

morning was the moment when the Spirit's new covenant ministry among men began so that their "two stage" experience must be judged unique and not a norm for us at all? Surely this, too, is certain. . . .

Two more counterquestions about tongues now arise.

Can it be convincingly denied that when Paul wrote, "Do all speak in tongues? (1 Corinthians 12:30), he expected the answer. "No"? Again, surely not.

Can charismatic glossolalia which is frequently a learned skill and technique, which lacks language structure, and which its own practitioners regard as mainly for private use, be convincingly equated with the tongues of 1 Corinthians 12-14, which were for public use, which were a "sign" to unbelievers ("a negative sign towards their judgment", as Stendahl explains it), and which Paul "thought about as a language", conveying meaning and therefore capable of being interpreted? Can the identity of these two glossolalic phenomena be convincingly affirmed? Surely not. . . .

As for the tongues spoken for two generations in Pentecostal churches and nowadays by millions of charismatics also, linguists, sociologists, doctors, psychologists, and pastors have studied them firsthand with some thoroughness. The study has its hazards, for the phenomenon is widespread among all sorts of people, and the risk of generalizing from untypical cases is high. Also, it is clear that some students find glossolalic piety unsettling, indeed unnerving, so that strong defensive prejudices arise to cloud their judgment. However, there seems to be, if not unanimity, at least a growing agreement among present-day investigators on the following points.

(1) Whatever glossolalists may believe to the contrary, glossolalia is not language in the ordinary sense, though it is both self-expression and communication; and whatever Freudian theorists may have suspected or feared, it is not a product of the kind of disassociation of mind and bodily function that argues stress, repression, or mental sickness. It is, rather a willed and welcomed vocal event in which, in a context of attention to religious realities, the tongue operates within one's mood but apart from one's mind in a way comparable to the fantasy languages of children, the scat singing of the late Louis Armstrong, yodeling in the Alps, and warbling under the shower or in the bath. Dennis Bennett, who was a pioneer of charismatic renewal in the Episcopal Church, actually identifies childish pseudolanguages with the glossolalic gift and on this basis claims that "it is not unusual to find a person who has been speaking in tongues ever since childhood but who did not know the significance of what he or she was doing." . . .

(2) Though sometimes starting spontaneously in a person's life, with or without attendant emotional excitement, glossolalia is regularly taught (loosen jaw and tongue, speak nonsense syllables, utter as praise to God the first sounds that come, and so forth) and through such teaching it is in fact learned it is not something hard to do if one wants to.