored a commentary in the series entitled Handbuch zum Neuen Testament (1969).^2 In it, he omits all questions of introduction and plunges immediately into exposition of the text. His verse-by-verse commentary is very concise, though he does include an occasional extended comment. In fact, he precedes the tongues passage with a rather lengthy statement wherein he describes tongue-speech as a language that is not intended for men, but is a language of prayers, songs, and thanksgiving that is intended only for God. Consequently, it serves only for personal edification so is useless for the community. He does allow that the experience can have an uplifting effect upon the community if the speaker or some other person interprets the sounds for the community.^4 In this introductory section he supports his view of tongues as an ecstasy by giving several references from early Christians (e.g., Origen, Irenaeus, Polycarp, Ignatius) who allude to various kinds of enthusiastic, ecstatic expressions which Lietzmann equates with Corinthian tongues.

---

1Ibid., p. 317.  
2Ibid., p. 327.  
4Ibid., o. 58.
Though his exegesis of the verses on tongues is brief, he refers several times to the idea that Corinthian glossolalia was intended to be of value only to the recipient. Regarding the passage on which this dissertation focuses, Lietzmann suggests that, beginning with vs. 26, Paul sketched what he felt was the ideal condition for edification of the church as a whole.\footnote{Ibid., p. 73.} It is a helpful exegetical commentary, that offers rather abbreviated comments on many verses.

The commentary in the New Century Bible series (1971) by F. F. Bruce\footnote{Ronald E. Clements and Matthew Black, eds., New Century Bible (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1971), 1 Corinthians, by F. F. Bruce.} is similar in style to that by Barrett. The phrases of Scripture are printed in bold face, followed by Bruce's comments. Also, like Barrett, Grosheide, and others, Bruce transliterates an occasional Greek word into English letters but appears to be writing in something of a popular style. His introduction, though brief, is helpful in that it shows how conditions around Corinth might have been a factor in the Christians' propensity toward enthusiastic expression. Bruce regards glossolalia as a personal prayer experience that, apart from an interpretation, is useless for the public worship. His additional explanations regarding tongues are clear but quite abbreviated, and except for the introduction, they do not make a significant contribution to the tongues discussion.

The volume on 1 Corinthians in the Anchor Bible series (1976)\footnote{W. F. Albright and David Noel Freedman, gen. eds., The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1976), 1 Corinthians by Wm. F. Orr and James Arthur Walther.}
done by William Orr and James Walther varies from the style of most exegetical commentaries. The English translation of each chapter is divided into sections under very helpful headings and subheadings. Thus, when they quote the tongues sections of 1 Cor 14 under the general heading "Superiority of Prophecy over Speaking in Tongues," they divide the chapter into four sections: "Prophecy, tongues, and building" (1b-5); "Tongues, interpretation, and building up" (6-18); "Tongues and unbelievers" (20-25); and "Tongues, prophecy, and order" (26-33a). The phrase-by-phrase analysis of the Greek is quite condensed, but the primary issues of the letter are addressed well by means of extensive topical comments. For example, in regard to the background and setting of the letter, the authors make a smooth connection between the recent pagan past of many believers and their current preoccupation with ecstatic displays in church. As is common, the authors view the phenomenon as an expression of feelings and sentiments too deep for words, yet characterized by vocalization. They further assert that since Paul believed it to be a legitimate gift, he had no desire to dismiss it, he only wanted the Corinthians to be aware of the communal aspects of their exercise of it.

This list of exegetical sources is very selective, but it is a fair cross-section. While only one article was chosen to represent each of the primary views of tongues, the commentaries were selected because of their prominence in the literature, without regard to the authors' views of tongues. Thus it is of interest to

---

1 Ibid., pp. 298-310.  
2 Ibid., p. 306.
note that while these scholars vary considerably in their use of the text, in their style of presentation, in their thoroughness, and in some aspects of their conclusions, only two of the fourteen commentaries evaluated (Hodge and Lenski) supported the xenoglossia argument and the other twelve maintained that the phenomenon was some type of ecstatic, unintelligible vocalization. The charge by Gundry that the view of tongues has changed with the years or with the spread of the history-of-religions influence is hard to prove with the facts.
The Cultural Context

An element of the situation in the Corinthian church that comes quickly to notice is the divisiveness and party-spirit of the members (1:11-14). How was it that people who seemed so interested in worship were wracked with problems of discord? This latter word is used in only four NT books for a total of only eight times. Yet, three of those uses are in 1 Corinthians and one of those passages is 12:25 where Paul is expounding on the variety of gifts that ensue from one Spirit. He is illustrating his point by referring to the complex systems of the human body that must work in harmony if there is not to be discord. Clearly, such discussion would be pertinent only where there existed a certain amount of conflict. It seems safe to conclude that whether the πολιτεία of 12:1 is neuter, thus referring to spiritual questions from the Corinthian believers, or masculine, referring

1 Though perhaps flawed by over-statement, there is pertinence in E. F. Scott's observation that "the church was never so much divided as in that initial period, when all the scattered communities stood jealously on their rights. Paul was the protagonist in a great conflict in which the chief Apostles took sides against him. Before he died he saw his own churches broken up into parties, bitterly opposed to one another." (Ernest F. Scott, The New Testament Today [New York: The Macmillan Co., 1927], p. 37).

to persons,¹ the specter of σχολα loomed large over the Corinthian community.

At least a partial explanation for the factious spirit in the church may be found in the Corinthian milieu itself. The great seaport city, caught up in all its commercial enterprises, populated in part by seafarers who were concerned with momentary pleasures and pursuits, was not the setting for a calm, orderly religion or a carefully reasoned philosophy of life. Ernst von Dobschütz, who has written at length about the conditions of early Christian communities, has observed that Corinth was characterized by significant social contrasts. On the one hand, there were the merchants whose wealth had accrued from their financial perspicacity and, on the other hand, there were the toilers who lived and worked for the next meal. Since the main business of Corinth had to do with transportation of people and goods, there was little time for genuine science and art. In the Corinthian theaters, the Sophists and philosophers mouthed their flowery rhetoric, but underneath the words was a rampant cynicism. There were unscrupulous merchants, disciplined athletes, pleasure-loving crowds, all "bidding defiance to every power--these are the real Corinthian types; in a word, the man whom none surpasses, to whom nothing is impossible and nothing denied."³

At the same time, it is conceivable that Corinthian χαράγματα and σχέσεις may actually have had some common elements, with the first phenomenon explicating the second. For example, it is generally conceded that the charism of tongues has occasionally led to attitudes of "spiritual pride and arrogance,"¹ and it is not unreasonable to assume that glossolalia is not the only charism that poses such a temptation. The mentality or spirit that is enamored with χαράγματα such as miracles, healings, or tongues might easily exalt them unduly, with some participants tempted to pride and others tempted either to preoccupied desire for the gifts or cynical skepticism of their value. "What St. Paul evidently fears, is that an unwholesome preoccupation with the charismata in their more startling forms is creating an atmosphere uncongenial to the exercise of charity; it fosters pride, jealousy, backbiting, and other uncharitable emotions."² In all events, a community preoccupied with χαράγματα was easy prey to σχέσεις.

A closely related aspect of the Corinthian problem is an understanding of that part of the milieu that provided for or encouraged the germination of χαράγματα, in general, and γλῶσσας λαλεῖν, in particular. It does appear to be a uniquely Corinthian phenomenon. Why? Although Romans places a great deal of emphasis on varied aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit, reference to glossolalia is missing. While it is true that some expositors have

¹ Kelsey, p. 231.
seen in Rom 8:15,23,26 something akin to the tongues experience,\(^1\) both J. P. M. Sweet\(^2\) and A. Schlatter\(^3\) make a strong case against the hypothesis that Rom 8:15,23,26 or Gal 4:6 refer to glossolalia. In any case, of the Christian communities to which Paul wrote letters, only Corinth received a polemic on tongues.

The Gnostic Hypothesis

W. Schmithals is quick to suggest\(^4\) that an understanding of early Gnosticism solves many of the perplexities surrounding Corinthian practices. His position has some support. For example, there are a variety of Corinthian terms that lend themselves to such a view. Thus, Paul's use of \(\sigma\omega\zeta\alpha\), a word used prolifically by Gnostics, is suggestive, for he uses the noun form a total of twenty-eight times in five epistles, and seventeen of these uses are in 1 Corinthians.\(^5\) Similarly, the crucial word of the Gnostics, \(\gamma\nu\omicron\omegad\omicron\zeta\varsigma\) is used by Paul twenty-two times, with ten of these occurrences in 1 Corinthians and five in 2 Corinthians.\(^6\) Of course, similarity of terms does not indicate that Paul's primary opponents in Corinth


\(^3\)Gottes Gerechtigkeit (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1935), pp. 280-81.

\(^4\)P. 278.

\(^5\)A listing of the relative number of occurrences of the word makes the point more obvious: Rom 1x, 1 Cor 17x, 2 Cor 1x, Eph 3x, Col 6x.

\(^6\)The only other occurrences are: Rom 3x, and once only in Eph, Phil, Col, and 1 Tim.
were Gnostics. In addition to similar terms, similar ideas must be believed and taught. But that level of commitment to Gnostic concepts is not obvious in Corinth.

For example, when Paul twice uses the phrase, "All things are lawful . . ." (6:12; 10:23), he may well have been quoting a saying that had grown commonplace in Corinth, which reflected a concept of freedom that was close to license. Inasmuch as such thinking was part of the Gnostic system of thought of the second century,\(^1\) it is easy to see a possible Gnostic tendency in first-century Corinth.

In a similar way, some of the questions regarding marriage which the Corinthians had raised (e.g., 1 Cor 7:5,10,36) suggest an elevation of celibacy which later became common among Gnostics.\(^2\) So elements of both libertinism and asceticism can be found among those things Paul refutes, and both became hallmarks of Gnostic thinking.\(^3\)

As mentioned above, Corinth was also afflicted with divisions and party-strife which might be likened to the fragmented nature of much of Gnosticism.\(^4\) But although Gnosticism was characterized by rampant plurality, it is difficult to draw parallels between the Corinthian parties alluded to in chapter 1 and later Gnostic thinking.\(^3\)

---

\(^1\) Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.6.2; 1.25.4-5 (ANF, 1:324, 351).
\(^3\) Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle, pp. 144, 145.
factions. Furthermore, Paul's argument is not against a given party, but is directed against factionalism in general. This is demonstrated in that Paul does not show any particular favor to any of the groups mentioned, including the one that claims him as its special spiritual progenitor. Thus the problem is seen as a "quarrelsome spirit" rather than a polemic against a given group or party, as Schmithals attempts to show.

In addition, in spite of the factions, there was a degree of unity in Corinth that never characterized the Gnostics. Although Johannes Munck has over-stated the case in his chapter entitled "The Church without Factions," he has shown that the church was still largely united to the degree that one letter would be read by all parties. And even if the unity was an "uneasy unity," it would be considerably more cohesive than most of the Gnostic parties.

Of course Gnosticism too had its core of beliefs. Fragmented though it was, there were a number of constants: spirit-matter dualism, angelologies, a demiurge creator, etc. But nowhere in the Corinthian letters is there a sustained argument against any of the major Gnostic lines of thought. At best there are common

2Moffatt, p. 9.
3Schmithals, Die Gnosis in Corinth, p. 107.
ingredients alluded to or hinted at, but little more. The suggestive use of common terms as mentioned above is typical. But the lack of polemic suggests either that Paul is very timid against a popular, well-entrenched belief or that the belief is in such an early stage of development that an occasional reference to an erroneous idea, not yet systematized, is all Paul feels he needs to make. Clearly, the latter is more reasonable than the former.

On this point, R. McL. Wilson's article is particularly germane.\(^1\) While acknowledging Paul's use of terms that became Gnostic by-words, he strongly objects to calling Paul's Corinthian opponents Gnostics. Instead, he makes a strong case for differentiating between the term "gnostic," meaning a tendency in that direction, and "Gnosticism," meaning the more developed system of thought. In fact, he suggests a system of identification be developed such as using an initial capital letter for the word that designates the narrower sense of the term, and a small initial when referring to the wider, more general meaning. But, since that would entail so much interpretive judgment, he concludes: "The only solution here is to treat the word as a danger signal, avoid it if possible, and if it must be used define it more precisely."\(^2\)

After delving into the background of Paul's Corinthian opponents rather extensively, Birger Pearson\(^3\) has concluded that


\(^{2}\)Ibid., p. 71.

\(^{3}\)The full title of his dissertation indicates the nature of his research and also its pertinence to the question here being considered: *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians.*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
there is unquestioned continuity between the use of terminology on
the part of Paul's Corinthian opponents and certain Gnostic groups.
At the same time, Pearson rejects the possibility of equating the
Corinthians with budding Gnostics. One of the reasons he gives has
to do with the contrast between the Corinthian and Gnostic concepts
on man.

For inasmuch as the Gnostics separate the θεωματικός
nature of man from the realm of God's activity as Creator,
inasmuch as they posit man's ψυχικός or χοικός nature as
the product of an inferior or fallen being working in defi­
ance of, or in ignorance of, the highest Deity, the continuity
between the Corinthian opponents of Paul and the Gnostics
has been broken. The speculations of the opponents of Paul
in Corinth cannot successfully be placed in the same category
as those (of the various Gnostic groups). In fine, the
Corinthian opponents of Paul were not 'Gnostics'.

The Hellenistic Influence

The purpose here is not to confirm or refute Schmithals'
proposal regarding Gnosticism, but rather to determine if possible
why Corinthian tongue-speaking seems to be unique to that Christian
community. And even if it could be shown that the Corinthian oppo­
nents were the first Gnostics, that larger question would remain
unanswered because Gnosticism can hardly be localized in any one
city of the empire. At least if the use of common terms is a viable
clue, then something similar was also developing in the region of
Colossae. Yet, there is not clear internal evidence that a

A Study in the Theology of the Corinthian Opponents of Paul and Its

1 Ibid., p. 83.

2 The language of Col 2:8-10, 15, 18-23 reflects an attitude
of veneration of both angels and asceticism that goes beyond the
Christian concepts. Various scholars see the lineaments of incipient
Corinthian type of glossolalia existed in that area.¹

If the tongues phenomenon was uniquely Corinthian, as the evidence in the Epistles suggests, the reason for that localization is not at once clear. For just as Gnostic elements were widespread, and hardly unique to Corinth, the same can be said regarding many of the religious practices in the area. Furthermore, a syncretistic bent caused considerable borrowing of ideas and practices. For example, Hellenistic religions had elements common to both Judaism and Christianity. One such meeting ground was apocalyptic.

We imagine the Christian missionaries as faced by a grave difficulty when they sought to convey to the Gentile mind their strange beliefs in angels, and demons, judgment, retribution, a new age on the point of dawning, a Savior sent from heaven. The truth is that these ideas were all familiar, in one form or another, to the Gentile religions.² Hence, the influence of one religion on another waxed and waned, and thus it is conceivable that the Hellenism of Corinth influenced the embryonic Christianity there.

Corinthian Hellenism had points in common with several of

⁠¹Some see Col 3:16, "... as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God;" and Eph 5:19, "... addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart," as referring to a Corinthian type of tongues experience. But the references are too cryptic to provide clear answers. In any case, if those passages are referring to a glossolalia type experience, they underscore the uniqueness of the Corinthian problem, as they give no hint of difficulty, but rather indicate Paul's approval.

the Gnostic ideas previously mentioned. For example, a part of the Greek ideology was the virtual deification of reason as the final reality. Also, Hellenism held to a kind of dualism that distinguished between the essence of the divine and the human.

Man was of earthly substance... incapable of immortality, or of any true happiness or virtue. The gods were different. In their veins... there flows not blood but ichor. Their life-principle is of finer nature than man's, and so they live forever, and are exempt from suffering... For man there can be no deliverance unless the substance of his being can somehow be transformed.¹

But another significant aspect of Hellenism was the prominence of ecstasy. It seemed to arise from the sense of the gods as partly friendly and partly untameable and wild. Thus the god Dionysus is the

... distant and hidden god on the one side, the near and manifested on the other. He loves both noise and stillness. His symbol is the mask with its emphasis on presence and yet also its withdrawal from objectivity. The portion of the god no less than his worshippers is drunken desire, wild dancing, creative and prophetic, yet also sinister and destructive frenzy, ecstatic life and life-destroying death.²

Similarly, the Greek poet, Pindar, who wrote so much in honor of Dionysus, spoke of worship festivities that were truly ecstatic. He described how the various testimonials that flowed from the lips of men were "long drawn out," and had peculiar enunciation characteristics--no sigma was pronounced. In addition, the demonstrations included the frenzied shouts of dancers, which was preceded by the "whirling of timbrels" and the "ringing of rattles," all illumined by torch light.³ So also, Aeschylus, the dramatist, described a

¹Ibid., p. 71.
³Pindar Dithyrambs, fragments 79a, 79b, and 208; idem The Odes of Pindar, trans. Sandys, LCL.
worship occasion when the clang of cymbals and the shrill sounds of the holy rites created a sense of frenzy. The "bull-voiced mimes in answer bellow fearfully, while the timbrel's echo, like that of subterranean thunder, rolls along inspiring a mighty terror."¹

Although both Pindar and Aeschylus wrote in the early 5th century B.C., their writings reveal an element of religious frenzy that must have characterized Hellenistic practices for many years.

Maurice Goguel suggests that there was also a less frenetic manifestation of ecstasy in the Hellenistic communities:

> In the Greek environment . . . enthusiasm in the etymological sense of the word was still alive. Popular preachers and philosophers felt that they were the mouthpieces of the gods and on that score claimed attention.²

Certain of these elements may well be reflected in the terminology of Corinthians. Thus, the Hellenistic belief that wisdom is the only path to God might well have influenced Paul's counsel in 1 Cor 1:20-30, where he refers to the inadequacy of wisdom, which the Greek sought, and then contrasts its impotence with "Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God" (vs. 24).

Also, Hellenistic Judaism, as represented by Philo, shows points of similarity to some of the Corinthian concerns. For

---

¹Aeschylus Ἡμων, fragment 27 (trans. Smyth, 1946), LCL.
²The Birth of Christianity, trans. H. C. Snape (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1953), p. 99. However, Goguel overstates the case when he asserts that pneumatism hardly existed at all in the life of Christianity at Jerusalem. Of course, his conclusion is a logical one given his method of approach. Regarding the more outstanding manifestations of the Spirit in Acts, such as Pentecost, Peter's various healings, Ananais and Sapphira, and others, he summarily dismisses them by calling them "literary inventions," "legendary," or of "doubtful" historicity. See especially pp. 95-98.
example, he believed in a rational and a mystical-ecstatic knowledge, with emphasis on the latter.¹ In an extended commentary on Gen 15:12, he speaks of ecstasy with a variety of figures.

Sometimes it is a mad fury producing mental delusion due to old age or melancholy or other similar cause. Sometimes it is extreme amazement at the events which so often happen suddenly and unexpectedly. Sometimes it is passivity of mind, if indeed the mind can ever be at rest; and the best form of all is the divine possession or frenzy to which the prophets as a class are subject.²

Later, commenting upon ecstasy as divine possession, Philo states that the human νοῦς "... is evicted at the arrival of the divine Spirit,"³ which strikes a dissonant chord with Paul's counterstatement in 14:15, ",... and I will pray with the mind" (νοῦς).

Hellenism may well have provided at least some of the thought forms behind certain Corinthian problems.

The Influence of the Local Cultus

But Hellenism, like Gnosticism later, spread throughout the empire. Consequently, one must be more precise if he is to isolate the factors that precipitated only the Corinthian community toward glossolalia. While Hellenistic thought provided the broad background, the actual cultic practices in and around Corinth must have had enormous impact. Christie-Murray is typical of several authors⁴ who see continuity between the whole Delphic oracle cultus, practiced a few miles up in the mountains above Corinth, and the Corinthian

¹Oepke, "ξυστάσις," p. 453.
²Philo Heres, 249 (LCL, 1932, 4:409).
³Ibid., p. 419.
⁴For example, Van Elderen, Engelsen, Georgi, and Baird.
Christian penchant for mysterious worship language.

The pagan Greek belief in mantic ecstasy must have been prominent in the thought of many of the Greek converts. The Delphic oracle was not far away, and the idea of a worshipper becoming enthusiasmos--filled with god--was a common one in Greek thought. In this state his personality was temporarily expelled and his body taken over by the god who spoke through him, very often in words which, although in the vernacular, were so opaque in meaning that they needed an interpreter to translate them. Such 'enthusiasm' was recognized as legitimate and respectable by the Socratic-Platonic and Stoic philosophies which aimed to use it to improve the enthusiast's character permanently. There were marked differences between these ideas and those of Paul . . . but they were current and could have influenced the Corinthians, especially as a number of contemporary Greek sects are said to have practised glossolalia.¹

Bastian Van Elderen sees the Corinthian church being influenced by the pagan worship practiced even closer to Corinth than that carried on at the Delphic Oracle. He sees this influence on the very doorstep of the Corinthian church.

Her religion was dominated by the over-shadowing Acro-Corinth with the temple of Aphrodite and her thousand priestesses. In addition, the Greek oracles with their frenzied priests and priestesses provided a fertile environment for the phenomenon of tongues in Corinth. One can readily understand that this problem should arise at Corinth and also receive undue stress, whereas it did not arise at such a place as Philippi.²

Engelsen has carefully documented the various speech phenomena referred to in the ancient Greek sources, and gives considerable space to the pagan phenomena of orgiastic worship and ecstasy. He describes the nature of these manifestations as a combination of intelligible and unintelligible utterances, with the unintelligible predominating.

The utterances of the frenzied mantics and priestesses seem to have been a mixture of intelligible and unintelligible ejaculations. Descriptions also point to cases of inarticulate speech deliriums.

The necessity for interpreters at the oracle places gives one reason to believe that incomprehensible apparitions, strange voices, and unintelligible speech prevailed.¹

As to the connection with the Corinthian phenomenon, early Greek practices, no doubt, provided certain antecedents, for just as the Greek writers indicated that the gods spoke through the priestesses and mantics, so also, the Corinthians believed the Holy Spirit was speaking through them when they experienced glossolalia. At the same time, while the Greek and Corinthian manifestations were likely related, the precise nature of that interrelationship is difficult to determine.

The speech phenomena evidenced in the Dionsysian cult are similar to the ones in the Corinthian church, but the controversial question about interdependence must at this point be left open.

The ecstatic phenomena in Corinth are not as such distinctively Christian, but are pan-human.²

Contrarily, T. W. Manson does not see in Greek cults any necessary line of continuity with the glossolalia phenomenon in Corinth. He suggests that in those cults the shouting was the cause of the ecstasy, not the result of it. He then proceeds to trace the Corinthian experience to the Palestine Church described in Acts. Further, he believes that the OT prophetic ecstasies are better analogues than the Bacchic or Dionysian frenzies.³ However, Engelsen's careful dissertation traces the history of both the

Greek and Hebrew ecstasies quite thoroughly, and in so doing, makes a strong case for a line of continuity. Consequently, Manson's conclusion that the origins of Corinthian glossolalia are to be sought in Jerusalem seems thinly supported.

Although the Corinthians' reputed immorality was likely no worse than that of other Mediterranean cities of the times,¹ the fame of the nearby Delphic Oracle and the notoriety of the local temples are beyond dispute. Hence, in light of the evidence above, it seems reasonable to conclude that the Pagan worship practices in the vicinity of Corinth provided the seedbed for the development of the Christian preoccupation there with Χαράκτα in general and ecstaticism in particular. For while the Hellenistic age had softened some of the more savage practices of Pagan worship,² certain elements of the Greco-Roman religion that remained were as bloody and as frenzied as some of its precursors.³ Consequently, due to the historical and geographical proximity of such practices, it should be no surprise if "the Corinthians would not be satisfied with silent prayer."⁴ This argument is strengthened by Paul's


²Baird, The Corinthian Church, p. 120.

³An example was the taurobolium, a pit dug in the ground over which a bull was slaughtered. As the blood poured over him, the new devotee let it immerse his eyes, ears, lips and nose, even catching some on his tongue. The meaning of the act is not clear, though later records said the recipient was "reborn for twenty years." A. D. Nock, Conversion—The Old and New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), pp. 69, 70.

⁴Baird, The Corinthian Church, p. 121.
allusion to the Corinthians' previous experiences of being led about by "dumb idols" (12:2). And while Hellenism must have pervaded many other cities where Paul ministered and raised up churches, it is conceivable that only in the Corinthian community, with its background of mystic cult-worship, were the new Christians oriented toward ecstatic manifestations.

The Biblical Context

When considering those features that are especially significant to the Corinthian landscape, some attention must be paid to

1That this verse alludes to a previous ecstaticism seems quite clear, in spite of some grammatical difficulties. The problem lies at the end of the verse and bears on the relationship between the adjoining verb and participle, ἐγερσθὲ and ἀπαγάγετον. G. G. Findlay opts for the Westcott and Hort conjecture that the δὲ ἔτες was originally δὲ ἔτες, but due to scribal error, the τ was omitted. In that case the verse could be rendered, "You know that once (δὲ ἔτες) you were Gentiles, carried off to those dumb idols, however you might be led." Here, the force of the argument is that now, being people of God, you are distinguished from Gentiles in that you are no longer led away to the worship of idols. Furthermore, ἀπαγάγετο is a strong word, implying a certain force, thus stressing not the truth from which they had been led, but the idea of being carried away by an outside force. This is strengthened by the phrase, ὡς ἐν ἐν (how­ever you might be led), which suggests the caprice of the powers at work. G. G. Findlay, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, The Expositor's Greek Testament, 5 vols., ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.)2:905. Also, the word ἀπωμα, which qualifies the idols indicates that since they were voiceless, whatever the directives that emanated from them, they must have been like an occultic influence.

Luke Johnson concurs with this interpretation of earlier ecstaticism, simply asserting that the Corinthians had experienced "spiritual" ecstasies while still pagans. He adds that any raptures that might lead them now to curse Christ could not derive from the Spirit of God, for the only kind of expression that can ensue from that inspiration is the confession, "Jesus is Lord." Luke Timothy Johnson, "Norms for True and False Prophecy in First Corinthians, The American Benedictine Review 22 (January 1971):35. Here Paul is exposing ecstatic experience as something not essentially spiritual and is thus weakening the argument of those in Corinth who looked upon ecstaticism itself as evidence of being Spirit-controlled. See also Kirsopp Lake, The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul (London: Rivingtons, 1919), pp. 206, 207, and especially, Pearson, The Pneumatikos Psychikos Terminology, pp. 49, 50.
the terms *χαράσμα* ("gift," or "spiritual gift") and *τυγχάνεις*, ("spiritual," used either as an adjective, or with an article as a substantive). Both words are almost uniquely Pauline,¹ and both are used predominantly in 1 Corinthians.²

From the very first chapter of 1 Corinthians it is clear that spiritual gifts have taken on great weight among the Corinthian believers, and Paul either compliments or satirizes them on the basis of their concern for these gifts (1 Cor 1:7, "You are not lacking in any spiritual gift"). Furthermore, the distinction between gifts in 12:28 and the rhetorical questions in 12:29 make clear that gifts of the Spirit were held in high esteem, with some prized more highly than others.

In this milieu of fervent desire for manifestations of spiritual power, certain misconceptions had to be corrected before the adherents could grasp Paul's directives regarding glossolalia. A fundamental issue was an understanding of *χαράσμα/τυγχάνεις*. Yet, it is not as though Paul is simply handing down unpleasant information to unwilling recipients. There is reason to believe that the Corinthians had raised questions about this very issue. Chapter 12 begins with the words ἵνα τις, which J. C. Hurd (and a host of scholars cited by Hurd) has shown is a formula Paul used to introduce a response to a Corinthian question.³ Other passages

---

¹They are found elsewhere only in 1 Pet 2:5; 4:10.

²The statistics illuminate the importance of Paul's usage: *χαράσμα*: Rom 6x, 1 Cor 7x (5x in chapter 12 alone), 2 Cor 1x, 1 Tim 1x, 2 Tim 1x; *τυγχάνεις*: Tom 3x, 1 Cor 15x, Gal 1x, Eph 3x, Col 2x.

³The Origin of 1 Corinthians (New York: Seabury Press, 1965), pp. 63, 64.
seem to bear out his thesis. If this is so, it suggests that the Corinthians themselves were divided about the topic of spiritual gifts and sought instruction from Paul. The exact nature of their inquiry is not clear, nor does it need to be for the successful pursuance of this study. It is sufficient to notice that the issues Paul discusses in chaps. 12-14 are a part of the Corinthian scene and are sources of discussion and dispute.

If Hurd's thesis is correct, $\tau \varepsilon \omega \lambda \delta \varepsilon$ helps to point out the unitary nature of chaps. 12-14.

The key to a proper understanding of 1 Corinthians 12:1-3 is the recognition that it belongs to the whole context in chapters 12-14. If it is interpreted in isolation, as is done by Schmithals, the point of Paul's argument is lost. That it does belong to the wider context is clear from $\tau \varepsilon \omega \lambda \delta \varepsilon$ $\tau \omega \nu \tau \nu \mu \nu \alpha \lambda \kappa \alpha \nu$ in 12:1, a heading that governs the entire argument in 12-14.

Inasmuch as 15:1 does not begin with another $\tau \varepsilon \omega \lambda \delta \varepsilon$, there is some question about where Paul's response should end. Nevertheless, the subject of the resurrection, which is the focus of chap. 15, is an obvious change of topic. Stephen Smalley, while acknowledging Hurd's thesis regarding $\tau \varepsilon \omega \lambda \delta \varepsilon$, suggests that the unit extends from chap. 12 through chap. 16. However, the phrases $\tau \varepsilon \omega \lambda \delta \varepsilon$ that

---

1 This formula is found in 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12.
2 So also, Hans Conzelmann, A Commentary, p. 204.
3 See Ernest Evans, The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), p. 128. Evans has attempted to reconstruct the Corinthian inquiries on the basis of Paul's instructions, and although the result is somewhat speculative, it is a legitimate attempt.
occur at 16:1 and 16:12 suggest a change of subject and militate against Smalley's idea. He attempts to make a unity of the section by calling the two phrases in chap. 16 "subheadings," but his argument is weak. It seems more reasonable to treat chap. 15 as a separate topic and leave open the issue of whether or not it was a part of the Corinthian inquiry.

**Spiritual Gifts or Spiritual People? (12:1)**

Whatever the nature of the Corinthian inquiry, the immediate issue in chap. 12 has to do with τοῦ τεσσαρακοστού (12:1). Though the word is an adjective, its Corinthian usage is almost evenly divided between the adjectival and the substantival use.¹ The first meaning listed by Bauer, "caused by or filled with the divine Spirit,"² relates to either the adjective or the substantive. Lake cautions against thinking of the Corinthian usage merely with reference to a "spiritual frame of mind."³ He holds that the word in 12:1 was a masculine form and, in harmony with common understanding in the first century, referred to "a man who was obsessed by a τέρατον which was not his own, but had come into him from without."⁴ Following that definition, the neuter form would refer to those obvious manifestations of spiritual power that were looked upon as signs of Spirit possession. As Lake further adds:

---

¹It is used 6x as a substantive, 8x as an adjective.
³Lake, p. 203.
⁴Ibid.
The signs of this spiritual obsession were various, but they were chiefly ecstatic. That is to say, the proof of the existence of the spirit within was that the man did things which he otherwise could not do. This supernatural power might manifest itself in act or in word. The inspired person might develop powers of healing or do other miraculous deeds: the magical papyri show that this was as common in heathen circles as it was among Christians, and even extended to the resuscitation of the dead.¹

Whatever the nature of the Spirit-manifestation, the gifted person must have felt released from all restraint. Thus, even in his confession of faith, he might have little regard for propositional accuracy. He is not restrained by any particular words or formulas, since his life in the Spirit is all the proof necessary that he is "filled, reigning and is strong (1 Cor 4:8, 10)."²

But the phrase, τὸν θυμόν τυπομάντων of 12:1, is problematic in that the genitive plural form can be either a neuter plural, indicating "spiritual gifts," or it could be a masculine plural, indicating "spiritual men." As might be expected, a lively debate has ensued, with scholars of repute on both sides of the issue³ and some in the middle.⁴ Though Engelsen favors the neuter, he feels that Paul intentionally used an ambiguous form. His rationale is that the

¹Lake, p. 203.


³In favor of the masculine are W. Schmithals, R. Bultmann, K. Lake, R. H. Fuller, and others. Among those in favor of the neuter are H. Conzelmann, Jas. Moffatt, Jas. Dunn, T. W. Manson, Jean Héring, Birger Pearson, N. I. J. Engelsen, and others.

⁴Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 278, and Robert Gromacki, Called to Be Saints (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977), p. 148, both take a mediating position, indicating that the word could refer either to gifted believers or to the gifts themselves.
Corinthians had a narrow view of ψυχικά, limiting it largely to ecstatic speech as the special sign of Spirit-possession. Paul, not sharing such a narrow concept, favors a broader term, χαράκια, and, consequently, leaves ψυχικά unclear as a means of beginning his substitution.¹ It is an interesting hypothesis, but one that is hard to verify.

The neuter form does seem to fit the context more smoothly than the masculine, however.² For example, there seems to be a clear parallel between τῶν ψυχικῶν of this passage, 12:1, and τὰ ψυχικὰ in 14:1. There, the neuter plural nominative form can only be translated "spiritual gifts." While it cannot be proved that 12:1 and 14:1 should both be translated "spiritual gifts," the contextual evidence in favor of it is strong.

If chap. 12 begins a Pauline answer to a Corinthian question,³ then it is conceivable that ψυχικῶν was the Corinthians' term and Paul simply picked it up from their inquiry. In that case, the precise meaning would remain obscure, as there is no way of proving beyond question how the Corinthians used the term. But if the word was Paul's choice, a masculine form would indicate a qualitative aspect, "spiritual men," which would not fit smoothly into his following argument, unless as a foil, against which he proceeds to argue. Clearly, the behavior he describes in vss. 2 and 3 is out of harmony with what Paul considers "spiritual." In fact, Paul seems

¹Engelsen, pp. 127, 128.
³See p. 52 above.
to be saying that ecstatic speech behavior, of itself, is not necessarily a mark of "spiritual" Christians at all, inasmuch as it has been demonstrated even among the heathen (12:2). Such reasoning is particularly relevant to the problem at hand, for the later context shows (chap. 14 particularly) that the Corinthians had exalted ecstatic tongues as a special evidence of being Spirit-possessed. But in 12:1-3, Paul reminds them that ecstatic speech can be impelled by a radically different spirit. Or to put it another way, Spirit-possession may eventuate in ecstatic speech, but in view of the pagan manifestations brought on by another spirit (vs. 2), the church members should beware of concluding that ecstatic speech, in and of itself regardless of the content of what is said (vs. 3), is evidence of Spirit-possession.

Paul is saying that this demonic variety of ecstatic speech as such is not capable of leading men to confess Jesus as Lord; on the contrary, such ecstatic speaking could also lead to cursing Jesus.*

This issue must be close to the heart of this part of the Corinthian inquiry. Perhaps they asked, "Is a manifestation of tongues the sign par excellence of Spirit-possession?" Paul does not attempt to give an answer here that will deal with other aspects of tongues. He will work his way into the specifics two chapters later. But in the immediate context, his answer seems to be:

---

1 See footnote 1, p. 56.
3 For example, the outburst against Jesus described in vs. 3 appears to be intelligible without an interpretation, whereas the experience described in chap. 14 is repeatedly referred to as unintelligible (vss. 2, 5, 6, 13).
"Genuine Spirit-possession can only result in confession of Jesus as Lord: it can never result in blasphemy (e.g., "Αμαθευμα ιςαοῦς"). Second, there are gifts other than tongues that originate with the same Spirit, and are thus as important as tongues. So if you feel that tongues outstrips all other Spirit-manifestations, you are wrong.

That Paul is addressing a one-gift mentality, or at least a very narrow view of Spirit-possession, seems clear in 12:4-11. His polemical style is apparent at once as he stresses the variety of gifts that stem from the "same Spirit." Thus, in vss. 4-6 he uses the word οὔτος three times, each time with reference to a different type of "gift." Although Bauer gives the first meaning of οὔτος as "division, apportionment," the second definition, "difference, variety," is more in keeping with the Corinthian context, for each use of the word is placed over against the emphatic use of the pronoun, οὗτος, meaning, "the same." Verse 4 begins the series of contrasts with the phrase οὔτος ἐστιν τὰ καθολικά (varieties of gifts) contrasted with the little phrase, τὸ ἐστιν οὔτος τηνοῦμα (but the same Spirit). Though he uses different figures, he repeats the same kind of contrast with οὗτος (the same)

1Kirsopp Lake allows that, although confessing Jesus as Lord (12:3) was a simplistic test, Paul does not elaborate on it here. As time went by, the tests of genuine confession became gradually more complex, as can be seen as early as John's slightly more specified test, "Every spirit which confesses Jesus as Messiah come in the flesh is of God" (1 John 4:2). Lake, p. 207.

2Arndt and Gingrich, p. 182. So also, Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 283. J. Héring takes the mediating position by declaring that the word "signifies both the variety of gifts . . . and their distribution among many individuals" (p. 125).
Such stress upon varieties having a common source must have been called forth by some opposing idea such as that mentioned above—that some spiritual gift (e.g., tongues) was the hallmark of a privileged few and felt to be the epitome of experiences to be achieved. But Paul goes on in vss. 7-11 to enumerate a host of other gifts, with the almost tiresome reiteration of the Spirit as the source. Then, in vs. 11, he summarizes the argument with the statement that "One and the same Spirit accomplishes all these things, distributing to each one as He wishes."  

No doubt D. W. B. Robinson is correct in his suggestion that the Corinthians had narrowly equated τυεματωκα only with ecstatic tongues, to the exclusion of other gifts. But he carries his argument too far when he asserts that Paul was subtly trying to abolish the Corinthian term τυεματωκα in favor of his own term χαρακκατα since the gifts never originated with the Holy Spirit. In so stating the issue, Robinson does injustice to 12:11 where it is quite

1 It is interesting, though it does not advance the current argument, that Paul, in this series of contrasts in vss. 4-6, uses a different figure in each verse for the source, τυεμα, κύολος, ἀμος. As Barrett observes, "The trinitarian formula is the more impressive because it seems to be artless and unconscious. Paul found it natural to think and write in these terms" The First Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 284. At the same time, C. T. Craig points out that Paul's trinitarian formulation should be looked on with caution as he is not above using the terms interchangeably (Rom 8:9-11) (Interpreter's Bible, 10:150).

2 So also Bittlinger, Gifts and Graces, pp. 21, 22.

clear that the subject of the distributing (διαδοθῆ) is "the same Spirit" (τὸ αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα).

