

GROANS TOO DEEP FOR WORDS: TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF TONGUES AS INITIAL EVIDENCE

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I asked for a show of hands one day in a pneumatology course at Southeastern College from those students who disagree with the doctrine of tongues as the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Only a small number of hands were raised. I then asked for a show of hands from those who agreed. To my surprise, only a small number of hands went up. I impulsively asked for a show of hands from those who did not understand the meaning of the doctrine. The majority of hands were raised. Though these students were still in the process of gaining a fundamental knowledge of doctrine, their lack of understanding is probably also related to the general neglect of theological reflection on tongues as initial evidence in the history of Pentecostalism. I suspect that what I experienced among these students could be repeated throughout many of our colleges and churches. It seems that the decades of polemics defending tongues as the "Bible evidence" of Spirit baptism have failed to allow for sufficient energy to reflect constructively on the possible meaning of this understanding of tongues theologically and how the "gospel intention" of the doctrine may be preserved without the dogmatic rigidifications that only serve to detach one from the living meaning of this in-depth response to God.

Without question, there is a lack of theological reflection on tongues. Research on glossolalia has centered on biblical exegesis, historical investigation, and psycho-social studies. In his guide to research on glossolalia, Watson Mills also mentions the role of theological reflection, but he includes only a brief paragraph discussing this approach in contrast to the rich and lengthy discussions of the other approaches. Mills recognized this lack of theological reflection available on tongues in his doctoral dissertation on the subject, stating that "Pentecostal groups need to be more creative in developing and articulating a theology of glossolalia."¹ Since then, a number of essays have been published, adding to the young but growing body of theological reflection on tongues that has attempted to build on the early, seminal thoughts of Carl Brumback and Wade Horton, and others. In addition to my work in this area, the more recent efforts by Simon Chan, Amos Yong, Jenny Everts, and Gordon Fee to reflect theologically on glossolalia hold promise for further dialogue.²

Despite these recent efforts, theological reflection on tongues as initial evidence of Spirit baptism is still very difficult to find. The significant collection of essays on the subject edited by Gary McGee only contains one theological essay. But this important piece written by Henry Lederle is nevertheless thoroughly critical of the doctrine. He is open to

a "gospel intention" behind the doctrine, which he defines as the vibrant life in the Holy Spirit. The implications in tongues speech for enhancing life in the Spirit is a helpful point of departure for a theology of tongues, but Lederle nowhere tries to show how the doctrine of initial evidence *per se* contributes anything to this spiritual life.³ In general, however, most theological reflections favorable toward the experience of glossolalia still consider the doctrine of tongues as initial evidence to be an embarrassment or even a serious theological error. Without theological reflection on tongues as initial evidence, the biblical and historical work on the doctrine will lack contemporary theological and practical significance.

1. CRITICISMS OF TONGUES AS PART OF THE CHRISTIAN CREDO

The Assemblies of God has a statement in its Fundamental Truths concerning tongues as the initial physical sign of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Glossolalia achieved doctrinal status as a fundamental "truth" or confession of faith through its linkage with the experience of Spirit baptism. Consequently, most of the recent theological criticisms of the doctrine of tongues as the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit concern the issue of whether or not the experience of tongues should be an essential part of a church's confession of faith. Many wonder how tongues, allegedly the "least" of the gifts according to Paul, could be essentially linked to the reception of the Spirit and, finally, to one's confession of faith. There are many who feel that the Pentecostals have elevated tongues far beyond the teaching of scripture in granting them such doctrinal and confessional status. Some would even conclude that we have thereby elevated our own sense of self-importance as among the only bearers of the Spirit's fullness, since we are among the only ones who speak in tongues. The criticism follows that we have neglected the exclusive place of love and holiness as the only really vital marks of life in the Spirit.

The theological criticism of the doctrine of tongues as initial evidence is forcefully expressed by Henry Lederle, who judges the doctrine to be an attempt to guarantee the vibrant life in the Spirit that begins in Spirit baptism. According to Lederle, one attempts through the dogma of initial evidence to nail down precisely when and how the Spirit decides to fill and empower people with the presence of God. Hence, a "law" or dogma of tongues is erected, much like apostolic succession in the Roman Catholic Church, which guarantees that the Spirit is possessed and experienced in the ongoing life of the church. For Lederle, however, tongues were never meant to be linked so inseparably with Spirit baptism nor formalized into a normative principle of the Spirit's work. The Spirit's work is free and cannot be regulated and formalized.⁴ Another way of stating Lederle's view is to say that tongues are "normal," but not "normative," namely, tongues can be expected to be as prolific as they were among the New Testament churches ("normal"), but this experience cannot be made into a dogma that regulates how the reception of the Spirit is to take place ("normative").⁵ Similarly, Pentecostal preacher, Jack Hayford, expresses an expectation that tongues will accompany the experience of Spirit baptism at some point in the believer's experience, but he also shares a hesitance to make tongues a doctrinal

norm, especially not an "ironclad" requirement. "Who would dare insist," he asks, "on an absolute requirement that tongues be an ironclad rule?"⁶

Michael Welker's criticism of tongues as initial evidence is similar to Lederle's except the focus is not so much on formalizing and guaranteeing the experience of the Spirit as on "proving it." Welker, of the University of Heidelberg, has written recently that the Pentecostal focus on tongues as the evidence of Spirit baptism wrongly involves a fixation on signs and wonders as proofs of the Spirit's work.⁷ Jack Hayford popularizes a similar viewpoint by seeking to steer clear of "evidential" language with regard to tongues, opting instead for a reference to tongues as the "provision" or privilege that accompanies the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. He wants to avoid any notion of tongues as "proof" of one's baptism in the Spirit.⁸

Others sympathetic with the initial evidence doctrine still wonder what other term besides "evidence" might be more fruitful theologically for expressing the substance of the doctrine. For example, some are convinced that tongues as the initial "sign" of Spirit baptism is a fruitful direction to follow. The word "evidence" works well in scientific investigations in which one is seeking for clues or data that may lead to proving an intellectual hypothesis. But tongues may be said to do more than provide data for a hypothesis.⁹ Instead, tongues express an overwhelming experience of God through the Holy Spirit and they impact others to be open to the same experience.

The term "sign" can have a simple meaning as a reference to some external object or idea. When I see a stop sign I know that the civil authorities wish for me to stop! But the term "sign" can also have a complex meaning as a symbol that is integral to an experience and that actually serves to make that experience present for others. If I enter my home after being away at a conference and embrace my wife, that embrace is a "sign" of the deep love that I feel for her. But at that moment, the embrace may be said to do more than refer my wife to some external idea. That hug, as an integral aspect of the love that I feel at that moment, also makes my love present for her to feel and experience. Some theologians refer to sacraments as "signs" in this way, namely, as the ritual means by which God embraces believers and makes the divine grace and love present to experience. Thus, some have viewed the term "sign," especially as defined sacramentally, as a way of describing tongues that avoids the impression of a modernistic (positivistic) preoccupation with empirical proof. This use of the word "sign" is also truer to the substance of the initial-evidence doctrine than Jack Hayford's preference for the word "provision" (tongues merely as a provision for those who have been baptized in the Spirit).

