

## The Problem Tongues of 1 Corinthians: *A Re-examination*

by Robert Zerhusen

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In a previous article I suggested an alternative explanation for the "other tongues" of Acts 2:4. Historical evidence demonstrates that both the Judeans from Palestine and the Diaspora Judeans shared the same native languages (i.e. Aramaic and Greek). The Judean crowd of Acts 2 had expected to be hearing the "holy tongue" (i.e., Hebrew) the proper language of the temple liturgy, the upper language of the Jewish diglossia. Instead the disciples of Jesus when filled with the Spirit prophesied in their own native languages (i.e., Aramaic and Greek) and violated the Jewish diglossia. Luke designates these languages as "other tongues" (i.e., languages other than Hebrew). A natural response after exposure to this alternative explanation is to ask: "That makes sense in the context of Acts 2; how though does it make sense of the 'tongues' of 1 Corinthians 14?" This article provides an explanation for the "problem tongues" of 1 Corinthians 12-14.

Because of its geographical location and its commercial prosperity, the city of Corinth in Paul's time was a highly multilingual environment. This is admitted by scholars of all persuasions; as Gordon Fee puts it, "the phenomenon of different languages would also have been commonplace in a cosmopolitan center such as Corinth" (664). From the opposite end of the theological spectrum, Robert Thomas writes.

"Barbarians" was a general designation for those of the first-century world who were ignorant of the Greek languages. The city of Corinth abounded with such visitors. Thus the illustration was full of meaning for these residents. Most of them doubtless were familiar with the frustration of encountering another intelligent person with whom it was impossible to converse. Visitors from other linguistic backgrounds could not comprehend the Corinthian speech any more than the Corinthians understood theirs [128].

This means that for many in Corinth, Greek was not their first or native language. Instead, they spoke a non-Greek language as their first or native language, and Greek was a second language for them. Vern Poythress also sees this possibility: "A Corinthian tongue-speaker might speak in a human language unknown to the whole assembly, but known somewhere in the world" (133). A. Robertson and A. Plummer point out the frustration that Corinthians may have experienced:

All kinds of languages met at commercial Corinth with its harbors on two seas, and difference of language was a frequent barrier to common action. Moreover, it was well known how exasperating it could be for two intelligent persons to be unintelligible to one another [310].

Surprisingly, Robert H. Gundry claims:

The other presupposition underlying Paul's words about the unintelligibility of tongues is that in the ordinary church meeting at Corinth there would not be numbers of people with varied linguistic backgrounds [303].

A church tends to reflect its environment. As the city of Corinth was a highly multilingual environment, we would expect to see this reflected in the church.

As a major seaport city, Corinth would have a constant influx and varied mix of visitors, travelers, temporary residents, freedmen, and slaves. Jerome Murphy O'Connor says of the Corinthian population:

In a highly developed commercial city such as Corinth it has been calculated that the population was made up of one third free full citizens, one-third freedmen (ex-slaves whose freedom was restricted by commitments to their former owners), and one-third slaves [xi].

These groups of people provided sources for many human languages. Visitors, travelers, and temporary residents would come from all over the Roman Empire bringing their non-Greek native languages with them. Freedmen and slaves would also come from areas where Greek was not the native language and another language would be their native or first language.

### **The Text of 1 Corinthians 14: Some Observations**

Careful observation of the text provides clues about the nature of the "problem tongues" at Corinth. Consider the following inferences derived either from common knowledge about Corinth or directly from the text of 1 Corinthians 14. These inferences are stated as propositions, below, with the source of each indicated in parentheses.

1. The native language of the city of Corinth was Greek (common knowledge).
2. Prophesying would have been in the Greek language (common knowledge).
3. Prophesying (being in Greek) was understood by all who were present at the service (common knowledge).
4. Prophesying was edifying to all (14:3) because it was understood by all (proposition 3).
5. The "problem tongue" at Corinth was not the Greek language (common knowledge).
6. The problem tongue(s) were spoken primarily to God (14:2).
7. The problem tongue(s) were not known or understood by most of the Corinthian congregation (14:2,14,16).
8. The problem tongue when interpreted was interpreted into the Greek Language (common knowledge).
9. The problem tongue (even when not interpreted into Greek) built up the tongue-speaker (14:4,16-17).
10. Paul desired that all of the Corinthians have the freedom to engage in problem tongues (14:5, 39).
11. Paul preferred prophesying in Greek to uninterpreted tongues (14:5).
12. Prophesying in Greek was superior to speaking in uninterpreted tongues (14:5).
13. The problem tongues could be interpreted (14:5, 13, 27).
14. If the problem tongue was interpreted, it was no longer inferior to prophesying (14:5).
15. The problem tongue could sometimes be interpreted by the tongue-speaker himself (14:5,13, 27).
16. Sometimes the tongue-speaker could not interpret the problem tongue (14:28).

17. Once interpreted the problem tongue ceased to be a problem tongue (common knowledge).
18. An uninterpreted problem tongue consisted of words (14:19).
19. An uninterpreted tongue could not convey revelation, knowledge, prophecy, or teaching (14:6).
20. When a problem tongue was uttered (without interpretation), the tongue-speaker's Spirit acts, but his Mind does not produce fruit (14:14).
21. The problem tongue was used by the tongue-speaker for worship or devotional purposes: for prayer (14:14, 15, 16,17); for singing (14:15); for blessing/praising God (14:16); and for giving thanks to God (14: 16-17).
22. Paul spoke in tongues outside of the church meetings (14:18).
23. Paul preferred "five intelligible words" to "countless, myriads of words" in an uninterpreted tongue (14:19).
24. Paul told the Corinthians that they must use their physical organ of speech (i.e., tongue) to produce intelligible speech. If they do not, they will be speaking uselessly into the air (14:9).
25. Paul asserts that there are many voices in the world, and yet none is meaningless in itself (14:10).
26. Paul asserts that if people do not understand each other's voices, they become "barbarians" to each other (14:11).
27. If all of the Corinthians engage in problem tongues simultaneously (without interpretation), this leads the unlearned and unbelieving visitors to conclude that they are just "raving" (14:23).
28. If all of the Corinthians prophesy, the unlearned and unbelievers overhear and could possibly be converted to the Christian faith (14:24-25).
29. Multiple individuals at the Corinthian worship service brought multiple problem tongues (14:26).
30. If someone speaks in a particular problem tongue (singular), this should be limited to two or at most three per meeting (14:27).
31. One tongue-speaker should speak at a time; many should not speak simultaneously (14:27).
32. One of the tongue-speakers must interpret the particular problem tongue that is used (14:27).
33. If there is no person capable of competently interpreting a problem tongue (neither among the tongue-speakers nor among the interpreters), the tongue-speaker should keep this particular tongue out of the public service (14:28).
34. The word tongue is used in 1 Corinthians 14 sometimes in the singular (14:2, 4, 13, 14, 19, 26, 27), and sometimes in the plural (14:5, 6, 18, 21, 22, 23, 39).
35. The problem tongues carried cognitive information (e.g., "giving thanks:" 14:16-17; lyrics of a song: 14:15; and words: 14:19).