It seems that Robinson has tried too hard to depart from the simpler view, which he admits is espoused by "most translators and commentators,"¹ that the χαράσματαν of vs. 4 modifies or at least refers to the same things as the τευχαύτης of vs. 1.² Dunn feels that the two words are essentially synonymous, the only possible distinction being that τευχαύτης may have been the Corinthian preference, and χαράσματαν, Paul's preferred choice (cf. Rom 1:11; 12:6; 1 Cor 1:7).³ But even if in Paul's preference for χαράσμα, he wishes to underline the gracious character of the experience, he hardly disavows the prominence of the Spirit's role. If the Corinthians want to indicate by their term that the phenomenon they experience is impelled by the Spirit, Paul does not quibble over the term. He even goes so far as to admonish them to strive for the τευχαύτης (14:1). And though that admonition is used primarily as a lead-in to something even better (i.e., "to prophesy"), it still indicates Paul's acceptance of the term as a synonym for χαράσματα.⁴

---

¹Ibid., p. 50.
²Conzelmann, A Commentary on the First Epistle, p. 207.
⁴This suggests that R. H. Fuller's argument is perhaps too finely honed. He takes the τευχαύτης of 12:1 as masculine, with the resultant translation, "spiritual persons," asserting that they were "infected with Gnosticism." He notes that the Gnostics divided all people into three classes—the hylics, "sensual men"; the psychics, the "conventionally religious persons"; and the pneumatics, the truly "converted Gnostics." Fuller then deduces that there was a group in...
A further word must be said regarding the \( \chi\alpha\rho\sigma\varsigma\nu\alpha\rho\alpha \) in view of the dominant role they play throughout chaps. 12-14. As mentioned above, the term is preferred by Paul over \( \tau\nu\varepsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\tau\nu\kappa\alpha \). In fact, "'charisma' is a concept which we owe almost entirely to Paul."\(^1\) The only non-Pauline NT occurrence is 1 Pet 4:10. In the LXX the word occurs only twice, and then as variant readings. It appears two times in Philo and not at all in Josephus. Consequently, the meaning of the word must be determined almost entirely by the few Pauline occurrences. In those passages, the definition given by Bauer seems appropriate, "A gift graciously given, a favor bestowed."\(^2\) Or to put it another way:

Charisma is, in Paul's definition, the experience of grace coming to particular expression through an individual believer in some act or word usually for the benefit of others.\(^3\)

In addition, the close connection of the word to \( \chi\delta\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \) should not be ignored, for

the relationship of \( \chi\delta\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \) to \( \chi\delta\omicron\upsilon\sigma\mu\alpha \) is that of abstract to concrete, source to effect or manifestation, action to product. \( \chi\delta\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \) does something and \( \chi\delta\omicron\upsilon\sigma\mu\alpha \) is the result.\(^4\)

---

Such a definition puts emphasis on the source of the \(\chi\rho\sigma\mu\alpha\) rather than its nature. In view of the human effort expended to attain certain charisms, it is important to establish this aspect of grace in the origination of the \(\chi\rho\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha\). Building upon both Gunkel\(^1\) and Wetter,\(^2\) James Dunn asserts that so far as Paul was concerned, charismata are the manifestation of supernatural power. Charisma is always God acting, always the Spirit manifesting himself. Charisma emerges from the new life begun by the gracious act of God and as an expression of that grace . . . for Paul every charisma was supernatural. The character of transcendent otherness lies at the heart of the Pauline concept of charisma.\(^3\)

Dunn insists that \(\chi\rho\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha\) should not be looked upon as mere improvement of human talent and natural ability. It is a gracious activity of God coming upon or working (\(\epsilon\nu\delta\gamma\mu\alpha\)) through man. Any idea of worth or merit on the part of man is inimical to the meaning of the concept. Wherever \(\chi\rho\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha\) are present, there God is acting.

The Body Figure and Diversity of Gifts

In a milieu where ecstatic religion was rampant, and where people were daily exposed to the sights and sounds of "religious" fervor, some would grow up with the assumption that religion and ecstasy were inherently linked. It is not surprising that, in such a setting, Paul's letter to the Corinthians makes room for a certain religious enthusiasm. But such enthusiasm is volatile and can get

---

\(^1\)Hermann Gunkel, Die Wirkungen des heiligen Geistes (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprechts Verlag, 1888), p. 82.


\(^3\)Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit, p. 225.
out of hand. Accordingly, some Corinthian Christians had become enamored with the spectacular gifts, whereupon Paul set about to re-order their priorities. He does not, on principle, argue against a hierarchy of gifts. On the contrary, when he admonishes the Corinthians to seek the gifts which are "higher," "greater," (μεγίστος, 12:31), he implies that there is an acceptable hierarchy. Immediately following this directive, he proceeds with an exposition on love, followed by one on the merits of prophecy, thereby suggesting what he considers the top positions in his "hierarchy." His priority arises naturally out of his great concern for what will be of benefit to the corporate body of Christ. In other terms, it is not a variety of gifts, as such, that is detrimental to the harmonious growth of the body; rather it is a preoccupation with any one gift or manifestation that selfishly puts the individual on display ("When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue . . ." 14:26). And given the amount of space Paul devotes to the tongues issue, it is apparent that the Corinthians had exalted that gift at the expense of other gifts and had thereby fragmented the group.

Such a situation points up the aptness of Paul's "body" figure in 12:12-25, for by that one figure, he illustrates the need for unity among factions (cf. 1:11; 14:26, ". . . each one has a hymn, a lesson. . . .") and diversity among the one-gift people (cf. 14:23, "If . . . all speak in tongues. . . .").¹ The first of

¹The motif of the body representing the harmonious working together of varied forces was a common one among the Romans and would have been readily grasped by the Corinthians according to extended comments in both J. A. T. Robinson, The Body (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1952), pp. 59, 60; and Moffatt, p. 184.
these has received frequent comment, as the idea of a unitary body seems such an appropriate analogue and corrective to the factiousness that comes to light early in the letter (1:11-13). Yet, in the more immediate context, it is the emphasis on diversity that seems more to the front. At least some of the Corinthian ecstatics had overblown the importance of tongues and, in the process, had underrated the importance of diversity of gifts. It is to this point Paul speaks in 12:4-11, when he makes reference to the various gifts all emanating from the same Spirit. This is immediately followed in vs. 12 with the analogy of the body, which "... does not consist of one member but of many" (vs. 14). Clearly, Paul did not disparage the diversity of gifts in Corinth (cf. 1 Cor 12:8-11, 28; 14:1), but he was disturbed over the narrowness of the Corinthians' view of the operation of the Spirit.

Paul stressed the variety of the gifts of the Spirit, not negatively, as though they represented a theological challenge to the doctrine of the unity of the Church, but positively, in order to persuade the Corinthians to broaden their viewpoint and to accept a variety of skills and ministries as actual evidence of the working of the Spirit.¹

So then,

The point of the verses that follow (12:21) is not that the different members must be united among themselves (the question of schism does not enter till vs. 25, and then it is quite incidental to the passage), but precisely that there must be more than one member if there is to be a body at all.²

It is clear from the analogy in vss. 14-27 that, for the upbuilding of the corporate body, the church stands in as great a need of the variety of gifts as the body stands in need of its various limbs and organs. But Paul is not content simply to raise the

Corinthians' consciousness about the plurality of genuine gifts. In vss. 21-26, he presses his figure further, thereby disavowing their hierarchy of gifts which tended to exalt the spectacular and belittle the more common. That kind of priority is clearly unacceptable.

It was tongues, not the humbler gifts, that were making arrogant claims for themselves at Corinth. There are indeed greater and lesser gifts. . . . None of them can be dispensed with, but it is the seemingly less important members of the body which are really more necessary. Tongues, the most spectacular show-piece of the Corinthian church are in fact the least necessary.1

In 12:22-24 Paul makes a frontal attack upon the erroneous priority of tongues. He does this first in vs. 22a by means of the adversative phrase ἀλλὰ τὸλῦ ὁπλοῦ, showing the intense contrast between the foregoing and the following. This phrase he follows with the plain assertion that "the parts of the body which seem to be the weaker are indispensable, and those parts . . . which we think less honorable we invest with the greater honor." "A gradation must therefore be involved."2

Then in a more oblique fashion he confronts the Corinthian hierarchy of gifts with his own list in vss. 28-30. Considerable debate has ensued concerning the significance of the order of the gifts listed, with most of the attention focused on the first three3

---

3 Perhaps because, as Conzelmann observes, they are the only ones that are introduced with the ordinal number, "first . . . second . . . third." Conzelmann, A Commentary on the First Epistle, p. 214. J. Weiss makes the additional observation that the first three should be looked upon as a group since they are introduced by οὕτως ὑπὸ and are predicate accusatives, while the remaining ones are introduced by
(apostles, prophets, teachers) and the last one (tongues). While some uncertainty about the order lingers, regarding tongues there is broad consensus that its position at the end of the three lists\(^1\) is not accidental, but is intended to depreciate that which the Corinthians had unduly exalted.\(^2\)

**Conclusion**

Hellenistic Judaism, coupled with the pervasive influences of the local cultus, created in Corinth a predilection toward enthusiasm among some of the Christians there. As questions arose among them regarding the relationship between ecstasy and religious expression, Paul made it plain that there were God-given gifts called charismata, designed to minister to the needs for expression.

\[^1\]The three lists are found in 12:8-10; 12:28; 12:29, 30.

\[^2\]So suggest Barrett, The First Epistle, p. 296, Grosheide, p. 300, Robertson and Plummer, p. 282, and numerous other commentators. Wayne Grudem, while acknowledging that the placement of tongues last was done intentionally, points out that in the list of gifts in 12:8-10, prophecy, which Paul esteems very highly in chap. 14, is placed fourth from last. Consequently, with the exception of tongues last, and apostleship first, there is not a consistent hierarchical order of gifts (p. 266). Greeven further suggests that since glossolalia (as well as healings and miracles) did not contribute significantly to the οὐχοδουμί of the church, it never evolved into an established office such as prophets and teachers (pp. 31-43).
felt by some of the believers. Furthermore, the diversity of those gifts of the Spirit was meant to minister, not simply to the needs of individual members but, inasmuch as they emanated from the same Spirit, to the needs of the Church as a unified body. Consequently, while diversity and spontaneity of gifts are wholesome elements of worship, they must always be controlled by the principle of the common good (e.g., 12:7, "He has given to each the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good").
CHAPTER III

PAUL'S DIRECTIVES:
1 CORINTHIANS 14:26c-33a

As mentioned above, since many studies on glossolalia have been done against the backdrop of polemic against current glossolalic practices, the actual place and function of the gift in the Corinthian worship service has been neglected. Inasmuch as 1 Cor 14:26c-33a highlights and summarizes the directives by which Paul sought to regulate the Corinthian worship service, this section provides a convenient avenue of approach to much of the chapter. These eight verses wrap up Paul's argument on the subject and give "a practical solution for order in the assembly." Paul's use of the term ἀφορμή, as well as the summarizing phrase τῇ ὀνοματί, indicates that he is pulling his argument to a head. Findlay says the ὀνοματί "is widely resumptive, taking in the whole state of the Corinthian Church as now reviewed..." Up to this point in the chapter, Paul has been reasoning with his hearers, appealing to their logic. But now he proceeds to outline a series of practical steps that he expects the Church to incorporate into its

---

2Weiss, Der Erste Korintherbrief, p. 334.
worship practices."St. Paul has here completed his treatment (xii.-xiv.) of τυγκαλισμοί. He now gives detailed direction as to their use."¹ Conzelmann, adds that here Paul "returns from examples to instructions..."² It would appear that these verses are not merely "a few needful regulations... appended at the end..."³ but comprise a distillation of the preceding arguments into a few forceful summary statements of primary importance, from which much of the polemic of the preceding verses is absent.

Before Paul begins his directives for the service of worship, he briefly reviews the Corinthian's penchant for individual participation: "When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation" (vs. 26b). The readiness of each member to manifest some sort of charism calls to mind Paul's accolade that the group did not lack any spiritual gift (1:7). That statement, combined with his exposition of the body figure (12:26), by which he stresses the value of the diversity of gifts, leads to the conclusion that the conditions described in vs. 26b are being praised rather than disparaged. Lietzmann sees that possibility when he says that Paul here "sets forth the ideal (ξαπτός ξεει) which is also an indirect expression of the wish, 'it should be so'."⁴ Similarly, Moffatt sees in the term βαλον

---

¹Robertson and Plummer, p. 319.
²Conzelmann, p. 244.
³Lenski, p. 575.
⁴p. 73. At the same time, he holds out the possibility that Paul actually intended a dependent clause, "Everyone who wants to bring forward a psalm or a teaching, etc., should do it for edification." Both possibilities suit the context, but the latter requires a certain grammatical imprecision by Paul, hence the former seems the more reasonable interpretation.
not simply an OT psalm, but a reference to hymns in general which would include praises and prayers to God, partly prepared beforehand, and partly improvised on the spot after the manner of the Jewish Therapeutae.¹ In the act itself, he sees nothing unfavorable. James Dunn connects vs. 26b to what he calls "charismatic hymnody," which Paul has referred to in vs. 15. There Paul has mentioned two kinds of singing—with the Spirit, (presumably unintelligible), and with the mind (presumably intelligible).² Coupling this passage with Eph 5:19 and Col 3:16 where Paul refers to the believers singing "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs," one can easily see his approval of that spontaneous element of praise in the service. Though these manifestations are to be controlled by love and edification of the group, there is nothing in vs. 26b to indicate that Paul depreciates a freedom of expression as such. "Here, beyond dispute, Paul conceives of worship as a very spontaneous affair, without regular structure of form, and wholly dependent on the inspiration of the Spirit."³

But even good things carried to excess lose their value, and vs. 23 has alluded to an excess of tongues. While 26b does not specify an excess, the counsel of 26c to πεποιηθεί has implies a Corinthian preoccupation with individualism. If there is a problem in vs. 26b, it seems to lie in the eagerness of "each one" to

¹Moffatt, p. 227. Although Robertson and Plummer disavow the Therapeutae as illustrative of the Corinthians' psalm singing, they give no reason. P. 320.
²Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit, p. 238.
³Dunn, Unity and Diversity, p. 129.
participate. The ἐκαστὸς ... ἔχει of vs. 26b recalls the ἐκαστὸς ... λέγει of 1:12 where factionalism was fracturing the body of Christ. So here, although diversity of manifestations is a good thing, the following stress on οἰκοδομή indicates they were afflicted with an individualism that allowed the group to suffer. The same contrast is seen in vs. 12, where there is likewise indicated a certain dichotomy between eagerness for gifts on the one hand, and mutual upbuilding (οἰκοδομή) on the other.

At this point, an interpretive translation of the entire passage should prove helpful.

Vs. 26: τὰ ὅπως ἔστως, ἄφελας; ἦταν συνέχησθε, ἐκαστὸς ἁλαλοῦ ἔχει, ἀναφαίνῃ ἔχει, ἀποκάλυψιν ἔχει, γλῶσσαν ἔχει, ἐσυνεκαύν ἔχει; τάντα τῶν οἰκοδομῶν γνωρίζω.

What then is it, brethren? (What shall we say? What can we conclude?) When you gather together, each one has a psalm, or a teaching, or a revelation, or a tongue, or an interpretation; let all things be done (in such gatherings) for edification (of the group).

Vs. 27: εἴτε γλῶσσῃ τὸν ιαλετ, κατὰ τὸν τὸ ιευτόν τὸν τόσον, καὶ ἀνώθεν, καὶ εἰς ᾤδημονεύεται.

If anyone should speak with a tongue (as they certainly will), let it be in this manner: two, or at most three, and one at a time, and let one interpret.

Vs. 28: ἕαν δὲ ὡς ἂς ὑμῶν ᾤδημονεύεται, τῇτῳ ἐν ᾔδημονεύει, ᾔδημονεύεται ἐν τῇς ἰεβῇ,

But if there should be no interpreter, let him keep silence in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.
Furthermore let two or three prophets speak and let the others evaluate.

But if (something) should be revealed to another sitting by, let the first keep silent.

For all of you (to whom the gift has been given) can prophesy (provided you do it) one at a time, that all (the assembly) might learn, and all might be admonished.

Even the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets,

For God is not (a God) of confusion, but of peace.

The term οἰκοδομή is a key word in this chapter. The noun or verb form is used by Paul only nine times outside the Corinthian letters, yet it is used seven times in this chapter alone and four times in the rest of 1 Corinthians. The only other chapter where the word is used more than twice is Eph 4 where the context is strikingly similar to 1 Cor 12-14.

In the larger context of chaps. 12-14, the import of the concept of edification can also be seen. It is first alluded to in 12:7 by means of the phrase, τοῦτο το μυστήριον, "for the
mutual advantage." It is further clarified by means of the "body" figure which stresses the importance of both unity and diversity among the members, "that there may be no discord," and so that all might "rejoice together" (12:25, 26). It is suggested again in 13:5 where, by means of the phrase οὐ ζητεῖς τὰ ζωνταίς, Paul spurns the individualism which is so antithetical to his concept of ὀξοδομή.

Lexically, the word means "to erect a building." While a metaphorical sense was not unique to Paul, it was he who popularized the sense of "benefiting a person or a group."²

Paul's terms often have a tendency to fluctuate and move freely from a literal to a metaphorical sense and back again with little warning.³ "Among Paul's many virtues is not to be counted a strict consistency in the use of terminology."⁴ In a similar way, his use of the term ὀξοδομή in 1 Cor 14 reflects this flexibility of meanings, as he combines elements of both quantitative and qualitative upbuilding.

The metaphor of the church as a house or temple in the process of being built is one to which Paul frequently reverts. Paul sees his own task essentially as a founder and builder

---

¹ Bauer, p. 560.
² Moulton and Milligan suggest that outside of Paul the metaphorical use of the term is found only in Xenophon. James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959), p. 442. In contrast, Michel calls attention to metaphorical uses in Judaism, Hellenism, Philo, Gnosticism, and other sources, but admits that it was Paul who popularized the metaphorical sense. Otto Michel, "ὀξοδομή," TDNT, 5:144.
³ Paul's use of ἀξιόθανευ in its varied forms in Rom 6 is a case in point.
of churches (Rom 15:20; 1 Cor 3:9f.; 2 Cor 10:8; 12:19; 13:10; cf. Eph 2:21), and his readers are reminded to ensure that what they do helps build one another up towards the ideal of a community whose mutual concern wholly expresses the Spirit and love of Christ (Rom 14:17ff.; 12:2 ...).

Furthermore, the concept of "building up" can be collective, or it can refer to the individual.

The church is the body of Christ. It is an organism; not an organization. Every organism has its laws of development. Each individual member grows (1 John 2:12f.), as does also the total organism.²

Clearly, there is to be individual, as well as collective up-building. As each member is edified and grows, so also will the corporate body be built up. Paul's "body" figure in chap. 12 teaches that as each individual member of the body is healthy and successful in its intended function, the corporate body is likewise successful, for what contributes to personal edification will in some way contribute to group edification and church growth.

Uncertainty regarding the nature of the edifying arises in part from Paul's contrast in 1 Cor 14:4: "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church."

Concerning this statement, the common assumption seems to be that the first half of the verse is negative only, and the second half is positive, as if Paul is saying, only group edification is necessary. But Paul is not ruling out individual edification.

In fact the building up of the community is in a vital sense inseparable from that of the individual. No doubt, the charism has an altruistic character, sometimes going so far as to laying down one's life for the sake of others. But even in this case it shows itself as the diffusion and overspill of

¹Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit, p. 295.
²Bittlinger, Gifts and Graces, p. 117.
what builds up the charismatic individual himself, quite specifically, as the living cell or organ of the Church.¹

At the same time, Paul is consistently concerned with the corporate dimension of religious experience--its impact on the community rather than merely personal experience. Consequently, if individualism were to become pervasive (and there are indications that this happened in Corinth; cf. 1 Cor 1:12; 3:3,4,21, 22,26b), Paul would want to control that which aroused individualism and encourage that which contributed to corporate edification. In other words, while edification can be individual (e.g., vss. 4, 17),² Paul's paramount concern both in Corinth and elsewhere is missionary witness.

..., it appears that the Corinthians were bent on emphasizing a hyper-individualistic approach to worship, bound up as they were with their own individual experiences of tongue-speaking. Paul responds by calling them back to their missionary task, to a concern for the church's οἰκουμένη. . . .³

In their zeal for charismatic demonstrations, the Corinthians had been more concerned with individual expression than with the


²In "The Service of Worship," Interpretation 13 (1959):404, Eduard Schweizer over-states his case when he says, "Paul never speaks of edifying oneself; he always means edifying the congregation." Somehow Schweizer must have overlooked 14:4, 17, where οἰκουμένη refers to the individual. The thesis of his article is well-stated, however, that the early Christian service of worship was an act of community, in which the assembled members served one another and the world, each with his own special gift. While the service was to be intelligible and orderly, the spoken message was not limited to an ordained minister, with all other members passive listeners.

³Pearson, p. 47.
corporate good, hence the need for Paul's corrective. As Deiter
Lührmann has observed, Paul was objecting to

... a gathering of ecstasies, whose language of the higher
world dominated, and in the ecstasy, (they) left this world.
But such a service loses the missionary character; Paul reckoned
with a community comprised of ἔξωτος (outsiders) and ἀναφερόμενος
(unbelievers), which community is large in the narrative. The
goals of the Divine services are οἴκοσύνη, παράκλησις and
παρακλητικόν, which can only be attained through charisms ἐν νο̂ο̂ι
(in the mind).1

It is not that Paul is unconcerned with individual growth
and development; it is rather that he sees the Corinthians' concept
of personal edification to be seriously flawed. They apparently
believe that ecstatic enthusiasm either engenders or gives expression
to the edified state. But when οἴκοσύνη in vs. 26c is seen in the
light of what Paul has just said in vss. 24, 25, it is obvious that
their enthusiasm must be reined in. For Paul has just been dis-
cussing the "sign" value of tongues and prophecy and has again
underscored the superior value of prophecy in the assembly. The
reason he has given for its superiority is the instructive and
humbling impact it makes upon the unbeliever and outsider (ἔξωτος).

For Paul the only essential measure for a sermon or a prayer
spoken in a service is the outsider. There is no strict
distinction between missionary preaching and a sermon in a
worship service of believers. Church and mission belong
together like apple tree and apple. For always the outsider,
the "idiotes," is the most important person in the whole
assembly.2

Thus, as a result of the prophesying in the assembly, there is
individual edification that results in unbelievers making public

1Das Offenbarungsverständnis bei Paulus und in Paulinischen
Gemeinde (WMANT, 16) Neukirchen, 1965, p. 38; translation ours.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
confession and falling in worship before God, whereby the entire group is edified. In this process, individual ecstatic enthusiasm has no meaningful role.

At the same time, the counsel in vs. 26b regarding individualism ("each one has a psalm . . . a teaching, etc.") should be seen in the light of Paul's concern here for the collective "building"—not necessarily as negative counsel in an absolute sense. For Paul

the "upbuilding" of the community is more important than freedom. The independence of the Christian conscience must not break the cohesion of the church ("All things are lawful," but "not all things build up").

It is an overriding concern with Paul to be pragmatic. In two quite different settings, both in 1 Corinthians, he repeats virtually verbatim what must have been a well-known adage, τὰντα ξεσπυλτυν, "all things are lawful." Apparently the Corinthian believers had misunderstood the meaning of freedom in Christ and had interpreted literally the adage, τὰντα ξεσπυλτυν, and then had applied it to some aspects of their liturgical practices. Paul thus sees the need of correcting the resultant imbalance by inserting the practical emphasis on αὐξανοῦμεν. A similar emphasis is seen in 1 Cor 9:19-23, where Paul stresses his burden to be salvific

---


2 Paul used the expression in 1 Cor 6:12 and 10:23, with only the addition of μου in the former passage. Although both occurrences included the phrase ἀλλ' οὐ τὰντα συμφέρειν, "but not all things build up," it is not clear whether this phrase was a part of the adage or was added by Paul. However, in both contexts, the practical exhortation that follows makes it appear that that part of the saying was a part of Paul's caution rather than a part of the popular expression.
whatever the cost: "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." Accordingly, the polemic of chap. 14 must be seen in the light of Paul's consistent concern for maximum οὕτως ὅσιως of the Corinthian community.

But community concern does not preclude the "upbuilding" aspects of glossolalia. There are at least two important reasons why Paul continued to value glossolalia. First, Paul valued it because it is a charism—a gift of the Spirit, speaking in and sometimes through man. Second, he valued it as a kind of prayer.

It is presumably as Spirit-inspired prayer that glossolalia "edifies" the tongue-speaker; and here we may draw in Rom 8:26-28, even though that is not talking about glossolalia as such. He who experiences glossolalia (or wordless groans) experiences it as effective communication with God. The prayer which he finds himself unable to utter the Spirit utters through him, giving him the sense of communing with God, the confidence that God knows his situation and needs better than he does himself, the assurance that God's Spirit is directing his course and its circumstances.1

Surely then, Paul's negative remarks are the result of external factors, such as the way a private gift was used in public worship, rather than because of something inherent in the gift. His more positive statements (i.e., 14:2,4,27,28; 1 Thess 5:19) make it clear that he has no desire to quench all Spirit-manifestations in favor of some kind of uniform rationality.2 But Paul is consistently missionary minded, and the Corinthians have allowed their enjoyment of the experiential to eclipse some of their rationality and most of their concern for the edification of others.

1 Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit, p. 245.

2 This is all the more significant when it is remembered that in 12:2 he expressed concern over an ecstaticism that had occurred among them while they still had heathen associations.
Nevertheless, "Reason as such is not his standard of judgment. His great concern is that everyone, even the unbelieving stranger, \( \text{\textit{σκέψις}} \) and \( \text{\textit{λογός}} \) should be able to understand what is said in the service, be convinced by it and confess, 'God is among you indeed' (xiv. 25)."\(^1\) Obviously, ecstatic tongues, without "interpretation," does not minister to that particular kind of upbuilding.

An understanding of Paul's thought here is aided by a brief look at OT attitudes toward prophecy. In early OT references to prophets and prophecy (cf. 1 Kgs 10; 1 Sam 19:18ff.), the phenomenon included ecstatic, dervish-like behavior that fell under the general category of \( \text{\textit{προφητεύειν}} \) in the LXX. But in later Old Testament times, there seemed to be a deeper concept of prophecy that viewed it as requiring conscious reflection and sober expression. But throughout, it is looked upon and spoken of as being caused by the "Spirit of God." In a similar way, Paul affirms the authenticity of visions, dreams, and ecstasies (1 Cor 14:2; 2 Cor 12:2-4), and yet insists that what is needed among the Corinthians, for the collective body of Christ, is that testimony which can appeal to the moral intelligence of the hearers and, in an intelligible way, rouse them to action.

Paul hailed every transport of the Spirit as a fresh proof that Christians were in the direct line of God's purpose, during the closing period before the End; they, not Israel, were the successors of the prophets. Yet he is careful to preserve the guarantees of true prophecy, as it was being endangered by an enthusiasm which derived from contemporary ethnic movements of divine possession.\(^2\)


\(^2\) Moffatt, p. 214.
In other terms, it is \( \sigma\nu\sigma\delta\omega\mu\) which is the test that proves prophecy, as Paul uses the term, to be superior to uninterpreted glossolalia.\(^1\) For although by glossolalia a man may speak to God in such a way that his own spiritual growth is enhanced, by prophecy, since it is both inspired and intelligible, God can speak to the community as a whole so that He instructs the "mind and will as well as stirring the emotion."\(^2\) In this way, the tongues experience can be "a helpful spiritual experience for the speaker himself, but the Christian is called to think not of himself alone, but of the good of the community to which he belongs."\(^3\) Thus, Paul preserves both inspired speech and liturgical order in the Corinthian service of worship. But in vs. 26c the effectiveness of the entire service of worship is measured against the yardstick of the \( \sigma\nu\sigma\delta\omega\mu\) of the larger community. Conzelmann simply calls it "the decisive criterion."\(^4\)

This thought does not depreciate the importance to Paul of the individual \( \chi\varphi\omega\sigma\mu\alpha\). Throughout these three chapters (1 Cor 12-14), he repeatedly exalts the various gifts as vital for the progress of the Christian community. Yet, at the same time, he here brings out that "the more striking or extraordinary the gift the less valuable

\(^1\)Although, for upbuilding the congregation, even interpreted glossolalia was not of equal benefit to the church as prophecy, since tongues was essentially a private experience, while prophecy was intended as instruction for the group. See p. 154.

\(^2\)Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit, p. 296.


\(^4\)Conzelmann, A Commentary on the First Epistle, p. 234.
it is—it is serving rather than lording that counts, building up rather than flying high.  

εἴτε γλώσσα τῆς λαλεῖ (27a)  
"If anyone should speak in a tongue"

This phrase, which is a "simple condition," recalls much of the earlier discussion of the chapter. It is not a question of contingency, but an introduction to the directives; not a matter of whether, but when.

In spite of J. H. Michael's gloomy assertion that unanimity concerning the nature of glossolalia is unattainable, an attempt at definition must be made. Paul, whose use of the term far outweighs all other NT sources, nowhere defines the phrase γλῶσσα/ γλώσσα λαλεῖν. Some form of the verb λαλέω is used with an instrumental dative form of γλῶσσα twelve times in 1 Corinthians, which suggests that Paul was referring to a phenomenon so well-known to his hearers that a more careful explanation would have appeared to them as condescending. It is likely that "by the time Paul and the author of Acts had put pen to paper the terms had become more or less fixed, a possibility which would also explain the combination of γλῶσσα with λαλεῖν, but never with λέγειν."  

However, T. W. Manson takes a dissenting view. He feels  

---

1 Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit, p. 298.
that inasmuch as glossolalia does not appear to have arisen during the eighteen months that Paul spent in Corinth, it must have been a new thing about which the Corinthians needed detailed instruction. Furthermore, since Paul had spoken in tongues more than the Corinthians (14:18), Manson assumes the practice had not reached any imposing proportions. But Paul's extended comments in 1 Cor 12-14 reflect an urgency that seems to rise from a preoccupation on their part ("since you are eager for manifestations... . If... the whole church assembles and all speak in tongues... . . ." 14:12,23) with something that, whether or not of recent origin, has become a problem.

Intelligible or Unintelligible Speech

While the primary meaning of the term γλῶσσα is "tongue," meaning the organ of speech, the Corinthian use was obviously an extended meaning of the term such as "language" or "vocalization." Bauer, after giving the obvious meanings of "speech organ," and "language," continues with a special category to explain the Corinthian use of the term. Though he refers to the rival positions of foreign language versus ecstatic utterance, listing several of the outstanding protagonists of each position, he asserts that "There is no doubt about the thing referred to, namely the broken speech of persons in religious ecstasy." Moulton and Milligan show that usage indicates a broad range of meanings that includes

---


2P. 161.
not simply foreign languages but also "local peculiarities of speech."¹ There is little question that the predominate meaning of γλώσσα in both the NT and the LXX is understandable language rather than obscure speech. Consequently, "only very strong evidence can overthrow the natural understanding of speaking in tongues as speaking in used human languages."² But as will be shown later, 1 Cor 14 contains just such "strong evidence," which points away from understandable language and toward obscure speech.³ And while the analogy of usage is an important clue to meaning, it should not overrule contextual considerations.

But a complete definition must await an analysis of the combined phrase (γλώσσας/γλώσσα λαετεν). In view of the passage of time and the apparent lapse of the gift in the early Christian centuries, it would be risky to assume that current understanding of the phrase is the same as first century understanding.⁴ One thing does seem clear: as mentioned above, the fact that γλώσσα is consistently combined with some form of λαετεν when there are other terms for "speak" (e.g., λεγετεν, ελετεν) which are never used, suggests the phrase had taken on a technical meaning.

Although they were writing specifically about Paul's instruction concerning women in 14:34, Richard and Catherine Kroeger

¹P. 128.
³Obviously, Gundry disagrees with this view of the evidence in 1 Cor 14, as he holds consistently to the view of known human languages.
made some pertinent observations about the term λαλεῖν. As they observed the parallels between the cultic Maenadism of Greek worship and the Corinthian manifestations, they noted that λαλεῖν had onomatopoetic connotations.

Indeed, it is essentially an onomatopoetic word embodying "la-la," often a ritual cry of clamor. The Bacchic "Eleleu" also involved the reduplicated "I" sound, a phenomenon still employed by ululating women of Turkey, Iran, Sephardic Jewry, Tanzania and the American charismatic movement. . . . Lalein is used repeatedly in the fourteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians to denote utterance which does not convey meaning.1

This argument is enhanced when it is noted that Paul used the same technique in 14:11. There, Paul, referring to the failed communication when one speaks in a language not known by the one hearing, says that the person seems like a ἄνηγμα. Some expositors2 see in the term not only a reference to the usual interpretation of "foreigner" but also an onomatopoetic word for unintelligibility, like our own "gibberish." Throughout the history of the Greek language the verb λαλέω was used generally to mean "speak" or "talk," but basically conveyed "the idea of chattering and inarticulate speech. This appears to be present onomatopoetically in the verb itself—λαλέω λα-λα-λα.3


3 Van Elderen, "Glossolalia in the New Testament," p. 53. So also, Joseph Henry Thayer adds that λαλέω has reference "to the sound and pronunciation of the words and in general, the form of what is uttered, while λέγω refers to the meaning and substance of what is spoken; hence λαλεῖν is employed not only of men, esp. when
At the same time, one must not push this piece of evidence too far, for in 14:19,29, forms of λαλέω are used where intelligible speech is obviously intended.\textsuperscript{1} Still, there are passages (cf. John 12:29; 16:18; Acts 22:9), that at least suggest that λαλέω held some degree of obscurity in meaning not present with λέγω.

The Lexicons indicate as much. Bauer allows for the meaning "obscure sounds" or "tones," and goes on to point out that while in Classical Greek the word usually means "chatter" or "babble," this meaning is even more common in the LXX than in secular authors.\textsuperscript{2} Similarly, Moulton and Milligan suggest that "while λέγω calls attention to the substance of what is said, the onomatopoetic λαλέω points rather to the outward utterance. . . ."\textsuperscript{3} But grammatical arguments

chatting and prattling, but also of animals . . . and so of inanimate things. Accordingly, everything λέγων is also λαλούμενον, but not everything λαλούμενον is also λέγων (Joseph Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament [New York, Cincinnati, Chicago: American Book Company, 1889], p. 368).

\textsuperscript{1}Gundry, p. 304. However, in support of his thesis of known foreign languages, Gundry tries too hard to disprove unintelligible speech. In the process, after his assertion that λαλ- did not normally mean incoherent speech at this time, he makes the rather final-sounding suggestion, "See the lexica and concordances." However, if such a suggestion was meant to cement his argument, he should have stipulated which ones, as those mentioned above do not help his position.

\textsuperscript{2}Bauer, p. 464.

\textsuperscript{3}Moulton and Milligan, p. 368. Similarly, Blass and Debrunner point out that a common construction is for λέγων to appear following such words as ἀποκρύπτεσθαι, λαλεῖν, κραζεῖν, ταρακαλεῖν, whereas forms of λαλεῖν are not so used. This gives further weight to the suggestion that λαλέω refers to the act of speaking and λέγω to the content of what is spoken. F. Blass and A. Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, trans. Robert Funk, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 204, 217. This is precisely the point made by Van Elderen, which Gundry's article was attempting to dispute. However, in a footnote Gundry weakens his own argument. Here he was attempting to support
have limits and, based solely upon them, one can only conclude that there appears to be some relationship between unintelligibility and άλαλ-. Additional factors are considered later.

If the phrase (γλῶσσας/γλῶσση άλαλευ) had taken on a meaning of its own, the origin of that meaning is not easy to pin down. An examination of the varied occurrences of the phrase in ancient Greek sources, as well as in the LXX, leads to the conclusion that the technical sense implied in the Corinthian usage does not occur outside the NT.\(^1\) Similar phenomena occurred in various circles, Greco-Roman as well as Jewish, but they were referred to under the general category of "prophecy" or "divination." It appears that Paul is the only one who narrows the meaning of the phrase to unintelligible speech, and thus puts prophecy into a separate category.\(^2\) Engelson leaves open the possibility that Paul did not coin this technical meaning. "He may have had predecessors in this, but they have left no trace."\(^3\)

But if the phrase had a precise, technical meaning, what was

his assertion that Paul's use of άλαλευ arose out of Isa 28:11, rather than out of ecstasy, and accordingly suggests, "Perhaps also the strange sounds of foreign words sounded like chatter and facilitated the use of άλαλ- for speaking in tongues" (p. 304). It seems such a statement is a tacit admission that there is some relationship between unintelligibility and άλαλ-.

\(^1\)Engelson, p. 20.

\(^2\)H. A. Guy earlier said something very similar: "The problem (of the Acts 2 tongues experience) is complicated by the fact that in the Pauline churches there was a distinction between the gift of prophecy and the gift of glossolalia. It seems probable, however, that in early Christian prophetism, as at Pentecost, this distinction was not made" (New Testament Prophecy [London: Epworth Press, 1947], p. 91).

\(^3\)Engelson, p. 60.
it? Scholarly opinion is still somewhat divided between coherent communication in a foreign language on the one hand, and unintelligible ecstatic utterance on the other.\(^1\) In view of its limited extra-Biblical usage, lexical definitions are of limited help. Consequently, one is limited to the Pauline or Lukan passages in working out a usable definition.\(^2\) Accordingly, it is legitimate to ask if either set of passages throws light on the other.\(^3\) The early Christian writers seemed to think so, as they usually started with the Pentecost experience and proceeded to interpret Corinthians in the light of Acts.\(^4\) Though Irenaeus presents a mixed picture,\(^5\) the more common interpretation is that the phenomenon of tongues represented a miraculous ability to speak in a foreign language. Chrysostom, referring to the miracle of suddenly speaking a foreign language, goes so far as to list the languages spoken—Persian, Roman, Indian, and so on. But in an oft-quoted statement, he allows that in his time, the gift has waned:

\(^1\) The majority of scholars (e.g., see the list of expositors given above on pp. 26-40) hold the view that it was an ecstatic utterance. A few of those who have written in favor of a foreign language are Robert Gundry, J. G. Davies, Charles Hodge, William MacDonald, Massingberd Ford, and William Bellshaw.

\(^2\) The only passage outside of Acts and 1 Corinthians where a similar phrase is used is Mark 16:17. However, that reference is too cryptic to be of help in analyzing the nature of the phenomenon.

\(^3\) Best, "The Interpretation of Tongues," p. 55.


\(^5\) In Against Heresies 5.6.1, he refers to the Spirit of God enabling them to speak "in all languages." But in his catalogue of Roman Bishops, he refers to speaking all kinds of tongues, whereby they "bring to light the secret things of man ... and declare the mysteries of God." Eusebius History of the Christian Church 7.6 (NPN 1:222).
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 lock now, the cause too of the obscurity hath produced us again another question: namely, why did they then happen, and now do so no more?