Jean-Daniel Plüss is also concerned with the negative result of formalizing (Lederle) or proving (Welker) the experience of Spirit baptism through the dogma of initial evidence. Plüss finds value in tongues as symbolic of an in-depth experience with God and he finds power in the testimonies about such experiences, because they serve as metaphors that continue to encourage these experiences. Contrary to the power of metaphor or testimonies, the doctrine of tongues as initial evidence attempts to give a literal and scientific explanation of tongues in a way that distances Pentecostals from the ongoing

vibrancy of the experience. In his words, "some have tried to elevate the phenomenon of speaking in tongues to the level of doctrine, and thereby seemed to forget that speaking in tongues is primarily a symbol of God's blessing Spirit." In his view, "the perception of a spiritual phenomenon was changed into a shibboleth of orthodoxy." The way back from the initial-evidence doctrine to the experience of tongues will come when we replace the initial-evidence doctrine with testimonies. Such will only occur when "we learn to appreciate our past metaphorically" and resist seeking to quench our spiritual thirst "by mere deductive propositions and statements of doctrine."[10](#)

Juan Sepulveda is concerned to preserve the metaphorical power and flexibility of the Pentecostal understanding of "Spirit baptism" by detaching it from its necessary connection to tongues. He seeks thereby to resist a "glossocentric" understanding of Spirit baptism implied in the doctrine of tongues as initial evidence. In a brief but provocative essay, Sepulveda draws from his Chilean Pentecostal background to argue for a rich variety of metaphors to describe the Spirit's work in initiating a person to the life of the Spirit. All of these metaphors point to the importance of interpreting the Christian life as a dynamic and life-transforming experience of God. Implied is the conviction that the doctrine of initial evidence restricts Spirit baptism narrowly to a glossolalic experience. Sepulveda wants to broaden the definition of the term "Spirit baptism" so that it might function along with other metaphors to refer to that complex of events which initiates one to the new life of the Spirit. This necessitates in his view detaching Spirit baptism from its inseparable connection to glossolalia in Pentecostal dogma.[11](#)

2. QUESTIONING THE INTEGRAL CONNECTION BETWEEN TONGUES AND SPIRIT BAPTISM

Such criticisms cannot be ignored by Pentecostals, especially if they wish to teach Christian doctrine in a way that is sensitive to the full diversity of Pentecostal testimonies and to the broader Christian church. Pentecostal ministers will certainly be exposed to this broader context in their ministries. It is important for the sake of honesty and charity to listen carefully to what sincere Christian brothers and sisters have to say about a distinctive point of doctrine that we advocate. By way of response to the criticisms of initial evidence, I do believe that they help us to define the doctrine theologically in a way that avoids misunderstandings and abuses. And I believe further that the best Pentecostal teaching on tongues can be understood in a way that resists the understandings of the initial-evidence doctrine which these criticisms assume. For example, I think most of us would agree that tongues by themselves are no final guarantee, nor by themselves an adequate manifestation, of life in the Spirit. Pentecostal pillars, Ray Hughes and Vinson Synan, have argued that tongues in isolation from other works of the Spirit are no final confirmation of the baptism in the Spirit, but tongues only in relation to other evidences or works of the Spirit can be regarded as the genuine initial physical evidence of Spirit baptism.[12](#) And the Pentecostal tradition of "tarrying" for the filling of the Spirit as evidenced by tongues implies that the notion of initial evidence was

not fundamentally a "law" or dogma that contradicts the freedom and sovereignty of the Spirit to move and to act when and how God pleases.

Problematic is that the essential and necessary connection which the initial-evidence doctrine implies exists between tongues and Spirit baptism. The initial-evidence doctrine did attempt to account for the integral connection experienced among Pentecostals and believed to have been implied by Luke between one's experience of Spirit baptism and the symbolic expression of tongues-speech. As Lederle himself notes, W. T. Gaston stated in 1918 that "[t]ongues seems included and inherent in the larger experience of Spirit baptism" (perhaps one of the earliest theological statements about tongues as initial evidence).¹³ Pentecostals have explained the integral relationship between tongues and Spirit baptism in various ways. They have argued, for example, that tongues symbolize the total yielding of the self to the work of the Spirit so essential to Spirit baptism, since the tongue, as the most "unruly" member and the last "holdout" to one's submission to God, is finally brought into service to the Spirit.

Should this integral link between tongues and the experience of Spirit baptism be severed? Watson Mills argues that it should. He distinguishes between the substance of Spirit baptism, which is the overwhelming experience of the Spirit, and the formal symbolism of tongues. Since tongues are an archaic symbolic expression that no longer impacts the human psyche and community life as they once did, tongues should be "demythologized" and replaced by symbolic expressions of the Spirit's fullness more meaningful to the twentieth century.¹⁴ But, as Jacques Ellul notes, prayers never become outdated because the fundamental purpose of prayer is not to communicate but to participate in, and partake of, the presence of God.¹⁵ Mills fails to recognize that tongues as a mystical language play a unique role in the process of participating in the presence of God to empower the people of God for service. An argument can be made that they cannot be exchanged for something else without the people of God losing something valuable in the process. This is what Donald Gee implied when he stated that giving up the expectation of tongues as evidence of Spirit baptism will cause the church to lose a dimension of the "glory and power" of the experience.¹⁶ In part, the "sacramental" understanding of tongues seeks to account for the integral connection between the potential depth and breadth of the Spirit baptismal experience and the symbolic expression of tongues, but without the rigid, scientific, and glossocentric connections often implied by the initial-evidence doctrine. The "sacramental" connection between tongues and Spirit baptism need not lead to the conclusion that tongues are its only significant symbolic expression. Pentecostals struggled from the beginning to grant tongues a special relationship to Spirit baptism without restricting Spirit baptism to a glossolalic experience. This struggle must now find more profound theological formulation.

3. BECOMING AN ORACLE OF GOD: THE ORIGINAL CHALLENGE OF SPIRIT BAPTISM AND TONGUES

The initial-evidence doctrine goes back to Parham and the unique interpretation of his doctrine among the intercultural and largely poor worshippers at the Apostolic Faith Mission at Azusa Street. Tongues were understood at Azusa as the audible sign most integral to the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, because this spiritual baptism was understood as the latter-day restoration of apostolic power to share the gospel quickly with people of all nations before the end comes. Taken how Spirit baptism was understood, it was only natural that tongues as miraculously-learned foreign languages (xenolalia) would be understood as the initial and most important Bible evidence of this experience. The conviction at Azusa Street was that this global witness was inspired by God first among the lowly and oppressed of the earth, for even a "little orphaned colored girl" received the commission to share the goodness of God with other nations. Indeed, tongues implicitly served to dismantle the privileges of the rich and the educated and allowed the poor and devalued of society to contribute meaningfully to the latter-day witness of the Spirit of God to the coming kingdom and to the kind of justice and love that it inspires. Hence, the view of Spirit baptism shared at Azusa Street included the down-trodden helping to break down racial barriers between people. One "Indian preacher" was reported to have pointed to a racially mixed gathering including Native Americans, whites, and a "colored brother" and stated that God willed for them to become "one great spiritual family." The report concluded with the significant conclusion: "Tell me,...can you have a better understanding of the two works of grace and the baptism in the Holy Ghost?"¹⁷ Despite the limitations of this vision, it was way ahead of its time in capturing the thrust of the Spirit's work.