These inferences provide parameters in the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14. Three key questions need to be answered: (1) was the problem tongue a language of some sort? (2) If it is established that the tongues were languages, were they heavenly/angelic languages or human languages? (3) Did the tongue-speaker know or understand the tongue in which he was speaking?

### Languages or Non-cognitive, Non-languages?

A common position among scholars is to view the problem tongues of Corinth as "ecstatic utterances." William Barclay provides an example: "What happened was this--at a church service someone would fall into an ecstasy and pour out a torrent of unintelligible sounds in no known language" (111). A. C. Thiselton describes these utterances in a similar fashion: "Speaking in tongues denotes a kind of non-conceptual, prerational outlet for a powerful welling up of emotions and experiences" (30).

"Ecstatic utterances" is a misnomer for these utterances, however, as Poythress observes: "But the label 'ecstatic utterance' describes the psychological state of the speaker, whereas the description in terms of 'a human language foreign to the speaker' deals with the scientific classification of the utterance (the speech product). This is mixing apples and oranges" (130). Since Paul says nothing about the emotional or mental state of the tongue-speaker, we should restrict ourselves to analysis of the speech product. I suggest that rather than label these as "ecstatic utterances," we should designate them "non-cognitive, non-language utterances" (henceforth "NC-NLU's"). Non-cognitive because the mind is not involved in the production of these utterances. Non-language utterances because they are not any form of language (angelic, heavenly, or human).

There are some major difficulties with the "NCNLU's" view. First, there is no reference in the text of 1 Corinthians 14 to the emotional or mental state of the tongue-speaker. Paul's emphasis throughout the chapter seems to be on whether or not the problem tongue is interpreted. Fee recognizes this emphasis when he writes: "The problem is not speaking in tongues per se but speaking in tongues without interpretation--which from the context seems very likely what the Corinthians were doing (659). Second, the Greek word *ekstatikos* does not appear anywhere in the Greek text of 1 Corinthians 14. The regulations Paul lays down in 1 Corinthians 14:27-28 presuppose that the tongue-speaker is completely in control of himself and his utterances. Third, in 1 Corinthians 12:10 Paul says some have ability in "kinds [gene] of tongues." If NC-NLU's are not languages of any kind and have no cognitive structure, how can they be differentiated into "kinds" or "classes"? Differentiation into individual, particular tongues seems to imply languages of some kind.

Fourth, when Paul says "tongues of men and even of angels" (1 Cor 13:1), he cannot be referring to the "NCNLU's of men and even of angels"; in this verse "tongues" clearly means "languages." Similarly, when Paul cites Old Testament precedent in 1 Corinthians 14:21-22 he appeals to past experience of the unintelligible human languages of Israel's conquerors (i.e., "by men of other tongues"). The Old Testament context prophesying in the intelligible human language (i.e., Hebrew) was intended for believers ("prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers"--1 Cor 14:22b). When this was rejected by Israel's unbelief, they received unintelligible languages ("and tongues is not a sign for believers but for unbelievers--1 Cor 14:22a) as a sign of God's judgment. Throughout 1 Corinthians 14 Paul argues for the superiority of prophesying over uninterpreted problem tongues. So it makes sense for him to cite Old Testament precedent in support of this argument. It should be noted that both in the actual Old Testament context and in Paul's choice of words ("other tongues"), he is referring to human languages, not NC-NLU's.

Fifth, although some scholars (most notably Johannes Behm) attempt to argue that Hellenistic parallels demonstrate the problem tongues to be NC-NLU's, Christopher Forbes in his book *Prophecy and Inspired Speech: In Early Christianity and its Hellenistic Environment* convincingly argues against this theory. D. A. Carson says of Behm's argument:

More careful word studies have shown that in none of the texts adduced by Behm or the standard lexica does *glossa* ever denote non-cognitive utterance. The utterance may be enigmatic and incomprehensible, but not non-cognitive. The ecstatic utterances of the pagan religions prove less suitable a set of parallels than was once thought [80-81].

Sixth, as noted above, sometimes *tongue* is singular, and sometimes plural: *tongues*. Can there be singular or plural NC-NLU's? Did Paul engage in multiple NC-NLU's (1 Cor. 14:18)? References to singular ("tongue") and plural ("tongues") fit the hypothesis of language (singular) versus languages (plural) much better.

Seventh, NC-NLU's would involve random, arbitrary sounds or syllables, which would not bear any cognitive content. The text of 1 Corinthians 14 says precisely the opposite. The problem tongue(s) of 1 Corinthians 14 involve the lyrics of songs (1 Cor 14:15) and expressions of prayer, praise, and "giving thanks." The problem tongue(s) also involve *words*. In 1 Corinthians 14:19 Paul says that he prefers "five intelligible words" to "myriads, countless words in a tongue." This reference to "myriads, countless words in a tongue (singular/*glossa*) is clearly a reference to a language of some kind. Words bear cognitive content and serve as the building blocks of all spoken languages.

Eighth, NC-NLU's cannot be interpreted or translated. An utterance that is non-cognitive (not consisting of words or conventional structure of any kind) cannot be translated. Ernest Best cites a famous example of a NC-NLU when he cites Alice in *Through the Looking Glass*: "'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves did gyre and gimbe in the wabe: All mimsy were the borogroves, and the mome raths otitgrabe" (57). This is incapable of translation as it contains no cognitive information or meaning and is not a language. It cannot be translated into any language (including Greek). As W. F. Orr and J. A. Walther observed regarding the interpretation of tongues: "If the reference is to 'languages,' this should be rendered 'translation'" (280). If the reference is to genuine NC-NLU's, then interpretation or translation cannot take place.

Gundry notes: "The term interpret(ation) *diermeneuo*, used frequently in connexion with glossolalia in 1 Corinthians, normally refers to translating a language when used in such a context" (300). J. G. Davies, discussing interpretation in the Septuagint and the New Testament, writes:

Thus of the twenty-one instances of the use of *hermeneuein* and its cognates in the LXX and the New Testament, apart from the seven occurrences in 1 Cor. 12 and 14, one refers to a satire or figurative saying, two to an explanation or exposition, and eighteen have the primary meaning of translation...the evidence is such as to warrant the assertion that the word used by Paul of interpreting glossolalia carries with it the strong suggestion of translating a foreign language [230].

