

Sex Symbols Who Speak in Tongues?

I was at the grocery store the other day when I was unexpectedly confronted with an adult-oriented magazine located right next to the vitamin section. I immediately had to look away from the front cover, which featured a scantily clad, seductively posed, sex symbol. Yet it was only a few weeks ago that I read an article about how this same sex symbol loves to speak in tongues and has to restrain herself from outbursts in tongues while attending church services. What?

This is actually a perfect illustration of American charismatic Christianity, where you can say you love Jesus (like the rapper “The Game” claims to do) and still frequent strip clubs (as “The Game” still does), or where you can flow in the **gifts of the Spirit** and become a made-for-TV preaching sensation, only to announce that God told you that you married the wrong woman, leading to a quick divorce and remarriage.

Yes, this is the “gospel” of the 21st century, “Spirit-filled” church of America, where the cross is bypassed, denial of the flesh is scorned, purity is called legalism, and anything goes if it feels good.

It is the “gospel” of self, in which Jesus dies to make you into a bigger and better you, a “gospel” in which God is here to serve you and help you fulfill your dreams, and where the measure of all things is not how God feels about it but how you feel about it (or how it makes you feel).

Back in the late 1950s (as I recounted in my 1990 book *How Saved Are We?*) there was a notorious gangster named Mickey Cohen. He attended a **Billy Graham** meeting in Beverly Hills, and although he expressed some interest in the message, as

revival historian J. Edwin Orr explained, Cohen “made no commitment until some time later when another friend urged him, using Revelation 3:20 as a warrant, to invite Jesus Christ into his life. This he professed to do, but his life subsequently revealed no evidence of repentance, ‘that mighty change of mind, heart and life’ [as defined by Richard Trench]. He rebuked [his] friend, telling him: ‘You did not tell me that I would have to give up my work,’ meaning his rackets; ‘You did not tell me that I would have to give up my friends,’ meaning his gangster associates. He had heard that so-and-so was a Christian football player, so-and-so a Christian cowboy, so-and-so a Christian actress, so-and-so a Christian senator, and he really thought that he could be a Christian gangster.”

Today, in some **charismatic** circles, you *can* be a Christian gangster—or, at least, a **tongue-talking**, seductive starlet, or a Christian lingerie model, or a strip-club-attending, Jesus-speaking rapper, just to mention a few. After all, as we are reminded day and night, “Who are you to judge?”

Actually, what Jesus taught was that we should not judge hypocritically or superficially or unjustly and that we should not condemn. But Jesus also said, “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment” (John 7:24). The Lord commands us to judge, as long as we do it rightly.

Paul taught the very same thing, writing to the Corinthians, “not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?” (1 Cor. 5:11-12)

Why is it that everyone seems to know the words, “Judge not” (Matt. 7:1), but very few seem to know—or care about—the divine call to judge those “inside the church” (meaning those

who profess to be followers of Jesus)?

Without a doubt, only the Lord knows who is saved and who is not. But the Word makes things very simple for us, outlining God's part and our part: "But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are his,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.'" (2 Tim. 2:19) There you have it! To quote the words of John, "No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God" (1 John 3:9). Could God make himself any more clear?

Unfortunately, as Orr noted years ago, "Many have sadly forgotten that the only evidence of the new birth is the new life," and the Scriptures make perfectly clear that if we profess to follow Jesus with our lips but do not follow Him with our lives, we do not belong to Him. (I'm not talking about momentary lapses in our walks with the Lord or about serious mistakes that we make, only to reject and renounce them. God's mercy and forgiveness are great. I'm talking about the consistent, willful pattern of our lives. Are we following Jesus or not?)

It's time to say goodbye to this watered-down, sin-excusing, so-called gospel that offers everything and calls for nothing. It's time to get back to the cross and back to the truth. Otherwise, as America collapses in a heap of amoral ruin, the soft preachers of America will be largely to blame.

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