The view of Spirit baptism as the renewal of apostolic power to transcend national and cultural barriers to spread the gospel to the nations explains why tongues, understood as xenolalia, were given a privileged place as the initial evidence of the experience. This glossocentric understanding of Spirit baptism, though problematic, did point to the global, ecumenical, and missionary significance of tongues with a power and a vision unprecedented in the history of the church since the book of Acts. But early in the history of Pentecostalism there were those who sought to give spiritual fullness an independence from glossolalia, while still granting the latter a unique role to play in expressing the former with great power and depth. W. F. Carothers expressed skepticism toward Parham's understanding of glossolalia as end-time xenolalia and followed this with the confidence that others who did not speak in tongues obviously shared in the fullness of the Spirit. But this fullness alone is not yet "Pentecost." Pentecost for Carothers is an experience of praise that goes over the balconies of heaven in glossolalic splendor.¹⁸

What is interesting is the fact that both Carothers and those of the Azusa Street mission pointed to glossolalia as the experience which distinguished Pentecostalism from the Holiness Movement. Both assumed that this distinguishing role for glossolalia is due to the nature of tongues as a form of inspired speech which causes one to transcend the limits of one's human speech and thought in order to become an oracle of the Spirit in praise (Carothers) or witness (Azusa Street). The Apostolic Faith papers repeatedly distinguished Spirit baptism from the sanctification experience of the Holiness Movement because in the former it is God who speaks and bears witness to the divine presence.¹⁹ Implied in this assumption is the idea that through tongues the believer becomes the

oracle of God, an experience which in some ways transcends one's struggle to bear witness to God indirectly through spiritual fruit or works of love and holiness. Carothers is unique in granting spiritual fullness independence from glossolalia and in viewing the latter as overflowing praise. Seymour and others of the Azusa Street Mission were unique in attaching tongues as xenolalia to the intercultural witness of the poor and disenfranchised. But both sought to describe the new outbreaks of glossolalia as a breakthrough in the most characteristic sign of the Spirit's presence to empower the people of God in the latter days, namely, inspired speech. Tongues as cryptic and miraculous speech functioned as the final breakthrough in the Spirit's witness to, or praise of, God in the latter days.

As we will note, this early Pentecostal understanding of glossolalia raises difficult theological problems. But these problems are faced to a degree in the biblical witness as well. As Roger Stronstad, Robert Menzies, and J. Massynbaerde Ford have pointed out, Luke followed the Jewish tendency to associate the reception of the Spirit with inspired or prophetic speech.²⁰ Luke seems to focus on tongues as the most significant expression of inspired speech because of their role in miraculously uniting a diversity of people together in a common witness and praise in the light of the approaching kingdom of God. It is important to note in this context that the tongues of Pentecost in Acts 2 symbolized the bringing together of people from all nations in service to a united praise and witness, but not in the simplistic sense of merely pointing intellectually to the divine action. Tongues themselves were integral to the thrust of Spirit baptism in bringing all peoples together in this inspired speech. Tongues were an integral part of that diverse but unified witness and praise produced by Spirit baptism at Pentecost.

But Acts 2 only witnessed to the bringing together of Jews from every nation. For this reason, Acts 10:46 completes the picture by including Gentiles in the common praise and witness inspired by Spirit baptism and expressed in tongues. The Jews knew that the Gentiles had joined the diverse, international praise and witness "for they heard them speak in tongues" (10:46). Acts 11:15 elaborates on 10:46 with Peter's observation that the Spirit had fallen on the Gentiles "as he had on us at the beginning." The connection between Acts 2:4 and 10:46 implies that tongues played a significant role universally in the earliest churches to symbolize the power of Spirit baptism to unite the people of God in common participation in the eschatological renewal of language.

In other words, the theological importance of the connection between Acts 2:4 and 10:46 flows from the fact that tongues were viewed by Luke as integral to the thrust of Spirit baptism in bringing together all of the peoples of the earth in common praise and witness. But the fact that the language miracle began among the diaspora Jews, God's chosen people, who lived as strangers in their own land due to the oppression of Gentile powers, is not devoid of theological significance either. The connection between Acts 2:4 and 10:46 implies the theological significance of tongues for Luke as the initial sign of the Spirit's work in bringing together Jew and Gentile in common praise and witness in a way that does not neglect the significance of the experience among the "Jews first." (God began among the poor and the outcast at Azusa Street as well!) Acts 19:6 is an interesting addition, since Hellenistic Jews and followers of John the Baptist are now joining the

Christian prophetic movement in magnifying God in a Gentile land. The breaking down of the barriers continues.²¹ How many times tongues are mentioned in Acts is not important. The older polemic in support of tongues as the initial evidence was misguided here. Where and how tongues are mentioned and what theological meaning is implied are important.

It may be argued that the bringing together of Jew and Gentile in the diverse but unified praise and witness of the Spirit to the goodness of God is the central theme of Acts. Tongues, in this light, play a very important role for Luke, since they function as the most striking and outstanding involvement of God in this corporate praise and witness empowered in Spirit baptism. Tongues are the central feature of the first Spirit baptism at the start of the book (10 verses are devoted to them in Acts 2) and play a pivotal role in chapter 10 at the crucial entry of the Gentiles into the corporate praise and witness of the people of God, a topic picked up in chapters 11 and 15. The movement toward a diverse but united witness begun in chapter 2 continues in 19:6. Tongues in Acts thus reveal an ecumenical witness that is ours by the Spirit of God, but must also be gradually realized through the ongoing work of the Spirit and the struggle of the church to be receptive to it. The pivotal places in Acts in which tongues play a role as the characteristic result of Spirit baptism imply that tongues are much more important as a sign of the most significant breakthroughs inspired by the Spirit in the expanding diversity of the church's praise and witness than most non-Pentecostals seem willing to admit.