This however let us defer to another time, but for the present let us state what things were occurring then. Well: what did happen then? Whoever was baptized he straightway spake with tongues and not with tongue only but many also prophesied, and some also performed many other wonderful works.¹

References to the phenomenon by the Fathers, although showing a slight trend away from the rigid technical use of the terms by Paul, add nothing to our understanding of the Biblical terminology. In the writings of Origen, Chrysostom, Theodore, Severian, Cyril, Theodoret and Photius, there are scattered references to tongues-speaking, but they comprise "a mere recital of terms appearing in Acts and 1 Corinthians, and with such minor differences as inversion of word order, substitution of the plural for the singular and vice versa, together with such changes of case as are required by the context."² In fact, the way the fathers substituted adjectives, nouns, or verbs, or made other relatively minor changes "... reflects attempts at coming to grips with a phenomenon which had become more or less unknown."³

A careful examination of the early extra-biblical references to the tongues phenomenon, including the Apostolic Fathers, the Apologists, and the apocryphal works, leads to uncertain results. The early Christian records simply do not provide a

¹Chrysostom Homily XXIX [on 1 Corinthians 12:1, 2] NPN 12:168.
³Ibid.
precise definition of the Pauline phrase, γλῶσσας λαλεῖν. Stuart
Currie concludes that the phrase might be interpreted in one of
four ways:

- a. Speaking a human language one has not learned;
- b. Speaking a non-human language;
- c. Uttering a "dark saying," more enigmatic than "prophecy"
  or "revelation" and therefore requiring "interpretation"; and
- d. Uttering cadences of vocalization which do not constitute
discourse.¹

But he then states that all four are equally unsupportable in the
records; the post-apostolic church simply left no first-hand account
that would verify the presence of any particular manifestation.
This is not to say that no such experience took place, for it is
obvious that in the time of Paul something called γλῶσσας λαλεῖν
was taking place. But, as mentioned above, the scattered references
by the fathers to a gift of foreign languages² are made in such a
way that it is clear they are describing something past rather than
something the writer has witnessed. Consequently, since no
verifiable post-apostolic record exists that offers a clear
definition of the term, one is forced to look again at the Pauline
material, as well as at some of what Harrisville calls the explana-
tions of the later generations.³

As mentioned above, for many years expositors have maintained

³"Speaking in Tongues," p. 254. His comment does not
contribute greatly to understanding the phenomenon. He simply
says that what occurred in Judaism and early Christianity had to
wait for later generations for its explication, and then he cites
the Chrysostom reference which states that ignorance and absence of
the events is what makes the issue so obscure.
a lively debate regarding the nature of the tongues experience as either foreign language, sometimes referred to as xenoglossia,¹ or as an ecstaticism characterized by unintelligible ejaculatory utterances.² While the purpose of this dissertation goes beyond this particular issue, an understanding of the nature of the phenomenon must precede any further exegesis of the text.³

Whereas the early fathers interpreted 1 Cor 14 in the light of Acts 2, thus interpreting the entire phenomenon as a gift of speaking foreign languages, in recent times the tendency among scholars is to look upon Acts 2 as the more difficult passage and interpret it in the light of Corinthians, thus treating all the phenomena as instances of ecstatic utterance.³ But while there are several points of similarity and difference, the Lukan material is referred to only to help clarify the Corinthian passage. An exegesis of Acts 2 is not done.⁴ Thus, an attempt is made to understand Paul's intent by looking at his terminology alone and by an evaluation of the primary arguments that have been advanced on either

¹J. H. Michael defines ecstaticism as "... spiritual rapture--a state of deep emotion during which utterance was given to meaningless incoherent sounds, such sounds not taking shape in the intelligible words of any language." "The Gift of Tongues at Corinth," p. 266.

²The term ecstaticism can be very ambiguous, referring to a broad spectrum of experiences, ranging from hymn-singing to demon-possession. While a comprehensive, contextual definition takes time and exposition, to avoid a certain amount of ambiguity, it can be stated that the predominate use of the term in this dissertation is with reference to a tongues experience that manifests itself in vocalizations of religious enthusiasm that, apart from the correlative gift of interpretation, is not intelligible, since it is not expressed in a known, human language.

³Best, "The Interpretation of Tongues," p. 55.

⁴See p. 7 above.
side of the issue. While the position in favor of xenoglossia is not presented in a systematic way, its primary supports can be seen in the dialoguing and rebuttal that now follow.

There are several statements scattered throughout 1 Cor 14 that harmonize more easily with ecstaticism than with xenoglossia. For example, in vs. 2 there are the phrases σύν ἄνθρωπος λαλεῖ ἄλλα ἀρνόστες γὰρ ἀκοῦει (he does not speak to men but to God for no one hears [understands]). Quite clearly, the meaning of these phrases is that human communication is not taking place. The early fathers and apologists who looked upon the gift as one of foreign languages did so with the idea that the gospel could thereby be extended; but while such an aid to communication is logical, the thought cannot be found anywhere in this verse. It seems evident that "unintelligible language cannot convey any benefit to those who hear it." Accordingly, "the difference between the prophet and one who speaks in tongues is that in the case of the latter the secrets remain hidden, while the former reveals them to his fellow believers." ¹ Robertson and Plummer focus on the meaning of ἀκούει in vs. 2b and, comparing its use here with Acts 9:7 and 22:9 and also with the LXX translation of the Babel account in Gen 11:7, conclude that it refers to hearing with understanding, not simply hearing. ² They then add, "Verse after verse shows that

¹Bruce, 1 & 2 Corinthians, p. 130.


speaking in foreign languages cannot be meant. . . . It is equally clear that οὐ δὲ ἀκούει does not mean that tongues were inaudible, or that no one listened to them, but that no one found them intelligible."¹ On this point, Lietzmann connects the meaning of ἀκούει with the musical instrument analogy of vss. 7-10 to show that the sense cannot be unhörbar ("inaudible"), but unverständlich ("unintelligible").² Commenting on this matter of intelligibility, Tugwell simply observes that "a man speaking in tongues is not normally intelligible to anyone else (v. 2), nor even to his own mind (v. 14)."³

Hodge, on the contrary, claims that the reference is not to "no man living, but to no man present."⁴ But as vss. 7-10 make clear, the lack of communication is the result of problems in the transmitter, not the receiver. If the Corinthian tongue-speakers were speaking in languages that the hearers could not understand, Paul’s illustration (vs. 7) would not be appropriate, for instead of concentrating on indistinct notes he would have concentrated on an unhearing ear.

Had the case been one of inability to understand what was uttered in a foreign tongue, would not Paul have written after this manner: "If a flute or a lyre gave forth the sublimest music imaginable, but the person who listened had no ear for music and were unable to appreciate it, the music would be lost"? Surely the very form in which the comparison is given proves that the utterance of coherent statements in any language formed no part of the glossolalia at Corinth.⁵

In his comment on οὐδὲς γὰρ ἀκούει, Fr. Bleek reasons from the cosmopolitan character of the Corinthian church that it would be

¹Ibid.  ²P. 71.  ³P. 137.  ⁴P. 279.  ⁵Michael, p. 259.
highly unlikely that one could speak a foreign language in that congregation that no one would understand. In view of their mixed backgrounds, as well as the *lingua franca* nature of Greek, no assembly of Christians would be in less need of a gift of speaking a foreign language for the communicating of the gospel.¹

Also, the phrase in vs. 2c, τυεύωμεν δὲ λαεε  μυστήρια ("but he speaks mysteries in the Spirit"), is not given as an illustration of failed human communication; it is a simple statement of fact—communication has not taken place. Similarly, in the contrast Paul sets up between λαεεν γλώσση and τοοητευν in vss. 2 and 3, that which sets them apart is the issue of communication—the former fails to communicate, whereas the latter succeeds. Consequently, the term "mystery" in vs. 2 must be taken in the sense of something unknown rather than in the more common Pauline sense of divine truth once hidden, but now revealed.² One would be a slave of consistency to insist that that sense of "mystery" is operative here.³ A more sensitive feeling for the context leads to the conclusion that "the reference is not so much to the great mysteries of salvation but to those things which, though they have been expressed, are not clear to everybody."⁴

²Edwin Hatch, Essays in Biblical Greek (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889), pp. 58, 59. Although Hatch gives evidences of this meaning by means of several texts, he omits 1 Cor 14:2 with its slight change of emphasis.
³Such is the position of Hodge, p. 280; and Gundry, p. 302.
⁴Grosheide, p. 318. If this analysis of the mystery in vs. 2 is correct, it reflects a significant contrast from the tongues.
Similarly, Robertson and Plummer, after giving the usual Pauline sense of mystery, state, "But in the case of Tongues without an interpreter, there was no revelation, and therefore no advantage to the hearers."^ They further support their position by calling the δὲ of the phrase an explanatory δὲ, thus closely associating the idea of mystery with the preceding statement that no one understands.2

Another point that goes counter to the concept of xenoglossia regards the language illustration given in vss. 10 and 11. First of all, it is clear that these verses are drawing an analogy between the current problem in Corinth and the use of intelligible foreign languages. But if, up to this point in the chapter, Paul has already been discussing foreign languages by means of the phrase γλώσσας λαλεῖν, why the sudden switch in vss. 10 and 11 to forms of τῶν; Conzelmann sees the changed term as meaning a different phenomenon--foreign languages in vss. 10 and 11, ecstatic utterance elsewhere.3 Similarly, Lietzmann4 and Weiss5 both see in these two verses an intended distinction--τῶν referring to expression in Acts 2:11; 10:46; where the immediate result is an extolling of the "great things of God" (a form of χαίρεται in both passages). In 1 Cor 14, though the element of praise is present (vs. 17a, "you may give thanks well enough"), the lack of comprehension by the hearers (vs. 17b, "the other man is not edified") must be noted.

^Robertson and Plummer, p. 306. This same concept of "mystery" is also set forth by H. Conzelmann, p. 234; John Ruef, p. 147; and others. It appears, however, that Engelson misreads Robertson and Plummer, as he has them giving only the traditional Pauline meaning. He seems to have overlooked their last comment. Engelson, p. 144.

2Ibid.  

3Conzelmann, p. 236.  

4P. 71.  

5P. 325.
languages, and χλωσαι referring to glossolalia. While some expositors hesitate to spell it out that explicitly,¹ few agree with Hodge that φώνας is essentially a synonym for χλωσαι as it is used elsewhere in the chapter.²

Furthermore, the little phrase οὖτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ("similarly also, you"), which is repeated in vss. 9 and 12, serves to make clear that Paul is, at those points, applying the thrust of his respective illustrations. The first illustration is of a musical instrument or a bugle, the normal use of which clearly differs from that which is being illustrated—namely, tongues. The second illustration deals with the contrast and comparison between uttering a word that is ὑπὸ ἐσομοὶ (not clear, not intelligible), and the many kinds of languages in the world, all of which have meaning. Yet, though those languages have meaning, if I do not know the meaning, then communication fails. At first glance, this illustration seems to lend support to the foreign-language proponents. A closer look, however, shows that both illustrations build on the contrast, not simply the similarity.

We come to the conclusion then that Paul refers to different languages or dialects as an illustration of the χλωσολαλία. Would he do so if the χλωσολαλία itself were foreign speech? A comparison implies a difference as well as a similarity. We do not use identical things to illustrate each other. The very fact that Paul makes the comparison of verses 10 and 11 proves that speech in foreign languages was not part of the χλωσολαλία at Corinth.³

¹Grosheide indicates φώνας may mean "sounds" and Moffatt suggests it could refer to a "croon" or "musical lilt." Grosheide, p. 322; Moffatt, p. 218.

²P. 284.

³Michael, p. 261. Quite similarly, Findlay asserts: "By this illustration of the futility of the uninterpreted Tongues, Paul
It is not clear how vs. 13 ("let the one who speaks with a tongue pray that he might interpret") can be easily harmonized with the concept of a gift of languages. In 12:10,30, there is a separate listing of the gift of tongues and the gift of interpretation. Yet the construction of vs. 13 suggests that it is to be preferred if the one who speaks in a tongue is also the one who interprets; but it is something he must pray for. However, at this point, the tongue-speaker's own understanding is an important element to get clear. When the glossolalist speaks, does he, at that moment, understand what he is saying? Commenting on 14:4, where Paul speaks of the glossolalist edifying only himself, not the church, Hodge states that the reason for this was that the tongue-speaker understood the words, whereas the church did not, because the church simply did not know the language being spoken.\textsuperscript{1} But if a tongue-speaker understood himself, then surely there would be no need of a separate "gift" of interpretation, as his ability of speaking the new dialect would include an understanding of what he himself was saying. If the gift was given to facilitate the proclamation of the gospel, as suggested by most proponents of the foreign-language view, then the person who spoke would need to understand his own sentence construction in order to correct himself, answer questions and enter into the dialogues that proclamation entailed.

\textsuperscript{1}P. 281.

\hspace{1cm} implicitly distinguishes them from natural foreign languages ... one does not compare things identical" (p. 905). In addition, Williams concurs with this view when he states that "here Paul obviously is engaged in making an analogy between speaking in tongues and speaking in foreign languages—a redundant exercise if, in fact, the Corinthians were indeed speaking foreign languages" (p. 21).
It does not seem logical that the Lord would enable one apostle to speak a foreign language and give to another the gift of interpreting that dialect, thus making it necessary for both of those men to always be together whenever the need arose for communicating in the "gift" language.¹

On this point of the tongue-speaker's own understanding, there are really only three options: The speaker

(a) . . . understood fully, as fully as someone who speaks his native tongue; (b) he understood partially, either by picking up the general drift or by identifying words or meaning-units here and there; (c) he understood not at all.²

Poythress suggests that 14:14, "my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful," is describing a tongue-speaker without the gift of interpretation, and therefore one who would fall into category (c), above, with the possibility that a little of (b) might be operative. Accordingly, the gift of interpretation might enable a person to grasp the meaning of words and phrases as when someone learns a language, or the person might, as claimed in modern charismatic circles, be given the interpretation "full blown" without a mastery

¹Robert Gundry, who, with Charles Hodge, is a proponent of the foreign language view, acknowledges that this position is vulnerable in this verse concerning interpretation. Accordingly, he gives an extensive footnote in which he points out the weakness of Hodge's position, yet he does not make clear how he differs from Hodge. He states: "The very giving of the ability to speak in a tongue should constitute authority enough to translate if the tongue is understood automatically by the speaker. Under Hodge's view, the gift of interpretation becomes superfluous" (p. 302). But, inasmuch as both Gundry and Hodge concur on the basic definition of tongues as a gift of languages, it is not clear how Gundry can fault Hodge as he does and at the same time imply that his own argument remains unscathed.

of the language. But the pertinent point here is Poythress' concluding statement: "In any case, 'pure' tongues (without interpretation) was not understandable to the speaker."¹ The suggestion in vs. 13 to pray for the ability to interpret fits more easily into the concept of an ecstatic utterance that would be considerably more unusual than a foreign dialect, and would thus require the same divine interposition to make it meaningful as that which brought it in the first place.

There are additional syntactical arrangements in vss. 13 and 14 that further define the tongues phenomenon. First of all, the verses are closely linked, as evidenced by γὰρ at the beginning of vs. 14.² The little word helps to tie the two verses together, thus indicating that vs. 14 is a further explanation of why interpretation is so important.³ In these two verses, Paul seems to interchange the terms "speak" (λαλῶν) in vs. 13 with "pray" (προσεύχωμαι) in vs. 14. Such an interchange is not surprising in the light of vs. 2, where he already equated speaking with a tongue with speaking to God, which is surely another way of describing a prayer experience. At the same time, the term for prayer would be a strange choice for describing the tongues experience if it were a matter of speaking in a language different from one's mother tongue.

¹Ibid., p. 132.
²Although the γὰρ is omitted from a few early MSS. (e.g., p46, B, G), its presence seems called for by the close construction of the two verses. In spite of its uncertain textual origin, the word is maintained in both the Nestle-Aland and the United Bible Society texts.
³Findlay, p. 906.
Furthermore, although there is extensive comment and difference of opinion concerning the meaning and relationship between the words τυεδωμα and νοος in vs. 14, there is considerable agreement about the meaning of vs. 14c, νοος μην ἄκοψτος ἐστιν. For example, Lietzmann, in commenting on this phrase, states that when the believer has the Holy Spirit thus dwelling in him, as alluded to in 14b, his human mental powers "sleep." 1 Similarly, Hering believes that in such a state of inspiration there is a diminished self-awareness. 2 If there is such a reduced faculty of understanding, there must follow a reduced utility for the church as a group. Or to put it another way, when the τυεδωμα alone is operative in the worship process, and the mind is in any sense dormant, group participation and growth is impeded. 3 Thus, in view of Paul's great concern for the expansion of the Church, glossolalia, which does not minister to the larger community, must be regulated. Accordingly, vss. 15 and 16 go together smoothly, as they show Paul's concern to preserve both

1P. 71.

2P. 150. It should be mentioned that, whereas Lietzmann views the term τυεδωμα of this verse as referring to the Holy Spirit, Hering interprets it as referring to the human spirit that is carried away in ecstasy. So also Gundry, p. 302. Again, Gundry implies that this view poses a problem for Hodge but not for himself. He says that this sense of the νοος causes Hodge's argument to become "very strained."

3The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, ed. F. D. Nichol (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1953-57), 6:789, 796, gives such a view as one of the two ways the phrase has been understood. The first way mentioned is that "the prayer is unfruitful because it is not understood by the hearers," but such a view does not fit well with the sense of the verse. The second interpretation is more probable: "The conscious mind is largely if not entirely inoperative during the exercise of the gift, as in the case of a prophet in vision" (p. 789).
the emotional and the mental aspects of worship ("I will pray with the spirit and... with the mind," vs. 15), but in such a way that in the group, the mental aspects predominate (the outsider must know what is being said, vs. 16). F. F. Bruce summarizes this thought nicely:

Let my prayer and praise be Spirit-inspired, indeed, but let it be intelligent too. This is specially important in meetings of the church: uninterpreted glossolalia may edify someone in his personal prayer-life (cf. verse 4), but in the church the one who leads in prayer of thanksgiving does so on behalf of the others present, who signify their assent by adding their 'Amen' to what is said.1

Such a discussion seems far afield if the phenomenon of tongues is simply one of misplaced foreign languages. On the other hand, if the subject is a form of ecstatic utterance, the discussion fits together.

Paul's statement in vs. 18 that he spoke with tongues more than the Corinthians seems to harmonize more easily with ecstatic utterance than with a foreign language phenomenon. The expression he used was ὑπὲρων ὑμῶν ἄλλου γλώσσας λαλῶ. It is clear that ἄλλον is used in an adverbial sense, modifying the verb "speak," rather than in an adjectival sense, modifying the noun γλώσσας. Accordingly, the phrase is stressing the frequency of experience rather than the multiplicity of tongues.2 It is in this sense that

1 & 2 Corinthians, p. 131.

2 F. W. Grosheide simply says: "If it were a matter of speaking in foreign languages, Paul would not have written: 'I speak more' (adv., more often), but: 'I speak with more tongues'" p. 327. Admittedly, one could argue that Paul is referring to frequency of foreign language speech. But apart from Greek and Hebrew (Acts 21:37,40), which would hardly be considered foreign languages, there is little to indicate that Paul was fluent in other languages. In fact, the incident in Lystra (Acts 14:11-15) suggests just the opposite.
Bauer interprets μᾶλλον in this context to mean "to a greater degree," or "more than you all."¹ In other words, if tongues were a gift of languages, one might expect Paul to say he spoke with "more tongues," thus using a form of the adjective τολμός, such as γλώσσας τολμάτως, or some similar expression.

The immediately following adversative in vs. 19, which is introduced by ἀλλά and then comes to focus in the contrast between τῷ νοῦ μου and ἐν γλώσσῃ, speaks strongly for ecstatic utterance and against xenoglossia. The clear implication is that when the mind is operative, there is intelligibility,² for the following purpose clause states that then he can "thoroughly instruct"³ others. On the other hand, the inflated number of words "in a tongue" (μοιολογίως) is meant simply to emphasize that, in spite of the words, "tongue" communication fails.⁴

Another liability for the xenoglossia argument in vss. 23-25 is the assertion that Corinthian tongue-speech is not an asset for the conversion of the ἐξωτικά (outsiders). This thought is difficult to harmonize with the concept of tongues as a foreign language. While vss. 21-24 pose several problems for expositors, it is clear in vs. 23 that tongues, as the Corinthians are using them, do not leave a favorable impression upon outside observers. Now if the phenomenon had been a foreign language ability, Corinth, with its

¹p. 490. ²So says F. F. Bruce, p. 137.
³Robertson & Plummer give this as the meaning of κατηχησάω, p. 315. So also, Bauer, p. 424.
⁴Such an interpretation harmonizes with Paul's cryptic but intriguing statement in 2 Cor 5:13, "For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you."
cosmopolitan character, would have been the place where it could have been used well for the conversion of the curious. Here in the city where nationalities of East and West often met, a visitor happening upon the worship service would have been duly impressed if he had heard his mother tongue being used to tell the Christian story. Even if a certain amount of confusion reigned, if the phenomenon were a demonstration of foreign language prowess, believed to give evidence that the speaker possessed or was possessed by the Spirit, an unbelieving visitor, hearing his own home dialect, would hardly level the charge of insanity. Yet, that is just what Paul insists will happen when the Corinthian glossolalia is observed:

There are many cases on record of persons being greatly influenced by unexpectedly hearing spiritual truths declared in their own tongue. If the gift had included ability to speak in foreign languages, would Paul have disparaged it at Corinth? Would he not rather have valued it highly as a divinely sent means for the evangelization of the vast foreign population of that heathen city? Again we are driven to the conclusion that the use of foreign speech formed no part of the glossolalia at Corinth.

In this same vein, if the gift of tongues was given to equip the apostles for the evangelization of people in their native dialects, the experience of Paul and Barnabas at Lystra is mystifying. The account in Acts 14:8-18 of Paul's first visit to Lystra indicates that neither he nor Barnabas understood the Lycaonian dialect, and a mob scene might have been averted had they known at once what the crowds were saying. While it is true that Paul was not a participant in the Pentecostal tongues experience, if any of the

---

1 Michael, pp. 265, 266.
apostles could have benefited from a gift of dialects it would have been the traveling evangelist, Paul. Also, there is the perplexing comment by Papias that Peter needed Mark as an interpreter.¹ It would seem that had a permanent gift of languages been granted for the proclamation of the kerygma, Peter, the foremost of the apostles would have been a prime recipient. While it is conceivable that Papias' statement is misunderstood, still it seems significant that the early church in no way ameliorated the prima facie sense of Papias' words that Mark was the interpreter of Peter. If Peter was graced with permanent foreign language ability, why did not one of the early Christians clarify Papias' statement so that no one would be led to think that the gifted Peter needed an interpreter? In addition, Celsus charged some Christians with speaking in nonsense syllables,² a charge which might have been easily refuted by asserting that they were speaking in the dialects of the people—if that had actually been the case. However, no such defense is offered.

Furthermore, a gift of speaking a language one had never learned would have been an impelling force upon the recipients for the evangelizing of the heathen. But the early church showed an amazing reticence to extend itself beyond its comfortable circle. The narrative of Acts 10, 11 and 15 show the church leaders giving

¹Papias in Eusebius Ecclesiastical History 3:39.

²Origen Against Celsus 7.9 (ANF 4:614). Celsus charged some Christians with speaking in "... fanatical, and quite unintelligible words, of which no rational person can find the meaning: for so dark are they, as to have no meaning at all; but they give occasion to every fool or imposter to apply them to suit his own purposes."
only grudging approval of the proclamation of the gospel to those that might possibly be of another "tongue." If they were miraculously equipped with a gift of languages, the early accounts reflect a

... strange obtuseness of the Twelve to their duty of preaching Christ to the Gentiles, a fact all the more remarkable if they had been equipped with the power of speaking in foreign languages for this special purpose.¹

As mentioned above, the post-apostolic period is relatively silent concerning first-hand accounts of tongue-speaking, and this fact is more easily explained if the gift were one of ecstaticism than if it were one of foreign languages. The ability to speak a language one has never learned would have brought considerable favorable attention to the budding group of believers, but their silence concerning such an event is notable. "If the experience had been widespread, one would suppose it should have left some traces in the writings of the early Christians."² However, the silence of the early writers is more easily understood if the phenomenon were a form of ecstaticism. Currie hypothesizes that anything like ecstasy

could so easily be mistaken for charlatanry, sorcery, or some other magical practise (thus constituting a hindrance to the hearing of the preached Word and bring ill repute upon the church) that its exercise was kept unpublicized and unrecorded.³

If the gift were one of foreign languages, the silence of this early period is more difficult to explain. Such an ability would

¹P. G. S. Hopwood, The Religious Experience of the Primitive Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. 147. In addition, it is significant that nowhere in Acts do tongues play a role in the conversion process. Rather, in Acts 10 and 19, believers praise God in tongues subsequent to their conversion.

²Currie, p. 278.

³Ibid., p. 294.
have been both a useful evangelistic tool as well as a favorable public-relations aid.¹

However, it is inadequate merely to say that a gift of foreign languages does not do justice to the terminology. Nor is it satisfying to conclude with Currie that the meaning of the term is beyond description.² It is difficult to imagine a person as forthright and expressive as Paul giving instructions about a controversial issue in terms so vague that even a tentative definition of those terms would be problematical. If there is to be understanding of the phrase in vs. 27a, and of other crucial points in the exegesis, a working definition of what is meant by ἀγαθὸν λαβέω must be set forth. This is especially true if there are ecstatic elements, for "ecstaticism" is a very slippery term with many shades of meaning. "Ecstasy is much too vague a term to employ unless it be abundantly qualified to make clear that there are many degrees of it, ranging from mild dissociation to extreme uncontrollable rapture."³

The Nature of Glossolalic Ecstasy

Some have questioned the wisdom of using any form of ἀγαθὸν λαβέω to describe glossolalia, since the two terms are never linked in

¹While it is not safe to attempt to support historical exegesis with contemporary practices, it is at least interesting to compare the two. Regarding the nature of the phenomenon, it is perhaps significant that "glossolalists do not themselves claim to have spoken such-and-such a foreign language (or do so rather uncommonly). . . . Generally, it is someone else who identifies the supposed language" (William Samarin, Tongues of Men and Angels [London: Collier-Macmillan, 1927], p. 110). It does seem reasonable to expect some clear documentation in support of xenoglossia. But after years of observation, "no case (of speaking a known foreign language) has been scientifically authenticated and there is no doubt that the normative characteristic of glossolalia is unintelligibility" (C. G. Williams, p. 27).

²Currie, p. 294.

³Williams, p. 21.
scripture. But it should be kept in mind that when έξώτωξ is used for the tongues experience, it is not intended as a technical term but merely as a descriptive term for a meaningful experience that is deeply emotional in nature. Although the Biblical usage is quite varied, so that specificity is lacking, still the word seems to be reasonably descriptive for what most scholars believe to be the alternative to xenoglossia.

But when one speaks of ecstasy, there is the ever-present tendency to think in simplistic terms of an emotional "high" wherein a person loses all voluntary control of his motor reflexes and experiences something akin to an epileptic seizure. However, by a series of questions, Poythress has focused attention on a broader spectrum of issues than the two usually cited: foreign languages and ecstatic utterance:

(1) What was the psychological state of the speaker at the time of utterance? (2) How far did the speaker "understand what he was saying," either at the time or afterwards? (3) How did Corinthian hearers perceive what was uttered? (4) What is the classification of the speech product in modern scientific terms? (5) How did the Apostle Paul classify the utterances linguistically?2

Like Samarin3 before him, Poythress, under (4) above, attempts to set out the specific speech possibilities in current scientific

---

1Of its seven NT uses, four of them are describing the amazement that befell witnesses of healing miracles (Mark 5:42; 16:8; Luke 5:26; Acts 3:10). The other three occurrences (Acts 10:10; 11:5; 22:17) describe the trance-like experiences of Peter and Paul when they were given unexpected instructions by the Lord. The LXX broadens its use slightly, referring thus to Adam's deep sleep in Gen 2:21, Abraham's trance in Gen 15:12, and even mental confusion in Deut 28:28.

2p. 130.

and psychological terms. For example, he constructs a kind of continuum of five categories: (a) known human languages, (b) a phenomenon that has language-like structure, but is not identifiable as a known human language, (c) a phenomenon comprised of both known and unknown parts of human language, (d) vocalizations without any fragments of known language, yet indistinguishable by a naive listener from a foreign language, (e) disconnected pieces of mutterings and groanings easily distinguished from normal human language. But Poythress admits that such categorization stems from the modern scientific spirit and is alien to the first century. Accordingly, Paul never clarified for the Corinthians the meaning of "kinds of tongues" (1 Cor 12:10); rather he simply affirmed that the phenomenon was a gift of the Spirit, but the type of gift that could be properly used or abused.

Clearly, Paul's stress lies on use rather than description of the gift. Still, Poythress may have over stated the case when he says "We have no means of determining from the Corinthian epistles which of the cases (a)-(d) occurred, or whether all of them occurred." But as shown above, an examination of certain Corinthian verses makes the xenoglossia option unlikely; so at least that much determination is possible. Beyond that, however, the Corinthian passage is simply too cryptic to permit one to settle on Poythress' points c, d, and e; enough evidence simply is not there.

In his attempt to clarify the phenomenon, Ernest Best suggests a description that would replicate Poythress' second option

---

1Poythress, pp. 132, 133. 2Ibid., p. 135.
of a language-like structure that is not in fact a human language. He calls it an idiolect as opposed to a dialect.\(^1\) A dialect is a language in which at least two people can communicate with each other, while an idiolect is a language which is peculiar to one person—something he may have invented. He cites passages from Alice Through the Looking Glass and Tolkien's Lord of the Rings as examples. He also adds that idiolects appear in the nonsense rhymes of children, and the rather meaningless syllables of everything from emotional profanity to the lyrics of pop songs.

Such analogical reasoning illustrates the difficulty of arriving at a precise, all-encompassing description of the nature of the tongues experience. Scholars of repute have struggled manfully, but agreement at this point has been elusive. For example, a lively debate has ensued with reference to the language of Rom 8:26, "the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words." On the one hand, Ernst Käsemann has interpreted the phrase, θυναμίς ἀλαλήσις, "wordless groans," not as private prayers but as public testimonials.\(^2\) Adolf Schlatter, on the other hand, held that the experience described in Romans was both wordless and intercessory.\(^3\) Similar to Schlatter, A. J. M. Wedderburn takes the

\(^{1}\) "The Interpretation of Tongues," p. 57.

\(^{2}\) Perspectives on Paul (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), pp. 129-31. Here Käsemann asserts that the "wordless groans" actually become "... ecstatic acclamations and cries of prayer, which counted in the primitive church as directly God-inspired and were binding on the church as sacred law, the Spirit enters the service of worship in a way which is positively objective compared with our own spiritual experiences, and does so by no means wordlessly but with the cries of the enthusiasts" (p. 130).

\(^{3}\) Gottes Gerechtigkeit (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1935), p. 280. Schlatter further elaborates that the experience described
position that "wordless groans" is simply not a fit description of the phenomenon referred to in Corinthians by the phrase γλῶσσας λαλεῖν, "to speak with tongues."\(^1\) Admittedly, there is a continuum of experiences from non-conceptual groanings to acclamations of thanksgiving and praise (cf. pp. 162, 163), but it strains the terms when the two ends of the spectrum are somehow equated.

Apparently the Corinthian believers looked upon themselves as "strong" (1:27) or "knowledgeable" (8:2) or "gifted" (1:7) or zealous to demonstrate (14:12), and felt the tongues experience to be an expression of that elevated spiritual plane. But the phenomenon which Paul has in mind is not a sign of power or prestige, it is a private experience (14:18, 19) made possible by the Spirit (12:10) and is to be made public only in such a way that others will be edified (14:5). Thus there is a oneness that develops between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit that sometimes comes to verbal expression. When such happens, it is because the human spirit is responsive to the initiatives of the Holy Spirit, and thus the experience is one of submission, not of triumph.\(^2\)

Thus, Corinthian tongue-speech is intimately connected with the Spirit, from whom it is a gift (12:10, 28); yet it is a prayer-like experience directed to God by "my spirit" (14:2, 15). As opposed to "prophecy," which embodies intelligible content for the

\[^1\text{p. 371.}\] \[^2\text{Ibid., p. 375.}\]
congregation, glossolalia, though not void of content, is not intelligible without an interpretation. Its function, then, is not for purposes of communication or verbal enlightenment but rather as a private, spiritual uplift which is at the same time a gift from God and a glorification or praise directed to God. But because of its personal nature, it may or may not be of help to anyone else in the congregation.

Tongues are one’s spirit’s utterance in prayer and praise. The human intellect has no part in this prayer, because it is incomprehensible. Therefore, an individual need also for intelligible prayer is expressed. In the congregation, prayer in tongues without interpretation contributes not at all to the common good. Consequently, speaking in tongues without interpretation should be restricted to private prayer life.¹

Nevertheless, the language of Paul is so complex that it is “difficult to capture the original meaning of it.”² At the same time, it should be acknowledged that the phenomenon was not amenable to a simple either/or kind of definition. For example, Paul seems to use the expression γενε γλωσσαω in 12:10, 28 as a kind of generic term that should be granted a certain fluidity. In fact, such a latitude of meaning may well be the “distinctive feature” of the term γλωσσαω as Paul uses it in chaps. 12-14. Moreover, the qualifying words ἐτεσαυ (Acts 2:4) and κανυαυ (Mark 16:17) indicate that the whole experience is a new thing in the early church, and thus, while there is a generic relationship³ between the various NT manifestations, a strict, inflexible definition of γλωσσαω in all its occurrences is unnecessary for a proper understanding of Paul’s

³Johannes Behm, “γλωσσαω,” TDNT 1:726.
Corinthian instructions. Here, the primary requirement is to differentiate clearly between tongues and prophecy inasmuch as chap. 14 would be unintelligible apart from such a distinction.

At this point, an additional word should be said regarding the kinds (γένος) of tongues Paul may have been referring to in 12:10, 28. In the NT church there were two tongues manifestations: foreign languages as demonstrated at Pentecost, and ecstatic speech as practiced in Corinth. The gift of languages served two functions: (1) to assist in the communicating of the gospel (Acts 2:6, 11); (2) to attest conversion or baptism (Acts 10:46). Ecstatic speech, similarly, had two manifestations: (1) private spiritual uplift; (2) congregational edification by means of an interpretation.¹ In the minds of the early Christians all such manifestations were forms of praising God (cf. Acts 2:11; 10:46; 1 Cor 14:2), and it appears that careful distinction as to "types" of tongues were not observed outside of Paul. He zeroes in on the ecstatic speech categories,² giving approval to both but carefully

¹ James Lapsley and John Simpson run these categories together and come up with three types of tongues: foreign language which is given to attest conversion, public tongue-speech which is interpreted and private tongue-speech which is not interpreted. They suggest that these three types of tongues are also present in neo-Pentecostalism. But as mentioned earlier, there has been no clearly documented case of xenoglossia in neo-Pentecostalism. James N. Lapsley and John H. Simpson, "Speaking in Tongues," Princeton Seminary Bulletin 58 (February 1965):4.

² Although in 14:22 Paul does make reference to tongues as a "sign," and thus suggests something similar to the phenomenon described in Acts 10:46, the mere use of the word γὰρες in Corinthians is not sufficient reason to conclude that both Luke and Paul were referring to the same kind of manifestation. For example, Stendahl asserts that γὰρες in 14:22 has a nuance of meaning which is essentially negative for unbelievers, and therefore is quite different from the Lukan phenomenon, which served to authenticate conversion. Krister Stendahl, Paul among Jews and Gentiles (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p. 116.
qualifying the public manifestation with explicit directives, inasmuch as that was the kind of tongue-speech that was being abused. In other terms, Paul seems to be berating the Corinthians for selfishly displaying what was actually intended to be a kind of "closet" experience, for "To speak in tongues is an act of private prayer and thanksgiving to God . . . ecstatic in kind, involving the suspension of the rational faculty (vss. 14, 19). They give the impression of (without actually being) speech in foreign languages. . . ."¹ "Perhaps God had chosen that even in this strange speech men should praise him. The real question for Corinth was whether such praise belonged to public worship."²

Accordingly, glossolalia . . . is a χρωμολογία, a spiritually effected speaking (14:2ff., 14ff., 37ff.; cf. 12:10,28,30), not to men, but to God (14:2, 28), in the form of a prayer, possibly of praise and thanksgiving and possibly sung (14:2, 14-17; cf. Acts 10:46); its value is for the individual concerned rather than for the community as a whole (14:4ff., 16f., 28). In this inspired utterance the νὸς is swallowed up (14:14,19) so that mysterious words, obscure both to the speaker and to the hearers, are spoken in the void (14:2,9,11,15f.). . . . To make glossolalia serviceable to the community, however, either the speaker or another brother must be able to give an interpretation (14:5,13,27f.; 12:10,30). In Corinth, therefore, glossolalia is an unintelligible ecstatic utterance.³

So then, regarding 14:27a, we can conclude that the "tongue" alluded to was a genuine, personal experience of prayer and praise, characterized by surrender of the human spirit to the divine Spirit, which resulted in an emotional feeling that was difficult to put into

² Baird, The Corinthian Church, p. 125.
words, but occasionally burst forth in rapturous expressions—not unlike continuous expressions of "hallelujah"—that would need "interpretation" before anyone else could fully benefit from the reasons behind such ecstaticism. Accordingly, since the gift of interpretation was not automatic (cf., 14:13, "he who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret"), the original intent was for tongues to be a private experience. But, given the Corinthian desire for public display (vs. 12 "... since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit . . ."), and the existence of a gift of interpretation, it appears that, while the function of the gift was to give scattered, personal evidences that the Spirit was present, and thus encourage and uplift individuals, some might, by the gift of interpretation, share the experience later with the assembly. When the gift was thus made public, "It served the same purpose as other miracles; it made visible and called attention to the entrance of new powers into human nature."¹ Such an experience would fit the concept of a "gift of the Spirit," and yet could be easily imitated by a person who felt pressured to conform to growing community expectations that the truly spiritual person should have some kind of spontaneous experience to show for his spirituality. But if a true gift were thus prostituted into a demonstration of meaningless enthusiasm, one might anticipate the correctives of a Paul to be both swift and surgical. Thus, it is not surprising when the polemic seems to eclipse the gift that started it all.

At the same time, it is possible to be overly harsh on the Corinthian glossolalists, attributing to them only attitudes of self-serving. However, inasmuch as the birth of the church at Pentecost was characterized by much excitement, the presence of the Spirit in unusual form, and some kind of tongue-speech, the Corinthian preoccupation with tongues might seem to have some justification.

\[\text{κατὰ δύο ή τρεις και \text{α}?τελεοσον\text{τος, και \text{α}παλ\text{ε}τος (27b,c)}}\]
\"let it be in this manner: two, or at most, three, and one at a time\"

As mentioned above, the directives in these verses relate to the public order or liturgy of the Corinthian service of worship. This is seen in vs. 26b, "when you come together . . ." and in vs. 23a, "if the whole church has come together. . . ." Such a reminder is a safeguard against allowing the correctives to eclipse not only the abuse but also the proper use. And on the face of it, the phrases of vs. 27b,c comprise instruction for the public practice of glossolalia as alluded to in vs. 27a. A careful look at the grammar shows that vs. 27b,c comprises the apodosis of the condition posed in 27a. In other words, by means of the simple condition, Paul has said, "If (when) anyone engages in tongue-speech in your assembly, let him speak according to this manner: only two or at most three, and one at a time." While there is no verb in the apodosis, Robertson and Plummer are probably correct in suggesting that λαλε\text{τωσαν is understood.\textsuperscript{1}}

\textsuperscript{1} p. 321.
phrases at once suggest the paradox of ecstasy that is under control. But is such emotional behavior worth saving, even if in some corrected, controlled form? In view of the practice described in vs. 26b ("each one has a psalm, or a teaching or a revelation"), it does seem significant that the vigorous, outspoken Paul opts for regulation rather than prohibition. It is not hard to imagine that the apostle who could say in 1 Cor 8:13, "if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble," might be prone to say in 14:27, "If the mysterious tongue-speech might cause even one ἄρωτος (outsider) or ἄσκαθος (unbeliever) to be offended, let us have no more such demonstrations while the world stands." Instead, Paul proceeds with regulations on the practice that, at the same time, insure liturgical order, yet fall short of prohibition.