Robertson and Plummer add: "The *dia* in *diermeneuein* may indicate either 'being a go-between' or 'thoroughness.' One who interprets his own words intervenes between unintelligible utterance and the hearers" (307). Isn't a "go-between" in the interpretation of a source language (i.e., the problem tongue at Corinth) into the target language (i.e., Greek) a translator?

Thiselton, to maintain his NC-NLU's position, attempts to argue that "interpretation" in 1 Corinthians 14 does not mean interpretation or translation, but "to put into words" (15-36). But what occurred when a problem tongue at Corinth was "interpreted" into Greek, the language of the congregation? If we diagram this process, it appears to be an exact description of translation:

problem tongue -->	"interpretation" -->	into Greek language
source language -->	translation -->	into target language

Thiselton also seems to be unaware that there are levels of translation, as David Crystal observes:

*Word-for-word.* Each word...in the source language is translated by a word (or morpheme) in the target language. The result often makes no sense, especially when idiomatic constructions are used....*Literal translation.* The linguistic structure of the source text is followed, but is normalized according to the rules of the target language....*Free translation.* The linguistic structure of the source language is ignored, and an equivalent is found based on the meaning it conveys [344].

Thus if the problem tongue is "put into words," it may not be a word-for-word translation or even a literal translation--it may be *free* translation.

Crystal, a linguist, defines translation as "conversion from one language into another" (432). The conversion of the problem tongue into the target language (Greek) by means of interpretation fits this definition of translation well because the evidence suggests that the problem tongues were not NC-NLU's, but were languages of some sort--languages that could be translated into Greek. For the remainder of this article, therefore, I will use *language(s)* instead of *problem tongue(s)*, and *translation* instead of *interpretation*.

### Angelic/Heavenly Languages or Human Languages?

The very strong arguments that can be brought to bear against the NC-NLU's view lead me to conclude that the problem tongues of Corinth were languages of some sort. The two major contenders here are angelic or heavenly languages versus human languages. Fee, a proponent of the heavenly language view, is quite certain the problem languages were not human languages: Paul's whole argument is predicated on its unintelligibility to both speaker and hearer, he certainly does not envisage someone's being present who would be able to understand it because it was also an earthly

language" (598). Dale B. Martin, another scholar who maintains this view, likewise asserts: "There is no indication that Paul viewed glossolalia as human language" (267). This view like the NC-NLU's view, also suffers from major problems.

First, careful examination of 1 Corinthians 14 reveals no references to "heaven" or "angels." We would expect some reference to such a fantastic ability of it were being practiced by the Corinthian language-speakers. All we have, however--and we shall examine it shortly--is a reference to angelic languages in 1 Corinthians 13:1.

Because there is no explicit reference (apart from 1 Corinthians 13:1), some have tried to argue against human languages based upon the Greek word *phōnōn*, which is translated as "languages" (NIV, NASB), "voices" (KJV) in 1 Corinthians 14:10-11. Robert Saucy states this argument when he writes:

Several things, however, make it difficult to see the tongues of 1 Corinthians as human languages....Most importantly, Paul uses foreign 'languages' (a different word than used for 'tongues') as an analogy for tongues (1 Cor. 14: 1-13). Something is not usually identical to that with which it is said to be analogous [131].

Fee concurs with Saucy: "Moreover, his rise of earthly languages as an analogy in 14:10-12 implies that it is not a known earthly language, since a thing is not usually identical with that to which it is analogous" (598).

Does *phōnōn*, however, mean "languages"? Paul writes: "There are I don't know how many [Barrett, 319] *gene phōnōn* [kinds of voices], there are in the world and yet none is voiceless" (a play on words in the Greek text meaning "none is meaningless"). "Therefore if I do not know the power of the voice" (Gordon Clark defines this well: "The 'power' of speech is intelligibility" [231]), "I will be a barbarian [*barbaros* -Hans Conzelmann says of this word:

"the basic meaning of *barbaros*, 'foreigner,' lit. 'gibberish talker'" -236] to the one speaking, and the speaking in me a Barbarian." R. C. H. Lenski sees that *pliolton* does not mean language here in 1 Corinthians 14:10-11:

While it is true that in the classics *phōnai* at times means "languages," and some interpreters think that this word has that meaning here, even they pause before *gene phōnōn* "kinds of languages." We might be inclined to accept "languages" as the meaning in the present connection because this rendering would support the fact that "tongues" signify all kinds of foreign languages. But *aphōnōn* which occurs in the next clause does not suit the idea of "languages."...We are obliged to translate "There are so many kinds of voices," sounds made by the throat and the mouth. And not a single kind is 'voiceless' or soundless so that it cannot be heard." This proposition is selfevident....But unless Paul comprehends the meaning of what this voice communicates, he will be a barbarian (a foreigner) to the man who is speaking with that voice. Paul, too, on his part will consider the man a barbarian (foreigner) [587-88].

John Calvin also saw 1 Corinthians 14:10-11 as a reference to "kinds of voices":

Paul now speaks more generally; for he now brings in the natural sounds of all the animal kingdom. Here he uses the word for unintelligible, i.e., as opposed to a clear, distinct sound. For the barking of dogs is different from the neighing of horses; the roaring of lions, from the braying of asses. Every single type of bird has its own particular way of singing or chirping. The whole of the natural order, which God has ordained, therefore calls for the making of distinguishable sounds [289].

Whether Paul is referring merely to human voices (Lenski) or to the whole natural world (Calvin), he is not referring to human languages as an analogy to the problem languages. Rather, Paul is making assertions that all voices are inherently intelligible, but if we do not understand the voice of another human being, we become "gibberish talkers" to each other. The Greeks prided themselves on their language and thought others had inferior languages. Paul appeals to this pride, arguing that when untranslated languages are used people become barbarians to each other.

A second problem with the heavenly language view is the reference to "kinds of languages" in 1 Corinthians 12:10. Is this a reference to multiple angelic languages? In the multilingual setting of the city of Corinth multiple human languages and translators would have been much more advantageous than angelic languages.

Third, if someone should counter that the angelic or heavenly languages were given for devotional purposes, this leads to some questions. According to the Greek construction of 1 Corinthians 12:30 not everyone at Corinth could engage in multiple languages or translate. Why would some believers (and not all) receive a greater capacity to worship the Lord? Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 13:8 says that languages will cease at the coming of the eschaton. Does this mean that

multiple human languages will cease, a true reversal of the tower of Babel incident? Or will angelic languages cease? In answer someone may claim that this does not refer to the cessation of angelic languages; it means, rather, that human beings will no longer be able to use angelic languages with the coming of the eschaton. But why would an ability in angelic languages be present with the church before the eschaton and then cease when it would be most advantageous?