There are major non-Pentecostal scholars who have noted the importance in Acts of tongues in signifying the baptism in the Spirit. More than a decade before the Pentecostal Movement began, German biblical scholar, Hermann Gunkel, stated with regard to the teaching of Acts, "If we intend to understand the view of the Spirit cherished in the apostolic age, then we must begin from the Spirit's most striking characteristic activity, that of glossolalia."²² In a well-known ecumenical commentary on Acts, German exegete, R. Pesch, referred to tongues as the "initial miracle" (*Anfangswunder*) of the Spirit's new witness of the kingdom of God in the world.²³ More recently, Catholic scholars George Montague and Kilian McDonnell have stated as a result of their research in the book of Acts that tongues held, and still can hold, a "privileged position" among the signs of the Spirit's work for the people of God. Montague, who, along with McDonnell, is otherwise critical of Pentecostal doctrine, admits that the Pentecostal focus on tongues as the most significant sign of Spirit baptism has a basis in the Book of Acts. He is baffled at Dale Bruner's remark that Luke "just happens" to mention tongues in relation to Spirit baptism in Acts.²⁴ Reformed Charismatic theologian, J. Rodman Williams, has recently argued from Acts that tongues are the "primary" and "initial" evidence of Spirit baptism.²⁵

All of the above viewpoints come very close to the thrust of the initial-evidence doctrine. Whatever else one may say about the doctrine, it is not simply a strange teaching of classical Pentecostalism without any provocation from the narrative of Acts. Luke is fascinated with the miracle of inspired speech, especially tongues, and focuses on this as the characteristic sign of the significant breakthroughs of the Spirit to empower the people of God for united praise and witness. Such a Lukan focus is still not the initial-

evidence doctrine, but it provides the inspiration for later Pentecostal reflection in the direction of the doctrine. Whether or not the narrative of Acts and other parts of the New Testament can legitimately be developed in the direction of a full-blown initial-evidence doctrine remains to be seen. Whether or not this project is possible or desirable would depend in part on how the doctrine is defined.

The important theological question is what the tongues of Pentecost imply for the initial-evidence doctrine today. At Azusa Street, the assumption was that tongues allowed believers to proclaim the gospel in all nations without first having to learn their languages. We all know what happened among those who attempted to preach in tongues in foreign lands!²⁶ Centuries ago, as early as Irenaeus and Augustine, tongues were defined as prophetic speech. Luke, as well, gives tongues prophetic significance. But, as Jenny Everts has shown, tongues in the New Testament were not described as the means by which the gospel was preached to all nations.²⁷ Glossolalia accompanied the proclamation of the gospel in Acts 2, 10, and 19 but was not that proclamation itself. And Luke does not take for granted that tongues would communicate anything to anyone. In Acts 2, there were many who thought that the believers were besides themselves, implying that a significant part of the audience did not understand the tongues. Only those who were receptive to the gospel understood. The implication here is that something other than mere foreign languages lay behind Luke's report of the tongues of Pentecost. Azusa Street rediscovered the global, ecumenical, and missionary significance of Spirit baptism and tongues in Acts, though its notion of tongues as an xenolalic witness to Christ among all nations could not be sustained.

In the decades following the origin of Pentecostalism, the belief in tongues as an in-depth prayer language or a congregational gift, usually interpreted for a congregation as a prophetic message, came to dominate the Pentecostal understanding of tongues. Though xenolalia (tongues as foreign languages) did not pass completely from Pentecostal testimonies, glossolalia as a transcendent form of speech or a "heavenly language" came to represent the most common understanding of tongues. This development is understandable, since tongues in the Bible and in the ongoing life of the church have an enduring role to play in the spiritual lives of believers and churches in that tongues represent more than a supernatural capability to bear witness to God in an unlearned human language. How do tongues edify the self in private prayer (1 Cor 14:3, 14-15), if I am speaking to God in a human language that I have never learned and do not understand? And, as Gordon Fee noted, why would Paul refer to uninterpreted foreign languages as one analogy among others of uninterpreted tongues if the two were the same thing (1 Cor 14:7-11)?²⁸ Surely something other than xenolalia is implied here.

Theologically, the early Pentecostal view of tongues as the miraculous ability to share the goodness of God across national and cultural boundaries needs to be demythologized. If this is not done, we can promote the illusion that the Spirit in these latter days can simply transport us instantly over the cultural divides that require an ongoing and extremely difficult process of hard-won communication to scale, especially from the side of those who benefit the most from the injustices involved in the divisions of which we speak. If the New Testament reveals anything, it reveals that the language miracle of Acts 2

symbolized a unity in diversity that the churches would struggle to achieve with great difficulty and less-than-perfect results. Furthermore, the idea of both Carothers and the participants in the Azusa Street Mission that we can become veritable oracles of God also needs to be interpreted carefully. Theology in a post-modern, and especially post-Barthian, era cannot possibly assume that human speech can be associated with the divine self-disclosure without significant qualifications. Those who wish to proceed forward toward a constructive theology of tongues and their relationship to Spirit baptism must deal critically with the early Pentecostal belief in tongues as divine speech across cultural boundaries in these latter days, but not in a way that loses the global, ecumenical, and missionary vision that originally cradled the doctrine of initial evidence.

4. SIGHS TOO DEEP FOR WORDS: TOWARDS A REVISIONING OF TONGUES AS DIVINE SPEECH

The idea of tongues as turning one into an oracle of God in praise and/or witness needs to be qualified by another undercurrent in the Pentecostal understanding of tongues which we have not yet discussed, namely, tongues as deep and agonizing groans of human weakness that are changed by the Spirit of God into a cry for redemption, and even a foretaste of this redemption in the here-and-now. I do not deny the possibility of an xenolalic miracle. But if tongues are to enhance the spiritual vitality of the church in its ongoing Charismatic and devotional life, they must meet us all on a level deeper than our current cognitive or linguistic capabilities. As such, tongues reveal the limits of human speech to capture and express the mystery of God's redemptive presence in the midst of a suffering creation.

Such an understanding of tongues holds a number of theological implications for personal piety and corporate worship. Paul's insistence that the mind is unfruitful during tongues-speech fits well with the groanings that cannot be uttered in response to human weakness in prayer "for we do not know how to pray" (1 Cor 14:14-15; Rom 8:26). Rather than tongues being a sign of an escape from this world into heights of glory, they are expressions of strength in weakness, or the capacity to experience the first-fruits of the kingdom-to-come in the midst of our groaning with the suffering creation. They bring to ultimate expression the struggle that is essential to all prayer, namely, trying to put into words what is deeper than words.²⁹ They express the pain and the joy of this struggle. They are, in the words of Russell Spittler, a "broken language for a broken body until perfection comes."³⁰ As such, tongues edify the soul and confront the church with a "sacrament" of the presence of God to empower and heal us as we groan in solidarity with the needy and the lost in anticipation of the redemption-to-come.