Paul's Positive View of the Gift

At least one reason for his patience with the phenomenon may have been Paul's concept of tongues as a genuine gift. For, "even though Paul ranks glossolalia low in terms of the relative value of spiritual gifts, he nonetheless gives it status as a gift."^  Paul's earlier inclusion of tongues as one of the list of Spirit-induced gifts in 12:10,28 would make it rather difficult to shunt it aside two chapters later. In other words, a distinction must be maintained between the Corinthian abuse on the one hand, and a somewhat mystifying, yet real spiritual experience on the other. In 14:27,  

^Mills, A Theological Interpretation of Tongues, p. 212; emphasis original.
Paul is not simply castigating the glossolalists in a generalized way, but is nudging them toward a proper understanding and use of a true gift. Since his language in the ensuing verses is approving, albeit with certain qualifications, his directives in vs. 27 cannot be referring to some pretense of spiritual power that was demonstrated by speaking a foreign language in a wrong setting. In other words, he is not saying, "Now when you speak Latin with only Greeks present, make sure you do it one at a time." Nor is he somehow attempting to harness a purely emotional but still spurious charismatic experience so that not more than three phony manifestations can be given in each church service. It seems reasonable to assume that Paul would not have taken the time to give instructions regarding a totally false phenomenon, but would have attempted to abolish it. Yet Paul is giving instructions on how to proceed correctly; he is not prohibiting.

Still, it has been suggested that Paul took a condescending attitude toward the gift of tongues, as a method of dealing with a hostile faction that was pro-tongues. This argument is built upon the concept of a "Christ party" in the church that was very anti-Pauline, and that may have chosen tongue-speech as a mark of original Christianity.1 On this view's premises, with such hostility as a backdrop, Paul could hardly declare that tongues were no genuine sign of whole-hearted Christianity, especially in view of the experience of tongues at Pentecost. It would have been folly for

1 Dawson Walker, The Gift of Tongues (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908), p. 72. Walker feels that the early church made no distinction between a Pentecostal type of tongue-speech and a Corinthian type. He feels both manifestations comprise an ecstatic outburst.
him to forbid the use of glossolalia in light of his own struggle for acceptance by the widespread groups of believers, many of whom belonged to the "Christ party."

However, it is difficult to read the positive statements by Paul (e.g., 12:10,28; 14:15,17,18,22,39) and conclude that he is merely making allowance for a Corinthian hostile faction.\(^1\) It is hard to imagine Paul, feeling that the entire manifestation should be abolished, rigorously pulling his punches and saying, in effect, "While the ideal is to abolish the phenomenon, given the local sentiment and my own precarious influence, the ideal is impossible, so I will damn with faint praise and burdensome strictures."\(^2\)

\(^1\) It is similarly difficult to concur with R. H. Fuller's contention that Paul's claim in vs. 18 to speak with tongues was merely an attempt to out-do the Gnostics by showing that they were not unique in their spiritual mysticism. First, there is little evidence that the Gnostics were a recognized entity at this time, and second, when vs. 18 is coupled with his wish in vs. 5 that others might speak in tongues. Fuller's argument is seriously weakened. Fuller, p. 165.

\(^2\) Recently, in "The 'Interpretation' of Tongues," pp. 15-36, by A. C. Thiselton, and in The Origin of 1 Corinthians, pp. 188, 189, by J. C. Hurd, similar views have been espoused. Thiselton refers approvingly to Hurd's position, but that position does not seem consistent. On the one hand Hurd suggests that Paul, in chap. 14 is marshalling every possible argument against the practice of glossolalia (p. 189), yet elsewhere, he firmly asserts the genuineness of the Spirit's presence in the diversity of the gifts, and feels that Paul actually sought to encourage diversity within the church. "By contrast, however, to previous scholarly interpretations of 1 Cor 12, we hold that Paul did not take a negative view toward diversity within the Corinthian Church. Instead, we suggest that Paul was disturbed over the narrowness and uniformity of the Corinthians' view of the operation of the Spirit. Paul stressed the variety of the gifts of the Spirit, not negatively, as though they represented a theological challenge to the doctrine of the unity of the Church, but positively, in order to persuade the Corinthians to broaden their viewpoint and to accept a variety of skills and ministries as actual evidence of the working of the Spirit" (p. 191).

It seems difficult to square this concept with Hurd's previously stated idea that Paul's positive statements about the gift of
Furthermore, such a view does not do justice to Paul's concept of the genuineness of the Spirit's presence in the diversity of gifts. If Paul speaks in favor of a variety of Spirit manifestations in the church, it is not clear why he would include tongues in his lists of "gifts of the Spirit" and at the same time want to abolish it. It seems more reasonable to conclude that since the Corinthians had seized on, and overblown, this one gift because of its spectacular nature, Paul, for that reason, puts it down. But his harsh language is actually in proportion to the degree to which the Corinthians had exaggerated the importance of that one gift. The well-integrated body is made up of many necessary members—all of importance to the proper functioning of the whole.

Paul's positive statements about the diversity of gifts in general (e.g., chap. 12), and tongues in particular (14:15,17,18,22), simply do not correlate easily with the idea that glossolalia was something Paul wished would disappear.

From what we know of the Apostle, he was not the man to speak in this manner (the positive statements) of something that he regarded as an evil in the life of the Church—much less to include it in any way in a list of the gifts of the Holy Spirit! tongues were only meant to "damn with faint praise" (p. 189) a phenomenon that he wanted to abolish. He further weakens his anti-tongues stance, when, after he has stated the importance of the varieties of the gifts, he adds: "Paul then listed eight distinct gifts, each of which, he maintained, revealed the genuine inspiration of the Spirit. He next introduced the metaphor of the 'body', which was used in antiquity to represent the interdependence of the 'members' of a society" (p. 191). Admittedly, Paul could have favored diversity of gifts without equal endorsement of all, but evidence that he is here withdrawing support for tongues is not at all clear.

Or to put it another way, if one takes seriously the reiteration of tongues as a charism of the Spirit in 1 Cor 12:10, 28, 30, it is difficult to support the contention that tongues was included in the list only as a ploy to cover Paul's real feeling of apathy toward it. It seems clear that behind the abuses and excesses of the Corinthians lay something of value. To see only the excess and consequent polemic is to run the risk of calling evil that which is good.

The problem in Corinth did not stem from the mere fact that they spoke in tongues, but from the fact that they lacked wisdom and guidance in the use of this gift. To say that speaking in tongues is evil or dangerous is to question the wisdom of God in placing this gift within the church.1

It is clear from 1 Cor 11 that in Corinth there were serious abuses in the celebration of the Lord's supper; yet there has been no widespread feeling that Paul's words there were intended to discredit the observance of the eucharist. "Our common life as Christians would be poor indeed if we had to shun every gift of God which human beings are capable of abusing."2 Therefore, we should not "take the somewhat unhealthy development at Corinth as the standard for judging early Christian glossolalia as a whole."3

While the immoderation in Corinth was producing alienation within the church and causing problems for outsiders looking in, part of Paul's difficulty in handling the issue may well have been his belief in the legitimacy of the gift. Because of this belief, and because he himself had received the gift, he could "not treat

---

1 Christenson, p. 97.  
2 Ibid., p. 98.  
3 Delling, p. 35.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
the practitioners of this gift brusquely, nor will he unceremoniously ban them from the assembly.\footnote{1}

So Paul must fight on two fronts: he must cautiously depreciate that which had been unduly magnified, and he must preserve the genuine gift that lay behind the abuse. The method he used may be called "condescending," but if so, the term must be used with care, for to say that he was being condescending or tactical in his treatment need not imply that he had a low view of the phenomenon. Paul was consistently concerned about the impact of his counsel and example on the collective body of Christ (1 Cor 8:9, 10; 9:12; 10:32,33). So here, "Paul's discussion is a serious attempt to deal with the question in such a way as to avoid a split in the church. . . . Paul's correspondence treats theological matters with serious care. . . ."\footnote{2} For Paul to be tactical simply meant he thereby had a greater chance of successfully influencing people for Christ. "I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some" (1 Cor 9:22). In other words, if Paul is attacking the Corinthian estimate of tongues, and not tongues as a gift, then the positive statements can be allowed their "natural weight."\footnote{3}

Accordingly, we can see it as a positive statement when Paul says that one who speaks in a tongue "does not speak to men but to God" (vs. 2). In a similar way, the phrase in vs. 4 that "one who speaks in a tongue edifies himself" can be interpreted in a positive sense when the contrasting phrase about prophesying is not allowed

\footnotesize{\footnote{1}Orr and Walther, p. 305. \footnote{2}Ibid. \footnote{3}Sweet, p. 254.}
to dominate one's understanding of the text. In any case, the self-
edification here need not be viewed solely in a "negative sense,
as classical theology tends to do."\(^1\) So also, when the phrases in
14:5,15,17,18,27, and 39 are put together, it is difficult to see
Paul attempting to rid the church of the tongues manifestation.\(^2\)

As pointed out earlier, Paul's polemic should not be allowed to
eclipse the positive statements to which, because of the Corinthian
problem of excess, Paul did not give great emphasis. "Since it
apparently never occurred to anyone at the time that the experience
would be totally rejected, he did not counsel tolerance on the other
side, as he did in other matters."\(^3\) If Paul's inclusion of tongues
in the lists of χαρώσματα in 12:10 and 28 is taken seriously, then
his positive statements should likewise be taken seriously. Aberrant
behavior that is highly influenced by psychological conditioning

\(^1\) Laurentin, p. 12.

\(^2\) H. Pêne takes such a "face value" approach to Paul's state-
ment in 14:18 ("I speak in tongues more than you all") and allows
that Paul thus "talks in perfectly natural fashion of speaking in
tongues himself more than all of them (xiv. 18); and all he demands
of the Corinthian Christians is that they should allow charity and
the needs of the Church to govern their use of such gifts..." (p. 394).

Simon Tugwell takes a similarly facile approach in his
reflection on 14:4. "Praying in tongues is a thoroughly good thing
in itself, all else being equal: 'he who prays in tongues builds
himself up' (v. 4)" (p. 140). Though he speaks of the value of the
non-conceptual aspect of prayer and asserts that that aspect has
often been neglected in recent years, he avers that there should be
a balance between praying in the spirit (non-conceptual) and pray-
ing with the mind (conceptual). He then proceeds to emphasize the
positive aspect of the experience by stating: "Against the exces-
sively pneumatic Corinthians, Paul has to stress the need to pray
with the mind; perhaps we, prone as we have been to exaggerate the
importance of the mind, need rather to stress praying with the spirit.
The important thing is to grow towards the wholeness of life which
is offered to us in Christ (Eph 4:13)" (p. 140).

\(^3\) Kelsey, p. 233.
should not be allowed to detract from that fundamental issue.

Furthermore, to covertly excise just one gift from the list by hypothesizing about a subtle Pauline reasoning, whereby he masks his real feelings, seems to go beyond the evidence. Even the last place position of tongues in the lists of gifts should not be exaggerated into an element of depreciation, for it is more than a little likely that he pushes it to last place, not because he despises it, but because the Corinthians had exalted it to first place and because "it is not particularly suited to edifying the church."¹

Although not too much should be made of Paul's expressed wish in 14:5 that all might speak with tongues, at the same time, it should not be ignored. The verb he used, ἀδιάβολω, is the same as that used in 7:7, where he expressed the desire that all should remain single. In neither case should the wish be interpreted in an absolute, all-inclusive sense. Just as Paul was aware that most people would marry, so also he would, no doubt, allow that most people would not speak in tongues. Still, the positive thrust of the wish should not be lost. Admittedly he is, in this verse, setting up an a fortiori argument, with prophesying getting the most powerful thrust, since the upbuilding of the congregation is thereby advanced. But he might have said the same even more forcefully had he contrasted the two practices. That is, it would have been a simple matter for him to say, "I would that all of you prophesy rather than speak in tongues." Instead he maintained

approval of tongues while expressing his preference for prophecy. Charles Ellicott refers to this same idea by means of an interpretive translation: ". . . though I do not seek to depreciate the former gift, but even wish that you had it, I still would rather that you should prophesy." ¹

If Paul had looked upon tongues as a serious threat to the church, as, for example, asceticism (Col 2:21-23) or legalism (Gal 4:9-11) or libertinism (1 Cor 8:8-10), he would surely have called for its removal. Bruce submits that Paul hesitated to erect a "fatal barrier" between himself and the glossolalists, which he would have done had he denied that "the gift of tongues was a genuine supernatural charism. . . ." ² But it seems more precise to say that Paul did not deny the supernatural nature of the gift because to do so would not be true to what he believed. ³

The Need for Control

At the same time, it is clear that Pauline approval, or even a divine origin, did not obviate the need for human control, for such regulation is the obvious intent of the instruction in 27b and c.

¹P. 261.

²1 & 2 Corinthians, p. 130. At the same time, it is quite clear in this context that Bruce, along with J. C. Hurd and Dawson Walker, feels that Paul's logic here is strictly calculating. That is, Bruce implies that if Paul could deny the authenticity of the gift and not erect a barrier between himself and the glossolalists, he would have done so. In any case, if Bruce meant that Paul was only disparaging the abuse of a genuine gift, he does not make it very clear.

³This is not to deny that an element of diplomacy influenced Paul's presentation of the topic, but to assert that his words were not so "diplomatic" that they masked his real belief about tongues as a χάρισμα.
Apparently, for Paul, orderly control was not opposed to the free and open operation of the Spirit, nor did it disparage the validity of the gift. In fact, in laying down regulations for the use of tongues in worship, Paul thereby acknowledges their value. Or, to say it another way, "controlled ecstasy" would have been no contradiction of terms for Paul.

To the mind of primitive Christianity the Spirit and order are no more mutually exclusive than are the Spirit (church) and law (Recht); but order and law, to the extent that they are determined by the operation of the Spirit, cannot be institutionalized and codified, certainly not in the context of the community assembled for worship.

But such openess to the sudden inspiration of the Spirit "is no excuse for disorder because God's Spirit inspired order and not confusion." Admittedly to thus draw together the two aspects of spontaneity and orderly worship has never been easy. But Cullmann points out how essential such a harmony is:

It is precisely in this harmonious combination of freedom and restriction that there lies the greatness and uniqueness of the early Christian service of worship. With this high aim of the "building up" of the community, of the body of Christ, constantly in view, Paul does not fall into the error of eliminating on principle from the service of worship all free expressions of the Spirit.

While the phrases in vs. 27b,c speak clearly of control, such control need not denigrate the importance of the "immediacy of the 

---

1 Best, p. 46.
Spirit." By means of these directives, Paul is not inhibiting the enthusiastic element of which he himself partook (vs. 18); he is simply setting forth the manner in which such an experience is to be shared with the group.

While the precise nature of the control is yet to be explained, the phrases in vs. 27b,c preclude the notion that the genuine experience of tongues, which Paul approves was an uncontrollable seizure of ecstasy. But "Paul does not accept that a man might be so seized by the Spirit that he could do no other. Rather, he takes for granted that the true spirit shows itself in this submission to proper order." Indeed, that order must include control of both the practice of tongues as well as certain aspects of the content of what is said.

The criterion of orderliness is apparently effective not only when it comes to the content of the inspired speech (this is treated in 12:1-3), but already in the case of the phenomenon itself. The Spirit does not bring about the extinguishing of

---

1 In Glossolalia in the Apostolic Church, Ira Martin distinguishes between a "genuine" glossolalia which he maintains was characterized by such a seizure, and a "synthetic" glossolalia that was only contrived by the person and was thus under his complete control. The first, he describes this way: "The glossolalist appeared to be completely unaware of his surrounding, and deprived of any control of thought. Such "possession," furthermore, described that state of being which responded abnormally to everyday influence and impulses. The individual appeared to be living mentally and spiritually elsewhere, while the body wandered aimlessly" (p. 34). Such a description might apply to the private devotional experience, but Martin does not indicate that he is describing only the private phenomenon. In any case, Paul's counsel would not fit into Martin's categories, for Paul's restrictions are too specific to allow for Martin's idea of religious seizure. Furthermore, Martin's "synthetic" glossolalist would not have elicited Paul's various positive statements regarding the manifestation (e.g., vss. 5, "I want you all to speak in tongues," and 39, "do not forbid speaking in tongues.").

the subject. Accordingly, the matter-of-fact rule is "by turns," and not more than the community can stand.¹

Perhaps there is in this verse (27) the first hesitant retreat from that important idea of charismatic authority. From that time when the apostles had first gone out healing the sick and casting out demons, some Christians had nurtured an immediacy of experience with the Spirit that, after the departure of Jesus and the events of Pentecost, had gradually become characterized by certain excesses. Thus, to be "Spirit-led" became the goal of many believers, even though all the implications of that experience were not always clear. But vs. 27b,c coupled with 26c suggest that such liberty in the Spirit, as manifested in Corinth, was not helpful to the οἰκουμένη of the group; so it must be reassessed.

The theological and practical conquest of enthusiasm was the first test to which the young church was exposed, and nothing less than its whole existence and future depended on its mastery of this problem.²

It appears that Paul is here making the first attempt at such a "conquest," and the amount of space he devotes to the problem indicates the seriousness with which he views the issue. Because the Corinthians had blown out of proportion an otherwise good gift, Paul is constrained to set forth regulations that will curb the more enthusiastic members of the congregations. If charismatic authority has tended to bleed off into some kind of ego-fulfillment, then steps must be taken to ensure that the dominant role being given to individual expression does not result in disastrous stultification

¹ Conzelmann, A Commentary, p. 244.
² Käsemann, Perspectives on Paul, p. 123.
of church growth. Hence, vs. 27 may well have been the first attempt to put reins on the charismata in favor of a more ordered concept of authority and liturgy.

In 12:2 Paul has stated that some of these very believers had, in their former pagan state, been dominated by external forces and had followed "however you were led." It is conceivable then that a certain influence from the former activity had subtly affected their Christian ecstatic behavior patterns.\(^1\) Accordingly, the control spoken of here would stand in obvious contrast both with their pagan past and with that part of the Christian tongues practice that seemed to be beyond all human control. While some behavior patterns might appear similar, they differed radically in both source and control.\(^2\)

The Nature of the Control

At this point, the difficulty lies not in the concept of "controlled" tongues, but in understanding the precise nature of that control. At the outset it can be stated that Paul's regulation of the gift placed responsibility for control on both the speaker

\(^1\)This is not to deny the position taken earlier that Christian ecstatic glossolalia was of complex origin and was not a direct continuation of pagan cultic behavior. See especially pp. 58-60.

\(^2\)After describing the clamor of the pagan orgiastic religions, Richard and Catherine Kroeger contrast the order of the Christian ecstatic in a public meeting: "While the pagan deity might seize upon the subject with irresistible force, the Apostle insisted upon the Christian's ability to control his or her ecstatic activities. No more than one person might speak at a time, and speech with meaning was preferred. A Glossolalist must refrain from public utterance unless there was an interpreter available, and prophets must yield the floor to another upon demand. The Christian order of worship demanded no speech unless meaning might be assigned to it and no audible expression while someone else was speaking" ("An Inquiry into Evidence of Maenadism," p. 334).
and the community to which he spoke. Here again, the term οὐχοδομη of vs. 26c looms large over the entire passage. However it is that freedom of the Spirit and the restrictions of liturgy are brought together in the public meeting, it is "in the light of the one aim: the οὐχοδομη (building up of the Church)." But the phrases in vs. 26b indicate that the Corinthians "delighted in the effect produced when they stood up apparently out of control; the Spirit had chosen them as the medium of his message." Such individualism was inimical to corporate growth, and Paul, in vss. 37, 38, suggests that anyone who does not submit to the authority of his words is not to be recognized. So Paul here attempts to set forth regulations that will curb the more enthusiastic glossolalists, but at the same time acknowledges in 14:39 ("do not forbid to speak in tongues") that the control by the church could be so formidable that it would quench both the abuse and the gift. Nevertheless, in the public assembly, liturgical order must dominate spontaneity rather than the reverse.

Laurence Christensen suggests that the term "ecstaticism" has added to the confusion, as it connotes a certain irrationality for which there is no warrant in Scripture. He points out that ἐκστασις, which is the basis for the English word ecstasy, is never used with reference to a glossolalist, but is used only to refer to

---

1 Cullmann, p. 32. 2 Jerome Murphy-O'Conner, p. 132.

3 William Bellsahw, however, carries the argument too far. After acknowledging that failure of glossolalists to recognize the regulations in vss. 27, 28 invalidates the gift, he goes on to postulate that the gift would never be given to those who would abuse it. "The Confusion of Tongues," Bibliotheca Sacra 120 (April-June 1963): 153. But the Corinthian problem counters his conclusion, for, as shown previously, the gift was Spirit-induced, yet was continually being abused.
those who heard tongue-speaking. His view leads him to conclude that the phenomenon partook of virtually no emotionalism, but was under the complete control of the rational mind.

The idea that a speaker in tongues goes off into a kind of religious ecstasy, where he loses emotional and personal control, is contrary both to Scripture and actual experience. The person who exercises this gift is perfectly able to remain in full control of himself and his emotions.

Such a concept of total control does not make room for the idea of tongues as a gift of the Spirit, nor for the language of vs. 14 that implies that tongue speech includes a certain mystical element wherein "my mind is unfruitful." To insist that the term for ecstasy is not applied in Scripture to the phenomenon is not sufficient reason for concluding that, therefore, all patterns of behavior that might be ecstatic in character can comprise no part of the manifestation, public or private. However "control" is understood, it must be remembered that the phenomenon is comprised of both a spiritual gift and a rational mind.

1 Pp. 83, 84. His position stands opposed to H. Conzelmann on this point, who, while he favors the idea of personal control, interprets "inspiration," as "the being carried away--ek-stasis" (Der erste Brief, p. 288). Howard Frvin takes a view very similar to that of Christensen, and flatly states that "ecstasy is not a corollary of tongues either in Scripture or in experience" ("As the Spirit Gives Utterance," Christianity Today 13/14 [1969]:624). But his article shows that his real objection is not to the idea of ecstaticism, but only to that interpretation of it that looks upon the tongues experience as meaningless babbling. While he does not go as far as Christensen, he acknowledges that there are ecstatic elements in the tongues experience, but those elements simply do not result in unintelligible jargon.

2 Christensen, p. 84.

3 D. A. Hayes, whose work consistently denigrates the supernatural element in the tongues phenomenon, had a burden for the rational aspects of glossolalia. "It is a mistake to think that the Holy Spirit is more interested or more active in abnormal experiences
It seems clear that, throughout Paul's discussion, while the Spirit is the source of the experience, the vehicle for expressing that event is to be a rational, controlled person, who is able to hold back his public expression until an appropriate time. Furthermore, inasmuch as only three glossolalists were to speak in any one meeting, one is led to conclude that either the total number of tongue-speakers was small or the restraint called for was considerable, if tongue-speech was expected by the group. And given the

or our unconscious states than He is in the reasonable conduct of our ordinary life. The operation of the Holy Spirit must not be looked for in any abnormal, violent, or mysterious psychical experiences. Such convulsions of the soul have, indeed, in some cases, marked the awakening into a new life; like a volcanic upheaval, they have brought to the surface hidden strata of the subconscious life; but generally it is by the small voice, not by the earthquake or the fire, that God speaks to us.

"The highest Christian experience is not attained through the abandonment of one's own faculties, the abnegation of one's own personality, the surrender of one's own self-consciousness.

"The Holy Spirit puts a premium upon sanity and soberness and good judgment and common sense and clear thinking. Let Him have the right of way and the gift of tongues will be proportionately valued, exercised to edification, submissive to discipline, and subject to self-control whenever and wherever it may be manifested" (The Gift of Tongues, pp. 114-16).

1 In a statement that stresses this idea of control, Engelsen links both prophecy and tongues as different forms of ecstatic speech, and then suggests that both were inspired and controllable. "Both categories of speakers are able to speak when the inspiration comes, to stop speaking at liberty, or remain silent. The rational control is not lost" (p. 204). In the merging of the two phenomena, Engelsen blurs somewhat the element of spontaneity that must have been present in the private tongues experience.

2 Though Moffatt agrees that the gift could be managed and restrained, he indicates that considerable psychological pressure could be brought upon speakers by the expectations of the assembly. "It would seem that such a gifted speaker, sitting in a glowing congregation, might be moved to use his gift as he yielded to the contagion of the group. The impulse would arise from suggestion, from an excited fervor of the company which weakened self-control. Paul insists that a glossolalist must be on his guard, as quivers ran from soul to soul, so much on his guard, and so alive to the
sentiment expressed in vs. 23 ("If the . . . whole church should assemble . . . and all speak with tongues . . ."), the latter conclusion seems the more reasonable. It is surely conceivable that four glossolalists might desire to express their ecstasy in one assembly, but if vs. 27b and c are definitive, then the fourth glossolalist would be constrained to take his turn at a subsequent meeting, which might be several days removed from the initial experience. Yet, such control is actually implied in ἵνα ἔφυγε for if the expression of the experience can be withheld for five minutes while another takes his turn, then why not for five days?

Such control comports well with the definition of the phenomenon given earlier, that the tongues which Paul is addressing was a Spirit-induced, private worship experience, meant to edify only the recipient (vs. 4). It was both emotional and verbal, and may have been so dominated by the Spirit that there was minimal human control. This private experience, given to inspire and encourage, could then be replicated in the public assembly--though it need not be. But if that excitement and encouragement were made public, then order must prevail, the members must take turns and must limit such ecstatic reports to not more than three in any one meeting. From this it can be seen that the control exercised by edifying needs of the gathering, that he could restrain himself if too many had already taken part" (The First Epistle, p. 215). But group pressure could also be a restraining influence, and Paul must surely be appealing to that group influence in some of his cautions.

Jean Héring flatly states: "The number of inspired speakers seems to have been very big. So it was necessary to dam these floods of eloquence by limiting the number of speakers in tongues and of prophets respectively to two or three" (The First Epistle, p. 153).
the speakers had to do with when or even whether to speak, but had little to do with controlling the content of the experience or the verbal expression used to describe it.

It is in this vein that G. C. Joyce pulls together the troubling aspects of ecstasy on the one hand and control on the other. He concludes that the control aspect comes only at the beginning of the ecstasy, but not during the experience.

There is a critical moment for decision just before the subconscious activities begin to operate. When once they are in full course, then the vision is seen, or the speech uttered, apparently without any intervention of the man's own will. It is as though from that moment forward, until the impulse have exhausted itself, he were carried along by an overmastering power. Thus we may conceive it to have been with regard to the tongues in the meetings of the Christian congregation at Corinth. If the will of the speaker was to be exercised at all it was necessary that it should be exercised at the beginning; and this is precisely what the language of S. Paul seems to suggest. Nothing that he says implies control of the tongue by the speaker when once the utterance has begun.¹

Such a view takes into account the spontaneity or lack of rationality suggested in vs. 14 ("my mind is unfruitful") as well as the requirements for control spelled out in vss. 26-28.

But control of tongues, or of any charism, lies not only with the individual participant but also with the congregation of which the individual is a part. For it is in part the expectations of the group that may give rise to certain behavior. "If the congregation be all a-quiver with excitement that the exhibition should take place, that fact in itself adds greatly to the likelihood of the occurrence."² Consequently, Paul's counsel for control was, no

²Ibid., p. 166.
doubt, meant to have a sobering effect upon the entire community, not solely upon the gifted ones who were revelling in their activities. The community provided an atmosphere favorable or the reverse to the nurture of these powers. Nor is this recognition of the importance of environment in any way inconsistent with the divine origin of the gifts. They come from God, but God does not bestow His gifts indiscriminately. His grace works effectively where men are eager to receive and to respond to it.¹

καὶ εἰς διδομένων (vs. 27d)
"and let one interpret"

Not only must there be orderly procedure, but each tongues experience must be "interpreted." Unfortunately, the meaning of διδομένων is not at once transparent. Still, the difficulty of precise definition should not obscure the importance of this bit of instruction. Paul's repeated use of the term (13:30; 14:5,13,27,28) shows at once the importance he placed on the phenomenon, as well as its relative insignificance in the minds of the Corinthians. They seemed to feel that the mere display of tongues illustrated something of their spirituality (14:23), whereas Paul suggests that apart from the all-important interpretation, tongues should be kept out of the public meeting (14:5,19,28). He earlier set forth the divine status of "interpretation"--it is a gift in its own right (e.g., 12:10,30). He then states in vs. 13 that for the edification of the church the glossolalist should pray for that correlative gift of interpretation.² Then here in vs. 27d he turns

¹Ibid., p. 167.

²As Reginald Fuller puts it, "Interpretation of tongues had already been recognized as a gift--indeed an indispensable gift..." However, he carries his point too far when he adds, "Only where ecstatic speech is translated into rational has it any effect in building up either the individual or the church. Only so can tongues--
those previous observations into "rules for the ordering of the
service of worship." Moreover, the importance of the interpretation
is also seen in that only one (εἰς not τῆς) was to do the interpre-
ting. As Robertson and Plummer have observed, "this would be a
security against two speaking with tongues at the same time, for
one interpreter could not attend to both." Furthermore, although
throughout the chapter Paul continually exalts prophecy over tongues,
he also asserts that an interpretation (συνανθρός cf. vss. 5,13)
raises tongues to something tantamount to prophecy.

Translation or Interpretation

Whatever the meaning of the term, both logic and the exhor-
tation of vs. 16 make it clear that this gift makes intelligible
that which was formerly unintelligible. In fact, in the continuing
comparison between tongues and prophecy in this chapter, it is obvious
that intelligibility is what makes the difference. Yet, such a state­
ment merely begs the question as to the nature of the unintelligible
speech. Was it unintelligible because it was irrational, or because,
though rational, it was a language not known by the hearers? If the
former is the correct analysis, then the verb in question would have
the meaning of "interpret the significance of," but if the latter is
accepted, then the verb would simply mean "to translate."

i.e., when they cease to be tongues--become serviceable for agape"
vation to "the church," it would be defensible, but when he suggests
that an "individual" cannot be edified by a non-rational mystical
experience, he over-states his case.

1 Conzelmann, A Commentary, p. 244.
2 Robertson and Plummer, p. 321.
Carl Tuland attempts to make such a distinction by means of a lexical argument, but the result is not convincing. His neat differentiation between ἐπενευμένεως ("translate") and ἐρμηνεύω ("interpret") is used as his basis for concluding:

This fundamental distinction between translation and interpretation as observed in both Testaments should be a strong enough argument to dismiss "tongues" in the sense of First Corinthians 14 as intelligible speech or as "foreign languages." But his premise is faulty, for his distinction of terms cannot withstand close scrutiny. In John 1:42 and 9:7 the term ἐπενευμένεως means "translate," which goes counter to Tuland's argument. Furthermore, the word used most frequently by Paul in 1 Cor 14 is the compound form ἐπενευμένεως, which can mean either "translate" or "interpret." "Therefore, in the passages in 1 Corinthians it can mean either, depending on the bias of the interpreter." But though grammar is of limited help, perhaps there are some considerations that will at least help control the bias.

J. H. Michael takes the position that in the quarter century that elapsed between Pentecost and the writing of 1 Corinthians,  


2 In Luke 24:27, when Jesus talks incognito to two of his believers near Emmaus, he ἐπενευμένεως to them the things in the scriptures about Himself. Clearly, the term "translate" would be an incongruity. The obverse is seen in Acts 9:36, where the same word is used to show that the term Tabitha means Dorcas. Here the idea of "interpret" would be an incongruity. Furthermore, while Walter Bauer gives "translate" as the first meaning of the word, he goes on to suggest "explain, interpret" as the meaning best suited to this Corinthian passage. Bauer, p. 193. Similarly, Robertson and Plummer state that "The difference between ἐπενευμένεως and ἐρμηνεύως is unimportant" (p. 321).  

glossolalia had greatly changed, but the old terminology referring to it continued to be used. He states that at Pentecost the phenomenon was one of foreign languages, and that that gift continued in the church for a time. But as the foreign language aspect disappeared, it was replaced by a more emotional, unintelligible experience of prayer and praise, concerning which no new vocabulary seemed appropriate or necessary.

The natural term to use for a person that translated from one language to another would be ἄλογος λαλῶν, and the original speakers would be said γλώσσας λαλῶν. Gradually the use of foreign tongues ceased to be a part of the phenomenon; when Paul wrote this letter it formed no part of the glossolalia at Corinth. However, the old terminology was retained, and in 1 Corinthians 12:14 ἄλογος λαλῶν means to expound the significance, and, by spiritual sympathy, to interpret the condition of ecstatic rapture.¹

Thus, the interpretation process may well have been a kind of intimate thought transference made possible by the Holy Spirit and made necessary by the unintelligible nature of the tongues experience. Furthermore, the process could only be effected if the speaker and interpreter were together both physically and spiritually. As Joyce conjectures,

The most accurate and detailed record of the sounds and syllables uttered would probably have been found to convey no meaning whatever, either to the most learned linguist or to the most gifted interpreter. Only in the presence of the speaker, and under the influence of the mysterious spiritual bond which brought one mind into touch with another, could the task of interpretation be accomplished.²

¹Michael, pp. 257, 258. It is a plausible view and requires less conjecture than the position taken by Mosiman (p. 130) and others that glossolalia in the early church was always unintelligible, and Luke either misunderstood its nature when he wrote Acts 2, or else simply passed on what had become the "traditional" understanding of the Pentecost manifestation, foreign languages.

²Joyce, p. 160.
Accordingly, the phenomenon of interpretation would have to be viewed as something quite apart from translating or even interpreting a language; rather it would be more akin to verbalizing an experience. Apart from such an interpretation, the significance of the glossolalic experience would remain "mysterious" to all but God (14:2).

Verbalizing the Non-verbal

A. C. Thiselton develops this view more fully. First, he takes as his premise the definition of tongues as a private experience between the individual and God. He then asserts that when Paul, in 14:5 says εκτὸς εὔλογον· ἐπεζήτετο τὸν ἀρνίον, "except he should interpret," he means that the glossolalist himself is the interpreter, or the one who "puts it into words."¹ Thiselton asserts that this way of looking upon the interpretation phenomenon "expresses the thrust of all he [Paul] says from xiv. 1 to xiv. 33, if not from xii to xiv."²

In support of his view, he refers to the use of διερμηνεύω in Philo and Josephus. He has observed that of the eighteen uses of the word by Philo, fifteen of these occurrences can only mean "put into words," and the usual understanding 'interpret' or 'translate' would be almost impossible. . . .³ He gives several impressive examples that clearly support his contention.⁴ He then shows that

¹The 'Interpretation' of Tongues," p. 16. For additional support on this point, Thiselton cites the statement by G. G. Findlay: "To supply τοῦ with διερμηνεύω, supposing another interpreter is meant is ungrammatical, the identity of speaker and interpreter is the essential point" (Expositor's Greek Testament, p. 903).

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 18.

⁴Concerning those references which he does not expound, Thiselton adds: "It is . . . unnecessary to set out in full the remaining several passages in which διερμηνεύω means to produce articulate speech. It will readily be seen that the context of all
the uncompounded form, ἐπυνεύω, was used by Philo only for articulate speech.\(^1\)

It must be acknowledged that Philo's use of terms is not normative for Paul, but in the examples cited by Thiselton, "The similarities of thought between Philo and Paul are too close to be ignored."\(^2\) Admittedly, there is a wide divergence in philosophical reasoning between Philo and Paul in the way they would understand and describe the process of thought becoming word, nevertheless, the idea of "'articulation' retains the openendedness which we require."\(^3\)

Thiselton's research into Josephus' use of the term resulted in less impressive statistics because the pertinent passages were few. But, though less impressive than the Philonic references, those in Josephus "serve to establish that the use of ἐπυνεύω forms to refer to putting something into words rather than to 'interpretation' is no mere idiosyncracy of Philo's."\(^4\)

An element of syntax that supports Thiselton's view is the subject-verb relationship in vss. 27 and 28. It appears that the verb in vs. 28, ἀγγέλω, serves the subject of vs. 27, τὸς. But these passages relate to questions about language and communication, but not to translation. We may recall Paul's concern, as he expresses it in 1 Cor xiv. 9, "If you in a tongue utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said?" (cf. xiv. 2,4,6). By contrast, the passages in Philo in which ἐπυνεύω means "to translate," do so in a thoroughly obvious and straightforward way. Thus, for example, Isaac "means" laughter (Leg. all. 3:87); the law is "translated" into Greek (De vit. Mos. 2:31); and Edom is "interpreted" as meaning earthly one (Quod deus sit immut. 144)\(^5\) p. 20.

\(^1\) Ibid.  \(^2\) Ibid.  
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 24.  \(^4\) Ibid., p. 26.
caught in the middle is the little verb ἐμφανίζομαι, which could refer to one of the tongue speakers ("unless he might give an interpretation") or someone else ("unless there might be an interpretation"). But it follows closely the phrase in vs. 27d, "let one interpret," which seems to refer to one of the tongue speakers. Furthermore, a similar passage is vs. 5, where there is little question that the participial phrase "the one who speaks with tongues" is the substantive referred to by the following verb, "except he might interpret." Even though the connection between the subject of vs. 27 and the verb ἐμφανίζομαι of vs. 28 is not as close as that in vs. 5, the parallel nature of the phrases lends strength to the idea that the interpretation of vs. 28 was to come from one of the glossolalists. Still, it is common to leave open the identity of the interpreter. For example, the RSV translates vs. 28a, "if there is no one to interpret. . . ." Similarly, the NASB translates vs. 28, but if there is no interpreter. . . ." Such a view makes room for the total separation of the two gifts, tongues and interpretation. But on the basis of the grammar of vss. 27 and 28, one need not conclude that the ἐμφανίζομαι of vs. 27 refers to anyone outside of the three

1Similarly, J. Weiss earlier stated that the verb ἐμφανίζομαι and καταδίκω of vs. 28 have the same subject. But although Thiselton cites this passage from Weiss in support of his position, he does not mention that Weiss had just acknowledged the difficulty of identifying the interpreter. In fact Weiss says, "it is not entirely clear whether to translate, 'if no interpreter is present', or 'if he is not an interpreter';" though he allows that the latter is the "most probable" (Der Erste Korintherbrief, p. 340).