Fourth, proponents of this view may appeal to Judean sources such as the *Testament of Job* as evidence that the problem languages of Corinth were angelic languages. Forbes observes that this work may have been redacted by Montanists,, Christians, or Gnostics (183-87). There is another problem with appeals to Judean tradition and belief about angelic language. In Judean tradition there is also a belief that as the "holy tongue," Hebrew is the language (singular) of heaven. Harry M. Orlinsky provides an example of this mentality:

The idea that God and the angels spoke Hebrew is, of course, biblically derived...what other language was employed in the Garden of Eden, and before the Fall and Dispersion of Man?...and reference to this fact is found also, e.g., in the book of Jubilees, one of the oldest books in the Jewish apocryphal literature. So that we should not be surprised when we learn that an 11th century monk, who was getting old enough to realize that his days on earth were numbered, began hurriedly to study Hebrew, for he knew that after he died and went to heaven, he would have to speak and understand Hebrew, Biblical Hebrew, if he wanted to converse with the angels and with the notable worthies who had preceded him from this earth [426].

Why should the *Testament of Job* be determinative rather than the Hebrew as the language of heaven tradition? Thiselton says of the angelic language view: "The suggestion is purely speculative, since with the possible exception of xiii:1, there seem to be no traces in these chapters of any explicit claim by the Corinthians that they were actually speaking the language of heaven itself" (32).

Fifth, consideration of the only reference in all of scripture to angelic languages (1 Cor 13:1) is also problematic for the angelic language view. Martin says of 1 Corinthians 13:1:

Paul's statement about "tongues of men" in 1 Corinthians 13:1 is in opposition to "tongues of angels." The latter refers to "glossolalia," the former to normal speech. The construction is the rhetorical commonplace "from the lesser to the greater" and may be paraphrased as follows: "Even if I have power to speak all human languages...or, to mention something more impressive, even angelic languages...I am nothing." The first refers to human (normal) language, the latter to heavenly (esoteric)--that is, glossolalic-language [267].

According to Martin, the "tongues of men" is hypothetical, while the "tongues of angels" is actual. It seems Martin has reversed the Greek construction. In the Greek of 1 Corinthians 13:1 "*ean*" is followed by the subjunctive mood (i.e., 3rd class conditional). Gundry, recognizing this construction in the Greek, wrote:

Even more to the point, if one reads further it becomes apparent that the speaking in tongues of angels does not at all have to indicate factual reality in Paul's mind (Paul uses *ean* with the subjunctive throughout verses 1-3) and indeed probably does not: "And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith,...if I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned...(1 Cor 13:2f.). As matters of fact, Paul does not claim to possess all prophetic insight and knowledge or to have all faith or to have given up all his possessions or to have delivered his body to be burned obviously not, since he is writing a letter!). These are "suppose-so" statements only partially true of Paul's experience. By the same token, although Paul claims to speak in tongues, it is not necessary to infer that he claims to speak in the tongues of angels. In fact, the analogy of the following parallel expressions indicates that he does not here claim to do so. Speaking with the tongues of angels corresponds to the unreal "all's" in the succeeding statements [301].

H. A. W. Meyer says of the contrast between "languages of men" and "languages of angels" that this "is only supposed as an imaginary case to heighten the contrast" (368). Meyer's and Gundry's comments are in direct contradiction to Martin's analysis. Martin ignores the *ean* followed by the subjunctive mood construction found in 1 Corinthians 13:13, and claims that the "tongues of men" is hypothetical while the "tongues of angels" is actual. In reality, the construction says the opposite: namely, that the speaking in the "languages of men" was actual, and the speaking in the "languages of angels" was hypothetical.

Careful examination of 1 Corinthians 13:13 indicates a clear pattern found in all three verses. Paul begins with an actual ability or action ("speaking in the languages of men," "prophesying," "having faith," "giving possessions"), which he then takes to the extreme ("speaking the languages of angels," "knowing all mysteries and having all knowledge," "moving mountains," "giving my body to be burned") to make the rhetorical and practical point that even at the zenith of the spectrum, without love these things are profitless. If this is a valid analysis of the Greek construction of 1 Corinthians

13:13, we also have a major clue about the gift of languages and translation (1 Cor 12:10, 28, 30): these were abilities that involved human languages. Again, as was said earlier, considering the highly multilingual setting of Corinth, we should not be surprised that persons with abilities in multiple human languages and translation should be important in Paul's mind and in the workings of the Corinthian church.

### **Languages Known and Understood by the Tongue-Speakers?**

From the analysis so far we know that the problem tongues of Corinth were (1) non-Greek human languages; (2) languages that, when translated into Greek, would cease to be a problem; and (3) non-Greek languages that were used for the purpose of worship by the language-speaker: prayer (14:14), singing (14:15), giving thanks (14:16-17), and blessing/praising God (14:16).

Some scholars believe that a language miracle was occurring in which the speaker was speaking a human language that he had never learned before and did not know or understand. They often appeal to Acts 2 to demonstrate miraculous language speaking. As I pointed out in my earlier article, however, the language situation of first-century Judeans and the Judean diglossia connected with the temple liturgy in Jerusalem, shows the language miracle view to be unsupported by historical or linguistic evidence.

The miraculous element in Acts 2 was the prophesying by Jesus' followers, not the speaking of native languages familiar to both the speakers (the disciples of Jesus) and the hearers (the Judean crowd gathered for the feast of Pentecost).

If the appeal to Acts 2 fails, proponents of the language miracle attempt to prove that the language-speakers in 1 Corinthians 14 did not know or understand the language they were using. As in Acts 2 it is assumed that the language-speakers were speaking languages with which they were not familiar.

Careful examination of the text of 1 Corinthians 14 reveals that Paul never explicitly states whether or not the language-speaker knew or understood the language that he was using. In fact, Paul's emphasis throughout the chapter is, as Antoinette C. Wire observes, on the hearer of the problem languages, not the speakers: "He takes the hearer rather than the speaker as his touchstone, rejecting tongues because the hearers do not understand them" (144).

Before we conclude that the language-speaker did know and understand the language he was using, let's consider some of the "prooftexts" often used to suggest that the language-speaker did not know or understand his language (i.e., 1 Cor 14:2,13, 14, 15-19, 28).