The eschatological context for tongues as an in-depth response to God is also implied by Luke. The tongues of Pentecost were part of an awesome theophany of end-time signs and wonders (sound of a mighty wind, flames of fire) that foreshadowed the ultimate theophany at God's final appearance (with blood, fire, and billows of smoke) as Redeemer of the entire cosmos (new creation, Acts 2:1-4, 19-20). As such, tongues hold

potential for renewing our sense of awe and wonder in the presence of God that is so vital to a vibrant worship and personal piety. As an unclassifiable language, tongues point us to God's final self-disclosure and, therefore, prevent us from making an idol of our worship, religious language, and theological systems. Tongues push us ever forward to greater vistas of insight and commitment. They dismantle our culturally defined and self-serving idols and open us to the voice of God in new and unexpected ways. As such, tongues can imply a movement out of our comfort zone in openness to the voices of the powerless in our midst and among the victims of evil and injustice in our society.

The powerful role of tongues in self-edification and congregational edification (coupled with interpretation) must not preclude, therefore, Luke's assumption about tongues as the most significant sign of the bringing together of Jew and Gentile in the one mission of God. True, the assumption of Azusa Street that tongues merely functioned to aid in the latter-day spreading of the gospel needed to be abandoned and replaced by deeper insights into the role of tongues as in-depth communion with God. I fear, however, that we have "thrown out the baby with the bath water" so to speak by abandoning altogether the global, intercultural, and missionary vision implied in the early understanding of tongues as the Bible evidence of Spirit baptism at Azusa Street. Try to imagine what theological implications exist in that early vision of tongues as the "Bible evidence" of the Spirit baptism that was poured out in these latter days, especially among the poor and lowly, to enhance the church's capacity to share the goodness of God across cultural and national boundaries. Do not the groans too deep for words push me beyond the limits of my cultural boundaries so that I might bless, and be blessed by, people far different from myself? Certainly I cannot leap easily and instantly across cultural and national boundaries to communicate with people far different from myself. Tongues in fact expose my limits and how they shape my worship and theology. But do tongues not also reveal that these limits need not define me ultimately? Can I not eventually by the grace of God hear the voices of those who are different from mine, especially among those who suffer, and can I not still be shaped by them and impart something of myself to them? Whether they be xenolalia or glossolalia, do not tongues locate me already in that final chorus of people from all nations and tongues that will praise God one day at the throne of grace (Rev 5:9-10)?

Spirit baptism is not just about tongues. We cannot lock Spirit baptism into a glossolalic straight-jacket so that the former becomes inconceivable apart from the latter. But viewed in the context of our discussion, Spirit baptism is fundamentally and integrally about what tongues symbolize. As such, the initial-evidence doctrine has value even though it requires theological reflection and revisioning.

5. A PLACE FOR TONGUES IN THE CHRISTIAN CREDO

I appreciate the insight shared by Jerry Kamery-Hoggatt that a doctrine which is distinctive for a Christian movement is not necessarily central. Though Pentecostals have defended the importance of tongues, they have also resisted the notion that tongues are at

the core of the gospel for us.³¹ By including our distinctives, such as tongues, in our confession of faith, even if these distinctives are not central to the gospel, we preserve the unique gifts that we have to offer the broader Christian world and we communicate these clearly to other Christians. Therefore, tongues have a place in the Christian credo of Pentecostal churches. The presence of tongues as an aspect of our credo need not imply that we have given them too much importance in the life and mission of the church.

Donald Dayton has shown in his book, *The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, that Pentecostal theology consists of a constellation of themes borrowed from the Holiness Movement and centered on the figure of Jesus as Savior, Sanctifier, Spirit Baptizer, Healer, and Coming King.³² His book gives tongues only scant treatment. Though he was criticized for this lack of attention to tongues, most scholars were convinced that a paradigm shift had occurred in the research concerning Pentecostal theology from the centrality of Spirit baptism and tongues and toward a general *Gestalt* of themes concerning the work of Jesus in the world.³³ William Faupel's book, *The Everlasting Gospel*, has brought us further, pointing to the strong Christo-centric tendency of early Pentecostalism and to the eschatological nature of the movement. Early Pentecostalism emerges in Faupel's book as an end-time missionary fellowship with the express purpose of bearing witness to the nations of the soon-coming kingdom.³⁴ Though tongues played an integral role for Pentecostals in this end-time witness, tongues were not considered important as an end in themselves. They served a far more important and central purpose. It is also important to note that the initial evidence doctrine is not shared by all Pentecostals worldwide. Pentecostalism is not a "tongues movement," but a movement that supports the gospel of Jesus Christ in salvation, sanctification, empowerment for global witness, healing, and eschatological hope.

Yet, the unique Pentecostal understanding of Spirit baptism had a great deal to do with tongues.³⁵ As noted above, Carothers did not deny that advocates of the Holiness Movement experienced the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Rather, he maintained that the fullness of the Spirit can only reach an expression that can be termed "Pentecost" once the overflowing and heavenly praise of tongues is spoken. In *The Apostolic Faith* papers, the "Pentecostal" Spirit baptism was distinguished from sanctification because in the former it is God and not humanity who bears miraculous witness to the gospel. The idea here is that holiness as an encounter with the fullness of the Spirit is itself to be transcended in order to leave room for God to come on the scene in a way so as to represent the divine presence directly to us. It was felt that tongues, because of their miraculous or extraordinary nature, do this, thus marking the Pentecostal Spirit Baptism off from sanctification, which, it was assumed, provided only an indirect witness to the gospel.

Whether tongues were viewed as xenolalia or some form of transcendent glossolalia, their importance was the same. Here was a "baptism" in the Spirit that allowed a weak human vessel to function as a veritable oracle of God. Though this is true of all prophetic speech, tongues as a cryptic language revealed the unfathomable depth and ultimate eschatological fulfillment of all prophetic speech, pointing to both the limits and the meaning of the language of faith. Without this "glossolalic" understanding of Spirit

baptism, there may not have been enough of a distinction between the Pentecostal and the Holiness understandings of the experience of the Spirit to warrant the founding of a separate movement. The difficulties involved in this theological understanding of tongues are complex and cannot be explored thoroughly here. Suffice it to say that the initial-evidence doctrine does express an important and distinctive feature of Pentecostal spirituality and theology that has meaning for the church today.

I do not believe that we should abandon the Pentecostal association of tongues with the divine self-witness in our effort to articulate the more theologically promising understanding of the symbolic role of tongues. Our response to the assumption of those at the Azusa Street Mission that God engages in self-witness uniquely in glossolalia must be encountered with a dialectical no and yes. The fact is that tongues as a cryptic or mystical language presume to symbolize a sacred space in which God can speak uniquely to us. If we have discovered that tongues actually arise from human creativity, what have we learned that is not also known of all symbols of the sacred? Paul Tillich has noted that, even though we must avoid an idolatrous association of the symbol and the divine self-disclosure, neither should we separate them. According to Tillich, God takes the visible/audible symbol up into the divine self-disclosure so that the symbol actually participates in the divine act of revelation.³⁶

I have argued elsewhere that tongues play a unique role as a cryptic language because they bring to the forefront the unpredictable and transcendent aspects of the divine self-disclosure, aspects that are only implied in more intelligible sacred symbols.³⁷ As such, tongues play a uniquely iconoclastic role *vis-a-vis* all symbols, bringing to sharp focus both human weakness and divine strength. Furthermore, is there not an element of mystery in all spontaneous and innovative artistic expressions that transcend mundane forms of thought and expression and that defy human explanation? Do they not have something in common with other forms of expressionistic art, thereby protesting the "tyranny of words" in worship?³⁸ Is there not a sense in which the human can be "seized" by the Divine to engage in forms of expression that seem to carry the speaker more than proceed from him or her? Do not tongues represent a heightened form of this kind of language in the community of faith?

