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THINGS PENTECOSTALS DON'T KNOW

— About The Relationship Between First-Century Pentecost & Modern Pentecost —

#pen-7 — Online **NEWS**paper "PENTECOST" series. Each article builds on the aggregate foundation of all the previous ones.

From #pen-6—

> "For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God."

—1 Cor. 14:2a [NIV]

> "For he that speaketh in an [unknown] tongue speaketh not unto men but unto God."

—1 Cor. 14:2a [KJV]

And then I probed, "What does that say about all those 'interpretations' in your church that start out with something like, 'Thus sayeth the Lord thy God!'?"

"Oh! My goodness! Now I'm getting really nervous!" she admitted. I'm going to have to do some really hard praying tonight! You have given me some major cause for concern!"

She had sidestepped my question, but I understood that: "Actually, it is not I who have given you cause for concern," I explained, "but the written word of God, Himself."

"We must be very thankful that God is smart enough to have left his word in writing for us, so that we don't have to take anybody else's word for it. He knew, in advance, that many of the blind would become leaders—career professional leaders of the blind."

"That is soooo true!" she sighed slowly, eyes wide open with amazement.

"I am often compelled to recite this Mart DeHaan quote to myself:

> "Most of us have to admit that on occasion we have used the Bible the way a drunk uses a lamppost—for support rather than light."

She responded, "I have learned so much, today! I can't wait to share all this with my Sunday School class and with my pastor!"

I cautioned her, "You may be very wise to reflect on an Upton Sinclair quote:

> "It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his job depends on not understanding it."

"Oh! I get it," she smiled and blushed a third time, holding her Bible so tightly that her white knuckles revealed a stark contrast to her very red fingers.

Was she to survive the inevitable attacks? I prayed that night that she might be granted wisdom...

Did The Apostle, Paul, Talk In Tongues?

Zeal can be a good quality for a person to display. It can be good at home, at work, in sports, in politics and in religion. But there's a caveat: The operative phrase here is "can be." Here's a familiar observation from the apostle, Paul:

*I bear them witness:
They have a zeal for God
but not according to
knowledge.*

1 Corinthians 14:18 is the verse that many uninformed and misinformed pentecostals get really excited about—

*I thank my God,
I speak with tongues
more than ye all!*

Here are some critical facts that most pentecostal believers and preachers appear to have overlooked. On the other hand, maybe they just don't know. Not knowing might be okay for a parishioner but there are no excuses for preachers, seminary professors and theologians.

The language at Corinth was Greek, but Greek was not Paul's native tongue. The good news is that it was one of several languages he spoke and wrote fluently. Having studied at the feet of Gamaliel, Paul was one of the most highly educated folk on Earth at that time.

Then, as now, the study of foreign languages was considered an important part of higher learning. While we don't have a record of all the languages he spoke, it is quite apparent that he was at least fluent in Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, Latin and (possibly an early form of what would later become) Castilian Spanish.

So, yes, Paul would have been thankful that he spoke in more languages than all of the church people at Corinth. But, to be effective in that church, he chose to always speak and write in the Greek language—the only

tongue most (probably all) of the Corinthians understood.

Given the perpetual immaturity of the Corinthian people [See 1 Corinthians 11:21,22.], it is not surprising that their zeal was for unknown *tongues* and curious *interpretations*. Their practices of them were beyond juvenile, though: They were clearly blasphemous!

The scriptures offer nothing of such practices in any other New Testament church. Were the other 1st-Century Christians less spiritual? Might they have been more noble – as had been the Acts 17:11 Bereans?

Tongues = Languages of Men; known languages, always. Holy-Ghost-inspired tongues are no different from any other foreign language, except for the supernatural origin of their utterances, the precision of their timing and their exclusive focus on unbelievers.

These 1 Corinthians 14: 6-12,20 excerpts may be worthy of your reflection—

> "So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air... seek that ye may excel in the edifying of the church [*implied: anything but 'tongues'...*"]"

There is no evidence that Paul ever spoke in a tongue that he hadn't learned at home or in school and used in real life.