2So also writes C. T. Craig, "How would anyone know in advance that another would actually have the gift of interpretation?" (Interpreter's Bible, 10:208); and likewise, C. K. Barrett, p. 328; Jean Hering, p. 143; F. W. Grosheide, p. 336, and others.
tongue-speakers just mentioned, nor that the \textit{\underline{\textit{διευθυνων}} \textit{της}} of vs. 28
refers to a fourth individual.\footnote{Or, as Johannes Weiss puts it, "... danach ist denn auch
der \textit{εξς} einer von den Zungenrednern selber" (Accordingly, the \textit{εξς}
is indeed himself one of the tongue-speakers) (Der Erste Korinther-
brief, p. 340). This argument is also strengthened by the admonition in vs. 14 that the tongue-speaker should pray for the power to
interpret.}

Given the previous descriptions
of the phenomenon, and the syntactical relationships in vss. 27 and
28, Thiselton's view that the interpreter was simply a glossolalist
who put the experience into words is plausible.\footnote{Moffatt is in essential agreement with Thiselton's view of
\textit{\underline{\textit{διευθυνων}}}. "Sometimes an enthusiast could tell the gathering what
his sighs and cries had been about, as one might recount a dream
after waking. This faculty of recalling the contents of a mystical
rapture for the common good, Paul goes on to add ... was a further
gift for which one ought to pray" (The First Epistle, p. 207). Joyce
sets forth a similar view of the dynamics involved when a glossolalist
would be his own interpreter: "What was required was a certain con-
tinuity of consciousness between the ecstatic and the normal state.
The condition of entire forgetfulness which generally succeeds the
trance is not of invariable occurrence. It will sometimes happen
that just as the seer will retain a vivid memory of the vision
vouchsafed to him in trance, so the speaker may be empowered to
recollect the thoughts which swept through his mind, and to which he
gave expression in the fervid utterance of the tongue. In these
circumstances he can then find for them a secondary expression by
means of ordinary language, and this time in such a way as to render
them intelligible to his fellows" (Joyce, p. 160).}

But while the evidence can be interpreted to mean that only
glossolalists received the ability to interpret, it is difficult
to show that a glossolalist could interpret only his own experience
and never that of another.\footnote{There seems to be no prima facie reason why a genuine symp-
athy between two believers in the same Holy Spirit should not, in
the heightened sensibility which their worship may inspire, produce
a genuine interpretation, more or less exact, of a tongue" (Christie-Murray, p. 195).} There is insufficient evidence to
indicate whether the \textit{εξς} is used here in the sense of an upper
limit (i.e., "not more than one") or merely in the sense of
designation (i.e., "someone"), and thus equivalent to ... 1 However, since Paul's stress throughout the chapter is on edification
of the group by means of intelligible discourse (vs. 19), the
emphasis of this phrase does seem to be on making intelligible the
glossolalists' experiences, not on how many interpreters it might
take to do so.

But when it is admitted that one person may interpret for
another, the question of Weiss, 2 Craig, 3 and others, as to how the
glossolalist would know in advance if an interpreter was present,
is a legitimate one. But the question can be answered. As was
earlier pointed out, glossolalia does not appear to have occurred
in other communities, from which visiting "interpreters" might come
to Corinth. 4 Furthermore, the assembly of believers at Corinth
must not have been so large that the members would not know most,
if not all, the other members. Consequently, it would soon be known
who had received the gift of interpretation and his presence in or
absence from a given meeting would be duly noted.

Such a view of interpretation is in essential agreement with
the numerous scholars who have opted for the meaning "interpret the
significance of" rather than "translate," as the sense of ἐρμηνεύω
here. Thiselton repeatedly rejects both of these options in favor
of "put into words," but in so doing, he appears to be trying so

1Blass and Debrunner, p. 129.
2Weiss, Der Erste Korintherbrief, p. 340.
3Craig, The Interpreter's Bible, 10:208.
4see pp. 54-56 above.
hard to make a case for his wording that he fails to see how similar his position is to that of other scholars. For example, it is difficult to see the difference between Thiselton's view and that expressed by C. G. Williams:

To pray with a 'tongue' is to pray in the Spirit (1 Cor 14:14,15) and the utterance is unintelligible to the listener (1 Cor 14:16). It is for this reason that Paul stresses the communication function of intelligible interpretation, but this does not mean that we are to understand by hermeneuein or its cognates a formal translation of the actual utterance, or by glossa a real language. It is the whole event that is being interpreted, namely the utterance and the experiential context in which it is produced.¹

Nowhere in Thiselton's article does he precisely explicate the meaning of his catch-phrase "put into words," but he does indicate that it is something apart from "interpret." But given the nature of the tongues phenomenon such a distinction seems too finely honed. If the experience was rather mystical and ecstatic, as Thiselton allows,² then putting it into words would surely entail something akin to interpretation.

Such a way of viewing συναγωνίζω tends to subsume the gift of interpretation under that of tongues, which comports well with the view of the gifts presented earlier.³ As mentioned above⁴ the gifts

¹Pp. 17, 18.
²He calls it "a non-conceptual, pre-rational outlet for a powerful welling up of emotions and experiences..." (Thiselton, p. 30).
³G. C. Joyce speaks clearly on this point: "Incoherent, or more properly speaking, inarticulate the sounds of tongues may have been; but such incoherence or inarticulateness is not to be confused with absence of meaning. Behind the mere sounds were, we believe, definite thoughts and feelings in the mind of the speaker, which the interpreter was capable of making known to the rest of the congregation, thus giving them the opportunity of sharing in the exaltation of spirit of which the tongue was the outcome. The ability to do so was a special power distinct from the gift of tongues in itself, though the two gifts might co-exist in the same person" (Joyce, p. 159).
⁴See pp. 63-64.
listed in chap. 12 are not all of equal weight or distribution. Just as there was a certain over-lap between "healing" in vs. 9 and "miracles" in vs. 10, so also it is plausible that "interpretation of tongues" could be viewed as ancillary to "tongues," not really distinct from it. The emphasis in that chapter stresses their common source rather than the individual nature of each gift. Accordingly, the Spirit could use these diverse gifts to minister to the individual and collective needs of the group. In other terms, prophecy, as further clarified in chap. 14, was the paramount gift for the edification of the assembly. Tongues, though meant for the encouragement of the individual, if put into words by the correlative gift of interpretation, would thereby compare favorably with the word of prophecy. Nevertheless, for the group, prophecy was still to be preferred, since tongues was an individual experience and only potentially of benefit to the group, depending upon the presence or absence of interpretation; whereas, prophecy was by its very nature a group-oriented exhortation.

But while the evidence can be interpreted to suggest that interpreters were especially gifted glossolalists, that evidence is not overwhelming. There seems to be a distributive sense in the phrases in 12:10, ἐνεπίγραφα γενώς γλώσσαν ἄλλην ὅπερ ἐσχίνεται γλώσσαν, "to another, kinds of tongues, and to still another, interpretation of tongues." It appears that there was an ordered giving of distinct gifts to various members, with the interpreter of tongues being separate and distinct from the speaker in tongues. But one should be careful not to press the distributive sense of ἄλλος or ἐσχισθεις...
too far.\(^1\) The phrases in 1:7, 12:30, and 14:26b indicate that the desire for spiritual gifts was widespread, whereupon the sense of 12:10, as mentioned above, was not so much to show that the distribution was one gift per member, as much as to stress that, while different members have different gifts, they all originate from the same source, ἀπὸ αὐτὸ τῶν θεῶν. Consequently, on the basis of this passage, it is insufficient to say with C. K. Barrett that "each Christian receives some gift."\(^2\) It would be more precise to say, "Whatever gifts members received, they are from the same divine source."

The assertion has been made that a relationship existed between the interpretation of tongues and the sociological status of the speakers. The suggestion is that a person of poor social and literary background could, by speaking in tongues, gain a sense of accomplishment by an experience for which he had no vocabulary. In other words, for persons with a non-literate background, tongue-speech "provided a very necessary outlet for the expression of their response to the new reality that overwhelmed them."\(^3\) In contrast, the more literate members could easily move beyond this elementary stage to that of interpreted tongues, inasmuch as their vocabulary was ready at hand. Viewed in such a way, tongues and their interpretation are looked upon as gifts that minister to different levels of attainment—uninterpreted tongues for the neophytes and illiterate, interpreted tongues for the more advanced.

\(^1\) In this list in 12:8-10, each charism is separated by either ἐνος or ἐνεσ. The words are apparently being used here interchangeably. So also Bauer, p. 315, and Grosheide, p. 286.

\(^2\) The First Epistle, p. 286.

\(^3\) Thiselton, p. 34.
But it has been shown that, while the social spectrum in Corinth was broad, the under-privileged group must have been small. "If the Corinthians are at all typical, the Christians were dominated by a socially pretentious section of the population of the big cities." Even the dependent members of city households were hardly the dregs of society but enjoyed "a moderate prosperity." However, it was the peasants and slaves that comprised the underprivileged classes, and these were left largely "untouched by Christianity." Accordingly, Ernst Von Dobshütz presents the Corinthians in a moderate social and economic ranking:

The picture usually formed of this community of Corinth represents it as composed of merely poor and uncultured people. I do not believe that correct. . . . On the contrary Paul indicates that people of superior rank, and no inconsiderable number of them, did belong to the Church. . . . Lawsuits concerning property were certainly not raised by slaves and poor seamen. . . . People who discussed the superiority of Alexandrine allegory of a simple style of preaching, could not have been without considerable culture. 2

If this picture of the social condition is accurate, then the argument based on sociological conditioning is over-drawn, for it is clear that the issue of spectacular public displays had come to dominate the Corinthian scene (vs. 23). Yet, if the whole mystical experience was especially meaningful for the illiterate and social "have-nots," whose numbers in the assembly were small, it would not likely have assumed such proportions as are evident in 1 Corinthians. Only if the glossolalists comprised a rather influential group of believers would Paul's concern to redirect their energies into a

---

more fruitful ministry be appropriate. Furthermore, if the manifestations were sociologically conditioned, then Paul's way of stating his approval seems quite strange. For although it should not be construed into a quantitative wish, his desire that all might speak in tongues (vs. 5), and his statement that he did it more than the members (vs. 18), are hard to square with the idea that the experience in Corinth was especially linked to people of low class.

In addition, Paul's counsel in 14:20 to be mature in thinking regarding uninterpreted tongue-speech implies that the people could freely choose what course of action they might follow. But if their "immaturity" was actually the result of sociological or intellectual deprivation, would a change in behavior be such a simple matter of choice? In other terms, if some people spoke in uninterpreted tongues in public because they did not have enough training or education to do otherwise, would Paul have been so curt as to say "Grow up! Stop thinking and speaking like children!" It does not seem so.

εἰ δὲ καὶ ἰδιωματικά, ἐρχόμεθα εἰς ἐκκλησίαν,
εἰςτὶ δὲ λαλεῖτω καὶ τῷ θεῷ (vs. 26)
"And if there should be no interpreter, let him keep silence in church, and let him speak to himself and to God."

A brief clarification of Paul's use of ἐκκλησία will precede the analysis of these phrases. It is clearly a word of some importance, having been used some fifty times in the Pauline letters, thirty times in the letters to the Corinthians and nine times in 1 Cor 14.

In the LXX, ἐκκλησία is consistently used for translating
the Hebrew נַפּ which usually suggests "assembly," "company," or "congregation." Of course in the OT the term is frequently linked with "of Israel" or "children of Israel." In the NT, there are two uses of ἐκκλησία that are at once apparent: an assembled group of believers, usually associated with a specific locality ("... to the churches of Galatia..."), or a group which has some unity of belief but no local identity. The latter group is most often referred to by the term "church" or "church of God" and is normally in the singular. This latter sense had an early NT precedent, as Jesus introduced it in Matt 16:18. But Christ's use of the term is all the more significant because it goes counter to the more common NT sense. One need not look far to agree with Campbell that "the word is used in the New Testament much more often of the local community than of the Church as a whole." Accordingly, of the thirty times Paul uses the term in the Corinthian letters, only four of those times does he clearly move from the sense of the local congregation to the more universal "church of God." Thus Paul's instruction in vs. 28 that the uninterpreted glossolalist should keep silence in the ἐκκλησία referred specifically to the local assembly or gathering.

1In the OT the terms לַעַּד and נֶעַע were apparently used interchangeably, but the LXX translators consistently equated לַעַּד with ἐκκλησία and נֶעַע with κοινωνία. The reason for their consistency at this point is not obvious. One intriguing suggestion is that made by K. L. Schmidt that, in view of the penchant of the Greek and Latin Jews to add similarly sounding Greek and Latin names to their Hebrew and Aramaic names, the association between לַעַּד and ἐκκλησία was based loosely on similarity of sound. K. L. Schmidt, "ἐκκλησία" TDT 3:517.


of believers. At that time, the primary concern was not that the fixed order of service might be disrupted, but rather that the ἐκκλησία as an assembled group would not be edified.

Implications of the "Body" Figure for the ἐκκλησία

A further word must be said concerning the oft-used figure of the body. In addition to the passage in 1 Cor 12:12-28, the language of Eph 1:22, 23 is particularly instructive. In the process of exalting Christ, Paul also exalts both the universality of the ἐκκλησία and its internal unity: "And he (God) ... had made him (Christ) the head over all things for the ἐκκλησία which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all." By such figures we see that the church universal is more than the combination of all the local congregations. The organization as a whole is considerably more than the sum of its parts.

The body of Christ is not a quantitative concept in the sense that it could mean a summation of all local congregations. Just as Christ is present in all his fullness in the local congregation, so also the local congregation represents the body of Christ in all its fulness. There is, therefore, no basis for relating the concept of the body of Christ more to the universal Church than to the local congregation.¹

Thus Paul's "body" figure is an apt one for indicating both the cohesiveness of the local group as well as its belonging to the church universal. Accordingly, while there can be little question that in the immediate context, ἐκκλησία refers to those believers who assemble in Corinth, on the basis of Paul's concern for the missionary witness of the local group (14:23), together with his

use of the body figure (12:12-28), it is clear that he envisions the ἐκκλησία with dimensions that reach beyond Corinth, or Philippi, or Rome, or any other city. Furthermore, this larger sense of ἐκκλησία gives added impetus to his instruction to the Corinthian believers. Inasmuch as they are part of an entity that is much broader in scope, it is even more imperative that their liturgical practices be representative of the whole church. In other terms, proper worship practices in the Corinthian ἐκκλησία are of great significance inasmuch as the ἐκκλησία has a sphere of responsibility that is much more wide-ranging than the mere outskirts of Corinth.¹

Mystical Aspects of Christian Expression

However the protasis of vs. 28 (ἐὰν δὲ γὰρ ἰερόνοις, "and if there should be no interpreter") is understood—that is, whether the ἰερόνοις is the glossolalist himself or a different gifted person, the meaning of the double apodosis is unaffected. The two imperatives ("let him keep silent" and "let him speak") show an interesting balance that reveals something of Paul's attitude toward the phenomenon. If Paul were as opposed to the manifestation as some suggest, why did he not conclude this verse, "Let him keep silent in the church"? Or, had Paul concluded with "Let him speak to himself," it might have suggested a note of satire, which is not

¹In this regard, K. L. Schmidt remarks that "Every true early Christian congregation was just as good a representation of the whole body as the primitive congregation at Jerusalem. The fact that individual congregations gradually formed larger organizations leaves an impression of development from the individual to the corporate. But we must not be dominated by this impression. What counts is that the congregation took itself to be representative of the whole Church" ("ἐκκλησία," TDNT, 3:535).
unknown in him. But the entire phrase, "Let him speak to himself and to God," suggests that if corporate edification is not possible, the private experience, whatever its precise meaning, may continue.

One thing is certain: the contrast built into this conditional sentence offers the Corinthians a clear choice—either they must interpret, and thus edify the group, or else they must speak only to themselves and to God, which results in silence in the assembly. But what precisely does it mean to "speak to oneself"? Because of the tight construction of the phrase, *ἐαυτῷ δὲ λαλεῖς καὶ τῷ ἀγαθῷ*, the speaking to oneself should not be isolated from *τῷ ἀγαθῷ*. In other words, given the contrast with the audible public manifestation, as well as the idea of speaking to God, the entire phrase suggests a private communion between the believer and God, a prayer-type of experience which Paul here acknowledges as profitable for the individual. Whether or not the experience was articulate or even conceptual is not necessarily determinative of its value, for there are aspects of prayer that transcend verbal articulation.¹

There is something in prayer which eludes our conceptual grasp. The Holy Spirit prays "in unspeakable groanings" which only God himself can understand (Rom. 8:26f.). Prayer that we cannot ourselves fully understand is an essential part of Christian praying; tongues is a particularly straightforward embodiment of this principle.²

In a similar fashion, singing in worship (cf. vs. 15) includes a

¹Rom 8:26 seems to allude to just such non-conceptual feelings when it speaks of the Spirit helping our "weakness," which is then qualified as not knowing how to pray as we ought; whereupon the Spirit intercedes with pleadings and groanings that are "wordless." While Sweet and others (see p. 40) maintain that this passage is not to be equated with a Corinthian type of tongues experience, still it is no straining of analogies to see in it common elements.

²Tugwell, p. 139.
certain element that transcends analytic description and understanding. Accordingly, it is fitting that Paul should twice use music (vss. 7, 8, and 15) in this context to illustrate some aspect of his topic.\(^1\)

Joyce, having referred to tongues as "inaarticulate or only semi-articulate," yet expressive of the deepest and warmest feelings of the heart under the influence of powerful religious excitement,\(^2\) makes the pertinent observation:

> How sounds of this kind could produce this effect may be illustrated by means of the analogy of music, which in its own way is a more pliant and adequate means for the expression of emotion than language can ever be. The utterance in a tongue may have been something in the nature of a song without words, a succession of sounds bearing a resemblance to words, but having no articulate or grammatical structure.\(^3\)

Of course, in vss. 7 and 8 the emphasis of Paul's music illustration is on distinction of tone and understanding of meaning, not mere mystical feeling. And while there is a similar idea in vss. 14 and 15, his stated determination to "sing with the spirit and . . . with the mind . . ." allows for that element of worship, viz., singing, that includes more than the calm, rational articulation of the faith.

But certainly singing in the liturgy is the form of expression which could and should best arouse the sort of enthusiasm which in those days was realized in speaking in tongues. That applies to singing as a whole, but it applies particularly to the style of the singing.\(^4\)

Accordingly, the close connection of thought between vss. 14, 15.

---

\(^1\) In response to a national survey, when asked about various triggers of mystical experiences, the highest percentage of people (49%) indicated that music was what had triggered their mystical experience. The next four triggers of mystical experiences were prayer, beauties of nature, quiet reflection and church attendance, in that order. Greely, p. 141.

\(^2\) P. 155. \(^3\) Ibid. \(^4\) Walter, p. 148.
15, and vs. 28 can be seen. Still, there are aspects of "praying in the spirit" that are not transparent. For example, Walter understands "spirit" here as "that power or area of the human being which is raised above and beyond itself in inspiration, while 'mind' is more or less equated with consciousness." In contrast, Hodge asserts that in view of the prevailing use of the word θεουα by Paul to refer to the Holy Spirit, as well as for other reasons, it must mean the Holy Spirit here. But Hodge tries too hard, for in his argument in favor of the Holy Spirit, he seems to have overlooked the possessive personal pronoun οῦ in vs. 14. In this verse, it is not likely that "my" spirit would be used to refer to the Holy Spirit; hence the spirit here must be the human spirit.

It is true that the words 'my spirit' might conceivably be taken to mean 'the spirit which speaks through me'; but the obvious parallelism between the terms spirit and understanding render it practically certain that S. Paul is here distinguishing between two parts of human nature . . . the feelings so expressed would be the man's own feelings and the output of his own spirit, even though no record of them remained behind in his conscious memory.

1Ibid., p. 150.

2Pp. 279, 280. Hodge also adds: "2) That the expression to speak in or by the Spirit, is an established Scriptural phrase, meaning to speak under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. 3) When spirit is to be distinguished from the understanding, it designates the affections; a sense which would not at all suit this passage."

3Engelsen feels that to limit the spirit here to the human spirit inserts an impossible Pauline anthropology, composed of a separate spirit and mind, with an "I" above both, realizing what is going on. Glossolalia, p. 156. However, Paul elsewhere resorts to expressions which, if pressed, might result in an unusual anthropology (e.g., 2 Cor 12:3,4; Rom 7:17). H. Meyer refers to the spirit here as "mein individuelles höheres Lebensprincip" (Handbuch über den ersten Brief, p. 388).

4Joyce, p. 157.
Although the personal pronoun is not used in vs. 15, the close connection of thought precludes the idea of a different spirit being spoken of. Thus, by the term "mind" in vs. 15, Paul refers to the conscious, rational aspect of man, and by the term "spirit" he alludes to that more mysterious mystical aspect of praying that transcends articulation.

Consequently, it would seem that vs. 28c, "let him speak to himself and to God," closely parallels the phrase in 15b, "I will pray with the spirit." In both passages, a contrast is being drawn between articulate, public discourse and some kind of private, spiritual uplift. In vss. 14-16, "tongue-prayer" is equated with "spirit-prayer," and although it "blesses" (vs. 16), the person who is untrained cannot participate in that blessing.

Furthermore, that experience is also characterized by an "unfruitful mind." It is often difficult to conceive of a process of tongue-speech whereby the speech organs are in any way impelled by forces outside of or beyond ourselves. But perhaps there is a hint of such a process in the OT prophetic ministry.

Religious history shows us quite clearly how strong a characteristic of prophecy it is that the inspired prophet often speaks in the person of the god who inspires him. Certainly many of the OT prophetic oracles given under the inspiration of the Spirit of Yahweh were given out as the words of Yahweh—the sense of divine compulsion being so strong that the prophet could only express his message as though Yahweh himself was speaking through him.

It is not a great step from this concept to Paul's assertion that in

---

1John Ruef states, "It can also refer to the person who lacks expertise as opposed to the 'professional' or trained person" Ruef, (p. 150).

2Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit, p. 173.
a tongue "my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful" (vs. 14).

It should be noted that Paul does not forbid such a mystical experience, but because of concern for the untrained, ungifted persons, whose edification is always uppermost in Paul's mind (vs. 17), he will pray both τῷ τυπώματι and τῷ νῷ, so that all might understand (vs. 15). Then in the parallel to this in vs. 28, the same contrast is repeated in different terms. Here, speaking to oneself and to God is an unintelligible, inarticulate experience that is equivalent to speaking only in the spirit and is done in lieu of speaking in church.¹

The inevitable conclusion to be drawn from vs. 28c is that private tongues may continue, for Paul "was putting no limit on the amount of speaking in tongues between a man and God."² This conclusion is especially attractive if the tongues experience is comprised of prayer and praise, and this possibility is strengthened by the syntax of this verse. If the εἰς ὑμᾶς can be looked upon as a dative of advantage³ and ἐνῷ as a simple indirect object, then it is seen that the experience is not an exercise in self deception. Barrett suggests as much when he says the phrase should be translated, "... to God but for himself, for his own advantage. Paul does not suggest that prayer in a tongue is self-addressed delusion. It is genuine prayer, addressed to God, though only the speaker can

¹With reference to this phrase, Lietzmann simply says, "... zu Hause, nicht 'in der Gemeindeversammlung!'" (Lietzmann, p. 74). So also, Grosheide, p. 336.

²Craig, The Interpreter's Bible, 10:209.

³See Blass and Debrunner, p. 101.
participate in it."\(^1\) Or, in the words of Arnold Bittlinger, "In the gift of praying in the Spirit the ascended Lord gives to the members of His church the possibility of expressing the inexpressible and praising God in new languages."\(^2\)

Granted that Paul here allows for the private practice of tongues, how is it that personal edification takes place? If speaking "for oneself to God" is in fact equivalent to praying and singing in the spirit, by what means does the energizing and uplifting of the person take place? If, as the evidence indicates, "The distinctive mark of singing in glossa and praying in glossa in contrast to the usual singing and praying is that the nous (mind) is excluded (vss. 14-19),"\(^3\) how does the process work?

Admittedly, the thrust of vs. 28c is on silence in public, and the positive sense of private tongue-speech comes out of the verse somewhat incidentally. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, the polemical nature of Paul's argument should not be allowed to obscure the contributions of that important aspect of worship that transcends verbalization.\(^4\) That there is a place in the spiritual makeup of mankind for the non-conceptual or non-rational is a truism. In fact, there is an extensive range of human feeling or experience that does not fall within the boundaries of the verbal, and vs. 28c makes room for that broad spectrum of experiences that can be referred to as mystical.

\(^1\) The First Epistle, p. 328.  
\(^2\) Gifts and Graces, p. 48.  
\(^3\) Delling, p. 33.  
\(^4\) The presence of the verb λαλεῖτω in vs. 28c does not, in itself, negate this idea of the non-conceptual, for throughout the chapter, Paul has used the verb in contexts where no communication resulted.
But just as it is impossible to put all the nuances of religious feeling into words, so also, it is difficult to construct an adequate description of an experience that incorporates deep feeling, unintelligible vocalization, and a sense of having communicated ("he speaks . . . to God," 14:2). Perhaps the best one can do is call attention to the complex nature of such emotional expression, and acknowledge that Corinthian tongues were partly musical, partly verbal, and quite mystical.

Such a description places considerable emphasis on the individualizing of religious experience and expression, which had become a contagion in Corinth. While modern worshippers are often concerned with the problem of sameness and corporate formality that stifle individual expression, the Corinthians each came to worship with a "psalm or a teaching or a revelation or a tongue. . ." (14:26). It appears that emphasis was placed not so much on the importance of a deep personal experience as on attempting to express the inexpressible. Though there are inarticulate depths of religious

While it may be difficult to allow for individual needs in orderly worship services, the need for diversity of experience remains. In the words of William James: "Ought all men to have the same religion? Ought they to approve the same fruits and follow the same leadings? Are they so like in their inner needs that, for hard and soft, for proud and humble, for strenuous and lazy, for healthy-minded and despairing, exactly the same religious incentives are required? Or are different functions in the organism of humanity allotted to different types of man, so that some may really be the better for a religion of consolation and reassurance, whilst others are better for one of terror and reproof? . . . He aspires to impartiality; but he is too close to the struggle not to be to some degree a participant, and he is sure to approve most warmly those fruits of piety in others which taste most good and prove most nourishing to him" (The Varieties of Religious Experience [New York: Random House, 1902], pp. 326, 327).

At the same time, this is not meant to denigrate the importance of speech as a part of religious practice, "for it is
experience that can never come to expression, since man is a communicating being, a kind of obsession with vocalization is understandable. However, in Corinth, that obsession had become chronic; consequently, the whole body was sick. Thus, as Paul deals with the sickness, it is clear that he wants to dampen certain demonstrations of ecstatic fervor. For, important as it is, religious enthusiasm may at times feed on itself, and, in effect, illustrate the law of diminishing returns. Accordingly, while the mystical element is important, ecstasy must always be considered a means, never an end, for "ecstasy is secondary to a more effective loving service of the brothers. If ecstasy interferes with such loving service, it is to be viewed with grave suspicion." But the Corinthian glossolalists apparently believed their manifestations provided unimpeachable evidence that they were especially favored by God. Their belief that they were experiencing God directly in their behavior made the phenomenon an end in itself, which resulted in emotional excesses and anti-intellectualism. In the words of Ronald Knox:

Sacraments are not necessarily dispensed with; but the emphasis lies on a direct personal access to the Author of our salvation, with little of intellectual background or of liturgical expression. The appeal of art and music, hitherto conceived as a ladder which carried human thought upwards, is frowned upon as a barrier which interferes with the simplicity of true heart-worship. An inward experience of peace and joy is both the assurance which the soul craves for and its characteristic through the device of speech that feeling passes, with increasing success as the centuries go by, out of the darkness of feeling into the sunlight of consciousness" (J. V. Langmead Casserley, "The Inarticulate Element in Religious Expression," American Church Quarterly 3 (1963):169).

1Greeley, p. 134. 2Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit, p. 157.
prayer-attitude. . . . Its weakness . . . is an anthropocentric bias; not God's glory but your own salvation preoccupies the mind. . . .

But dangers notwithstanding, there were positive aspects to the early Christian enthusiasm that should not be overlooked. For example, Paul made a close association between the Corinthians' enthusiastic espousal of charisms and the hope of the parousia. Thus, in 1 Cor 1:7, where he first acknowledges their concern for charisms, he associates it with their anticipation of "the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ." Apparently he hoped to make an association in their minds between the immediacy of the Spirit, as manifested in the χαράκια, and the power that would sustain them to the final day. That Paul should make such a connection is not surprising, for even a rapid scanning of 1 Corinthians reveals that his interest in the parousia is continuous. Then at the very conclusion of the letter (16:22), he adds that mysterious word, "maranatha," which is interpreted through the Aramaic, from which it comes, as either "The Lord comes" or "Come, Lord." In either case,


2A few of the passages where he makes reference to the final day are: 1:7,8; 3:13-15; 4:5; 5:5; 6:3; 7:29; 10:11; 11:26; 13:14; and repeatedly throughout chap. 15.

3A. B. MacDonald broadens this apocalyptic element by showing that the term Maranatha occurs in the Didache, chap. x, as well as in the sentiment expressed in Rev 22:20. He then concludes that "their position in near proximity to the benediction in the two New Testament writings strongly suggest that they formed part of the customary closing act of Christian worship in the earliest days" (Christian Worship in the Primitive Church [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1935], p. 46).
Paul’s apocalyptic emphasis is apparent here, as it is throughout the letter.\(^1\)

In addition, there are positive things that can be said about an enthusiasm that is not bound by the rigidity and inertia that can characterize the more formalized worship procedures. Inasmuch as the church was in a formative period, the enthusiasm and informalism of the time allowed for a worship that was "kept flexible, and capable of easy adaptation to the needs of widely differing localities and races; while these, in their turn, contributed to it some touches of their peculiar genius. . . ."\(^2\) Moreover, the creative impulses of the whole group of believers were stimulated to contribute, inasmuch as "the conduct of worship was not restricted to the few; it was open to the many."\(^3\) Thus, under the impulses of the Spirit of God, the assemblies brought to their worship experience

\(^1\) Whether or not the Corinthians connected their charismatic manifestations with the apocalyptic hope is not as clear. H. A. Guy attempts to show that there was a close bond between charismatic leadership and that hope when he asserts that "in the first century the thing which consolidated the Church and made the members feel themselves to be one community was not organization, theology, great numbers, or a social programme, but the apocalyptic hope of the return of Christ in triumph. Anyone who fed this hope and at the same time restrained its more extravagant expressions "built up" the Church" (p. 105). While such a preoccupation was obvious in Thessalonica, it was not that obvious in Corinth. Guy suggests that, according to 14:30, it was the gift of prophecy that brought a revelation (\(\alpha\rho\omicron\upsilon\sigma\chi\alpha\lambda\nu\omicron\upsilon\omega\), and the revelation about which the Church was most eager to gain enlightenment had to do with the coming Parousia (p. 107). In the uses Paul makes of the word, there is, at times, an apparent relationship between the ultimate revelation of Jesus at His coming, and the continuing revealing, the instrument of which, is the Holy Spirit. But it is unclear that Paul intended the Corinthians to catch such a subtle idea. It is simply not obvious that whenever the concept of revelation is used, the believers thought at once of the final \(\alpha\rho\omicron\omicron\upsilon\sigma\chi\alpha\lambda\nu\omicron\upsilon\omega\).

\(^2\) MacDonald, p. 55.

\(^3\) Ibid.
a vitality and a breadth of understanding that was a powerful asset to the Church in its formative stage. At this time in the growth and development of the church, a more carefully ritualized procedure of worship might have had a stultifying effect. In any case, it is clear that church liturgy was not carefully systematized and ordered. As Streeter has pointed out, it is important for the various denominations, who usually feel that there is some direct connection between their particular church polity and the early Church, to acknowledge that in the first century, there simply did not exist a single type of church order:

During the first hundred years of Christianity, the Church was an organism alive and growing, changing its organization to meet changing needs. Clearly in Asia, Syria, and Rome during that century the system of government varied from church to church, and in the same church at different times.¹

Since the Christian liturgy was not yet highly stylized, the Corinthian penchant for individual expression (14:26b) should come as no surprise. Of course, concomitant with such personalized worship practice was a certitude of belief and feeling that transcended mere doctrine. In fact, such a dynamic, while allowing for the needs of the individual, lends itself to feelings of assurance that border on dogmatism. In the words of the maxim: "The man who has an experience is never at the mercy of a man who has an argument."² In Corinth, each believer had his own enthusiastic, personal, experiential approach to worship practice (26b).

Nevertheless, it was inevitable that that initial enthusiasm


²Gromacki, Called to be Saints, p. 142.
should wane, for it is difficult for human nature to sustain a high pitch of excitement. In the words of E. F. Scott, "In that first age the gospel was literally the good news, but the surprise and exultation of good news can only be felt once."\(^1\) "The waning of the enthusiasm was, therefore, no mere decline from a higher state of things, but a necessary stage in the advance of the cause. The creative period had passed because its work was accomplished."\(^2\) In any case, Justin's account, written less than one hundred years later, indicates that the ecstaticism described in 14:26 had not spread very widely. While the liturgical "Amen," which is reminiscent of 14:16, remained, the Corinthian style of spontaneity does not appear in the description.

When the reader is finished, the leader delivers an address through which he exhorts and requires them to follow noble teachings and examples. Then we all rise and send heavenwards prayers. And, as said before, as soon as we are finished praying, bread and wine mixed with water are laid down and the leader too prays and gives thanks, as powerfully as he can, and the people joins in, in saying the "Amen"; and now comes the distribution to each and the common meal.\,...\(^3\)

Admittedly, the description of rising and sending prayers heavenward could be looked upon as a continuation of the tongues phenomenon, but even if such an association is made, it appears that a Corinthian type of problem had not spread to Justin's group of worshippers.

Furthermore, the work of the Spirit in the Apostolic Church was characterized by considerable diversity. In other terms, the


\(^2\)MacDonald, p. 68.

\(^3\)Justin Martyr The First Apology 1:67 (ANF, 1:185).
nature of the Spirit's manifestation at one time and place does not mandate how He may operate in another setting. While the Spirit was the agency that breathed life into the infant Church, the manner of His working simply cannot be labeled. Luke cites three incidents when tongues are attributed to the Spirit's impetus (Acts 2:3,4; 10:46; 19:6), but there are numerous other manifestations linked to His presence, so that no systematizing of His work or power is possible.

In fact, if we sum up the picture of early Christianity given in Acts, we must in all honesty confess that it is one of great diversity and freedom in the things of the Spirit. At times the Spirit is given through the laying on of hands, at other times without; there is no fixed, unalterable pattern. Any attempt, therefore, to reduce the working of the Spirit here to rigid formulae, dictating when and how He must be received, involves the forcible importation of predetermined ideas into the text. What we are given, rather, is a glorious witness to the sovereign freedom of the mighty Spirit of God.

Accordingly, the Spirit's activities cannot be systematized into what has sometimes been called a "second blessing." While it lies beyond the scope of this paper to evaluate the many facets of the nature of and the work of the Holy Spirit, it is necessary to say that the diversity of manifestations militates against the more methodical concept implied in the technical sense of the term, "second blessing." This idea has systematized the work of the Spirit into two distinct moments in the human life, characterized by conversion, followed by a second spiritual in-filling that results in glossolalia or some similar charism. But as mentioned, the NT evidence does not lend itself easily to such a view. From the moment saving faith is placed in Christ, the Holy Spirit regenerates,

1Harpur, p. 167.
baptizes, and dwells in the person. The experience that follows is described as an on-going walk with the Spirit (Rom 8:4) that is marked by continuous progress (by the Spirit we continually put to death the deeds of the body, Rom 8:13), rather than one or two decisive moments.\(^1\)

Conversion is a single experience with a past, present and future; a Christian can say, "I have been converted" and even name a date and hour when he passed from darkness to light, though he may equally be unable to, if he has grown into the faith since babyhood. He is "being converted" as he continues living in the faith, and this may be either a steady unconscious growth or a series of leaps, if he is at all a mystic, from spiritual crisis to crisis—a whole series of "second blessings" yet none of them a Second Blessing with capital letters.\(^2\)

At the same time, this is not intended to belittle the continuing work of the Spirit; it only attempts to avoid systematizing it beyond that which the texts allow. Thus, for example, Acts, and to a lesser degree, the Gospels and certain Epistles, while not setting forth any organized teaching about the Spirit, are nevertheless irradiated with his light and power.\(^3\) In other words, an adequate doctrine of the Spirit, one that encompasses his extensive diversity, must allow for, but not insist upon, any one particular charism. Giossoialia, like miracles or healings, may or may not appear,

\(^1\)Merrill F. Unger, New Testament Teaching on Tongues (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1972), p. 53. In his attempt to deny the "Second Blessing" concept, Unger freezes the tongues experience into a once-for-all-time phenomenon designed only to attest the Christian faith prior to the canonization of Scripture. But that is a difficult point to verify.

\(^2\)Christie-Murray, p. 192.

\(^3\)Hermann Gunkel states, ". . . except for the indication from nature and reflection, we find, established by a man like Paul, no outspoken teaching concerning the Spirit in our sources, but only a feeling of a depiction of his work" (translation supplied). (Die Wirkungen des heiligen Geistes [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprechts Verlag, 1888], p. 4).
that is the prerogative of the Spirit. Thus, any human expectation that specific charismata must be present, or that the Spirit must manifest himself in a certain manner, is a wooden approach. Contrarily, that which is certain about the Spirit is His multiplicity of manifestation ("he blows where he wishes" John 3:8), and gifts ("distributing to each one as he wishes" 1 Cor 12:11).¹

τοοοηταυ σε δυο η τρες λαλουςαν (29a)
"Let two or three prophets speak"

Preliminary to a proper interpretation of vss. 29-32 is a clear understanding of the idea of "prophecy" as used by Paul. Throughout the chapter, the most obvious thing about prophecy is its intelligibility. In Paul's continuing contrast between tongues and prophecy, one is played off against the other in order to highlight the intelligibility and resultant group edification stemming from prophecy as opposed to the unintelligible and consequent sterile nature of glossolalia. Because of his overriding concern for the ολοσοφια of the Church, prophecy is cast in a most favorable light. In fact the two terms οοοητευω and ολοσοφια are closely linked in vss. 3, 4, 5, 12, and the same thought, if not both terms, is found in vss. 6, 7, 22, 24, and 26. Hence, it becomes clear at the outset that whatever else it means, the term "prophecy" refers to discourse that edifies the church because it is understandable. Clearly, the definition

¹William James' book, The Varieties of Religious Experience, points out the broad spectrum of experiences that, over the centuries, has fallen under the general term "religious." On the basis of James' research, one is driven to conclude that the term "mystical" has so many facets that no singular definition is adequate. Furthermore, his book makes it clear that the line between the genuine and the spurious is rarely an obvious one.
given by Bauer, "proclaim a divine revelation," fits smoothly in this context. Berkhof puts it nicely when he suggests that "prophecy is the gift of understanding and expressing what the will of God is for a given present situation."^2

The Old Testament Concept of Prophecy

In early OT times the term for prophecy seems to have been used quite loosely for a broad range of ecstatic behavior, as well as for the more serious exhortations of the later canonical prophets. For example, the incident described in Num 11:25 seems to place more emphasis on the "experience" than upon the resultant message. The occasion was the selection of the seventy elders to assist Moses. At a given time and place, the Spirit of God came upon them and they "prophesied" just once. The account suggests that the Spirit provided the manifestation as a means of accrediting the selection of the elders. But when Moses is informed that two others, not with the group of seventy, had also prophesied and is urged by Joshua to restrain them, he replies, in words reminiscent of 1 Cor 14:5, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" Again, the stress seems to lie upon the nature of the experience as indicating the presence of the Spirit.^3

^1Bauer, p. 730.