It is important to explore further the conviction that we have moved away from the proper place and immediacy of tongues as an experience by formalizing its connection with Spirit baptism in the form of a doctrine. Tongues did not begin as a doctrine among Pentecostals, but as an experience that was expected to accompany Spirit baptism for obvious reasons explained above. The link between tongues and Spirit baptism did not begin as a doctrine either, but as a testimony that implied an integral relationship between the experience of Spirit baptism and the symbolism of tongues. All that the doctrine did was to provide a formal statement of this relationship in a language that can be corporately agreed upon.

The experience of tongues is at the base of how we come to talk about it, as well as the doctrine that we agree upon to govern the language of faith. As George Lindbeck has shown, doctrine provides the "grammar" or rules for how we talk about God or the truths

of scripture.³⁹ As such, doctrine seeks to guide how we talk about an experience, but also to influence the experience and to preserve it as an enduring aspect of the community's religious life. An integral relationship was suggested between Spirit baptism and tongues in the experience and language about tongues early on in Pentecostalism. The initial-evidence doctrine came to formalize this relationship in its effort to preserve it in the ongoing experience of the church. An argument can be made that the formalization of the link between tongues and Spirit baptism was already implied from the beginning of Pentecostal experience and testimony and was not imported from the outside and imposed on Pentecostal piety. Neither does this doctrinal development need to carry the negative connotations assumed among its critics. We need God's help to prevent the doctrine from becoming a substitute for the experience. Our critics, though one-sided, may help to bring this need to our attention.

6. TONGUES, PROPHECY, AND THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

What about the Pauline assumption that tongues are not as significant to the community of faith as intelligible prophecy? It is important at this point to look at the claim that the initial-evidence doctrine runs contrary to Paul, who allegedly makes tongues of less importance than other gifts, such as prophecy. The Pauline stress on prophetic clarity in the church through the "interpretation" of tongues and the gift of prophecy functions as a corrective for a situation in which tongues were abused. Paul's conviction that tongues are a negative sign of judgment for unbelievers, and that prophecy will lead them to repentance is also occasioned by the same abusive context (1 Cor 14:21-23). This preference for intelligibility over ambiguous ecstasy in public worship is functional and contextual for Paul, relative to the abusive situation in Corinth. Applying this corrective to the initial-evidence doctrine must be done with great care and with full consideration of the Lukan witness. For example, I do not believe that one can stretch Paul's correction of the Corinthian effort to gorge on ecstasy to the neglect of intelligible utterance to mean that no glossolalic utterance is of any value to others without an intelligible interpretation. If prophecy brings clarity and guidance to our in-depth groaning, tongues impress upon us the unfathomable depths from which such clarity emerges and toward which it is always directed. Hence, tongues have their own value in corporate worship, even apart from needed interpretations, and tongues and interpretation do not simply "equal" prophecy as many assume. There is an interesting dynamic going on in the interplay and symbolism of tongues and interpretation that are not fully captured in a prophetic utterance alone.

Luke complements Paul's insights by allowing tongues to provide a powerful witness in public of both promise and judgment, without any explanation whatever on how such clarity is granted. Some might view this absence of an explanation as a lack of specificity in Luke, which Paul is then imported to provide. But Luke's hesitance to address the issue of how tongues convey intelligible meaning may also be viewed as providing greater flexibility for how the power of tongues may confront people in public than can be gained strictly within the confines of Paul's pastoral guidance among the Corinthians.

In Acts, all believers may speak in tongues at once in public as a dramatic sign of the empowerment of the people of God for service, even where no understandable content is mentioned. Clearly tongues do not follow the same rules of guidance in Luke as they do in Paul. In our efforts to negotiate between Luke and Paul, we should not try to conform the former to the latter. Luke reminds us that not all public expressions of tongues require interpreters to be enlightening or to motivate greater commitment to God. On the other hand, Paul reminds us that restrictions may be necessary if unintelligible tongues begin to dominate a service that lacks prophetic discernment and explanation.

To complete our discussion of Paul on tongues, I think it is important to note that Paul does not subordinate tongues to prophecy according to some inherent or abstract value, since such ranking of the gifts runs contrary to his insistence that all of the gifts are significant only in their common source in the triune God (1 Cor 12:3-4) and in their function in edifying the people of God in the love of God (ch. 13), an end toward which all of the gifts may contribute equally well, each in its own unique way (14:26). Hence, not only tongues, but all of the gifts, including prophecy, are radically relativized by Paul in subordination to the love of God. Desiring the "best gifts" (1 Cor 12:31) depends on the context in which they are exercised and the end achieved, and not on some abstract judgment concerning which among the gifts in general are the "least" or "most" important, which seems to have been the game that the Corinthians desired to play. Gordon Fee has argued convincingly, that the notion of tongues as the "least" of the gifts in Paul is based on faulty conclusions drawn from assumptions which are read into the text.⁴⁰ I am reminded here of Krister Stendahl's insight into the bias against tongues that many exegetes take to the analysis of 1 Corinthians 12-14, assuming from the start that Paul is dealing with the problem of tongues in the Corinthian church. Stendahl suggests that a more enlightening point of departure would be to begin with the gift and blessing of tongues according to Paul and then to understand the Corinthian distortion as the problem.⁴¹

It seems that Rom 8:26 implies a positive sign value not found in 1 Corinthians 12-14 to glossolalic sighs in public worship.⁴² But, in the spirit of Paul's Corinthian instructions, the "groans too deep for words" in Rom 8:26 do not lead to a quest for self-aggrandizement or for glory in alienation from those who suffer. This is quite consistent with Luke's report that the Diaspora Jews were the first to initiate the tongues speech that invited people of all nations, even Gentiles (!), to join in the empowered witness to the coming Kingdom of God. But Luke does go further than Paul in showing the unique and "privileged place" that tongues are among the signs of the Spirit's empowerment for service. Paul has his own unique contribution to make in insisting that prophetic clarity be the most cherished contribution of inspired speech to a congregation. The different contexts and purposes of the writers account for their different emphases. Theologically, Luke prevents us from interpreting Paul to mean that tongues are the least significant of our responses to God and can play no special role among the signs of the Spirit in worship. But Paul prevents us from interpreting Luke to mean that tongues are to be ranked abstractly as inherently superior to other gifts and worthy, therefore, of dominating a worship service regardless of whether or not they are understood.

