

be interpreted by the speaker himself or by someone who had the gift of interpretation. This Holy Spirit gift of interpretation does not mean making known some secret message from God, but simply explaining the teaching being spoken in another national language.

6. Secret Messages from God

Some Christians say they get personal messages from God. This is not correct. God does not operate that way today. He speaks through His Word (the Bible) and the Holy Spirit guides us in our understanding. Christians are instructed to study the Bible, read God's Word, meditate on it, and obey it with the help of the Holy Spirit (2Timothy 2:15, 3:14-17, James 1:25-27, 1Peter 2:2, Hebrews 5:12-14).

7. Do we have to 'Speak in Tongues'?

Certain Christians are obsessed with forcing their beliefs on others. It is Biblically wrong to say we must speak in 'unknown tongues'. Paul who had this unique gift of Evangelism said, *"In the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue (a foreign language)"* (1Corinthians 14:19).

8. An emphasis on 'Speaking in Tongues' is Unbiblical and Unspiritual

It is unspiritual to repeat nonsensical words and believe that the experience is a Holy Spirit utterance. It is wrong to use it as a sign of spirituality. Paul made it very clear that those who were emphasising 'speaking in tongues' were being and acting like spiritual 'babies' (1Corinthians 14:20).

9. It is a Denial of Church History

Those who are obsessed with 'speaking in tongues', are a minority in their interpretation of

1Corinthians 14. They deny the historical fact that over 90% of spiritual, godly Christians, have NEVER spoken in tongues. It is surely arrogant, to say the least, (even by implication), that powerful men of God like Billy Graham are unspiritual because they have not spoken in tongues. To say this is very un-Christlike!

10. What Can You Do?

- a) Stand firm on your understanding of God's word. Do not feel insecure or intimidated.
- b) If you fellowship with these Christians, ask them to respect your beliefs and knowledge of God's word. The Bible holds the real truth.
- c) Avoid aggressive and offensive Christians.
- d) Realise you will not be free or comfortable around those who push speaking in tongues.
- e) Find a church where you will be loved and accepted and where the Bible is clearly taught.

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**What is the Truth
about Speaking in
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What is the Truth about Speaking in Tongues?

In these stressful and difficult times, Christians everywhere are concerned about how to live the Christian life. They are looking for a Biblically based community and fellowship, that will uplift, encourage and provide confidence in their spiritual journey of life.

It is sad to see some churches and groups still majoring on teaching that separates and divides.

There is possibly no subject that causes alarm bells to ring, genders hurt and controversy among Christians, as the modern day practice called “Speaking in Tongues”.

There is no doubt that many genuine Christians are excited about living life in a way that pleases God. However, it is not uncommon for some to use “speaking in tongues” as proof or a sign of spirituality.

Sincere Christian’s ask, “What is the truth about this so called “Speaking in Tongues”. Let me give a brief overview, some Biblical explanations and a few practical suggestions on this subject.

1. Speaking in Tongues is Biblical

The word ‘tongues’ is a Biblical word, but it means ‘languages’ (Acts 2:11, 1Corinthians 14:10), not some mystical utterance or words that cannot be understood.

In the early days, it was a gift of the Holy Spirit to enable the leader, teacher, evangelist and pastor, to speak in another language, which he

himself did not know. It would be like an English person speaking to a group of Germans, without knowing the German language. He knows in his heart what he will say in English, - but when he speaks, he is actually speaking in German.

It was a communication gift. God told Israel, (Isaiah 28:11,12) he was going to speak to them using other languages of the then known world.

In 1Corinthians 14: 21-22, Paul refers to this when he says, *“In the Law it is written: “Through men of strange tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me,” says the Lord. Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers.*

2. The Gift of Speaking in a Foreign Language is Past. It was not to be used in the Church!

Paul, the chief apostle to the Church, states:

a) Speaking in an unlearned language is the meaning of ‘glossa’ - speaking in a ‘tongue’ - (1Corinthians 14:2, 4, 13, 14 and 19).

b) This gift was temporary and with other ‘sign gifts’ ceased as the church age developed (1Corinthians 13:8 - cp. Acts 19:11-12 with Philipians 2:27). Today, no one has this gift.

All Christians, who train to be missionaries in foreign nations, must go to Language School to learn the native language spoken in that country.

c) It was the least of the gifts of the Spirit – not intended for every Christian (1Corinthians 14:5).

d) This gift was primarily an Evangelistic gift, not for believers to use among themselves, but for speaking to unbelievers. Paul rebuked the Corinthians as being unspiritual and ‘babes’ for

using this gift in the church meetings (1Corinthians 14: 20). Because so many languages were being used in the Church service, Paul said, “people who visit will think you are mad!” (1Corinthians 14:23).

3. Biblical Tongues were Intelligible

In KJV translation of 1Corinthians 14:27 the word “unknown” has been supplied by the Translators, but it is not found in the original manuscripts. This means the word ‘tongue’ is ‘known’ native languages.

Corinth was an international sea port and some church members prided themselves in their Holy Spirit gift and ability to speak in other languages. But not everyone knew all these languages, so it caused major confusion in the Church!

4. The Role of Speaking Foreign Languages

Paul in 1Corinthians 14, deals with Christians in that early church at Corinth, who were ‘misusing’ their spiritual gifts. Since speaking in a foreign language was a Holy Spirit gift, intended to be used for Evangelism, it was not to be used in the local church.

There was no problem if they worshipped God in private and used a foreign language, but they were NOT to use a foreign language when they spoke in the Church (1Corinthians 14:13-17). There was no point in using a foreign language which no one knew!

5. How the Gift of Languages Worked

Paul explains that the words being spoken in a foreign language were ‘known’ to the speaker, but may be unknown by a hearer, unless it was in his native tongue or language. That is why speaking in some foreign language needed to