^3In A Theological Interpretation, p. 42, Watson Mills refers to the incident as the earliest ecstatic experience in Scripture. However, in view of the fact that the word "ecstatic" carries connotations of unintelligible vocalizations, and since the account in Numbers is silent concerning the nature of the experience, Mills may have gone slightly beyond what the evidence makes clear. It is possible, of course, that he is interpreting the Num 11 account in the
But the word nabi' includes aspects of "to speak" as well as of "ecstasy," and this in very early usages. It is inadequate to suggest that the concept of nabi' was strictly evolutionary, beginning with unintelligible ecstasy, and only later developing into the intelligible admonition of the canonical prophets. For example, Judg 4:4 relates how Deborah served in the capacity of a prophetess and apparently experienced no dervish-like behavior that merited inclusion in the records. Similarly, both Nathan and Gad served as speaking prophets and apparently were never seized by an uncontrolled ecstaticism (2 Sam 12:1-7; 1 Chron 21:9-13). Consequently, one can conclude that, while the earliest prophets were not all ecstatics, Israelite prophetism occasionally included some dervish-like behavior that was akin to some of the dionysiac frenzies in Asia Minor.


2 T. H. Robinson says some very good things about Yahweh's patience in making revelations to Israel only as rapidly as they could be assimilated. Nevertheless, he presses his evolutionary view of revelation a bit far when he speaks of the "crudity of early Hebrew theology" (p. 36); that the methods of some of the early prophets were "iniquitous" (p. 37); and that in the early stages, a "single righteous God would never have been recognized by the ancient Hebrew at all" (p. 37). He makes an unwarranted distinction between the "canonical Prophet" and the "popular Nabi," who was an ecstatic (p. 40).

3 See also the incident of the prophet recorded in Judg 6:8.

4 An example is found in 1 Sam 19:23, 24 where Saul's prophesying is associated with his stripping off his clothes and lying naked all day and all night.
Albright asserts that "the legendary Bacchantic irruption into Greece, of which Euripides wrote so eloquently, and the prophetic movement in Israel may then have a common historical source." But he goes on to allow that an important distinction must be made between the Yahwistic-oriented ecstaticism and that of the pagan cults. He denies that there was anything orgiastic about Israelite prophesying, though he does liken it to twentieth century Pentecostal manifestations.

Regarding the unconventional "prophesying" of King Saul related in 1 Sam 19:24, Robinson speculates that:

Whilst in a number of cases the ecstasy was clearly spontaneous, there were means employed to induce it. One of these was, no doubt, the imitation of the kind of activity to which it led. Music was frequently used, also possibly drugs of various kinds, including wine in the case of the Baal prophets. In some instances it might begin with the fixing of the eyes on a particular object. Most people are familiar with the dazed, half hypnotic condition that can be produced by continuous staring at the same thing, and in the case of highly strung or unbalanced minds, such a practice would easily lead to a very abnormal psychical state.

Clearly, OT usage suggests that a nabi' was generally thought of as a man who felt called by God for a special mission, and that "the prophet was thus a charismatic spiritual leader,

1 W. F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1957), p. 305.

2 P. 32. Later in his work, Robinson deals with the issue dissassociating the wild type of ecstaticism from the more calm and usually more reasoned testimony of the speaking prophets. He does so by means of two points. First, he sets forth his evolutionary view of revelation, suggesting that Yahweh had to move slowly and methodically if the people were not to be traumatized by too much light at once. But it is his second point that is especially incisive. He suggests that, even in the early stages, the nabi' stood for Yahweh and, in spite of primitive demonstrations, was still recognized as an enthusiast for God. So, in spite of short-sightedness and superstition, the nabi'im were locked upon as led by the Spirit of God, and, as those who, in their own way, spoke for him.
directly commissioned by Yahweh to warn the people of the perils of sin and to preach reform and revival of true religion and morality." Albright adds some precision to Robinson's concept of a gradually evolving revelation from God by suggesting that the formation of the Monarchy was the watershed that marked a transition from the early ecstatic seizures to the more reasoned rhetoric of the canonical Prophets. He asserts that in the earlier time, it was sufficient for the nabi' figure to feel the strong compulsion of God upon him regardless of the form that compulsion might take. But from the time of the formation of the Monarchy, a prophetic mission became more closely associated with moral, political, and religious reformation. "It can hardly be accidental that the flow of charismatic energy in Israel was diverted from military and political heroes and leaders to religious leaders almost immediately after the consolidation of the Monarchy." But such a view does not do justice to the earliest speaking prophets. Still, it must be admitted that the stand-out prophets of the eighth to the sixth centuries B.C. were surely vigorous religious reformers, and it must also be admitted that ecstatic seizures during this period were in scant evidence.

But, although intelligible exhortation was more in evidence in the time of the latter prophets, dervish-like behavior did not disappear altogether. In fact, the term for prophecy continued to serve as a kind of catch-all for everything from fanatical, irrational behavior to the canonical utterances of the prophets.

---

1 Albright, From the Stone Age, p. 303.
2 Ibid., p. 306.
3 Engelsen, p. 64.
The New Testament and Early Christian Concept of Prophecy

Thus OT usage shows a long and rather respectable history of both elements (ecstaticism and intelligible prophesying) that figure so prominently in 1 Cor 14. That extended history of the phenomena also supports the Pauline contention that while there have been many different manifestations, it is "the same Spirit" (1 Cor 12:4). But it appears that Paul was the first and only Bible writer to consistently differentiate between the gifts of prophecy and tongues.\(^1\) Others in Paul's day, and even Paul himself, outside of the Corinthian context, referred to prophecy in a wide variety of circumstances. Gerhard Friedrich notes that in addition to predicting future events (Acts 11:28; 21:10), prophecy served to keep alive the expectation of the parousia (Rev 22:6).\(^2\) It figured in the setting apart of Barnabas and Paul for their great missionary enterprise (Acts 13:1)\(^3\) and also was the acting force behind the call of Timothy (1 Tim 4:14). In addition, there were the conventional aspects of prophecy such as admonishing the weary and rebuking wickedness.\(^4\)

The on-going Christian usage is similarly free in its handling of the term. In the Didache, prophets are associated with apostles in

\(^1\)Engelsen, p. 58.

\(^2\)As mentioned previously, H. A. Guy concurs with this point by means of several incisive comments in New Testament Prophecy, pp. 103-12.

\(^3\)It is not clear why Friedrich includes this incident as an evidence of prophecy inasmuch as the text simply states that the Spirit directed in the setting apart of these men. "Prophecy" does not appear in the text.

\(^4\)Friedrich, "τοοοφητη," TDNT, VI:848.
a rather loose fashion; they are described as itinerant preachers of the gospel who must be watched and tested, as their ranks seem shot through with phonies. Thus, the believers are warned that if the prophet asks for money or food while "in the spirit," he is to be dismissed as false.¹

But that warning notwithstanding, true prophets continued to be held in high esteem. In Didache 8.1ff., the prophets are to be given the choice food, and in this regard, they even have priority over the poor. Furthermore, they are to be given the first fruits of the wine and oil, as well as of clothes and even of money.² Similarly, in a passage in which he is exalting the majesty and omnipotence of God, Irenaeus lumps together the apostles, prophets, and the Lord as those that bear consistent witness to that one, undervived God who is Maker of all things.³ All of this suggests that prophets in Paul's day must have already begun to enjoy the honor and deference accorded to true charismatic leaders.

But the nature of their charism in Paul's time must be looked at carefully if vss. 29-32 are to be correctly understood. It hardly seems sufficient to conclude with the generality that prophecy was intelligible and tongues were not. In this connection, Dunn has addressed the problem of the meaning of prophecy for Paul, and begins with Plato's distinction between two kinds of prophecy. One kind was mantic prophecy, whereby the prophet was possessed by the god and

²The Apostolic Fathers 1:329.
³Irenaeus Against Heresies 2.35.4 (ANF, 1:413).
became a mouthpiece for the Divine. The other kind was the prophecy of interpretation, wherein the prophet acquired skill in interpreting signs and omens, yet remained quite self-possessed.¹ Dunn illustrates the distinction by means of the famous oracles at Delphi, where a clear difference was made between the Pythia who spoke in a state of ecstasy and the prophet whose task it was to interpret the Pythia's sayings. Dunn makes it clear that if the original gift was, like tongues, a charism, then the prophet was more than a self-possessed interpreter of signs and omens. In any case, more was involved than appears in the common idea that prophecy for Paul was tantamount to modern-day preaching. An adequate definition of prophecy must incorporate aspects of the following points: (1) For Paul, prophecy is a spontaneous word of revelation, not merely the giving of a previously prepared sermon. It is an inspired utterance, delivered by the prophet in the same form in which he receives it. (2) Plato's distinction between two kinds of prophecy cannot stand up. Prophecy is a singular gift in its own right that sometimes requires an interpretation-like evaluation (vs. 29b) "and let others evaluate." (3) Plato's parallel also breaks down in that Paul does not make a contradistinction between "mind" and "spirit" but between glossolalia and mind. Consequently, in prophecy, one speaks with the spirit and with the mind, and thus is intelligible, whereas in a tongue, the mind is unfruitful. (4) Prophecy as a charism is inspired speech and is thus an actual speaking forth of the words given by the spirit in a particular situation and ceases when the words cease.²

¹James Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit, p. 228.
²Ibid., pp. 228, 229.
The Spontaneity of Prophecy

Though the element of spontaneity must not eclipse the aspect of control alluded to in vs. 29, it does figure prominently in the phenomenon. In fact, spontaneity was part of what legitimized the prophet's utterance.

It follows from Paul's concept of charismatic ministry that the prophets were recognized as prophets because they prophesied regularly. That is to say, they did not prophesy because they were prophets, rather they were prophets because they prophesied, because that is the way the Spirit regularly manifested himself through them within the church.¹

Thus the role of the prophet might be characterized as "responsive" to the initiative of the Spirit. Accordingly, prophecy was not something at the beck and call of the prophet but was communicated as the Spirit saw fit.

It meant that when engaged in prayer this Spirit suddenly descended on a man and by It he spoke things profitable to the Church at large, whether by way of consolation, instruction, or warning. He might even in a peculiarly official way be the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit for the guidance of the Church in times of need; for through him, persons fit for the ministry were pointed out, and through him the plans even of Apostles were corrected.²

In Paul's definition by analogy throughout chap. 14, the stress placed upon intelligibility does have a tendency to push the phenomenon into the category of exhortation, which at first glance differs little from traditional Christian proclamation. But the

¹Idem, Unity and Diversity, p. 112. Wayne Grudem puts it very similarly when he says: "He could only prophesy when he received a revelation. Even if he prophesied quite often, one might say that he did not really 'possess' the gift, since he had to wait until the moment the Spirit gave him a revelation" (The Gift of Prophecy, p. 256).

thrust of vs. 30 (that if one prophet receives a revelation while another prophet is speaking, the first prophet should withdraw in deference to the most recent revelation) is surely on spontaneity. While some analogy with preaching is obvious, so also are elements of spontaneous charism. Accordingly, the gift of prophecy is not to be looked upon as a slight refinement of natural talents. Paul spent too much time referring to the role of the Spirit, and too much effort ringing all the changes on the term χαρισμάτα for one to look upon prophecy as some sort of natural ability.

The Predictive Element of Prophecy

In addition to the revelatory aspect of the Spirit, prophecy entailed an element of predictive prophecy. Prophets in Judaism were often cast in the role of foretellers, and NT writers underscore this function when they state that the prophets' decisive predictions were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Like the OT prophet, who was himself part of the message, the NT prophet looked, at least in part, to the future and disclosed that which had not yet happened. In contrast, the preacher deals with material that is already "completed fact." The preacher is essentially a "proclaimer of that which is already available information--one who makes relevant past fact." The Agabus incident recorded in Acts 11:27ff., as well as the Apocalypse of John, are clear examples of NT prophesying that involved prediction.

To sum up, the New Testament prophet was concerned in the prediction of future events, including the End, in the ordering

---

of the Church, especially where new ventures were involved, and possibly also in receiving revelations which made clear truth that was already implied in the coming of Jesus Christ.\(^1\)

While the predictive element does not loom large in the Corinthian context, the possibility of its presence may have been a part of the aura that surrounded the gift.

In one important function, there is an overlap in the work of the preacher and prophet: both are called upon by God to appeal to the deepest reasonings of the human mind, and, by the agency of the Spirit, arouse the human consciousness of sin. Yet at times, Paul’s language sounds as if the prophet is enabled to probe more deeply than the preacher, for as he addressed unbelievers, “the secrets of the heart are disclosed” (vs. 25).\(^2\) As the prophets give their testimony, it is as though they were “reading the heart of some in the gathering. Even the casual hearer is awed; he becomes convinced of God and convicted of sin. . . .”\(^3\) Furthermore, vss. 24, 25 indicate that when “all” who are so gifted share their exhortations, there is a cumulative affect that results in conviction of heart and an overwhelming sense of God’s presence.\(^4\) But Paul’s

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 145. In a more recent article he stated: “. . . the prophet discloses God’s will for man now and in relation to the future; the element of prediction cannot be excluded. . . .” “The Interpretation of Tongues” (Scottish Journal of Theology 28/1 [1975]:46).

\(^2\)It is not clear whether this phrase suggests a kind of mind-reading or merely indicates an inward consciousness that leads the individual to his conversion. John Ruef, p. 152. What is clear in this context is that prophecy leads to this result, whereas uninterpreted tongues leads to a charge of madness.

\(^3\)Moffatt, p. 224.

\(^4\)It seems that Paul intends in vss. 23-25, not only to contrast the uselessness of uninterpreted public tongues with prophecy,
design is not to juxtapose preaching and prophesying but to make clear the contrast between uninterpreted tongues, which does not pierce the listener's heart, and prophesying, which does. He suggests that within the prophet there is a power from God enabling him in a supernatural way and by supernatural means to awaken the dormant conscience, and to stir into life the torpid capacities of the heart. Where the speaker with tongues can at most startle and surprise, the prophet can advise and persuade, can induce penitence and kindle the flame of faith.\footnote{Joyce, p. 170.}

The Source and Control of Prophecy

Such a description indicates not simply the contrast between the two charisms but also a close correspondence in their awakening in the believer. For example, like tongues, prophecy originates in the same Spirit (τὸ αὐτὸ τὸν θεὸν, 1 Cor 12:8,9,11) and thus partakes of spontaneity and supernaturalism. But while glossolalia is characterized by prayer and praise between the believer and God, which may subsequently be shared with the corporate body by means of "interpretation," it is only because of and on behalf of the corporate body that the prophetic charism is given. Thus, there is a sense in which both gifts can be spoken of as ecstatic in that they do not originate in man, but tongues is intended to be of a personal nature, whereas prophecy is intended to have corporate concerns. When too much distinction is made between tongues as ecstatic and prophecy as...
rational, there may result some bewilderment about the question of inspiration. With this in mind, it may be less confusing to see the formal difference between these two types of pneumatic speech in the fact that one is intelligible (prophecy), the other not. One is not more ecstatic than the other. Both categories of speakers are able to speak when the inspiration comes, to stop speaking at liberty, or remain silent. The rational control is not lost.

Nevertheless, the elements of control of the two phenomena are alluded to in different ways, and these differences deserve attention. If the gift of prophecy, like glossolalia, was ecstatic in that it originated outside of the person and then "came upon him," what can be said about the nature, not only of control (only two or three prophets were to speak), but even of critique (σχολοειτωσαν) of the prophets' words, spoken of in vs. 29b? If prophecy in Corinth was the spontaneous in-breaking of the Spirit for the purpose of spiritual nurture of the church, why is any human control necessary, and if necessary, what was to be the nature of the control?

As with glossolalia, prophesying was to be done one at a time (κατ' ενα, vs. 31), and not more than two or three at a given meeting. The directives regarding the phenomenon in vs. 29a are not quite as precise as those given for the control of tongues, as Meyer, Ellicott, and others have pointed out. For example, while vs. 27, referring to glossolalists, makes the "three" emphatic by the insertion of τὸ τὰλεστῶν ("two or at most three"), verse 29, referring to prophets, says simply "two or three." But the absence of τὸ τὰλεστῶν from vs. 29 hardly warrants extended hypothesizing. Conzelmann's

---

1Engelsen, p. 204.  
2Meyer, p. 419.  
3Ellicott, p. 279.
question notwithstanding, the difference in the wording seems merely like an alternate way of expressing the same concern as that set forth in vs. 27, that is, a quantitative limit must be imposed.

The reason for the limitation is not at once apparent, but Barrett's suggestion of time may have been the primary consideration. In vs. 23, Paul has expressed his concern for the impression made upon outsiders, and, having already approved of three glossolalists plus interpretations per meeting, three additional messages from prophets would, no doubt, be sufficient instruction for one meeting! Furthermore, it should be remembered that when Paul enumerated the presence of the gifts in the church (1 Cor 12:28, 29), he repeatedly designated the prophets as second in the list after apostles. So it seems reasonable to assume that when he describes the procedures for the liturgical order he would allow some room for a possible apostolic proclamation, which, according to Acts 6:2,4, was their primary concern. In the present passage, there is no mention made of apostles, but the possibility of some apostolic participation may have been a factor in his limiting the other elements in the service to not more than three glossolalists and three prophets.

1 Regarding the omission of τὸ ταλέῳτον from vs. 29, Conzelmann asks, "Does this indicate that Paul is here readier to make concessions in the direction of a greater number because the value toward edification is higher? (Conzelmann, A Commentary, p. 244).


3 John Ruef concurs with this idea when he says, "While no time limit is applied, the restrictions which Paul places upon the prophets may have been one way to enforce such a limit" (p. 153). Similarly, von Dobschütz looks upon this directive as "a wise precaution against too lengthy addresses" (Christian Life, p. 18).
In addition, vs. 33 indicates that uncontrolled prophetic "revelations" ran the same danger of confusion as did uncontrolled tongue-speaking. With regard to prophets, the confusion would not be lack of intelligibility, but lack of order. Repeatedly (vss. 26, 27, 30, 33), Paul appealed to the importance of order and propriety with reference to both tongues and prophecy. While both were initiated by the Spirit, it is obvious from these directives that control was to come from within the speaker, as he was able to withhold his testimony if necessary (vs. 30). But, as mentioned earlier, a certain amount of control was also to be exercised by the group, in that their expectations and desires could have a telling influence on the behavior of the speakers.

As mentioned above, Engelsen focuses on intelligibility as the only real distinction between glossolalia and prophecy, with control being equally absolute by both glossoalist and prophet. However, the private tongues experience apparently included some spontaneous vocalizations over which the speaker had little control. In contrast, while the inspiration of the prophet was likewise spontaneous, his verbalization was not (vs. 30), hence there appears to be a difference in the control of the two gifts. Thus, the prophet

... was always able to control himself. He could not, of course, summon at will the breath of inspiration. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." But even when that power was upon him in its fulness he never lost his liberty of discretion between speech and silence. Unlike the speaker with tongues, he could at any moment of his discourse master his strong excitement and hold his peace. ... Not only could a prophet of his own free action bring his message to an end, but he was bound to do so if the event of receiving from another an
intimation that he also had a revelation to communicate.\(^1\)

Similarly, Gerhard Friedrich asserts that, though the message that came to the prophets did so with no actual cooperation on their part, still

... the proclamation of what is revealed to them is according to their own will and it does not have to follow at once. Revelation does not cause a cleavage of personality which makes man an involuntary instrument. The responsible personhood of the prophet remains intact even though the whole man with his understanding and will stands under the operation of the Spirit.\(^2\)

\[\text{καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι διακρινομένοι (vs. 29b)}\]

"and let the others evaluate"

But although the prophet was regarded with esteem, and although the prophecy had supernatural impetus, still vs. 29b indicates that some sort of evaluation of the prophets' words was to take place. The term διακρίνω as used by Paul has a wide range of meanings, several of which can be seen in 1 Corinthians.\(^3\) But in 29b the RSV translation "let the others weigh what is said" seems appropriate. Moffatt is similarly helpful when he interprets the phrase, "while the rest of the prophets, sitting by, exercise their judgment on what they hear."\(^4\) In this context, the evaluative process involved was not simply to determine the veracity of the prophets\(^5\)

\(^1\)Joyce, p. 180. \(^2\)"διακριτοί," TDNT, VI:851.

\(^3\)In 1 Cor 11:29 the term has the sense of "judge," or "distinguish;" in 11:31, the sense is "evaluate;" while in 6:4 the word refers to a legal decision. All of these meanings fit quite aptly the meanings found in Bauer, p. 184 and Moulton and Milligan, p. 150.

\(^4\)Moffatt, p. 228.

\(^5\)Against Orr and Walther who take the position that the discrimination is simply to determine the true and false prophets. Yet, in so doing, they acknowledge a problem with that position for which they have no answer. They concede that if the question at issue was
but to reflect on the meaning of the message and aid in the edification of the assembled believers. This is seen in that the instruction for prophets leads directly into the purpose clause in vs. 31, "so that all might learn and all might be admonished." In other words, vs. 29b is referring to an evaluative, reflective process by which the instructive content of the prophets' messages is in some way clarified for the listening audience.

Evaluation of the Message and the Man

At the same time, there is an extremely close connection between the value of a prophet's message for a group and the way the prophet himself is perceived by the group. In other words, it is quite arbitrary to isolate the message from the man, assuming that an evaluation of the one has no bearing on the other. At its very base, the weighing of a prophet's message is a weighing of the prophet. In fact, the very need of some evaluation indicates that attitudes toward the prophet and his prophecy, though generally

a distinction between true and false prophets, then the gift of discrimination did not resolve the problem, it only added another step to the process. For "... if true prophets cannot be distinguished without people who have the gift of discrimination, how can the ones who discriminate truly be distinguished? False discriminators could emerge just as easily as false prophets" (Orr and Walther, The Anchor Bible, p. 310). William Baird expressed a similar idea: "The prophet is less a football forecaster and more a weather analyst who studies carefully the sign of the times. Yet even the careful student can read them in error. This is why there must be those who discern or distinguish between spirits; there must be other prophets who can weigh the worth of the various prophecies" (The Corinthian Church, p. 140). Still, as is shown later, Baird's analogy of the weather analyst is hardly adequate, for the NT prophet was not merely an interpreter of information already revealed. Such a view would make the prophet no different from a preacher or teacher. In contrast, a prophet revealed new truths as well as clarified old ones, and even provided insights into the future.
characterized by respect, were not the near-superstitious concepts of earlier times, when the prophet's word was felt to be synonymous with the word of the Lord. Supernatural origins for some did not rule out all possibility that spurious prophets and prophecies might appear.

Both from its intrinsic nature, where self-deception was so easy, as well as from the circumstances attaching to it, this gift was one which called for the most careful supervision by the Church. Extravagances, not to say scandals, were inevitable.

In vs. 29b, Paul injects an attitude of caution into the believers' listening habits. For the most part, those who "prophe­sied" would be known to the church, and the veracity of prophet and message would be safely assumed. In those cases, the evaluation of the prophet's message might entail primarily a discussion of the practicability and use of the counsel given. But because of the potential for abuse of gifts, which did seem to be a problem in Corinth, Paul counsels the members to make evaluation a regular part of the procedure. If the discrimination called for was more serious, and there was question about the prophet himself, no doubt Paul would suggest that the church should let the appropriate gift do its work. In 12:10, he had reminded them that a charism had been given for just such an exigency--"to another, the ability to dis­tinguish between spirits." Admittedly, certain of these details are speculative, but the idea of careful evaluation is clear.

Without the safeguard thus provided, the primitive Church might well have become a group of clashing eccentrics and fanatics, each howling, "Thus said the Lord." Thanks to this sane counsel of Paul, the Early Church was confronted with the

---

healthy ideal of possessing not only inspired souls, but saints with clear judgment; ecstasy and discrimination were to join hands somehow.¹

The precise nature of the discrimination is difficult to ascertain, for the language is too cryptic. "Whether this evaluation would be completely silent or whether some members of the congregation would respond orally cannot be determined from the term ἀξιωματικός alone. The emphasis of the verb is on the deliberative process itself. . . ."² But, as pointed out earlier, the importance of corporate ὑπερεκκλησία loomed very large in Paul's concern for the Corinthians. Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that some oral instruction resulted from the evaluative processes of the prophets. Such a conclusion is strengthened by the purpose clause in vs. 31b, "... that all might learn and all might be admonished."

Given the personal nature of glossolalia, as well as its reputation as the more ecstatic, less controlled phenomenon, it might seem that the counsel to evaluate prophecy is rather misplaced. Such a cautionary, discriminating attitude as is suggested by ἀξιωματικός would seem more relevant for glossolalia than for prophecy. As previously explained, the glossolalist required an "interpretation," but when the experience was thus put into words, it would then be only equal to the word of the prophet which was already understandable. Then, working backward from Paul's counsel to the prophets, it is conceivable that after glossolalia was made understandable, it would still require some evaluation to determine the practicality and application of its message. In sum, the process from experience

¹Moffatt, pp. 216, 217. ²Grudem, p. 65.
to counsel was more complicated for the glossolalist than for the prophet. However, the rank a prophet held in the church made critical analysis of his words more important than analysis of glossolalia.

... it (the gift of tongues) gave no precise official position to its possessor, neither was it calculated to exercise an influence on the minds of men, since it was as a general rule unintelligible. But prophecy, as denoting revelation, and as giving a man an influence in the counsels of the Church, and as enabling him to influence the future of others, e.g., in the case of Timothy ... was peculiarly liable to abuse.¹

The argument is strengthened by noting the counsel in 1 Thess 5:19-21 to not extinguish the Spirit and to not despise prophesying, which suggests that some in the church developed an attitude of skepticism regarding certain gifts, possibly because of absurdities demonstrated by some of the "possessed" members. Hence, Paul admonishes that the gifts were not to be despised but were to be carefully proved.

Identity of the "Others"

The identity of those who were to do the proving or evaluating (οἱ ἄλλοι, vs. 29b) is problematic. Does the term refer to all the members of the congregation or only the other prophets? Proponents of the two options are well divided.²


²Among those who interpret "the others" as prophets are F. W. Grosheide, p. 338; James Moffatt, p. 228, Charles Ellicott, p. 279; H. A. W. Meyer, p. 419; and H. Conzelmann, p. 245. A more general application of the term is made by H. Leitzmann, p. 74; C. K. Barrett, p. 328; F. F. Bruce, p. 134; and Wayne Grudem, p. 62. Jean Héring attempts to sit between the two sides by stating: "'the others' in 14:29 must not encourage everyone or just anyone to take part in the discussion, though as a last resort, the Church as a whole had, in certain cases, to judge the validity of a message." It would have helped had he clarified what he meant by "a last resort" (p. 154).
In support of the more general interpretation of the term, reference is often made to 12:10 where, immediately following the mention of a gift of τοῦ οπίστιν, is the allusion to διακρίσεις τευχών. As Bruce puts it, "Grammatically the others might mean 'the other prophets,' but in 12:10 'the ability to distinguish between spirits' is given to others than prophets, so the others here are more probably the hearers in general." However, Grudem has shown that with the exception of "tongues" and "interpretation of tongues," the list of gifts in 12:8-10 do not have an obvious connection one with another. The mere mention of the gift of prophecy immediately prior to "distinguishing of Spirits" does not mean that those two gifts are somehow linked. However, the point he is attempting to establish is different from that of Bruce. Grudem is attempting to show that just as διακρίσεις τευχών and τοῦ οπίστιν in 12:10 are two distinct and separate gifts; so also διακρίσεις τευχών in 12:10 and ὁ άλλος διακρινόμενος in 14:29 are similarly unconnected. The reference to the distinguishing of Spirits in 12:12 is often used to show that there were others besides prophets who may have received the gift of διακρίσεις. However, Grudem is wanting to show that since prophecy and "distinguishing" are not inherently related in 12:10, they are not inherently related anywhere; hence non-prophets may also have the gift of "distinguishing."

While it is conceded that the distinguishing of Spirits in 12:10 is not to be limited to the gift of prophecy, there is no

1Bruce, 1 & 2 Corinthians, p. 134. 2Grudem, p. 269.
reason to exclude prophets from those who might receive such a gift. In addition, in 14:29, the close proximity between the prophets and the evaluating suggests that there was a direct connection between the two. Furthermore, it is possible to interpret the ἄλλω of this verse in its technical sense of "another of the same kind," as opposed to "another of a different kind" (εἰς εἴδος), implying that the "other" was another prophet, not just anyone in the congregation.

Guy simply states that

We are probably justified in pressing here the literal meaning of ἄλλος, in distinction from εἰς εἴδος. The "another" to whom the apocalypse comes is not a different kind of person, but has affinity with the one already speaking.

It should be noted, however, that Paul is not above using ἄλλος and εἰς εἴδος interchangeably (cf. 2 Cor 11:4). Consequently, this point, while possible, is not a weighty one.

In vs. 31, there is additional evidence to suggest that the "others" ... vs. 29 were probably prophets. However, in keeping with the sequential handling of vss. 26-33, we will proceed first with an exposition of vs. 30.

Εὖν δὲ ἄλλω ἀποκαλυφθῇ καθεμιῶς, ὁ τρώτος στῦλῳ (vs. 30)
"And if (something) should be revealed to another sitting by, let the first keep silent"

Although the verb of this phrase is missing a subject, the close connection to prophets in the preceding verse suggests that Paul is here assuming that it is prophets who receive revelations. This conclusion is supported by noting that in vs. 26, the word

1Bauer, pp. 39 and 315. 2Guy, p. 105.
 inadvertently used where one might expect the term prophet or prophecy. Then, when the passive verb ἸΠΟΧΑΛΒΙΔΩΣ is used in vs. 30 in such close proximity to the ἸΠΟΧΑΛΒΙΔΩΣ of vs. 29, the recipient of the revelation must be a prophet. In fact, in an interpretive translation, Guy simply inserts the term prophet. "While the prophet is speaking, if a revelation is made to another sitting by . . . let the first (prophet) keep silent." Also, in Paul’s lists of gifts in 12:8-10; 28-30, he includes no gift of revelation, but he does include a gift of prophecy. Furthermore, Paul here speaks of the unexpected coming of a revelation upon the ἼΛΛΩ which necessitates the "first" to be silent. Just as the ordinal number "first" is not further qualified, neither is the ἼΛΛΩ nor the ἼΛΛΩ of vs. 29. Still it is obvious that the "first of vs. 30 refers to the first prophet, so by analogy, it is reasonable to conclude that the close construction of the verses suggests that the ἼΛΛΩ are likewise prophets; hence in vs. 30, Paul is continuing to address them, and not the congregation at large. As he does so, he points up once again the divine source and uncontrived onset of the gifts in general, and prophecy in particular. While it is possible to see potential disorder in such spontaneity, it is also possible to see a wholesome dependence of the prophet on the divine source of his illumination. As Luke Johnson has observed, "This dependence upon a revelation clearly marks off Christian prophecy from the

1Ibid.

2With reference to this issue, Grosheide says simply: "Prophecy and revelation are closely connected (vs. 6). Our verse implies that the revelation precedes and is thereupon given utterance in prophecy" (F. W. Grosheide, p. 338).
manipulated inspiration of the mantic prophets."\(^1\)

Paul's use here of the third class condition may be a clue that the occurrence described was not necessarily a common one. Accordingly, Paul could be viewed as merely making allowance for the possibility of one prophet interrupting another, whether or not it actually took place in that way. Such an interpretation would have Paul saying, "If it should ever happen . . . be ready to yield." But other than the mild contingency of the third class condition, there is no strong evidence one way or the other regarding the frequency of occurrence. The only other clue is found in vs. 29, for if the instruction regarding only three prophets is taken seriously, then the interruption incidents must have been relatively few, as it could not happen more than twice in any one meeting. And if two of every three prophecies came by the interruption process, such procedure would be tantamount to being the *modus operandi*, and thus the hesitance suggested by the third class condition in vs. 30 would seem strange indeed. Meyer, ignoring any sense of contingency, interprets the phrase in the sense of a simple condition and hypothesizes that Paul was simply putting more value on the "fresh, undelayed outburst" of the second prophet than on the continuing address of the first "outburst."\(^2\)

At the same time, the process of the interruption of one prophet by another was not to be abrupt or curt. If, as the participle

\(^1\)"Norms for True and False Prophecy," p. 42.

\(^2\)Handbuch über den ersten Brief, p. 420. His entire phrase reads, "... er legt vielmehr dem frischen unverzögerten Ansbrüche der prophetischen Begeisterung mehr Wert bei, als dem weiteren Fortreden nach dem ersten Ansbruch."
\textit{Xathne'vtj) indicates, the listeners were seated while the speaker stood,}^{1} \textit{it would have been a simple and orderly procedure for one sitting to indicate by standing that he had received a revelation. Taking a different tack, Robertson and Plummer argue for the idea of orderly interruption from the standpoint of the tense of the verb \textit{\textsigma\gamma\nu\tau\omicron\upsilon}. They suggest that the aorist form, \textit{\textsigma\gamma\nu\sigma\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon}, would be a more abrupt command, such as "let him \textit{at once} be silent," and they suggest that the apostle's choice of the present tense was guided by that awareness.}^{2}

Still, more than this must have been involved. Such a procedure would differ little from the apparent disorder described in vs. 26. Furthermore, Paul has, in vss. 23, 24, voiced his concern that observers be given an impression of order and calmness in the worship practices of the members, and if the thrust of vs. 30 is simply on the spontaneity and impulsiveness of the gift of prophesying, then Paul has moved little beyond the very practice of individualism that he disparaged in the previous verses. On the other hand, the verse can be seen as putting limits on spontaneity. In this way, the counsel is seen as referring to that person who had received the gift of prophecy but who was tempted to monopolize the worship scene on the basis of his revelation and, like an excited tongue-speaker, over-did a good thing. "Even inspired

\footnotesize{\textit{Lietzman simply asserts, "Also, steht der Prophet, während die Gemeinde sitzt" (\textit{An die Korinther}, p. 74).}}

\footnotesize{\textit{P. 322. It should be remembered, however, that in moods other than the indicative, the punctiliar, or linear sense of the tenses is not rigorously adhered to.}}
The Nature of Prophetic Inspiration

Still, the issue is raised regarding the concluding words of the first prophet. If his message was divinely inspired, should some of his words be hushed, and possibly lost forever? Does not such counsel treat the prophet's "revelation" in a rather cavalier fashion? Here it is helpful to take into account a distinction made by Wayne Grudem. He has shown that NT prophecy, though it was to be respected, did not enjoy the esteem of OT prophecy, wherein the words of the prophet were felt to be the very words of Yahweh. Rather, the NT prophet, whose rank was less than that of apostles (cf. 1 Cor 12:28; 14:37; 2 Pet 3:2), spoke with a divine authority, not so much on their actual words, but on the general content of their message.2 Accordingly, the word ἀιτωξαμία need not be looked upon as imbuing virtually every word of the discourse with divine inspiration. Just as the NT prophet partook of a somewhat lower level of sanctity than the OT counterpart, so the term ἀιτωξαμία is used in contexts where it indicates a general impression rather than a specifically worded message. Thus, when Jesus stated that those who know the Father do so only because the Son has revealed (ἀιτωξαμία) Him to them (Matt 11:27), he is using the word in a rather general way. Similarly, whatever authority be granted to the prophet's "revelation," Paul's statement in 14:37 makes it clear that that authority is less than absolute, as it is subject to his own greater authority, presumably

1Findlay, p. 913.  
2P. 68.
because he is an apostle. Accordingly, Corinthian prophecy

... is based on some type of supernatural "revelation" but that revelation only gives it a kind of divine authority of general content. The prophet could err, could misinterpret, and could be questioned or challenged at any point. He had a minor kind of "divine" authority, but it certainly was not absolute.¹

On the basis of such an analysis, the suggestion that one prophet should be willing to give place to another seems perfectly fitting. Conceivably then, the first prophet, having made his major point, is continuing to elaborate on it, while another major point has been revealed to a second prophet. In such a situation, the elaboration of the first point is not as needful for the group as hearing the second major point. Furthermore, if the prophets' authority were not absolute, and if their knowledge were not infallible, than a flawed perception or interpretation by one prophet could be quickly corrected by a subsequent revelation. Also, when it is remembered how preoccupied the Corinthians were with individual participation (vss. 23, 26) and the consequent import of Paul's counsel regarding corporate edification, it is even more apparent how fitting this instruction is. Provided the procedure is calm and orderly, a fresh revelation through another prophet is important for its impact on yet another segment of the congregation. To put it simply, "one person would appreciate the words of one prophet, while another would appreciate the words of another prophet."² Such an awareness on the part of the prophets would be a guard against the ever-present temptation to dominate the scene at the expense of corporate edification. "A true prophet is supremely

¹Ibid., p. 74. ²Ruef, p. 154.
conscious of his function in the body spiritual, which he is moved to serve. Even his own feelings and reputation are secondary, compared to that.\textsuperscript{1}

\textit{δύνασθε γὰρ καθ' ἑνα τάγης ποιητεῖς (vs. 31a)}

"for you can all prophesy one at a time"

Paul’s instruction in vs. 31 indicates something of the simple liturgical forms that existed in earliest Christian churches. Instruction and proclamation might not always originate with an apostle, nor with an elected or ordained official. The early Christian assemblies were much more dependent upon direct guidance from the Spirit, or in NT terminology, upon the “gifts” of the Spirit, than was the case in later centuries when the concept of an ordained clergy emerged. For the

\ldots ministry in the Pauline churches belonged to all, and each depended for his life within the body of Christ not just on some special ministry of a few, but on the diverse ministries of all his fellow members.\textsuperscript{2}

But to say that all members participated in some type of ministry is not to say that all members prophesied. For, in spite of Paul’s wish expressed in 14:5 that “all” might prophesy, the repeated enumeration of the varied gifts in 12:10, 29 suggests that the prophets in Corinth were an identifiable group within the larger congregation. As Best observes, “the picture of the Church as the Body of Christ implies that while each member has a gift all do not, and cannot, have the same gift, and so prophecy is restricted to

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{1}] Moffatt, p. 229.
  \item[\textsuperscript{2}] Dunn, \textit{Unity and Diversity}, p. 111.
\end{itemize}
a few (12:14-19,29). Accordingly, the stress of 31a lies not on the τάντες in the sense of every member prophesying, but on the καθ' ένα thus allowing that all those who had received the gift of prophesying might exercise that gift provided they did it one at a time. In other words, Paul is not here broadening the prophesying ability to include all members, for such would go counter to the concept of the χορωδία in chap. 12.

If τάντες is taken as a reference to all the members of the congregation, it may then be supposed that "all can prophesy." In that case, Paul held the opinion that all Christians are prophets. But if that were the meaning he would be contradicting himself, for in 12:12 prophecy is mentioned as a special gift, and in 12:29 it is said that not all are prophets. In addition, Paul's wish expressed in 14:5 that all might prophesy implies that there were those who did not have the gift.

In vs. 31b one is suddenly made aware of the fact that in a verse of only twelve words, three of them are τάντες. Here, the

1Best, "Prophets and Preachers," p. 142.