We can imagine what would be some of the practical results from really viewing Spirit baptism in our churches as an empowerment for one's gift or calling to serve the liberating and redemptive kingdom of God in the world. Without sacrificing the view of tongues as personal edification and admonition, we can also imagine what would happen if we were to recapture the global and missionary vision that originally cradled the initial-evidence notion. What new meanings and forms of praxis can evolve from viewing tongues as the sign that we are not bound by our cultural and linguistic conditioning, but may transcend these in significant ways to come into solidarity with those who suffer and to share the good news with those who are lost? How would the initial-evidence doctrine take on new meaning, even among its critics, if such a doctrine were at the forefront of a corporate witness that protests racism and models the movement of the Spirit of God to create a culturally diverse common witness to the liberating gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?

7. TOWARDS A REVISIONING OF INITIAL EVIDENCE

How should the doctrine of initial evidence be revisioned? A clue might come from the most significant general superintendent and leader of the American Assemblies of God throughout its history, Joseph Roswell Flower. In his 1933 and 1952 testimonies printed in *Pentecostal Evangel*, Flower noted that he was baptized in the Spirit months before he actually spoke in tongues. When he eventually spoke in tongues, it occurred without his seeking them, and without his knowledge at the time of speaking that he was engaged in glossolalic prayer.⁴³ More significantly, Flower explains his testimony in a theological tract on tongues in which he does not deny the fact that believers can be baptized in the Spirit without tongues. But he hastens to add that these believers have not yet been baptized in the Spirit with the "full manifestation" granted in the "biblical pattern."⁴⁴

Whether Flower realized it or not, he provided a significant breakthrough in the doctrine of tongues as the sign of Spirit baptism with the distinction that he made. He shifted the focus from tongues as the necessary accompaniment of the reception of Spirit baptism to tongues as the fullness of expression toward which the experience leads. The doctrine as he reformulated simply states that there is a fullness to glossolalic speech which the language of faith cannot capture. Tongues as groans of weakness for the redemption-to-come and the anticipation of our final unity in diversity before the throne of grace would represent a form of expression among the people of God that brings to full expression what the Spirit is attempting to do historically through the baptism in the Spirit. What this reformulation of the doctrine implies for the use of the term "initial" as in "initial evidence" still needs to be discussed. Can the term "initial" refer to the fact that tongues initiate the language miracle that symbolizes the depth and breadth of the Spirit's work through Spirit baptism to unite the people of God in common praise and witness? Can it refer to the act of tongues in initially conveying the full "glory and power" of the Spirit baptismal experience for the believer who receives as well as for the community of faith? Here is where sacramental "sign" fits the thrust of the doctrine better than scientific "evidence." The important point to the doctrine of tongues as the initial sign of Spirit

baptism is that there is a depth of experience in the Spirit, the consequence of which will quite naturally be speaking in tongues, and that the experience itself does not come to full biblical expression and signification without tongues.

In the midst of our revisioning the initial-evidence doctrine, we should not forget that there need not be a competition between a most striking sign of the Spirit's empowerment in worship (tongues in the service of love) and the vital marks of the Spirit in life (holiness in the service of love), especially in the light of our founder, William J. Seymour's, insistence that the life of love and holiness is the ultimate expression of the Spirit's work. After all, without justice (Amos) and love (Paul) our worship, as important as it is, is totally discredited. This includes tongues, as Seymour passionately reminded us.⁴⁵ We need to think about whether our statement of faith clarifies this point sufficiently well.

Perhaps part of the confusion that some of my students expressed over tongues as initial evidence is due to a lack of theological reflection on the doctrine. The challenge is on us to engage in this reflection in a way that is passionate in its commitment to scripture but also humble and compassionate toward others with whom we dialogue. After all, all doctrine is fallible and seeks to be accountable to the experience of the Spirit and to the only infallible rule of faith and practice, the Holy scriptures. May all that we do or say continue to reflect this accountability in order to bring God glory. Amen.

Footnotes

1. Watson Mills, "A Theological Interpretation of Tongues in Acts and I Corinthians" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1968), pp. 224-25; Note also his, "Reconstruction and Reappraisal," in Watson Mills, ed. *Speaking in Tongues: A Guide to Research on Glossolalia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987).
2. Frank D. Macchia, "Sighs too Deep for Words: Towards a Theology of Glossolalia," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (1992), pp. 47-73; "Tongues as a Sign: Towards a Sacramental Understanding of Pentecostal Experience," *Pneuma* 15 (1993), 61-76; "Tongues and Prophecy: A Pentecostal Perspective," in *Pentecostal Movement as Ecumenical Challenge*, eds. Jürgen Moltmann and K. J. Kuschel, Concilium (June 1996); and "The Tongues of Pentecost: A Pentecostal Perspective on the Promise and Challenge of Pentecostal/Roman Catholic Dialogue," forthcoming in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*. Note also the classics, Carl Brumback, *What Meaneth This?* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1947), and Wade Horton, ed., *The Glossolalia Phenomenon* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Books, 1966). Note Simon Chan's response to my work: "The Language Game of Glossolalia, or Making Sense of the Initial Evidence," and Gordon Fee's, "Toward a Pauline Theology of Glossolalia," both in *Pentecostalism in Context, Essays in Honor of William W. Menzies*, eds. W. Ma and R. P. Menzies (Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 80-95 and 24-37,