#### *1 Corinthians 14:2*

Some will claim that when Paul says: "If anyone speaks in a language, he does not speak to men but to God, for no one hears (i.e., hears with understanding), he speaks mysteries with [his] spirit," this proves the language-speaker doesn't know the language. As has already been noted, however, the primary function of the problem languages in 1 Corinthians 14 is to worship God (i.e., "does not speak to men but to God") Benny C. Aker disagrees but makes some good points:

Specifically, what does it mean to say that when one speaks in a tongue, he speaks to God? In the view which looks somewhat negatively upon the gift of tongues, speaking to God assumes a unidirectional meaning; thus tongues-speech is addressed to God, and prophecy to people I submit, then, that "does not speak to people but to God" (14:2) has reference to understanding instead of direction. In fact, in verse 2 the clause "but speaks mysteries by the Spirit says that very thing. The reason is that God in his omniscience knows/understands but people do not...One really does not speak, then, unless it is understood by others, which is the social dynamic in a Mediterranean society. Something has to be said about the sociological significance of tongues and the lack of understanding that results when tongue speaking is not interpreted. For one person to do something which relates only to an individual such as being personally edified and not being concerned about interpreting the tongues and thus edifying the group--is quite shameful in a kinship oriented society [20-21].

Aker is mistakenly arguing for an "either/or" situation, when it was a "both/and" situation. Yes, the problem language was unidirectional (directed to God), but Paul is also discussing the lack of understanding on the part of the hearers of the problem language.

### Dyadic or individualistic Personality?

Recall Wire's observation that for Paul throughout the discussion in 1 Corinthians 14 "the hearer is the touchstone." Aker is correct that in a Mediterranean culture (which is dyadic), it would be shameful to speak only in your language (thus edifying yourself), while being unconcerned about translating for the sake of others.

Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey explain the differences between dyadic and individualistic persons:

The personal, individualistic, self-centered focus typical of contemporary American experience was simply not of concern to first-century Mediterraneans. Given their cultural experience such self-concerned individualism would appear quite boring and inconsequential. For group survival it would be dysfunctional. And it would not be selectively unattended to. To understand the persons who populate the pages of the New Testament, then, it is important not to consider them as individualistic. They did not seek a personal, individualistic savior or anything else of a personal, individualistic sort. If those people were not individualistic, what or how were they? We submit that what characterized first-century Mediterranean people was not individualistic, but "dyadic" or group-oriented personality. For people of that time and place, the basic most elementary unit of social analysis is not the individual person but the "dyad," a person in relation with and connected to at least one other social unit, in particular, the family [73].

Paul's interest throughout 1 Corinthians is constantly the effects upon the group. Neyrey uses 1 Corinthians as an example of dyadic concerns:

Group orientation indicates that individuals should always "seek the good of the neighbor" (1 Cor 10:24) and not pursue individualistic objectives. Strong individualists at Corinth seem to have bucked the sense of accountability to the group either by an unseemly marriage (5:12) or by eating proscribed foods (1 Cor 8:1-2, 7:11). Paul points out how the incestuous marriage harmed the group as leaven pollutes flour (1 Cor 5:6-8); the unscrupulous eating of meats sacrificed to idols causes scandal to some, destroying the weak person for whom Christ died (1 Cor 8:11) Promoting one's interests, then, offends the group, and so comes under censure.... Prophecy is better than tongues, for it "builds up the group whereas the speakers in tongues "edify" only themselves (1 Cor 14:1-3). Yet both prophecy and tongues should be regulated and subjected to controls for the sake of the group's "edification" (1 Cor 14:26-33). Evidently individualism is the nemesis of group orientation [190].

We know that Corinth was a highly multilingual seaport city with a transient mixed population. If people began to freely worship God in the language with which they were most familiar (without translation in a non-Greek language), what would happen?

When a person is most freely worshipping God, he will use his first language, his native language (i.e., the language of the heart, the language with which he is most familiar), rather than a second language, a language with which he is much less familiar. There were many people at Corinth whose second language was Greek but whose heart language was some other language. When one of these people spoke out in his or her heart language (a language from a more remote area, say Lycaonian or Demotic Egyptian), the speaker would certainly know his or her own language, but unfortunately, the group or congregation would not know or understand that language.

How would Paul describe this from the perspective of the hearers of this unintelligible language? From their perspective "no one would hear" (with understanding) the language speaker would be "speaking mysteries from the heart" (cf. Paul's description of the spirit of man in 1 Corinthians 2:11: "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit [pneuma] of the man which is in him?" (NASB).

The phrase "for no one hears" should not be taken absolutely, as Boyce W. Blackwelder notes: "'No one' is not to be taken in the absolute sense. The speaker would understand and give the interpretation (cf. vv 5, 6, 13-17), or someone else conversant with the particular language could do so (cf. vv 27-28; 12:30)" (65). Charles Hodge said the same thing: "The meaning is, not that no man living, but that no man present, could understand" (157). Thomas correctly defines the phrase: "It means that 'no one in the local gathering was of the particular linguistic background represented by the tongues message" (118).

## Native Languages

We can now state the nature of the languages problem at Corinth: Corinth was a highly multilingual seaport city in which people would sometimes speak out in the Corinthian church service, worshiping God in the language with which they were most familiar (their native language, first language, language of the heart) without translation.

This explanation (1) fits the multilingual setting (which all acknowledge); (2) fits all 35 Scriptural observations listed above; (3) explains why the language-speaker is using a problem language to worship God; (4) explains how the language-speaker can be edified even when the language is not translated; (5) explains why Paul would say: "I want you all to speak in [your] languages" (1 Cor 14:5); "Do not forbid to speak in languages" (1 Cor 14:39). In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul as a dyadic personality must reconcile two competing values. On the one hand, everything must be done in such a way that the benefit of the group is maintained (thus he says: "Seek to build up the church that you may abound" (1 Cor 14:12); "Let all things be for building up" (1 Cor 14:26). Yet, on the other hand, Paul wants people whose native languages are not Greek to be able to freely worship God in the language most familiar to them (as long as they translate).

It should be noted that in 1 Corinthians 14:5, 13, and 27 Paul tells the language-speakers to translate their own languages ("unless he translates"--14:5; "that he may translate"--14:13 ; and "let two or at most three and let one [of them] translate"--14:27). In 1 Corinthians 14:28, however, Paul says that in a situation in which there is no "translator" (notice that *diermeneueto* is a noun), the language speaker should "keep silent in the church and speak to himself and to God." If speaking in languages and translation were miraculous (as some say) then the situation described in 1 Corinthians 14:28 could never occur. The language-speaker is instructed to "pray that he might translate" (1 Cor 14:13). If translation is a supernatural ability that the language-speaker or others with this supernatural ability could practice, then the situation of 1 Corinthians 14:28 could never arise! Either the language-speaker would translate, or one of the supernaturally gifted translators could translate. But in fact the situation of 14:28 could arise, according to Paul. How do we explain this?