2So also Conzelmann: "For καθ' ένα τάντες all one by one, cannot mean simply everybody, but all who are to be considered here, all upon whom the spirit of prophecy comes. The emphasis naturally does not lie on all, but on singly, i.e., that you may be understood" (A Commentary, p. 245). Similarly, "By economy of time, every one who has the prophetic gift may exercise it in turn. . ." (Findlay, p. 58). Robertson and Plummer, linking this phrase with the preceding verse, assert: "If each preacher stops when another receives a message, all the prophets, however many there may be, will be able to speak in successive assemblies, three at each meeting" (p. 322).

3Against Grudem, p. 62. 4Engelsen, p. 170.

5Accordingly, this view goes counter to that of Luke Johnson: "It seems quite possible then that Paul intends the whole community to exercise this critical function. This view is supported by Paul's saying in vs. 31 that all can prophesy" (p. 42).
purpose clause shows the anticipated outcome of the orderly procedure suggested in 31a. Accordingly, Paul seems to be saying, "It is for the purpose of instructing and admonishing all the members that the prophesying must be done one at a time." This phrase suggests that although the glossolalists may have been considerably more active, if not more numerous than the prophets (14:1,5), and were possibly more prone to disorder (14:23,26b), still prophets were not immune from some of the same tendencies. Apparently, there were those prophets who found the limelight comfortable and hesitated to yield the floor to another (vs. 30). Such grandstanding not only kept all who might have a message from prophesying but also kept all from learning. Recalling Paul's earlier "body" metaphor, it is in the diversity of gifts and talents that the body grows. Just so, it is in the systematic prophesying of all the different prophets that all the members will be admonished. Consequently, this part of the verse strengthens the point just made, that is, that the first τῶν in 31a was not intended to be inclusive of the entire congregation but of the entire group of prophets. For what could be Paul's meaning if he is suggesting that every member can prophesy, so that every member might learn and be admonished? It seems more reasonable to conclude that τῶν in vs. 31a should be qualified, referring to all the prophets, while in 31b it should be looked upon as all-inclusive, referring to all the members. It is conceivable, of course, that the prophesying itself could be looked upon as the learning experience, thereby permitting the first τῶν to be all-inclusive, but such a view would make both glossolalia and prophecy into a very personal experience. There are times when one person is
especially benefited by the testimony of someone else. Furthermore, Paul's discussion throughout this chapter makes a point of differentiating the two gifts precisely at this point of personal (glossolalia) versus corporate (prophecy) edification. It thus becomes apparent how important is vs. 31b with reference to the entire pericope.

The thrust behind Paul's whole line of reasoning has to do with the spiritual edification of the many rather than the few. Personal devotion, as represented by glossolalia, is not to be disparaged ("I want you all to speak in tongues," vs. 5a). But, when the church assembles, the concerns, the activities, the exhortation must focus on the needs of the group so that all may learn and all may be admonished.

Paul takes a positive stance toward the devotion of the individual, but he is anxious that this should turn outward rather than inward. The one who prophesies performs a greater function than the one who speaks in tongues since the prophet communicates to other people the mind of God so as to build them up in a social unit that lives as the body of Christ.

Such a view of prophecy is strengthened by Paul's previous argumentation in vss. 24 and 25. There, Paul has contrasted the results of all (γὰς τες) speaking with tongues or all prophesying. In the first instance, the result is a charge of madness, while in the second, the result is understanding and conviction of conscience. When this passage (vs. 24) is viewed in the light of vs. 31, it seems clear that the ηάντες τορφτεσσελμνυ of vs. 24 is, like the ηάντες τορφτεσσελμνυ of vs. 31, to be καθε ἑνα, one at a time, otherwise the unbelievers would fail to understand. Thus, it does seem clear that the prophecy of one is for the edification of another. But given the Corinthian

1Orr and Walther, p. 306.
penchant for personal involvement, Paul repeatedly suggests that all of those with a particular gift may share that gift, provided the edification of the group is kept uppermost. Such edification is best advanced, he suggests, when there is liturgical orderliness, on the one hand, and a maximum of testimonials, on the other. Apparently Paul felt that "the congregation would learn more through change of preachers, and the preachers also would learn more through listening to one another."\(^1\) While God speaks to individuals, He sometimes chooses to speak through individuals to others, and in Corinth that process was called prophecy. Paul here suggests that when the divine directives are followed, many testimonials will result in a more fertile harvest of ideas than if one person took all the time.

Furthermore, as God through the centuries has communicated with the race through human agents, He has allowed the idiosyncrasies of His spokesmen, not only to show through but actually to be a part of the message and its influence. Thus, He uses the blunt expressions of a Nahum, as well as the polished grammar of a Luke.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Robertson and Plummer, pp. 322, 323.

\(^2\)As B. B. Warfield expresses it: "As light that passes through the colored glass of a cathedral window, we are told, is light from heaven, but is stained by the tints of the glass through which it passes; so any word of God which is passed through the mind and soul of a man must come out discolored by the personality through which it is given, and just to that degree ceases to be the pure word of God. But what if this personality has itself been formed by God into precisely the personality it is, for the express purpose of communicating to the word given through it just the coloring which it gives it? . . . What if the word of God that comes to His people is framed by God into the word of God it is, precisely by means of the qualities of the men formed by Him for the purpose, through which it is given?" ("Inspiration," The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, gen. ed. James Orr, 5 Vols. [Chicago, IL: Howard Severance Company, 1915], 3:1480).
Accordingly, in the Corinthian context, if both the prophet's message as well as the prophet himself have had a divine preparation, and if a divine charism has had an influence on both the prophet and his words, then the resulting prophecy should be given as broad a hearing as possible.

καὶ τὸν άγγέλτον τοσοῦτον τοσοῦτος
υποτάσσεται (vs. 32)
"and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets"

The most obvious problem in the verse lies in the meaning of the phrase τὸν άγγέλτον τῶν τοσοῦτον ("spirits of the prophets"). The anarthrous nature of the phrase may suggest that it was used as a timeless proverb, but that does little to clarify its meaning. At first reading, the choice seems to lie between: (1) the human spirits as influenced and filled by the Holy Spirit and (2) the manifestations of the Holy Spirit himself. Another view, however, suggests that the spirits here are angels. In addition, there are refinements of these views, such as the suggestion that the plural

---


2 Johannes Weiss concurs with the idea that it was a proverb, but hastens to add that despite its proverbial nature, it was not understood (p. 341).

3 Ellicott, p. 281.

4 E. Earle Ellis, "Christ and Spirit in 1 Corinthians," Christ and Spirit in the New Testament, gen. eds. Barnabas Lindars and Stephen S. Smalley (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), p. 275. Similar to Ellis' position is the suggestion by G. C. Joyce that "the Spirits which are subject to the prophets are those beings of the unseen order with whom the prophets in their moments of inspiration are in communication" (p. 184).
form refers to the various "spiritual agencies producing various spiritual gifts."  

τυεδυματα as Human Spirits

When Paul in 14:14 compares and contrasts τὸ τυεδυμα του (my spirit) and ὁ ψυχος του (my mind), the close analogy suggests that the possessive pronoun means the same thing in both occurrences. Accordingly, in that verse he is drawing upon an anthropology in which τὸ τυεδυμα του refers to his own human capacity to grasp and appreciate the supra-mundane. Following this reasoning, the τυεδυματα of the prophets in vs. 32 would refer to their human spirits that provide the meeting-place for the human and divine. Accordingly, vs. 32 means that the prophet "can hold his peace, for orphans always have their own spirits under the control of their understanding and their will."  

τυεδυματα as a Divine Influence

Keeping the context in mind, however, there is a sense in which the τυεδυματα may refer to the divine Spirit that inspires and actuates the prophets.  

1Barrett, p. 319. In addition, Orr and Walther set forth a complicated view that attempts to combine the human and divine. They do this by suggesting that the τυεδυματα here is an accommodation to the power of the Holy Spirit by which various believers experience the effects of the Holy Spirit, and in the process, each believer becomes acutely aware of his own spirit (p. 308). One reason they take this position is to guard against diminishing the Holy Spirit, which results when one interprets the plural τυεδυματα as somehow referring to the one Divine Spirit.

2Robertson and Plummer, p. 323.

3Findlay assumes that the spirit discussed is the Holy Spirit, and sees no difficulty in the thought that the Spirit is under the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
ultimate source of all the gifts was the Holy Spirit. Then, more closely, the passive verb ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ("might be revealed") in 14:30 indicates that the prophets' message came by divine revelation, yet were to be under the rational control of the individual (συγκριθή, "let him keep silent"). Similarly, in 33a, which he connects with the present verse by the conclusive γάρ, Paul adds that God is not "of confusion." Following this line of reasoning, if the two verses are logically connected, then the reason why the "spirits" are subject to control is to be found in 33a--God is a God of order, not confusion. In other terms, the statement about order in 33a is the ground of vs. 32. Thus the power which actuates the prophets is subject to their rational control, because that power is orderly, and does not overwhelm the individual.¹

Perhaps it should be stated that whether Paul intended the Holy Spirit, or simply the influence of the Spirit, the expression is simply too cryptic to make clear. In this vein, Godet opts for the position that the spirits are "impulses and revelations granted to the "control" of the human prophet. "... this Divine gift is put under the control and responsibility of the possessor's will, that it may be exercised with discretion and brotherly love, for its appointed ends. An unruly prophet is therefore no genuine prophet; he lacks one of the necessary marks of the Holy Spirit's indwelling" (p. 913).

¹ Weiss, commenting on vs. 32 sees the τυγχάνειν as the unquestioned influence of the divine Spirit, but an influence that does not overwhelm. Throughout his comments, he repeatedly uses the term "self-discipline" (Selbstbeherrschung) to indicate that the idea of ecstatic experience being uncontrollable was a false impression. He asserts that Paul would not allow such an impression to go unchallenged even for the glossolalist because of the συγκριθή in vs. 28. But he states that it is even more certain that the prophet remains in control of his thoughts and will than the glossolalist. Then, with no explanation, he states that the prophet even "commands" the Spirit (p. 341).
Though he comes short of calling those inspirations the Holy Spirit, *per se*, or angels, he does later personalize them somewhat by suggesting that the present passive verb ὑποτάσσομαι should be translated "subject themselves." Findlay says it more clearly when he asserts that the plural τούς σωματα signifies "manifold forms or distributions of the Spirit's power." In any case, one should not easily dismiss the possibility that the term τούς σωματα of vs. 32 refers in some way to the influence of God's Spirit upon the prophets.

**τούς σωματα as Divine and Human**

At the same time, τούς σωματα need not be thought of in either/or terms. It is possible to so combine the divine and human elements that "the "Spirit of God and the will of men are for a combined power, and can melt together." In this way, the τούς σωματα may be the

---

1 At that point it is not clear how Godet's terms even fit into the discussion of human or divine spirits. However, a bit later, when contrasting the inspiration of the prophets with that former passive state alluded to in 12:2 ("When you were pagan, you were led astray to dumb idols. . ."), he asserts: "Divine inspiration differs from diabolical, in the fact that the latter takes man from himself--it is a possession--whereas the former restores him to himself" (Godet, p. 307). At this point, it becomes clear that Godet is interpreting "spirits" as an expression for the Divine influences.

2 Ibid.

3 Findlay, p. 913.

4 The use of a plural form for referring to the one Holy Spirit is problematical. Yet, Paul's anthropology makes room for interpreting the τούς σωμα του of vs. 14 as "my portion of the Holy Spirit." Robert Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), pp. 190-92. If that were the meaning, then the plural could be looked upon as indicating each prophet's portion of the Holy Spirit. Another possibility may be derived from the Old Testament concept of "the one and the many," by which Yahweh has repeatedly been described in both a singular and a corporate sense. Aubrey R. Johnson, *The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1961), p. 30.

5 Weiss, p. 341 (translation supplied).
prophets' spirits, but filled with the Holy Spirit. In any case, a prophet's own spirit cannot really be separated from the transcendent influence that inspires it. Still, as the passage makes clear, the prophet exercises some power of will over his divinely led spirit.

But that the τελεσκοτα here could in any sense refer to the Holy Spirit is often disparaged because it is difficult to think of the Spirit as in any respect subject to human will. Admittedly, the prophet, like the glossolalist, can, at some point, be described as a passive recipient of the Spirit's message. Moreover, since at that point the Spirit's manifestation is in the nature of inspiration, human initiative or control is minimal. But Paul is here addressing the problems of public liturgical order, so his emphasis is not on the passive or receiving aspect of the prophets' messages but on their delivery. It is at that point that talk of human control is entirely appropriate. So, although the Holy Spirit inspires, and to some degree even impels to speak, it is the volition of the prophet to determine when, in what words, and how much of the inspiration to deliver. Such a view is in harmony with the meaning of the verb in vs. 32, for Paul frequently uses ὑποτάσσω to indicate submission by choice, for the purpose of bringing about an improved order of things. Accordingly, it is possible that Paul is here

1 Meyer, p. 421.

2 See especially Rom 13:1, 5; 1 Cor 16:16; Eph 5:21, 22, 24; Col 3:18; Titus 2:5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
showing that the Holy Spirit will not force a prophet to speak, but allows the prophet himself to determine when he should speak. This is a voluntary submission in one particular function for the sake of order, and implies no theological statement about man as somehow superior to the Holy Spirit.¹

τευνάτα as Angels

The case for angels as the spirits of the prophets is intriguing, but not overwhelming. It has been shown that in both the OT and the intertestamental period, the divine Spirit was often associated with prophets and prophesying.² Further, it is quite clear that for Paul, this Jewish association of τευνάτα is significant as seen in his parallel in 1 Thess 5:19, 20: "Do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophesying..." In addition, Paul frequently reflects a certain dualism when he refers to the on-going hostilities between good and evil spirits. Then, given the cosmic scope which Paul uses to describe the spirit πνευμα in such passages as Eph 6:12 and Col 2:15, 20, it is possible to conclude that

the background of Paul's thought and the evidence of his writings support the conclusion that in his view the spirits of the pneumatics, the inspired speakers, are in fact angelic powers. In the words of Hebrews (1:14), with which Paul would probably not disagree, they are 'serving spirits sent out for ministry' (διακονείται). And they fulfill their ministry especially as co-workers of the prophets and as bearers and/or facilitators of the 'spiritual gifts' from the risen Lord.³

While it is true that Paul elsewhere speaks openly and unequivocally of good and evil spirits, he does not elsewhere make

¹Grudem, p. 126.
³Ibid., p. 139.
this exact connection—spirits (i.e., members of the spirit world such as angels) of prophets. Consequently, one must be cautious when applying his rather general terms regarding the cosmic struggle between members of the spirit world to the explicit language of 14:32. Also, while it is not difficult to see an association in Corinth between pneumatics and prophets, it does take a certain leap in logic to assert that the spirits in question are angels.

Additionally, the same anarthrous genitive construction, though singular, is seen in Rom 8:9 with reference to God (τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ and Christ (τὸν ἐν Χριστῷ). Following Ellis' line of reasoning, one might be forced to conclude that the phrase "spirit of God" is a way of referring to an angel of the Most High. But the context in Romans makes such a view untenable. Furthermore, a close look at Paul's use of τὸν with various genitive nouns indicates that Ellis' argument cannot be consistently applied, and so may not be the best interpretation of τὸν τοὺς τοιούτους. Nowhere does the view in favor of angels surmount the following objections:

(a) Within the NT, there is no unambiguous instance where τὸν without further specific qualification from context refer to angels; this simply was not a term which the NT writers commonly applied to angels. (b) Outside the NT, Ellis has not found even one instance of true prophetic speech which is ever said to be inspired by angels (and there is of course no clear case of this in the NT).¹

¹Grudem, p. 122. Though his terminology is quite different from that of Ellis, Grosheide comes close to Ellis' argument regarding angels. He consistently maintains the term "spirits" without further qualification and suggests that there were spirits whom God endowed with prophetic charismata. He then adds the opaque observation that God subjects these spirits to the prophets themselves (Grosheide, p. 339). In his avoidance of such terms as "human" or "divine" or "angels," Grosheide lets stand a certain intriguing ambiguity.
Concluding Comments Regarding Prophets and Spirits

The suggestion has been made that different prophets are alluded to by the different cases used in vs. 32 (τροφοτών τροφοτάς), with the genitive form referring to those prophets mentioned in vs. 30 who are willing to yield to the prophet who receives a later revelation. In this sense, the spirits of the first prophets subject themselves to the spirits of the prophets with the more recent revelation. However, in that case, one might expect Paul to have referred to the prophets themselves rather than the spirits of the prophets. Furthermore, if διοτοποτάτα had been written in the imperative rather than the indicative mood, the sense would be "should subject themselves" rather than merely "subject themselves," and in that case the above-mentioned argument would have been strengthened. But the indicative mood weakens that line of reasoning. Accordingly, it seems more reasonable to conclude that the two terms of prophets in vs. 32, though in different cases, refer to only one group of prophets.

While some lineaments of the τροφοτά may be less than clear, the over-all meaning of the verse is not uncertain—orderly control must predominate, and the spirits of the prophets will cooperate to that end. In a community rife with religious enthusiasts, where the common notion was "... the more wonderful is also the more divine," Paul's concern for order and control was a vital influence. "That

1 Godet, though he differs with that view, makes reference to it, together with the names of a few who support it, p. 306.
2 Meyer, p. 421.
3 von Dobschütz, p. 18.
the Church was saved from the pitfalls inevitable with such a movement seems to have been largely due to the sanity and restraining influence of Paul.\footnote{Guy, p. 118.} And although the gift of prophecy was more rational and controlled than glossolalia, at least from the standpoint of intelligibility, still the danger of over-excitability and disorder seemed always close to the surface. Due to the persistent counsel of Paul,

The Christian prophet became one who, instead of indulging in wild flights of apocalyptic fancy or being absorbed in mystical experience, proclaimed the "word of the Lord" for his own day and contributed to the ὑστορεῖν of the Church of his own and future generations.\footnote{Ibid.}

\begin{quote}
οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀκαταστάσις ὁ θεὸς
ἀλλὰ ἔσονται (33a)
"For God is not of confusion but of peace"
\end{quote}

In vs. 33a, Paul comes to the ground and basis of all that has preceded in chap. 14, and particularly in the pericope beginning in vs. 26. Although he has used γὰρ in vs. 31, it seems to refer back only to the activity of prophesying, which topic was begun in vs. 29. But the γὰρ of vs. 33a seems more widely resumptive, as it refers to the contrast between disorder and peace which has a bearing on the entire preceding discussion. Godet simply says, "The general maxim stated in this verse is the foundation of all the preceding injunctions."\footnote{Ibid.} And the argument is grounded in the nature of God, for "The God who gives the inspiration is not on the side

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
of disorder and turbulence, but on that of peace. . . . Inspiration is no excuse for conflict and confusion, and jealousies and dissensions are not signs of the presence of God. . . ."¹

It is of interest, however, that the contrast Paul draws is between ἀκατάστασις and εἰρήνη. A more logical contrast might have been between ἀκατάστασις and τάξις-τάγμα. Then the contrast would have been disorder/order. Such a choice seems particularly logical in view of the close proximity of ὑπότασσω in vs. 32, of which τάξις is a cognate. However, it is conceivable that the order Paul envisioned for the Church was not necessarily best described by the τάξις-τάγμα concept of careful order and arrangement, where every activity is planned ahead and little room is left for spontaneity.²

"A charismatic meeting for worship cannot be ordered and controlled by some wooden scheme or formula. Order results when all the members listen to the one Spirit and when each member regards the other as better than himself (Phil 2:3)."³ Presumably then, the God of peace would not necessarily be in antithesis to a dynamic orderliness that allowed for both order and freedom. Admittedly, "Paul has been laying down . . . nothing less than the outlines of an order of worship,"⁴ and vs. 33a adds to that sense of divine exactitude in worship. That

¹Robertson and Plummer, p. 324.

²At the same time, this argument cannot be pressed far, inasmuch as, in his brief concluding statement in vs. 40, Paul does in fact use the term τάξις to characterize what he hoped would be their liturgical behavior.


was the stress needed in voluble Corinth. But at the same time, as shown above, much of what has preceded makes clear that such orderliness need not preclude a certain spiritual aliveness in the assembly.

The Spirit does not give free rein to arbitrary will but posits firmly established order as the effect and the constituent of holy law. Granted he does not do this by creating an inviolable organization articulated according to some ruling concept; for then man would be the slave of the institution. What the Spirit does do is to give insight into the exigencies of the particular situation and at the same time, by the establishment of the nomos Christou, to set for individuality a limit which it must not transgress.1

Because the Corinthian church had transgressed that limit, and because the assembly had exalted individuality to such an eminence, worship practices had deteriorated to such a condition that the members needed the reminder that God does not preside over ἀκαταστασία. Such instruction emphasizes the degree of disorder that must have been present in Corinth, for diversity of forms and practices was common in the early assemblies.

No one can read the New Testament without immediately being aware that it thrills with the sense of barriers long-standing being broken down. Diverse in its external expression the Spirit is nevertheless creative of unity, a unity, we emphasize, which is not dependent on a unity of outward form nor destroyed by varieties of outward form, but which transcends all merely organizational differences.2

Schweizer concurs and emphasizes that the Church must always minister within a context of time and place, and such a mission demands a certain freedom of order and liturgy.

There is not such a thing as . . . the New Testament church order,

1Ibid., p. 74.

the New Testament service. The church always has to meet the challenge, the danger, the possible misunderstanding of its time and its place. There is no church order for the centuries, there is only the always renewed question of the Lord of the church: Is the order in your church and in your worship service a clear, challenging, and comforting witness of the gospel to the world?¹

How a given community can best give such a witness of the gospel to the world in terms of its liturgical practice is not a simple issue. There are dangers on the side of rigid regulation of the service, as well as on the side of free expression. No one statement or formula can be appropriate for every church of every age. But for Corinth, the "God of peace" was the concise expression Paul would have the believers remember as they reflected on and corrected their order of service.

CHAPTER IV

THE HISTORICAL CONTINUUM

The Early Silence

Whatever the nature of the Corinthian tongues phenomena, the second and third centuries are strangely silent about such manifestations. In the first extra-canonical account of a Christian service of worship, Justin Martyr refers to members all sending prayers heavenward after the main exhortation of the meeting, whereupon they join in a liturgical "Amen" which is reminiscent of 1 Cor 14:16 ("How will he, the layman, say the Amen ת"א אַעֲמִּנּו when you speak that which he does not understand?"). While the sending of prayers heavenward might be the equivalent of the Corinthian speaking in tongues, the description in 14:23, 26b of the Corinthian excitement does not harmonize easily with Justin's portrayal. Rather, it appears that sometime during the first 100 years after Paul, the unintelligible, confusing aspects of worship present in Corinth disappeared, along with a certain amount of spontaneity. At least the charismatic elements of worship that were so prevalent in

---

1"When the reader is finished the leader delivers an address through which he exhorts and requires them to follow noble teachings and examples. Then we all rise and send heavenwards prayers. And, as said before, as soon as we are finished praying, bread and wine mixed with water are laid down and the leader too prays and gives thanks, as powerfully as he can, and the people join in saying the 'Amen.'" (Justin Martyr Apology 1:67).
Corinth seem to be absent in Justin's description.\(^1\)

A search for tongues references during the post-apostolic period is not a rewarding endeavor. Origen mentioned a problematical statement by the unbelieving Celsus that is at least reminiscent of a tongues experience.\(^2\) Elsewhere, such experiences are cited only with reference to Montanus and his prime disciple, Tertullian. But because of the egotistical claims of Spirit-possession that characterized Montanism, it is conceivable that there were "no genuine cases of glossolalia in the post-apostolic era. Speaking in tongues had definitely ceased."\(^3\) David Christie-Murray observes that "the records of Christian glossolalia up to the Reformation are so meager and savor so much of other saintly wonder stories that a critic can be forgiven for doubting all of them."\(^4\) An oft-quoted statement by Chrysostom is offered as evidence of this apparent cessation of the manifestation.

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.\(^5\)

---


\(^2\)Origen, Against Celsus, 7.9 (ANF 4:614). Celsus charges that on certain occasions some Christians spoke in "strange, fanatical, and quite unintelligible words, of which no rational person can find the meaning: for so dark are they, as to have no meaning at all; but they give occasion to every fool or imposter to apply them to suit his own purposes."

\(^3\)Gromacki, The Modern Tongues Movement, p. 17.


\(^5\)John Chrysostom Homily 29 (NPN 12:168).
Other than these cryptic statements, the early records are silent regarding tongue-speaking. Such silence must be noted inasmuch as "the fathers lived in cities and wrote to cities in every significant area of the Roman Empire. If glossolalia had been widespread and in existence, it would have been alluded to or mentioned in some way."\(^1\) But although "the fathers wrote on every major New Testament doctrine . . . there is no mention of tongues."\(^2\) Surely this silence must be regarded as significant.

However, the fact of the silence is more easily established than the reason for the silence. Morton Kelsey offers the suggestion that the demise of tongues was a consequence of both external and internal factors. The church was under attack from without in that wild rumors had Christians conjuring up natural disasters and eating their own babies. In a time of such accusations, it was important to put a rational stamp on the movement, and the glossolalic experience would hardly do that. Talking in or about tongues would simply add to the charges that Christians were a weird group. Then too, there were those within the church who were clamoring for positions of influence, whose teaching and example would cast a questionable light on the new church. Montanus, a second-century Christian from Phrygia, made many claims about the Holy Spirit residing in him, and those claims were supported by a group of loyal followers. Furthermore, those followers of Montanus felt the gifts of tongues and prophecy were of special importance and needed


\(^2\) Ibid.
a more elevated role in the church. But at a time when the evangelistic destiny of the church was becoming increasingly clear, it was also clear that the Montanist emphasis would not be a plus for the church.

As their enthusiasm degenerated into arrogance, their asceticism into legalism, the movement died out, and it seems fair to infer that tongue-speech disappeared with it. This does not mean that the church negated glossolalia; it simply could not let the kind of enthusiasm exemplified by Montanism take over the whole group and remove it to a cloister to die ingrained or persecuted. Tongue-speech was, as it were, filed away.\(^1\)

To these points, Christie-Murray adds the suggestion that similar ecstatic practices in the mystery religions made the practice in the church suspect.\(^2\) He also posits that in most religions, initial enthusiasm tends to give way to a more ordered "decorous worship conducted decently and in order by sober priests."\(^3\)

Benjamin Warfield has suggested that all miracles and charismatic gifts were temporary phenomena, originally bestowed for the purpose of authenticating the Apostolic calling.\(^4\) Support can be seen in the incident in Acts 8:14-17 where the Samaritans, the first converts to be gathered into the church by men who were not apostles, Kelsey, p. 34.

\(^1\)Although the chapter on Context shows that there may have been certain connections between Hellenistic, cultic ecstaticism and that of the Corinthian Christians, this does not deny the point made here. It is possible that the ecstatic fervor in and around Corinth helped provide a fertile environment in which ecstaticism could grow and spill over into the Christian church there. But sober reflection and the passage of several decades could easily bring about the changed attitude of skepticism suggested by Christie-Murray.

\(^3\)Pp. 34, 35.

lacked the miraculous powers of the Spirit until Peter and John came to them and laid their hands on them. The record suggests that charismatic gifts were not conferred on others than the Apostles, with the two exceptions of Pentecost and the conversion of Cornelius. Ignoring these exceptions, Warfield asserts that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the following extraordinary working of the powers and gifts of the Spirit were only "through and under the guidance of the Apostolate."¹ As a consequence, Warfield reasons that after the Gospel and the attendant apostolic roles were authenticated, there was no longer need for miraculous or charismatic demonstrations.

Warfield draws further support from Abraham Kuyper's view that after the Scriptures were completed, the Holy Spirit no longer revealed himself in an individualistic way. Inasmuch as there is the collective revelation of God now in Scripture which God intended would minister as an organic whole to all people of every age, the Holy Spirit need not manifest himself in a personal, mystical manner to every individual. "Hence inspiration is no inshining of God's Spirit in the human spirit that endlessly repeats itself, but an action from the side of God which is limited to a definite period and bound to definite conditions."² The implications of

¹Ibid.

²Principles of Sacred Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1954), p. 353. Kuyper carries his point a bit far, however, when, having made a clear distinction between an individualistic revelation which he calls "mystic-atomistic," and his view, which he calls "organic" he asserts: "The first has been done by all fanatics, the latter by all churches," p. 355. Such a statement does not do justice to the concept of individualized charisms as witnessed in a variety of Pentecostal-type churches, unless, of course, Kuyper is including them in his "fanatic" category.
this view for the continued manifestations of χαράγματα are at once apparent. Having adopted Kuyper's position, Warfield concludes, "Therefore, it is that the miraculous working which is but the sign of God's revealing power, cannot be expected to continue, and in point of fact does not continue after the revelation of which it is the accompaniment has been completed."¹

By means of an exegetical study of 1 Cor 13:8-11, Stanley Toussaint addressed the issue of the disappearance of tongues² and concluded that tongues were envisioned by Paul from the very beginning as a temporary gift. Toussaint states that chap. 13 falls naturally into three parts which describe the necessity of love (vss. 1-3), the nature of love (vss. 4-7), and the endurance of love (vss. 8-13). In the last section he sees the three terms "prophecy," "knowledge," and "tongues" used to contrast that which is temporary, with love, which is permanent. But his article concentrates on when the three temporary phenomena were to disappear. After analyzing the nature of the verbs used,³ and the omission of any mention of tongues in vss. 9 and 12, he concludes that while prophecy and knowledge are to be superseded at the time of the Advent, tongues will have already ceased. He closes with the statement,

In 1 Corinthians 13 the change of voice and vocabulary in the verbs of verse 8 and the lack of any reference to tongues in

¹Miracles, pp. 26, 27.
³The future passive form of χαράγμα is used for both prophecy and knowledge, meaning "will be done away, superseded." However, the future middle form of χαράγμα is used for tongues, which simply means, "will cease."
verses 9 and 12 imply the gift of tongues ceases before the rapture of the church occurs. Tongues were a temporary gift that God used in the early years of the church. They have long since ceased because their purpose was not a permanent one.

It is an interesting hypothesis that merits consideration, but it should be noted that the author bases his firm conclusion on that which is only implied. Furthermore, in 1 Cor 7:26, 29, 31, Paul reveals his conviction that the parousia was imminent. If that was still his belief in chap. 13, then Toussaint's hypothesis is seriously flawed.

The same virtual silence regarding tongues that characterized the earliest Christian records continued in the records of the Middle Ages. References to charismatic manifestations during this period are all but impossible to find. St. Bernard is set forth as one of the most important mystics of the time, but his rhapsodic expressions, though frequent and emotional, were apparently always controlled, intelligible and quite unlike Corinthian glossolalia.²

Although the period of the Reformation was one of doctrinal revival, there was no apparent attempt to recover glossolalia. During this era, Scripture became more accessible than it had been in previous years, and the great issues of inspiration, sin, and justification were studied and debated. Great documents and creedal statements were produced, yet "not one of these even intimated that the doctrine of speaking in tongues had a part in the continuing stream of God's work or in the present-day activity in which the

¹Ibid., pp. 315, 316.

Holy Spirit directs."\(^1\) In addition, after referring to several Catholic saints of the Reformation period, Schaff observes that "not one of these saints claimed the gift of tongues or other miraculous powers..."\(^2\) Supposed references to a tongues-like experience prove elusive when brought under close scrutiny.\(^3\) In this vein, Dollar simply denies historical continuity to the modern tongues movement:

It has not been, it is not, nor can it be based on church history and a stream of witnesses to tongues down through the centuries. Indeed, from a few instances of it in New Testament times there has not been an occurrence of it since, unless allowance is made for the rather spotty and questionable practices among some medieval mystics. The voice of history... is that God has majored on those things which are given priority in his own Word and not on those things which men claim by experience, however hectic or calm.\(^4\)

---


\(^2\) History of the Christian Church, 1:241.

\(^3\) Gromacki, p. 20. An example is the assertion that "Dr. Martin Luther was a prophet, evangelist, speaker in tongues and interpreter, in one person, endowed with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit." However, the source of the statement remains shrouded in mystery. It is cited by Thomas Zimmerman in "Plea for Pentecostalists," Christianity Today 7 (January 4, 1963):12, as originating in a work by Erich Sauer entitled History of the Christian Church, 3:406. But when I could not locate the work by Sauer, I made contact with Mr. Zimmerman, who acknowledged that he had picked up the reference from a secondary source by Elmer Miller, Pentecost Examined by a Baptist Lawyer (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1936), p. 19. The statement is also used by Robert Gromacki, p. 19, in a direct citation from Zimmerman's article, and also in Carl Brumback, "What Meaneth This?" (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1947), p. 92, though Brumback refers only to Sauer as the source. Continuing research has not been fruitful—the work by Sauer remains a mystery; so the statement about Martin Luther and tongue-speaking remains unclear. Even those most concerned to find evidence in favor of tongue-speaking allow that the quotation cited should not be used as "conclusive evidence" that Luther was actually a glossolalist (Brumback, p. 92).

\(^4\) P. 321. But Dollar may have been too generous in making allowance for "questionable practices among some medieval mystics," for such occurrences are extremely difficult to document. At best
The Resurgence

It was the Post-Reformation period (1648-1900) that saw a sporadic re-emergence of references to tongue-speaking. Charismatic demonstrations took place within a variety of Christian groups such as the Jansenists (Roman Catholic), Quakers, Irvingites, Mormons, and others. But the varied accounts are marked by confusion and discrepancies. Children as young as three years are alleged to have spoken in tongues, while others were gripped by convulsions as supposed evidence of Spirit-possession. That such experiences constituted a revival of Corinthian tongue-speech is open to debate. In fact there were numerous similar experiences of a completely non-religious nature.

Moreover, the re-appearance of charismatic experiences has not consistently coincided with times of increased religious awareness. Thus many revivals have been quite void of such manifestations. The development of new religious groups in America (e.g., Puritans, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, etc.), though often moved by deep convictions and fervent feelings, did not demonstrate those feelings by glossolalia or other spectacular charisms.

Even in the strenuous days of the Great Awakening and the days of spiritual heat of the frontier revivals these things did not occur. Thousands were greatly moved, convicted of their sin and sins but they found no expression of a relief from these in such as is claimed by Pentecostals today.

they may be similar to what Schaff calls "Analogous phenomena of an inferior kind, and not miraculous, yet serving as illustrations . . . reappearing from time to time in seasons of special religious excitement, as among the Camisards and the prophets of the Cevennes in France . . ." (Schaff, 1:237).

1 Pattison, p. 74.  
2 Ibid.; and also Gromacki, p. 23.  
3 Cutten, p. 136.  
4 Dollar, pp. 319, 320.
Nevertheless, the twentieth century has seen a significant resurgence in spectacular physical manifestations that have been purported to be genuine copies of the Corinthian originals. In the early part of the decade of the 1960s, charismatic demonstrations spread so rapidly that the result was referred to as the Neo-Pentecostal movement. As might be expected, theologians rapidly took sides, and articles and books proliferated. Since there was no denying the realism of the physical displays, debate centered on the impetus of the manifestations, with reactions running the expected gamut from demon possession to Holy Spirit possession, with self-hypnosis somewhere in between.

All the reasons behind the charismatic renewal are too complex to be dealt with fully in this dissertation, but the following observations have some pertinence to the resurgence:

(1) Genuine gifts of the Spirit are at God's disposal, not man's, and have been distributed in this century as in the first century, according to His will. Since His ways are "past finding out," it is futile for mankind to debate the reasons behind any action of the Almighty. Wherever distributed, and however manifested, the gifts are genuine, so they should be experienced and enjoyed, not questioned.

(2) As Rationalism came to dominate not only the theology but also the liturgical practices of Christian worship, the loss of feeling and emotion became acute. The consequent reaction was to seek for a greater "feeling" of religious experience, and thus recapture some of the excitement and power of the church in its infancy. In this regard, glossolalia was perceived as a manifestation that could "recapture apostolic Christianity literally in its entirety, above
all the power of it, understood in terms of religious enthusiasm." Accordingly, there has been a certain amount of "self-hypnosis born of the earnest desire to recover and reproduce the simplicity of the early first century Christian faith and practice." (3) Since, from the first century, spirits were to be tested (1 John 4:1,2) and not naively believed, careful evaluation of ecstatic displays is as "biblical" as is the charism itself. Thus attitudes of questioning are not to be equated with cynical unbelief. Furthermore, such a testing would be unnecessary if there were not false manifestations to guard against. Consequently, it is safe to assume that some ecstatic manifestations have been prompted not by God, but by wishful thinking or worse.3

Implications of the Pauline Counsel
The Continuing Appropriateness of \(\chiαρσυνα\)

If the Corinthian \(\chiαρσυνα\) were God-given (1 Cor 12:5,6), if the very word was chosen to stress the gracious activity of God among believers,4 then the re-appearance of tongues or any other gift should not be disparaged because of a predilection against such or because of some previous human abuse. Just as the original diversity of gifts emanated from "the same Spirit" (1 Cor 12:8,9), it follows that such diversity could apply not only to the Spirit's manifestations at a given time and place in the Apostolic church but also to His manifestations in different historical periods. Humankind

1Ibid.
2Martin, Glossolalia in the Apostolic Church, p. 66.
3Gromacki, p. 28. 4See especially pp. 65-67.
is always limited by a historical framework of time and place, but God has repeatedly condescended to fashion His revelation according to those limitations. Thus, to the Israelites just out of Egypt, He came with simple declarations of what He was like and what He expected (Exod 19:20-23:33). Later, He inaugurated worship rituals filled with symbols and blood sacrifices that made indelible impressions. While numerous wonder-works characterized the life and times of Elijah, few such signs were alluded to by the post-exilic prophets. To a Babylonian king, God used the inherent awe and superstition regarding dreams as a means of revelation (Dan 2:28,29). Much later, when the time was right (Gal 4:4), He sent His crowning revelation in His Son, who also tempered His revelations according to the perceptions of His hearers ("It is not for you to know times or seasons..." Acts 1:7). In the book of Acts are recorded numerous demonstrations of Divine power such as healings, exorcisms, and prison-breaks, all of which seem to serve as accompaniment for that recurring theme, "and the Holy Spirit said..." But with the passage of the decades, the Pastorals and other late Epistles reveal a church still reaching out but concerned with organization, with positions of leadership, with orderly procedures, while the Spirit has assumed a more passive role than earlier. Truly the manifestations varied greatly, but the source of power was the same.

Such a view of the divine origin of the χαρέωσις is essential if certain pitfalls are to be avoided. For example, in the numerous books and articles that have taken a skeptical view of glossolalia,¹

¹Such works, as those mentioned earlier, by Mosimann, Cutten, Martin, etc.
discussion of χάρωςωμα and its cognates has been noticeably absent. It appears that such studies do not take seriously enough the continuity of thought between 1 Cor 12 and 14. But the lists of gifts given in 12:8-10 and 28-30 are clearly integral with the phrase in 14:1b, τολμήστε δὲ τὰ τεματώματα ("and be zealous of spiritual things"). In other terms, if one allows the concept of χάρωςωμα ("gracious gift") to carry its full weight, then each manifestation listed, including tongues, must be reckoned with as originally God-given.

Similarly, in the various studies that have probed the psychological aspects of tongue-speaking,¹ this concept of glosso­lalia as a charism has not been dealt with adequately. Some authors have concentrated on the apparent affinity between certain glos­solic displays and various psychological disorders.² While the results of such studies have not been uniform, the popular appeal of such writing has further clouded the issue of tongues as a gift of the Spirit. But to make an easy association between what appears to be excessively emotional behavior and the working of the Holy Spirit is neither accurate nor fair.