- respectively. Amos Yong has a provocative piece on the "truth of glossolalia," which is soon to appear in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*. Note also, Jenny Everts, "'Tongues or Languages?' Contextual Consistency in the Translation of Acts 2," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 4 (1994), pp. 71-80.
3. Henry Lederle, "Initial Evidence and the Charismatic Movement," in *Initial Evidence: Historical and Biblical Perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism*, ed. Gary B. McGee (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 131-141.
 4. Lederle, "Initial Evidence."
 5. Gordon Fee, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), ch. 6.
 6. Jack Hayford, *The Beauty of Spiritual Language, My Journey Toward the Heart of God* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1992), p. 96.
 7. Michael Welker, *God the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), p. 266. Note my review article of Welker's fine book, "Discerning the Spirit in Life: A Review of *God the Spirit* by Michael Welker," and his response to me: "Spirit Topics: Trinity, Personhood, Mystery and Tongues," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 10 (1997), pp. 3-28 and 29-34.
 8. Jack Hayford, *Spiritual Language*, esp. pp. 95-98.
 9. I am grateful to Russell Spittler for this insight.
 10. Jean-Daniel Plüss, "Azusa and Other Myths: The Long and Winding Road from Experience to Stated Belief and Back Again," *Pneuma* 15 (1993), pp. 189-201.
 11. Juan Sepulveda, "Born Again: Baptism and the Spirit, A Pentecostal Perspective," in *Pentecostal Movement as Ecumenical Challenge*, pp. 104-109.
 12. Vinson Synan, *Charismatic Bridges* (Ann Arbor, MI: Word of Life, 1974), p. 34; Ray Hughes, "A Traditional Pentecostal Looks at the New Pentecostals," *Christianity Today* (June 7, 1974), p. 8.
 13. Quoted in Lederle, "Initial Evidence," p. 128.
 14. Mills, *Theological Interpretation*.
 15. Jacques Ellul, *Prayer and Modern Man* (New York: Seabury, 1970).
 16. Donald Gee's address to the World Pentecostal Conference, 1952.
 17. *The Apostolic Faith* 1:1 (Sept. 1906), p. 1; 1:5 (Jan. 1907), p. 3.
 18. W. J. Carothers' pamphlet entitled, *The Baptism in the Holy Ghost and Speaking in Tongues* (Zion City, IL, 1906), p. 24.
 19. "When the Holy Ghost comes, he speaks for himself," *Apostolic Faith* 1:3 (Nov. 1906), p. 4; One is to "get justified and sanctified." Then the Holy Spirit will come in "and praise God himself in an unknown tongue." He will then "bear witness of himself," *Apostolic Faith* 1:6 (Feb.-March 1907), p. 3.
 20. Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984); Robert Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991); J. Massynbaerde Ford, "Toward a Theology of Speaking in Tongues," in *Speaking in Tongues, A Guide to Research on Glossolalia*, ed. Watson Mills (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 263-294.
 21. Note Murray Dempster, "The Church's Moral Witness: A Study of Glossolalia in Luke's Theology of Acts," *Paraclete* 23 (1989), pp. 1-7.

22. Hermann Gunkel, *The Influence of the Holy Spirit* (Reprint; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), pp. 25, 30.
23. R. Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte (1. Teilband)*, Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, eds. J. Blank et al., pp. 101-102.
24. George Montigue and Kilian McDonnell, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Evidence from the First Eight Centuries* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1991), pp. 39-40.
25. J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988-92), II, pp. 211-12.
26. Note W. Faupel's evaluation of the shift in emphasis from tongues as xenolalia to tongues as an edifying transcendent language. D. William Faupel, "Glossolalia as Foreign Language: Investigation of the Early Twentieth-Century Pentecostal Claim," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 31 (1996), pp. 95-109.
27. Everts, "Tongues or Languages?"
28. Gordon Fee, "Towards a Pauline Theology of Glossolalia," p. 32.
29. I refer to tongues in this way in my earlier work, "Sighs too Deep for Words." I appreciated Gordon Fee's development of this theme in "Towards a Pauline Theology of Glossolalia."
30. Russell Spittler, "Glossolalia," *Dictionary of Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements*, eds. Gary B. McGee et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), p. 441.
31. Referred to by Murray Dempster, "The Search for Pentecostal Identity," *Pneuma* 15 (1993), p. 7.
32. For example, Wade Horton stated, "We did, and still do not, place as much importance on glossolalia itself...as others claim we do." "Introduction," in *The Glossolalia Phenomenon* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1966), p. 16; Similarly, Vinson Synan protested the characterization of Pentecostalism as a "tongues movement," since tongues, though distinctive, are not central to the faith for us. *Charismatic Bridges*, p. 34.
33. Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988).
34. D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).
35. I am grateful to Gary McGee for drawing my attention to the importance of tongues for the origin of Pentecostalism.
36. My "Tongues as a Sign," pp. 63, 69.
37. Note my, "Tongues as a Sign."
38. Note Harvey Cox's discussion of tongues as "primal speech" in his, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Boston: Addison-Wesley, 1995), p. 81-98.
39. George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine* (Philadelphia: John Knox, 1984).
40. Gordon Fee, "Tongues - Least of the Gifts? Some Exegetical Observations on I Corinthians 12-14," *Pneuma* 2 (1980), pp. 3-14.
41. Krister Stendahl, "The New Testament Evidence," in *The Charismatic Movement*, ed. M. P. Hamilton (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 48.

42. Ernst Käsemann has noted that the groans of Rom 8:26 in the original language are "unutterable," and not "unuttered," thereby opening the door to see the text as an unutterable utterance, a paradox similar to knowing that (i.e., the love of Christ) which is beyond knowledge (Eph 3:19). Since a recognizable feature of worship provides the most likely object of Paul's reference to groaning, Käsemann identifies it with tongues. *Commentary on the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 237-38.
43. Joseph Roswell Flower, "How I Received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit," *Pentecostal Evangel* (January 21, 1933; reprinted September 7, 14, 1952). The 1993 version of the testimony (July 18) omits Flower's description of the delay in his experience between Spirit baptism and tongues!
44. Joseph Roswell Flower, "Is It Necessary to Speak in an Unknown Tongue?" (n.d.), esp. p. 91.
45. Note Cecil M. Robeck's treatment of Seymour's views, "William J. Seymour and the 'Bible Evidence'," in *Initial Evidence*, pp. 72-95.

THE INCREASING frequency of the phenomenon of "speaking in tongues," in the Roman Catholic and other Christian denominations, challenges one to outline a "theology" of this spiritual gift. Morton Kelsey has made an important contribution in the field of psychology. However, while psychological investigations are valid and interesting, they can hardly throw adequate light on supernatural phenomena. But we have the mind of Christ. The present essay will be approached purely from the biblical point of view. First, it might be useful to give a brief survey of representative exegetical expositions of the pertinent scriptural texts. After this we shall discuss "tongues" from (a) the individual's and (b) the community's point of view. Too Deep for Words book. Read reviews from world's largest community for readers. Exploring fundamental ways in which verbal expression in worship relate... Goodreads helps you keep track of books you want to read. Start by marking "Too Deep for Words: A Theology of Liturgical Expression" as Want to Read: Want to Read saving... We all groan for glory. But there's a third groaning in this passage that is quite remarkable, and it is the groaning of the Holy Spirit. It is the groaning of the Holy Spirit. In the same way that creation groans, waiting for the glorious manifestation of the sons of God, in the same way that we ourselves groan, waiting for the adoption of sons, the redemption of our body, so the Holy Spirit groans. We saw the groaning of creation, the groaning of the believer, now the groaning of the Holy Spirit and all of this groaning in the direction of our future glory. Please this is not speaking in grunts and gibberish and tongues; this is not ecstatic speech; this isn't anybody saying anything that can be heard. This is the Holy Spirit saying things that can't be heard. It says it, "too deep for words." The word would evaporate and another less fitting, less appropriate, less timely word would appear in its place. Is it really possible to forget your mother tongue? I Speak, Therefore I Am. I'd like to introduce you to Aharon Appelfeld. He was subject to deep psychological trauma and conflated the German language with the Nazis who committed heinous acts against him and his family. And he arrived in Palestine shortly before the formation of the State of Israel in 1948, when the government implemented policies to promote the use of Hebrew as the official language. As a consequence, Appelfeld has spoken Hebrew and produced his works in Hebrew for the past 70 years.