First of all, some misunderstand Paul's meaning in 14:13. They assume that language-speaking and translation were supernatural abilities practiced by members of the Corinthian church. Not all the manifestations of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12 are miraculous abilities. In fact, according to Paul something can be a manifestation of the Spirit and not be a miraculous ability. Even Fee, a staunch charismatic scholar says of the "gifts" of "administration," (literally, "steersmanship"--Mitchell: 163) and "helps":

"The sixth and seventh items (lit. 'helps' and 'guidances'), which are deeds of service, are noteworthy in three ways: (a) they are the only two not mentioned again in the rhetoric of vv 29-30; (b) they are not mentioned again in the NT; (c) they do not appear to be of the same kind, that is, supernatural endowments" (618-19).

Carson notes the same reality: "It is at any rate very clear that these spiritual gifts are not among those frequently regarded today as 'charismatic,' even though Paul is happy to think of them that way" (41). Discussing the "gift" lists in the New Testament Carson writes:

The lists as a whole contain an impressive mixture of what some might label "natural" and "supernatural" endowments, or "spectacular" and "more ordinary" gifts. This is in line with what we have gleaned from Paul's argument in 12:1-7. The intriguing thing is that Paul himself makes no such distinctions: it is the same God who works all things in all men. Paul's overarching doctrine of divine sovereignty is precisely what can prompt him to ask the Corinthians elsewhere: "For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?" This suggests in turn that Paul would not have been uncomfortable with spiritual gifts made up of some mix of so-called natural talent what he would consider still to be God's gift and of specific, Spirit-energized endowment [37].

Watson makes the same point: "Paul makes it clear that the gracious gifts of the Spirit need in no way be striking, spectacular, 'out of this world'" (131). Discussing "helps" and "steersmanship," Watson says these were "gifts which are in no way striking or extraordinary, such as ability to help others or power to guide them. The Corinthians need to be reminded that the latter are every bit as much the work of the Spirit of God as the former" (137).

This leads to an important conclusion. If some of the manifestations of the Spirit (or "gifts") are not miraculous abilities (e.g., "steersmanship" and "helps"), then abilities in multiple languages and translations of multiple languages (1 Cor 12:10, 28, 30) could also be non-miraculous manifestations of the Spirit. This conclusion follows directly from observation of the text and cannot be refuted on exegetical grounds. We should not be surprised that in multilingual Corinth of all places, Paul would consider those with natural abilities in languages and translation to be essential persons in the local church. While I would maintain that these particular abilities were not miraculous, I do nevertheless believe

that miraculous abilities (e.g., "workings of power" and "healings") were also present.

Once we see the possibility that ability in languages and translation was not miraculous, we can return to the 1 Corinthians 14:13, 28 dilemma. Since many assume that the language-speaker does not know or understand the language he is using, they ask: "If the tongue-speaker understands and knows the language, why does Paul tell him to ask God for help in translating his own language in 14:13?" This question shows linguistic naivete, because as Crystal observes, translating is one of the most difficult tasks imaginable:

It is sometimes said that there is no task more complex than translation--a claim that can be readily believed when all the variables involved are taken into account. Translators not only need to know their source language well; they must also have a thorough understanding of the field of knowledge covered by the source text, and of any social, cultural, or emotional connotations that need to be specified in the target language if the intended effect is to be conveyed. The same special awareness needs to be present for the target language so that points of special phrasing, contemporary fashions of taboos in expression, local (e.g., regional) expectations, and so on, can all be taken into account [344].

Since translation involves the factors that Crystal refers to here, wouldn't it make sense for Paul to tell the language-speaker to ask God for help in translating into Greek--his second language, one that he may not know nearly as well as he knows his own native language?

This also helps to explain the relationship between 1 Corinthians 14:13 and 14:28. If the language-speaker is competent to translate his language into Greek, he should do so, or one of the translators (who knows both the language of the language-speaker and Greek) ought to translate. If none of the translators present knows the particular language however, and if the language-speaker engages in a local language from some distant part of the Roman Empire, and he is not very familiar with Greek (or competent in Greek), he should "keep silent in the church" (i.e., keep that particular language out of the service for the sake of the group). Blackwelder notes:

This implies that a person needing an interpreter is able to ascertain in advance whether or not an interpreter is present. This could not be done if nonhuman or heavenly languages were involved; for if that were the case the interpretation would have to come as a special disclosure in each instance, hence a speaker could never be certain that he should present a message [67].

Paul advocates this strategy in 14:18-19. Although he engages in multiple languages outside the church, in the church meeting he would rather speak "five intelligible words in order that I might instruct you" than "innumerable words in a language" (singular) that they don't know.

Some mistakenly believe that Paul in 14:18 refers to "private-prayer languages." For example, Craig S. Keener writes: "Paul himself prayed in tongues privately more than all the Corinthians, though he did not make a big deal about it (1 Cor 14:18)" (99). Carson goes further and claims: "The only possible conclusion is that Paul exercised his remarkable tongues gift in private" (105).

Calvin saw another possibility, as he explained the meaning of Paul's words:

You should realize that what I am saying ought not to give you grounds for suspicion, as if I would deprecate something that I personally lack, for if we had a contest about languages not one of you would be able to hold a candle to me. But while I could make a good showing in that sort of thing, I am more concerned about upbuilding" (294).

Where did Paul use these multiple human languages? Thomas answers: "He instead refers to his public ministry with various linguistic groups encountered in connection with missionary travels" (219). Gerhard F. Hasel concurs: "Paul speaks in tongues more than all the Corinthians, and thus as a missionary to Gentile peoples and nations" (149).

While there is no evidence that Paul used multiple languages for private prayer purposes, he did so as missionary to the Gentiles. Even in Jerusalem, Paul switched back and forth between languages. In Acts 21-22 he speaks to a Judean crowd in Aramaic at first; then, when the crowd becomes hostile, he speaks in Greek to a Roman Chiliarch (Acts 21:37). Finally, to establish himself as Judean, he addresses them in the "holy tongue," Hebrew (Acts 21:40, 22:2).

Some attempt to read the private-prayer language concept into 14:28. They claim that when the language-speaker is told to "keep silent in the church and (*de*) let him speak to himself and to God," Paul is saying: "Go engage in your language in private." As Thomas explains, however, it is better to take the "and" (*de*) in an explanatory sense:

The question of whether the *de* in 14:28b is adversative...or explanatory...is significant. In the former case it would contrast public tongues with private tongues, whereas in the latter it would introduce an explanation of how the tongues speaker is to keep silent in the church....The other explanation of verse 28b is that *laleito* refers to inaudible utterances; "Let him keep silent in church [and let him do this by means of] speaking to himself and to God only." The greater plausibility of this view is seen by the way *en ekklesiai* ("in the church") continues its force from verse 28a. Wherever the silence is located is the same place where the speaking to oneself and to God is to transpire....Since the context of 11:2-14:40 has public surroundings in view and makes no clear reference to private activities, *de* in an explanatory sense is the preferable interpretation [226].