... the attempt to understand the phenomenon exclusively in psychological terms as some sort of egocentric emotional disorder appears to know more about the moving of the Spirit than is actually warranted. These detractors, who look down on the primitive practice from the vantage point of a more


reserved time, are quick to quote Paul's censure of its excesses.  

While it seems clear that diverse gifts of the Spirit have continued to minister to the needs of the church through the centuries, the vagaries of language and the passage of time should not be ignored. That is, one must be cautious about assuming that a word used to describe a gift in A.D. 50 means the same thing in 1980. Yet, in the extensive evaluation of the psychological and phenomenological aspects of tongue-speaking, there is often a veiled assumption that Pauline glossolalia and twentieth century glossolalia are identical phenomena. However, in view of the lapse of the phenomenon for many centuries, and in view of the fluidity of the original terms, a simplistic equating of current behavior with the Corinthian experience is not warranted. Consequently, to say that a gift of tongues may be an appropriate charism for twentieth-century Christians does not commit one to current "Pentecostal understanding of it, nor to their kind of religion."  

Changing Needs and Changing Gifts

As the needs and circumstances of the church have changed with the years, it is a reasonable assumption that the Spirit would

---

1 Baird, The Corinthian Church, p. 125. Baird's statement should not be generalized to include all psychological analyses of tongues-like behavior. It is only when such studies approach the topic "exclusively in psychological terms" that his observation obtains.


3 Tugwell, p. 137.
be as dynamic and flexible in modern times as in Bible times. Accordingly, the question is raised as to whether or not we should expect to see any or all of the Corinthian χαράσματα displayed in the church today.

Though genuine gifts have been abused in Corinth and elsewhere through the years, abuse of a gift is not sufficient reason for it to lose all credibility. Any gift that results in public disclosure (e.g., gifts of healing, working of miracles, tongues, 1 Cor 12:9,10) is a "potential source of embarrassment to the church because of the ease with which it could be confused with charlatanry, sorcery, or the magical practice of exorcism."^ But gifts of the Spirit do not cease to be such when human effort conjures up remarkable imitations. Believers must be prepared to live with the tension that accepts the genuineness of the χαράσματα, and at the same time allows for the possibility of their perversion.

At the same time, it is possible that some of the Corinthian gifts, though they served an essential function when originally bestowed, could, because of altered attitudes and conditions, actually become an obstruction to the advance of the Christian cause. If, for example, there developed an unhealthy preoccupation with miracles and all manner of supra-mundane phenomena, it is conceivable that continued performance of miracles of healing could be misconstrued and prove counter-productive for the church.

Accordingly, when Paul gave his various lists of gifts in (1 Cor 12:8-11; 28-30), it is probable that neither list was intended

^Currie, pp. 293, 294.
to be exhaustive for all time. Those gifts mentioned should not be viewed as "closely defined entities or permanent abilities, but possible ways in which the Spirit may choose to work at a particular time in a particular individual." A careful look at the gifts listed reveals that they related to the internal life and functions of the corporate body of believers, as well as to the outreach of the church to the surrounding community. To the extent that other Christian communities have the same needs and attitudes, the same gifts might be expected to continue. However, the church is conditioned by time and place, so its members must constantly evaluate in what ways each charism continues to minister to the community and at the same time be aware of other manifestations of God's power that might be a latter-day counterpart of the Corinthian χαρίσματα. In this sense, Paul's statement that the Spirit distributes "to each one as he wishes" (1 Cor 12:11) reaches beyond the immediate setting of Corinth. Accordingly, Corinthian insistence on tongues (1 Cor 14:23) and twentieth-century denial of (or insistence on) tongues are equally wrong. Since the Spirit "blows where he wishes" (John 3:8), His particular gifts and the manner of their distribution should hardly be concretized into one short list of seven or eight empowering procedures. Following such a line of reasoning.

... if Paul were to list the charismata necessary for the Church in Ireland today it is probable that right at the top of the list would come a political charisma. We cannot deny that there are some with this gift of God, but they are few and far between. ...3

---

3 Best, "The Interpretation of Tongues," p. 59.
Similarly, although he tends to slight the more spectacular manifestations of χαράγωγα, Karl Rahner makes a strong point in favor of the more mundane demonstrations of God's power that he feels are equally genuine gifts. His recurring theme is that such gifts can be unspectacular and therefore almost unnoticed in the church today.

If we had real humility and goodness we would see far more marvels of goodness in the Church. But because we are selfish ourselves, we are only ready to see good, good brought about by God, where it suits our advantage, our need for esteem, or our view of the Church. But this unrecognized goodness, and even charismatic goodness, is found in the Church in rich abundance... Can it not be charismatic goodness to be a patient nursing sister, serving, praying, and asking nothing else of life?1

Such a position begs the question as to whether a charisma is something the Spirit miraculously bestows, which then enables the person to do something which he could not otherwise do, or whether it is simply a Spirit-directed improvement of a person's abilities now that he has become a Christian. The issue is thus a matter of degree of control by the Spirit, with the spectrum ranging from total control on the one end to little more than natural human abilities on the other. Scholars who lean toward the latter suggest, for example, that a preacher has certain communicative abilities which are heightened by the Spirit, the combination of which enables him to be an agent to convert and nurture others in the faith. Such might be called "prophecy." 2 Accordingly, although all χαράγωγα

---

1 The Dynamic Element in the Church (London: Burns & Oates, 1964), p. 65. In a similar vein, Arnold Bittlinger asserts that the total activity of the Christian doctor is "charismatic." "A prescription or an innoculation are only different ways of laying on hands. Both are done prayerfully and in fellowship with Jesus" (Bittlinger, Gifts and Graces, p. 72).

2 Best, "The Interpretation of Tongues," p. 60. Similarly, Bittlinger states that a charisma is manifested when, "being set
are gifts of grace, there is an interaction between the concept of "gift" and human response.

All are gifts; yet at the same time they are activities involving effort on the part of those receiving them. This idea of activity is suggested first by the word "serve" (12:5) and then by the most general term possible—"working" (12:6).  

Such a view of the gifts is often the result of reacting against an exaggerated supernaturalism. Accordingly, Eduard Schweizer asserts that the two most important characteristics of the χαράσματα are those referred to in 12:3,7--i.e., they must give a positive testimony to the Incarnation, and they must minister to the common good (τοῖς τῷ συμφέρον). In fact, it is on the basis of this last principle, according to Schweizer, that Paul actually stresses the non-ecstatic gifts, since they are more effective for the building up of the corporate body of Christ. For Paul, the real yardstick for estimating the value of ministries is the effect they have on outsiders and unbelievers (ζωότητα, ἰσχύσ τοῦ). So, a charism does not efface a person's natural personality, nor is there to be a striving to attain an experience characterized by irrationality. A charismatic experience is not the result of one abandoning his rationality to the Spirit's power, nor is it the result of the

free by the Holy Spirit, my natural endowments blossom forth, glorifying Christ and building up His church" (Bittlinger, Gifts and Graces, p. 72).


3Bittlinger stresses the same two points, but does so in reverse order in Gifts and Graces, p. 72.
vigorous exertions of one who desires to expand God's kingdom.

Schweizer combines the two elements well when he says: "The fulness of grace is shown in God's taking man, together with his full responsibility, into his service." In spite of his strong emphasis upon God's gracious activity in the χαράγματα, Dunn likewise concedes that there must be some kind of human response.

Charisma may of course chime in with an individual disposition and temperament, and will certainly make use of natural abilities (even glossolalia makes use of the vocal chords); the expression of divine power through the human frame will certainly be tempered in some degree by the body's limitations.

Still he cautions against carrying the idea too far and reiterates that a charism can only be manifested when there is dependence upon and openness to God.

So one can exercise even such charismata as celibacy, teaching, giving to the poor, helping, only when one recognizes that they are not something performed in one's own power, but only when one stands in conscious dependence on God.

The Continuing Need of the Mystical

At the same time, the possibility of continuing χαράγματα is not uniformly welcomed. There are those in the church who hold suspect all things they consider "charismatic." In a time when computers and scientific advances capture the imagination, there is often resistance to religious expression that is marked by what is perceived as inordinate enthusiasm. Nevertheless, as both Tugwell and Sweet have observed, in an era when great stress is placed on a rather cerebral approach to religion, it is conceivable that

1 Church Order, p. 186. 2 Jesus and the Spirit, p. 256. 3 Ibid. 4 p. 140. 5 p. 256.
Paul's counsel might easily stress the need for more "praying with the Spirit" rather than less. Admittedly, the personal needs of worshippers vary considerably. With some, there are God-ward feelings that always remain unexpressed, while others are so constituted that they have few unexpressed thoughts or feelings.

Different Christians become aware in different ways of their weakness and inadequacy, and give expression in different ways to their deep need of God's grace. To one tied up in himself and unable to break out of himself, the release involved in surrendering himself to sheer God-ward babblings may indeed be seen, at least sometimes, as a gracious intervention of God's Spirit and a divine answer to his particular need.¹

But to others, worship must be characterized by a quiet dignity in which verbal expression is kept at an absolute minimum.

It seems clear, however, that verbal expressions of devotion comprise only one level of human experience and communication. For

... even in our ordinary life we constantly have experiences, emotions, premonitions for which there is no language. In those moments we have touched a range of existence which is beyond reason, and the instrument of reason is helpless.²

Modern psychiatry has probed the subconscious, making us aware of the complexity and depth of the human psyche. If an analogy can be drawn from human life and its expression, one must acknowledge the inadequacy of verbalizing every nuance of feeling and experience. No one can deny that the "language" of love extends beyond words to smiles, sighs, and various inarticulate sounds. So also, in Christian worship there is an experience that goes beyond articulation. Thus when, in 1 Cor 14:28c Paul admonishes an uninterpreted glossolalist

¹Wedderburn, p. 371.

to "speak to himself and to God," he thereby makes room for that broad spectrum of experiences called "mysticism."\(^1\)

After showing that in the human worship experience there are divine realities that are too deep for articulation, Langmead Casserley shows the similarities and contrasts between a glossolalic expression of those realities and the similar elements in liturgical music and religious pageantry. He acknowledges that in the music, there are intelligible words that give expression to the feelings, but he also asserts that

> We shall undervalue the importance of liturgical music if we think of it simply as an efficient way of facilitating the rendering of a liturgical text by a congregation of musically uninstructed people. On the contrary, it is the function of the music to suggest and express the vast deeps which lie beyond the expressive capacity of the text.\(^2\)

Though writing from a Catholic perspective, and consequently, placing the expected stress on the magnificence and meaning of the Mass as that religious ceremonial that goes beyond the mere verbal, Casserley makes an important point when he says:

---

\(^1\)In a time and place where religious practice seems governed largely by a kind of proper (some would say cold) formalism, it is well to remember that "Christianity does not condemn mysticism. There is a strong mystical strain in the writings attributed to St. John; and St. Paul had something that very much looked like an ecstatic experience at least once. Many, though not all, of the great saints throughout the last two millennia have been occasional if not habitual mystics. The great writings of Christian spirituality surely are ordered toward predisposing Christians for moments of ecstasy" (Andrew M. Greeley, Ecstasy, a Way of Knowing [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974], p. 734). Greeley appears to use mysticism and ecstasy very similarly. However, as defined in the glossary (p.vi), ecstasy may include vocalization while mysticism does not.

To demand that every detail in a pattern of ceremonial should have a verbal meaning is rather like supposing that once we have read the descriptive program notes at the symphony concert we may straightway go home, for now the music has nothing more to say to us. If the meanings of music and ceremonial were merely verbal meanings there would be no need for music or ceremonial.

The Need of Balance in the Worship Experience

Having acknowledged the need of the numinous and mystical in the Christian worship experience, one must remember that Paul's counsel to Corinth attempted to place certain controls on ecstatic expression of the mystical, and thus strike a balance between spontaneity and liturgical order. His underlying reason was that only where such a balance existed could there be edification of both the individual and the group. Likewise, it is still vital that public worship should make possible both personal and corporate growth. A balance must be maintained in Christian worship between perfect but cold order on the one hand, and spontaneous but chaotic expression of the mystical on the other. Rahner's statement, coming as it does from a Catholic perspective, is helpful:

Provision has to be made that bureaucratic routine, turning means into ends in themselves, rule for the sake of rule and not for the sake of service, the dead wood of tradition, ... and other such dangers, do not extinguish the Spirit.

But over the centuries, little such provision has been made. Although there has traditionally been an element in Christianity that has played down structured worship in favor of the "immediacy of the Spirit," Dunn asserts that that stream of Christianity is often "little more than a trickle." It is important that worship partake of both structure and freedom of expression. And while it

---

1Ibid. 2Rahner, p. 52. 3Unity and Diversity, p. 174.
is true that liturgical order and structural organization may have a deadening effect upon spontaneity, it would be unfair to generalize that the less liturgical the structure, the more Spirit-filled the church. Some informal churches can be as ritualized in their informality as some High Church organization. William Baird recalls,

In a tiny rural church in Oregon, a rustic Sunday school superintendent led the 'opening exercises' with unvaried rigidity: 'Now to your hymnals... Now to your leaflets... Now to your classes'.

Formality is needed, as patterns of worship help the worshipers to participate meaningfully. Yet, there must be opportunities for some freedom of expression, provided that freedom does not deteriorate into egocentric displays or emotional excesses. For "although it is bad when an outsider comes in and says you are mad, it is worse when a visitor comes in and says you are dead." 

The precise nature of a "balanced" worship experience is difficult to determine inasmuch as the individual make up of believers varies from church to church and from age to age. Just as the early church was characterized by diversity of form and expression, so allowance must be made for variety in modern religious expression. It is true that there were certain "constants in the life of the primitive Church--the Eucharist, Baptism, the Reading of Scripture, Prayer, Praise, Exposition, etc.," but the proportion of each in the service remains less than clear. Clearly the Corinthian believers felt comfortable with a high level of enthusiasm in

---

1Baird, The Corinthian Church, p. 157.  
2Ibid.  
their public worship service. "It was intensely alive; many spiritual gifts were exercised within it; many persons made their contributions, some large, some small, some quiet and solid, some showy and ephemeral."¹ But though Paul felt the group needed less public display and more control, he did not attempt to squeeze the Christian liturgy into one permanent shape. The ground of his reasoning, that God is a God of peace (1 Cor 14:33), provides for considerable latitude in the order of service. So in the churches of today, the proportion of emotional expression to formal order simply cannot be spelled out for all congregations. While the rationale of the God of peace must still prevail, edification of the corporate body can best be accomplished when a variety of types of Christian fellowship is not only allowed but approved. While congregations go about it in different ways, every Christian service should in some way be a marriage of dignity and devotion, formality and feeling, liturgical order and personal expression.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Over the years, the topic of glossolalia has remained something of an enigma in Christian churches. Evaluations of the phenomenon have ranged from demon possession on the one hard to divine inspiration on the other. This polarity may arise from the fact that books on the topic are rarely based on exegesis, and exegetical works rarely extrapolate implications for the contemporary scene. Accordingly, it has been the purpose of this dissertation to do a thorough exegesis of that segment of 1 Cor 14 by which the topic of glossolalia can best be explicated, and on the basis of that exegesis make pertinent applications of the biblical ideas.

Inasmuch as 1 Cor 26c-33a highlight and summarize the directives by which Paul sought to regulate the Corinthian worship service, these verses have provided the avenue of approach to the chapter and the topic.

Summary

To give a picture of approaches taken and conclusions reached on both the topic and text, several significant works were reviewed under the two categories: (1) books on the topic and (2) exegetical expositions of the text. As might be expected, the topical approaches vary widely, with some offering only a cursory evaluation of 1 Corinthians and others treating the phenomenon as though it were entirely
psychological in origin. None of the works that addressed glossolalia as a topic did so through the avenue of exegesis. The exegetical studies were likewise varied in both method and attitude. Several of these authors felt the tongues experience was intended to be of personal value to those who practiced it, but none felt it was to comprise a part of the public worship service unless carefully controlled. The exegetes agreed overwhelmingly on one point: Corinthian glossolalia was not a speaking in foreign languages but was some form of ecstatic, unintelligible vocalization.

An examination of the conditions that called forth the admonitions of Paul reveals a church that was at the same time charismatic and schismatic. Within a few verses, Paul compliments the believers for their gifts (1:7) and berates them for their factions (1:11,12). The order in which he comments on them may indicate why such attitudes co-existed. People who have an inordinate interest in spiritual gifts, whether of healings or miracles or tongues, may develop an attitude that is "uncongenial to the exercise of charity; it fosters pride, jealousy, backbiting, and other un-charitable emotions."[1]

As to how God-given charisms could lead to problematic behavior in Corinth, several factors may be mentioned. Clearly, the influences on the Corinthian Christians were many and varied. Ideas with Gnostic overtones were prevalent, as were Hellenistic and Judaistic influences. In addition, the fame of the nearby Delphic oracle cultus and the local "religious" frenzies of the Acro-Corinth[2] must have

---

made an impact on some of the Christians' attitudes and practices. These influences, together with some awareness of the excitement that had accompanied the birth of the church at Pentecost, may have been influential in precipitating the Corinthians toward a mind-set that would hardly "be satisfied with silent prayer."^1

At the same time, the possibility that the Corinthian Christians' worship attitudes and behavior were somewhat conditioned by their environment need not preclude the genuineness of the spiritual gifts such as tongue-speaking and prophesying. In keeping with the "flexible" way in which God has manifested Himself over the centuries, adapting both the method and content of revelation to the varying capacities of people, it is conceivable that, in a milieu where ecstatic religion was rampant, there were genuine charisms of ecstasy which, when properly understood and practiced, could minister to both the individual and the church.

Yet there is an indication that some in the Corinthian church were uncertain about their liturgical practices and had inquired of Paul about them. In any case chaps. 12-14 comprise Paul's response to several issues that fall under the general category of θεουματικὰ problems, foremost of which, was the place and function of tongue-speaking in the worship assembly. From Pentecost on, the presence of the Spirit in the church was felt to be essential, and since the initial out-pouring had been accompanied by a tongues manifestation, it is not surprising that some of the excitable Corinthians had developed a narrow view of Spirit-possession. Accordingly, if the Corinthians had in fact raised the issue, their inquiry

^1Baird, The Corinthian Church, p. 121.
must have been something like, "Are we safe in assuming that a manifestation of tongues is the sign par excellence of Spirit-possession?"

It is clear at the outset of Paul's answer that he is concerned to protect the importance and even the sanctity of the spiritual gifts. For example, he exhibits a bias for the term χάρισμα over τευχαρίσματος since it seems so clearly to stress the graciousness of the gift, an emphasis that is almost uniquely Pauline. In view of the human effort expended to attain certain charisms, it was essential to establish this aspect of grace in the origination of the χαρίσματα.

In 1 Cor 12:4-11 Paul confronts the narrow Corinthian attitude that seemed to say "My gift first and foremost." He assures the believers that it is the same God who works through a variety of ministries, and then in vss. 12-26 he illustrates his point by means of the figure of the body. In contrast with many interpretations which see in this figure only a stress on unity, the thrust of the analogy is on diversity. At the same time, an important point in Paul's developing argument is that corporate edification is best accomplished not by attitudes of independence among the gifted, but by attitudes of acceptance and interdependence between the recipients of all types of gifts. A dynamic church, like a growing body, must have a variety of members and those members may not all be of equal utility. But the true gradation is not the same as the apparent one. Thus in 12:28-30 Paul sets forth his own hierarchy of gifts, which stands that of the Corinthians on its head. For "it is the seemingly less important members of the body which are really

\[\text{\textsuperscript{1}}\text{See p. 66.}\]
If there is to be personal and collective growth in the Church, a variety of gifts must be at work, but they must work according to God's order of things, not man's.

In chap. 14, two of those gifts come sharply into focus, with prophecy getting the favorable light and tongue-speaking getting pushed to the shadows. Yet Paul fails to give the coup de grace to tongues, but rather he begins in vs. 26 to spell out the conditions under which tongue-speaking may continue as part of the service of worship. After many comments which depreciate tongues and exalt prophecy, the positive directives regarding tongues may seem surprising. But this dissertation has shown that in vss. 26c-33a Paul is providing an important conclusion to his preceding arguments and, in so doing, indicates that abuse of a gift need not nullify the legitimacy of the gift. Or to put it another way, hidden behind the over-wrought excitement in Corinth was a genuine charism of tongues which could only be revealed if certain decorous procedures were followed.

It is at once apparent that edification of the church is the dominant concern for Paul. It then follows that whatever does not minister to that up-building of the group falls under his displeasure, and the selfish desire of each believer to exalt only his own favorite gift (26b) does just that. While personal involvement is often upheld as a favorable element in church growth, vss. 23 and 26b indicate that the Corinthian involvement had become a preoccupation that was allowing the group witness to suffer.

\footnote{Fuller, p. 164.}
Consequently, Paul is concerned to make them face the import of ἀγάπη for the entire church.

Chap. 14 then is an acknowledged polemic, designed to correct a public practice that militated against the corporate growth of the church. Since Paul is nothing if not missionary minded, and since the Corinthians have allowed their enjoyment of the experiential to eclipse their concern for the edification of others, Paul's advice is incisive and unequivocal—in the assembly, uninterpreted glossolalia, which is very personal prayer and praise experience, has no place. But it should be kept in mind that Paul's disparaging remarks may well have been brought about by external factors of method rather than by something inherent in the gift itself. Accordingly, a Corinthian might still gain personal edification from glossolalia if the phenomenon is not dismissed but corrected.

By means of the simple condition expressed in vs. 27a, Paul indicates that he expects tongue-speaking to continue in the church. However, nowhere does he clearly define his term, since his auditors knew what he was referring to. The passage of time and the disappearance of the original manifestation have made difficult a clear definition in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, a working definition is essential for any understanding of the passage. The most obvious options, both of which have numerous credible proponents, are unintelligible and intelligible vocalizations. The latter, sometimes called xenoglossia, means a gift of speaking a foreign language which one had never taken the time to learn; the former, some type of ecstatic vocalization that did not constitute any known language pattern.

This particular issue cannot be resolved by an appeal to the
words Paul used to refer to it. Although some have attempted to show
that since the verbs and infinitives in 1 Cor 14 are always forms of
 练 and never 练, there is an inherent sense of meaningless
chatter built into the expression, the argument is not decisive. 1
The early Christian writers looked upon the gift as a foreign
language ability, yet admitted that it had disappeared. While a
number of modern expositors have espoused that view, a much larger
group favor the view that it represented some type of ecstatic,
unintelligible vocalization.

The exegesis of certain key verses throws considerable weight
behind the argument that, without an interpretation, Corinthian
glossolalia was unintelligible. An example is 14:2 which states
that "no one hears." The verb 练 here, when compared with its
use in Acts 9:7 and 22:9, as well as in the LXX translation of the
Babel account in Gen 11:7, means hearing with understanding, not
simply hearing. In other words, the RSV translation, "no one under­
stands," is the obvious intent of the phrase. Furthermore, the
phrase in vs. 2c furthers the argument when it asserts that the one
who speaks in a tongue "speaks mysteries in a spirit." Accordingly,
"the reference is not so much to the great mysteries of salvation but
rather to those things which, though they have been expressed, are
not clear to everybody." 2 So then Corinthian glossolalia was a
vocalization of praise that did not comport with any known, intelligible
speech patterns; hence the need for interpretation if the experience
were to be of public value.

Some have questioned the wisdom of calling it an "ecstatic"

1 See pp. 88-91. 2 Grosheide, p. 318.
experience since that term is never used in scripture. However, when it is used for the tongues experience, "ecstaticism" is not intended as a technical term; it is merely a descriptive word for an experience that is deeply emotional in nature. Granted that the term "ecstaticism" lacks specificity, it seems to be a reasonably useful word for what most scholars believe to be the alternative to xenoglossia.

The glossolalic phenomenon may well have been more complex than is allowed for in a simple either/or conclusion. It is possible that there was a continuum of experiences that moved from known human languages on one end of the spectrum, through several intermediate categories of language structure, to unintelligible vocalizations on the other end.\(^1\) However, that type of precise, analytical categorization, while typical of the modern, scientific spirit, is alien to first-century thought. In any case, though Paul referred to "various kinds of tongues" (12:10), he did not further define what he meant but simply indicated that the experience he had in mind was a gift of the Spirit, that it was being abused, and that there was an acceptable method of practicing it.

While all is not certain, some things about the tongues phenomenon are clear. It was intimately connected with the Spirit, from whom it was a gift (12:10,28); yet it was a prayer-type of experience directed to God by "my spirit" (14:2,15). As opposed to prophecy, which embodied intelligible content for the congregation, glossolalia, though not void of content, was not intelligible without an interpretation (14:5). Its function then was not for purposes

\(^1\)See p. 112.
of communicating messages to the church but rather for a kind of personal, spiritual uplift which was both a gift from God and a glorification or praise directed to God. Additionally, the gift was to give scattered, personal evidences that the Spirit was present and thus encourage and uplift not only the individual involved but also those in the assembly with whom the glossolalist would share the phenomenon on those occasions when, by the gift of interpretation, he was enabled to put the experience into intelligible words. It seems reasonably safe to conclude that the NT references to tongues included three primary manifestations: the "sign-tongue" referred to in Acts 2:4; 10:46, which may well have included a foreign-language ability and which was given to attest the genuineness of conversion or baptism; public tongue-speech which included an interpretation; and the uninterpreted tongue-speech of private devotion. According to this categorization, Paul berates the Corinthians for pridefully displaying what was actually intended to be a kind of "closet" experience. Such an experience would fit the concept of a "gift of the Spirit" and yet could be easily imitated by a person who felt pressured to conform to growing community expectations that the truly spiritual person should have some kind of spontaneous experience to show for his spirituality. If a true gift were thus prostituted into a demonstration of shallow enthusiasm, one might anticipate the correctives of Paul to be both swift and surgical. Thus, it is not surprising when the polemic seems to eclipse the gift that started it all.

As Paul proceeds with his directives that glossolalists are

---

1 See p. 116.
to speak in order and not more than three in any one meeting, it is clear that he is giving instruction regarding the public order or liturgy of the service of worship. Thus, in these verses, he does not address himself to the issue of private devotional practices. Such an awareness by expositors of the passage would be a safeguard against allowing Paul's correctives to eclipse not only the abuse but also the proper use of the gift.

That there was a proper use can be seen in the various positive statements concerning the gift that are scattered throughout the passage. While some interpreters have looked upon Paul's positive statements as simply tactical, or condescending, he comments favorably on the gift in such a variety of ways (e.g., 12:28; 14:15,17,18,22, 39) that it is difficult to conclude that he was merely being diplomatic. The suggestion that Paul had actually turned his back on tongues thus goes counter to much that is in the text. It seems better to take his positive statements at face value.

In addition, Paul's directives refute the notion that the experience of tongues which he approved was an uncontrollable seizure of ecstasy. Rather, both the spontaneous aspect of the gift of the Spirit and the restrictions inherent in human order were to come together in the proper tongues expression. It seems that while the Spirit was the source of the experience, the vehicle for its expression was to be a rational, controlled person who was able to hold back his public expression until the appropriate time. Furthermore, Paul's counsel for order in the worship service was intended to have a sobering effect upon the entire community of believers, so that the whole church would help determine if the time was appropriate, and thus provide
some additional guidance for the "gifted" ones. Such direction comports well with the definition given above, that the phenomenon was a Spirit-induced, private worship experience meant to edify the recipient (vs. 4). But if that excitement and encouragement were made public, then order must prevail, the members must take turns, and must limit such ecstatic reports to not more than three in any one meeting. Such an orderly procedure would take place only if the audience controlled its expectations and the speaker controlled his desire to make public his private experience. Thus it can be seen that the control exercised by the speakers had to do with when, or even whether, to speak but had little to do with controlling the content of the experience or the form of its verbal expression.

The term "interpret" in 27d refers to an ability given by the Spirit (12:1, 30) and should be prayed for by the glossolalist (14:13). The sense most consistent with the context in Corinthians seems to be "to interpret the significance of," which also conforms nicely with the preceding definition that regards glossolalia as a private worship experience. This is corroborated by the syntactical construction in vss. 27 and 28, which indicates that the "interpreter" may be simply a glossolalist who has been granted the ability to put his experience into words. Whether or not one glossolalist could thus "interpret" for another glossolalist cannot be proved or disproved from the text.

The two imperatives "let him keep silent" and "let him speak," show an interesting balance that reveals something of Paul's attitude toward the phenomenon. If he were entirely opposed to the manifestation, he might have concluded the verse with, "Let him keep silent

1See pp. 144, 145.
in the church." But his advice to "speak to himself and to God" suggests a continuing place for a private tongues experience, thereby indicating the importance he placed upon a personal, mystical worship experience that transcends complete verbal description.

Paul then repeats for the benefit of "prophets" several of the directives he gave for glossolalists. It is reasonable that in his summation of instruction he should address the prophets, since the entire chapter has focused on glossolalists and prophets in juxtaposition. Throughout chap. 14, the most obvious distinction Paul has made between tongues and prophecy is that the former is unintelligible, while the latter is readily understood. Nevertheless, the Corinthian prophets were more than simple preachers who exhorted the people with understandable homilies. They, like the glossolalists, were recipients of a divine gift of revelation, only theirs was given with the specific intent of instructing the assembled believers. Like tongues, prophecy originated with the Spirit, yet the prophet, in conjunction with a sympathetic congregation, was to exercise control over when and how long he spoke. In this way, the Spirit is regarded as actually being subject to a certain kind of control by the prophets. Here again is seen the melting together of the Divine Spirit and the human will for the collective up-building of the church.

Whereas the glossolalist might make public his experience by means of an "interpretation," the prophets, though not needing an interpretation, were to subject their messages to an evaluative, reflective process (διακριτική) by which the instructive content was in some way clarified for the listening audience. The need for such an evaluation indicates that attitudes toward the prophet and
his prophecy, though characterized by respect, were no longer the near-superstitious ones of earlier times when the prophet's word was felt to be synonymous with the word of the Lord. But divine origins for some messages did not rule out the possibility that spurious prophets and prophecies might appear. So, because of the potential for abuse of gifts, which did seem to be a problem in Corinth, Paul counseled the members to make careful reflection a regular part of the procedure. Inasmuch as the people were usually acquainted with those who prophesied, that reflection would normally entail a discussion of the meaning and application of the prophecy. However, if there were a more serious question about the veracity of the prophet himself, the members were reminded that a gift had been given to help them "distinguish between spirits" (12:10).

Finally, the ground and basis of all that has preceded in the chapter is given in the concise statement in vs. 33a, that God is a God "of peace, not of confusion." Because the Corinthians had exalted individuality to pre-eminence, their worship practices had fallen into such disarray that the only fit word to describe it seemed to be ἀναταστασις (disorder, confusion). However, as the believers reflected on Paul's counsel and corrected their practices accordingly, the compelling picture that he hoped would give impetus to a liturgy of order was that of the "God of peace."

Conclusions

As a result of this study, the following conclusions seem appropriate:

The gifts of the Spirit discussed in 1 Cor 12-14, including tongues, were genuine manifestations of God's grace, and changing
circumstances or attitudes cannot alter that meaning of χαιρετισμοι.
However, abuses set in so early that a precise analysis and description of the original tongues charism is somewhat difficult to achieve. Still, that difficulty is not overwhelming, for if no snapshot is available, a rough sketch can be drawn. Thus it appears that the unabused Corinthian tongues experience was a personal expression of prayer and praise for which no words were either adequate or necessary. At the same time, some vocalization spilled out, as is common today in times of intense grief or happiness. While such intensity of feeling and expression was not for public display, the Corinthians were so conditioned that when such an experience was "interpreted," and thus put into intelligible words and meaning, the entire group was uplifted.

If such a definition is valid, one can understand Paul's positive sentiments toward some aspect of tongues and his approval of certain mystical elements in the totality of the Christian worship experience. Though the face of the charism may change, some spiritual gift must attend our worship practices if they are to rise above mere physical behavior patterns. It is reasonable then that although Paul does not include charisms of choir directing (though he does mention singing in the Spirit, vs. 15), or of organ playing, or of spiritual meditation, yet for some contemporary Christians, such things might form a vital part of worship. In other words, the spectrum of "spiritual" experiences is a broad one, and the gifts Paul listed were no doubt only suggestive of the Spirit's many capabilities of ministering to a variety of individuals and churches. While for some contemporary worshippers congregational singing provides sufficient
expression of inner feelings, others may need to express an occasional "Amen!" or "Preach brother!" in order to feel that they have participated in a meaningful worship experience. In a similar way, though the temptation to ostentation and exploitation is close at hand, other types of verbal expressions of praise should not be glibly disparaged. Paul’s counsel to the Corinthians cannot be construed to mean that he encouraged public expressions of the glossolalic experience, but his directives illustrate his acceptance of diversity in the procedures of orderly worship service. Such an attitude of active tolerance is summed up nicely in his counsel to the Romans to "accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God" (Rom 15:7). Accordingly, modern Christians should be accepting of fellow-Christians who may express their spiritual vitality in enthusiastic ways. Since Paul did not attempt to give the church one permanent shape, believers today should not rigidly deny the validity of everything "ecstatic" in the worship experience. Of course excitement for its own sake is hardly beneficial in a worship service, but the fact that corporate witness and subsequent church growth are enhanced by liturgical order and controlled public meetings should not be allowed to eclipse all opportunity for personal expression. Surely the indifference and lethargy that characterize so many churches are not to be preferred over some spontaneity of expression. Inasmuch as the Spirit still "apportions to each one individually as he wills" (12:11), it behooves Christians to be responsive not only to the Spirit but also to the differing ways His power may come to expression in other believers.

At the same time, in keeping with the concept of gift implied
in the repeated use of χαρισμα in Corinthians, any exaltation of
tongues (or any other charism) by human effort must be called in
question. Though Paul admonished believers to "earnestly desire"
(14:1b) spiritual gifts, that counsel was immediately balanced by
"but rather that you should prophesy" (14:1c), thus actually
depreciating uncontrolled, uninterpreted glossolalia. In other words,
beyond an attitude of thankful response, the distribution of gifts of
grace cannot be augmented by any human devising. The charism of
tongues is never set forth as a sign of one’s spirituality or
Christian achievement, so no person or group should set a kind of
priority on the experience which might encourage others to seek it as
an end. It is true that Paul puts a qualified approval on private
glossolalia and even makes room for a carefully controlled "interpre­
ted" tongue in public worship, but the emphasis of 1 Cor 14 is
clearly on reducing the Corinthian fervor for spontaneous expression.
Apparently, when uninterpreted tongues are not controlled and concerns
with personal edification are thus placed above the common good,
chaotic worship results. Therefore, no one gift should be allowed
to so dominate the scene that a sense of proportion is lost and
group growth suffers. Such an exaltation of any one gift denies
the teaching about order in 1 Cor 14:26,27, emasculates the sense
of the body figure in 12:12-27, and nullifies the meaning of the
rhetorical questions in 12:29,30.

Furthermore, those who would encourage the resurgence of
glossolalia must address seriously the issue of the rapid disappear­
ance and subsequent absence of the gift during so much of Christian
history. The implication of the history of the phenomenon suggests
that the importance it held for the Corinthians was soon tempered if not eviscerated by changing times and circumstances. Since tongue-speech was not felt to be essential for Christian worship throughout most of Christian history,¹ the phenomenon can hardly be touted as a necessary part of contemporary Christian worship. If there was even a tentative connection between the mystery religion milieu of first-century Corinth and the interest in tongues by the Christians,² then the possibility of tongues as temporary can be seen. In other words, a charism like tongues, while genuine and functional in its origin, might later be incongruous or even an obstruction to the advance of Christianity due to altered conditions and attitudes. Consequently, while worship always demands a spiritual, mystical dimension, it does not always demand a tongues-like expression of the mystical.

Finally, in Christian worship in every age, Christ must hold the central position. At the very outset of Paul's discussion he makes it clear that any expression that is Spirit-inspired will confess Jesus as Lord (12:3). Then as he presents his "body" analogy, it is Christ who is the central figure (12:12,27), around whom all gifts cluster. Still later, in his sustained discussion in chap. 14 Paul exalts prophecy over tongues, not because that gift is the epitome of all other gifts, but because it is more effective than tongues in winning unbelievers to the Christian message (14:24,25). Thus, above all other concerns must be the concern to keep Christ central. It is a point that must be stressed, for in the practice

¹See pp. 219, 220. ²See pp. 52-54.
of the more spectacular gifts such as tongues or miracles, there is a temptation to allow the focus to shift. Charisms, regardless of their nature, must always remain peripheral. This is undoubtedly the reason behind the call for regulation and discipline in Corinth—Christ has been pushed aside and a variety of gifts, especially tongues, had taken center stage. Such a situation must not be allowed. The Christian service of worship is to give honor and glory to God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And while He may be approached in a variety of ways, if the method of praise or the accouterments of worship, whether tongues or choirs or organs or ritual, are more spectacular or more memorable than the one praised, a change must take place. For, "to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen" (Eph 3:21).


1 Corinthians, by C. T. Craig.


Ervin, Howard M. . . . And Forbid Not to Speak with Tongues. 


Evans, Ernest. The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians. 


Christianity Today 7 (September 13, 1963):3-7.


"First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, The." 
Seventh-day Adventist Commentary. Edited by F. D. Nichol. 


Ford, J. Massingberd. "Toward a Theology of 'Speaking in Tongues'." 

Freemante, Ann, ed. A Treasury of Early Christianity. New York: 


Godet, F. Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the 
Corinthians. 2 vols. Translated by A. Cusin. Grand Rapids, 

Goguel, Maurice. La Naissance du Christianisme. Paris. Fayot, 
1955.

Gonzalvez, Heliodora Emma. The Theology and Psychology of Glossolalia. 

Goodman, Felicitas D. Speaking in Tongues, A Cross-Cultural Study of 


Heinrici, C. J. *Das erste Sendschreiben des Paulus an die Korinther.* Berlin: Wilhelm Hertz, 1880.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


__________. *A Theological Interpretation of Tongues in Acts and First Corinthians.* Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1968.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


_________. Paulus Der Bote Jesu. Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1934.


VITA

William Edwin Richardson is an ordained minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Currently, he is Associate Professor of Religion and Biblical Languages at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Born June 1, 1937 in Mt. Vernon, Ohio, Dr. Richardson attended Emmanuel Missionary College, which later became Andrews University. There he earned a B.A. in Theology in 1959 and an M.A. in Biblical Greek (cum laude) in 1960. For three years he pastored churches in Ohio, then taught religion at the secondary level in Massachusetts. In 1967 he accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Religion and Biblical Languages at Southwestern Union College (later known as Southwestern Adventist College), where he taught for eight years. During this time he took classes at Bright Divinity School at Texas Christian University and also at Andrews University, where he completed an M.Div. in 1970. From 1975-77 he was Associate Professor of Religion at Pacific Union College in Angwin, California, following which he accepted his present position.

Dr. Richardson has written articles for Seventh-day Adventist publications and has read papers for the Society of Biblical Literature, of which he is a member. He is married to Sandra Van Eman-Richardson, with whom he has three children, Cindy, Cheri, and Steve.