

Why Do So Many Pentecostals and Charismatics Not Speak in Tongues Anymore?

This is an important word for those who believe in tongues. If you don't believe in them, or you believe they are not important, or that they are a gift for a chosen few, or that they've passed away and are no longer relevant for today, then this word is not for you. You can stop reading right here. But if you are under leadership who do not believe or speak or emphasize this supernatural language, you may want to consider getting out of the ditch your leadership has dug for you, especially if you are young and the better part of your life is still in front of you.

Let me start strong. Tongues was the making of such world changing ministries as John G. Lake, Oral Roberts, and Kenneth E. Hagin. Someone asked Lester Sumrall how often he prayed in tongues, which generated this terse respond: "When I'm not preaching." The apostle Paul told the Corinthians that he prayed in tongues "more than all of them put together," one translation says. Yet modern churches who seem to know better are departing from this sure way.

I travel to churches for a living so I see firsthand how much of a diminishing emphasis there is on praying in tongues these days. There is a marked difference between now and just 20-30 years ago. Even in the back room in pre-service prayer there seems to be less and less of praying in tongues. And singing in tongues is even rarer and almost unheard of. More and more Christians seem to be uncomfortable and unfamiliar with this realm. This neglect is hurting the church. This de-emphasis is diminishing her power and effectiveness. And this is exactly what the devil wants.

The use, value, and scope of tongues is so vast that it is difficult to sometimes put into words. If we are not careful some of these things will fade away in this new generation. I'm seeing it. There are certain elements of prayer, for example, that will be lost to our youth if those who are older and more experienced in these areas fail to pass them on.

There is a book in my library I often refer to. It is called, *Tongues: Beyond The Upper Room*, by the late Kenneth E. Hagin. Every believer should have that book. Every church should teach thoroughly from it. Every minister should read it regularly. There are certain men of old like Hagin and many others who were sent by God with light from heaven for their generation. The challenge with each new generation is to keep the light of the Holy Ghost that these men brought to us. There is a new church methodology that is making it easier to lose this light. There is new ministry philosophy that is content to let it slip away because according to their wisdom, it doesn't bring in the numbers or the big bucks.

In the aforementioned book, there are some mind-blowing testimonies of the miracle working power of God that was manifested through those who strongly believed and practiced praying in tongues. One testimony is told of one Brother Boley, a missionary to Africa. He would travel by sail boat to some primitive islands to preach the gospel to unreached tribes. One night on his return to the mainland a storm arose at sea. This was at the turn of the 20th century when they had not light nor navigation equipment.

The storm was so bad that they reached a point of two choices. They could stay out at sea and be swallowed up by the turbulent waves, or direct the boat toward shore through the coral reef, where in all likelihood it would be smashed to pieces. Either way, barring a miracle, there would be loss of life to all on the boat.

Unbeknownst to Brother Boley, one of his helpers back at the

mission station on the mainland had a burden to pray that night. Not knowing the situation or even quite what she was sensing, she prayed in tongues for about two hours. Then the burden lifted and she had a note of victory that the answer had come. The Old Pentecostals called this “praying through”—something so few Christians know anything about today. This is one of the elements modern Charismatics are losing.

Kenneth E. Hagin heard Brother Boley in person share this testimony, or else I would’ve had a hard time believing it myself. Around the same time that the burden of prayer lifted off this woman the boat took off in the air like an airplane and sailed over the dangerous reef and landed in the harbor where the waters were calm and peaceful. There was much rejoicing and not a life was lost.

Why are we not seeing and hearing more testimonies like this today? It’s simple. Because we are not praying very much in other tongues. The next wave of God’s Spirit is dependent on the prayers of God’s people. Ministers who know and have experience in these areas need to teach more on the Holy Ghost and prayer, and then demonstrate some of it to the people. The Lord told Kenneth E. Hagin that the greatest move of God would come through the combination of the solid foundation of the Word that’s been built over the last few decades and the power of the Holy Ghost that will be manifested as we learn to enter into this deeper realm of prayer.

Here is a powerful quote from Hagin in the book I referred to here:

“Oh yes, we’ve seen the power of the Holy Ghost in a limited fashion, but a wave is coming that will bring His power on a higher level and in a far greater measure than we have ever seen before. I can see that wave out yonder in the deep waters. It’s coming!

“Don’t stay on the old wave of yesterday’s move of the Spirit. Swim out to the deep waters of the Spirit realm by praying in the Holy Ghost, and get on the next wave of God’s purposes for this hour. Then keep on praying so you can ride that new wave as it builds in divine power and glory.

“I’m convinced the wave that is coming will be twice as high as the healing wave, the Charismatic wave, or the faith wave. In fact, it will be twice as high as all of them put together! I believe it is going to be the wave that sweeps us right on into the shores of the Glory World!”

It is surely not a time to back off from the Holy Ghost and praying in tongues. Instead, it time to double up and triple up in praying in other tongues so that we can see our mighty God display His great power in this gross time of darkness in the earth.