Hodge interprets this phrase to mean: "And let him speak to himself, and to God, or *for* himself, and for God. That is, let him commune silently with God" (169). Thus, the phrase is not a suggestion to use languages in private. Instead, it means the language-speaker ought to keep a particular language to himself. The language is to be used inaudibly during the service so that it does not become a problem language.

1 Corinthians 14:14 is probably the main text used to argue that the language-speaker did not understand his language. Paul says that if he should speak in a language (without translation), "my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful [*akarpos*]." Lenski takes *akarpos* as passive: "my *nous* or understanding" is inactive and thus *akarpos*--"barren," "unfruitful," producing no distinct thoughts" (592).

Paul could also be using *akarpos* in the active sense:

A decision upon its meaning centers in *akarpos* ("unfruitful") whether the adjective is passive in sense, meaning the speaker himself receives no benefit, or active in sense, meaning his *nous* provides no benefit to others...The view that assigns *akarpos* a meaning of "produces nothing, contributes nothing to the process"... is not convincing, because *akarpos* does not mean "inactive." It is a word for results and does not apply to the process through which the results are obtained. The present discussion does not center on the activity or nonactivity of the tongues speaker's mind, but rather on potential benefit derived by listeners [Thomas, 214-15].

The whole context of 1 Corinthians 14 is the effect upon the hearers of untranslated languages. Paul is also writing as a dyadic personality and, as Malina and Neyrey remind us, dyadic persons are not concerned about individual psychology: "In contrast, the Mediterranean person, in the past and present, is anti-introspective. In modern direct terms, the Mediterranean is simply not psychologically minded at all" (78). Modern scholars who ignore the dyadic personality of Paul come to 1 Corinthians 14:14 looking for Paul's description of the language speaker's psychological state in modern categories. Paul isn't concerned about this anywhere in the chapter; his concern is the edification of the group. Therefore, 14:14 should be taken as "My spirit prays but my mind does not produce fruit [in others]." This says nothing about whether or not the speaker understood his own utterance.

We should also discuss 1 Cor 14 verses 15-19 here. After telling the language-speaker to ask God for help in translating his native language (14:13), Paul says that should he speak in one of these non-Greek languages (without translation) his spirit will be praying (i.e., he will be speaking from the "heart"), but his mind will not be producing fruit in others (they will not be edified by speech which is unintelligible to them).

Paul begins with the words "What should be done then?" "He answers his own question, replying that all worship activities (which he represents with two examples: "prayer" and "singing") be done "with the Spirit and with the mind." Again, modern scholars read in modern psychological categories that were completely foreign to Paul's dyadic-oriented thinking. Paul is saying in v 15 that all worship activities should be "from the heart" (i.e., "with the spirit") and also "intelligibly" (i.e., "with the mind"). Paul then shifts to another negative example in vv 16-17. If someone praises God from the heart ("with the spirit") unintelligibly (i.e., "without the mind" [implied]), "the one occupying the place of the unlearned" (i.e., the person not knowing the particular language) cannot even assent to the prayer of the language-speaker ("how will he say the 'Amen' at your giving of thanks, since he does not know [what you are saying]"). Paul says the language-speaker may give thanks well ("For you truly give thanks well"), but because the language is unintelligible to the other person, that individual is not edified ("but the other is not built up").

Paul, as cross-cultural missionary to the Gentiles, is thankful for his own linguistic abilities (14:18: "I thank God that I speak in languages more often than all of you"). But in the Corinthian church meeting, Paul would rather speak "five intelligible words" (i.e., literally "five words with my mind") than "innumerable, countless words in a language" (that they don't know and hence is unintelligible, "without the mind," "unfruitful." Paul's concern in vv 15-19 is again the edification of the group, which can occur only when the speaking is intelligible, i.e., "with the mind."

### Mitchell's "Deliberative Rhetoric" Argument Applied to the Language Problem

Margaret M. Mitchell provides an extremely helpful discussion of "deliberative rhetoric" as an explanation for the language and composition of 1 Corinthians. Her discussion can be fruitfully applied to the language problem of Corinth. Mitchell cogently argues that 1 Corinthians exhibits the four elements of deliberative argumentation:

- (1) a focus on future time as the subject of deliberation; (2) employment of a determined set of appeals or ends, the most distinctive of which is the advantageous... (3) proof by example... and (4) appropriate subjects for deliberation, of which factionalism and concord are especially common [23].

All four of these elements are present throughout 1 Corinthians and are prominent in 1 Corinthians 12-14. Paul as a dyadic personality seeks to convince the Corinthians to pursue what is advantageous for the group and to avoid what is not advantageous (Mitchell: 25).

According to Mitchell "the single most pervasive deliberative example employed throughout the letter [is] Paul's use of himself as the example of proper behavior" (49). This leads Paul to "explicit appeal to imitate the illustrious example or avoid the negative example" (42). Paul's use of himself as a positive example in 1 Corinthians 14 occurs in 14:18-19. In 14:6, 14, 16-17, 21-22, and 23-25 he uses negative examples to demonstrate the superiority of prophesying (in Greek) over uninterpreted languages (in non-Greek). Rather than being zealous of individual experiences (i.e., "negative zealousness"), the Corinthians ought to seek the advantage of all/edification of all (i.e., "positive zealousness") (Mitchell: 97,171).

The problem with the Corinthians is that individual expression (shown by the word *ekstatos* ("each one..."--14:26) has taken priority over group advantage/concord/edification (Mitchell: 156, 172). What the Corinthians need is "unity in diversity of language" (Mitchell: 185).

Mitchell states the language problem thus: "The concord of the church community at Corinth ironically is threatened in its common worship, which should bring it together but there instead different languages divide those who should be united" (279). Paul's

advice is repeated several times in the argument: tongues are acceptable, but not the best course of action church members should seek. Best of all is to prophesy, because prophecy unifies the church while tongues divide it (14:6-17). The predominant appeal by which Paul argues for this course of action is thus the appeal to the common advantage here again named as that which builds up...the church...synonymous with love" [279-80].

Mitchell correctly recognizes that "the common advantage in liturgical speech...Paul advises, is measured by its intelligibility....Language which no one can understand is not advantageous but rather fruitless, and causes fellow church members, one's brothers and sisters, to be actually estranged from one another" (280).

While Mitchell believes the problem languages to be NC-NLU's (281), I maintain the problem was the use of non-Greek, native languages spoken without translation. How would the Corinthians find peace, concord, edification? Mitchell's answer is: "personal compromise for the sake of harmony" (280). Paul in fact argues for the superiority of prophecy (in Greek) over untranslated languages (non-Greek) unless they are translated (14:5). If there are no competent translators of a particular language (or the language-speaker cannot competently translate his own language into Greek), the "personal compromise" is to "keep silent in the church and to speak to himself and to God" (i.e., keep that particular language out of the service and speak it inaudibly).

### Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 14: Similarities and Differences

With the correct explanation of the language problem at Corinth in mind we can now explain the similarities and differences between the "other tongues" of Acts 2 and the language problem in 1 Corinthians 14.

#### *Similarities*

In both situations the speakers of the problem languages spoke languages with which they were most familiar (Acts 2: Aramaic and Greek, languages known and understood by the disciples; 1 Corinthians 14: the native languages/first languages/languages of the heart, known and understood by the language-speaker. In both situations the speaking of languages most familiar to the speakers caused problems (Acts 2: by speaking in Aramaic and Greek the disciples violated the Jewish diglossia; 1 Corinthians 14: by speaking in their native languages (without translation) the language-speakers edified themselves but not the group).

### Differences

The cultural-geographical contexts for Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 were very different. The language-speakers in Acts 2 (the disciples of Jesus) found themselves in a thoroughly Judean cultural context in Jerusalem. The setting for the 1 Corinthians 14 language-speakers was Greek culture at the major seaport city of Corinth. Since everyone in Acts 2 shared the same native languages (i.e., Aramaic, Greek, possibly Latin), translation (i.e., interpretation) was not necessary. In contrast, at Corinth where multiple languages converged, Greek was the *lingua franca* and people do not share the same native languages. In the city of Corinth (including the church) translation was necessary and became a major issue in Paul's discussion ( 1 Corinthians 14).

The Judean crowd of Acts 2 learned and spoke Aramaic and Greek as their native languages, rather than the "local languages" (e.g., Lycaonian, Demotic Egyptian, etc.), that persisted in more remote areas of the Roman Empire. The situation in Corinth, with regard to the more remote "local languages," was exactly the opposite of the Acts 2 setting. At Corinth, while everyone knew the *lingua franca* (i.e., Greek), people came from all over the Roman Empire bringing their non-Greek native languages with them. These languages ranged from widely spoken languages such as Aramaic to more remote "local" languages like Lycaonian or Demotic Egyptian. An important difference is also the intended direction of the languages. In Acts 2 Luke describes the language-speaking as prophesying, which is directed not towards God but to people; in 1 Corinthians 14 Paul says the language-speaking was worship, which is directed not to man but to God. We can see the similarities and differences of Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 in the following diagram:

ITEM	ACTS 2	1 COR 14
1. Language known and understood by language-speaker	Yes	Yes
2. Problem caused by languages?	Violation of diglossia	Untranslated languages
3. Cultural geographical context	Judean crowd in Jerusalem	Greek seaport city
4. Necessity of language translation?	Not necessary	Absolutely necessary
5. Language speakers/hearers shared the same native languages?	Yes	No
6. Spoke "local languages" as native languages?	No	Yes
7. Problem languages?	Languages other than Hebrew	Languages other than Greek (Left untranslated)
8. Languages directed towards whom?	Men (i.e., prophesying function)	God (i.e., worship function)
9. Group norm violated by problem languages	Violation of Judean Diglossia	Violation of group edification

Here we should also briefly discuss the languages of Acts 10 and 19 (note: the Mark 16:17 reference to "new languages" is part of a highly suspect text (Mk 16:9-20) and will not be discussed here). In both Acts 10 and Acts 19 we have new converts (viz., Cornelius and his household in Acts 10, and John's disciples in Acts 19), who spontaneously begin to "speak in languages." In neither situation is there a language barrier. All present when the languages are spoken are believers; so the languages do not serve an evangelistic purpose. The languages were also not spoken for the purpose of private prayer.

An important question here is, "With what language would a new convert spontaneously begin to praise God?" The answer (which lines up well with 1 Corinthians 14) is that the language-speakers would spontaneously praise God in the languages with which they were most familiar (i.e., native or first languages).

It should be observed that in neither passage is any amazement or ridicule (as in Acts 2) expressed in reference to the language speaking. Only in Acts 10 is amazement mentioned, and the amazement is in reference to Gentiles receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit: "And the faithful of the circumcision were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles also" (Acts 10:45). The reception of the Spirit, not the language-speaking, was the cause of the amazement. So we can conclude that in Acts 10 and Acts 19 (as in 1 Corinthians 14), people felt moved to praise God from the heart in languages with which they were most familiar.

## Conclusion

If the reader has read the earlier article on the violation of the Judean diglossia in Acts 2 and now has read about the language problem of 1 Corinthians 14, he will note that four assumptions have been challenged: (1) that the language-speaker spoke a language he had never learned before, (2) that the language-speaker did not know or understand the language that he was speaking, (3) that the language-speaking was miraculous, and (4) that this miraculous ability in languages was one of the manifestations of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7).

The cultural, historical, linguistic, and exegetical evidence presented in these two articles demonstrates these assumptions to be false. In both Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 the language-speakers knew and understood exactly what they were saying because they were speaking the languages with which they were most familiar (i.e., their native or first languages).

In neither Acts 2 nor 1 Corinthians 14 was the language speaking miraculous. In both Acts 2 and the Corinthian church, miraculous elements were present (in Acts 2 the miraculous element was the bold prophesying; and the Corinthian church manifestations of the Spirit such as "working of miracles" and "gifts of healings" were supernatural). Speaking and translating multiple languages (1 Cor 12:10, 28, 30) were considered by Paul to be manifestations of the Spirit to be used for the purpose of group edification (i.e., "for the common advantage"--1 Cor 12:7). Like the gifts of "steersmanship" and "helps," these were essential to the upbuilding of the Corinthian church and were not miraculous abilities. Even the gifted translator did not know every native language that might be spoken at Corinth. And if the language-speaker could not competently translate his native language into Greek, Paul advised such an individual to "keep silent in the church and speak to himself and to God" ( 14:28).

Ironically, Spiros Zodhiates relates a modern example of precisely what Paul had hoped would be happening in the Corinthian church meetings:

It is quite probable that all the people in Corinth knew at least two languages, the one native to them and the one native to Corinth. I lived in Egypt for twelve years, during which time I associated with non-Arabic speaking people; but all of us--Greeks, Armenians, Frenchmen, Americans, and other foreigners usually spoke our own particular native language and also Arabic, the language of the land. The same thing is true in America among the foreigners dwelling within its borders. In Corinth, the foreigners must have spoken in their own native languages and also in Greek, the language of Corinth. This is highly desirable and useful, and when consecrated to God's service can make His word widely known [59].

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