

# ISSUES RELATED TO THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

## I. SPEAKING IN TONGUES

**A.** Revelation 13:13 (and 19:20): Satanic spiritual force working miracles to unite the world in a spiritual effort in the endtime. Rev. 19:20 shows that the lamb-like beast of Rev. 13 is motivated by a false religious movement (that's why it's called a false prophet also).

**B.** Revelation 16:14: Satanic spiritual forces working miracles to unite the world in a spiritual effort in the endtime.

A<sup>1</sup> Revelation 13:13: miracles symbolized by fire coming down from heaven

B<sup>1</sup> Revelation 16:13-14: miracles associated with Satanic powers speaking like frogs. They are pictured as coming out of the mouths of the unholy trinity (word "mouth" is used all 3 times); the mouth is associated with speaking (see Rev. 13:5-6,11). Frogs are never used symbolically in Scripture except here, where they are identified in v. 14 as demonic spirits.

1. To humans, frogs speak an unintelligible language.
2. According to Isaiah 8:19, people speaking under the influence of demons "peep" and "mutter."

**C.** A<sup>1</sup> + B<sup>1</sup> = obvious reference to tongues of fire coming down upon the apostles and others on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), with the result being their ability to speak in tongues. Acts 2 makes it very clear that those tongues were foreign languages. In Revelation, however, the context is obviously a false, or counterfeit, outpouring of the "Holy Spirit" and a false, or counterfeit, tongues, which are nonsensical and unintelligible. And note that this spiritual movement emanates from **all** the false religious forces on the earth in the endtime; since the beast represents the false mother Church, the false prophet must represent Apostate Protestantism. The dragon ultimately represents Satan, of course (Rev. 12:9), but since Satan is behind all 3 of the world's religious forces, the dragon must represent all the non-Christian religions.

**D. Conclusion:** The endtime "Christian" charismatic movement (which focuses on the "Holy Spirit," "His" gifts, miracles, and the sensational) will be symbolized by a counterfeit speaking in tongues. The common element between false Christians and non-

Christians (ie., dragon) is, therefore, spiritualism. This movement will unite the world, and its political establishments ("kings of the earth..." Rev. 16:14), behind a type of false worship (Rev. 13) and the persecution of God's faithful people (Rev. 13; 16 in symbol), which will result in a final showdown called Armageddon (Rev. 16:16).

## II. THE MIRACULOUS AND SENSATIONAL

**A.** Luke 10:17-20 (especially v. 20): even when miracles are genuine, and come from the Divine source, do not focus on the miracles themselves and exalt them or yourself (or the human instrument for the miracle). Instead, be pleased that your name is written in heaven. This counsel was given by Jesus Himself to the 70 apostles He sent out in His name; it represents a serious caution or warning from the Savior.

**B.** John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-15: the Holy Spirit never points to Himself or the believer through whom He works, but only to Jesus! Among other things, this means that miracles wrought by His power are not for public show (as in entertainment) because He never displays Himself.

**C.** Gospels and the entire New Testament: Neither Jesus nor His apostles ever focused on their miracles as such. In other words, there were no spectacular body movements associated with their miracles; they were spontaneous--there were no "healing services" called to display this Divine power; and there was always a gentleness and calmness, as contrasted by the modern charismatic movement's near circus (ie., entertainment) atmosphere.

**D.** Matthew 7:21-23: Jesus will call those professed Christians who do mighty miracles in His name, but who do **not obey His word**, those who "work iniquity" (v. 23, KJV), or "practice lawlessness" (v. 23, NKJV). This means that a believer **cannot** trust his senses! "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20, KJV).

## III. LIFTING UP HOLY HANDS

**A.** There are more than a dozen Bible texts which speak about believers lifting up their hands to the Lord. Most of them explicitly associate this action with prayer; the context in the other texts imply an interpretation consistent with prayer, although an association with singing cannot be ruled out as inconsistent with the prevailing thoughts.

**B.** The lifting up of hands to the Lord is paralleled or contrasted with other thoughts and phraseology also, such as the following: lift up your soul to God (Psalm 25:1; 86:4; 143:8); lift up your hearts and hands (Lamentations 3:41); lift up your hands to God's commandments (Psalm 119:48); reach out your hands to iniquity (Psalm 125:3); stretch

out your hands to a foreign god (Psalm 44:20); and lifting up your soul to an idol (Psalm 24:4).

**C.** The lifting up of hands for a spiritual purpose also included a blessing pronounced on individuals or groups of God's people. In these cases, the hand or hands was/were facing those being blessed (see Leviticus 9:22) or raised in order to be placed on an individual (see Genesis 48:14-15).

**D.** The evidence of Scripture is that the lifting up of hands to the Lord represented the giving of your heart and soul to Him, to serve and obey Him. The same practice on or toward individuals or groups of believers was to bless them in the name of the Lord. In both cases, this practice symbolized **giving**--not receiving!

**E.** The lifting up of hands for either holy purpose (see above) was a custom of the Biblical culture. Even in I Timothy 2:8, the only New Testament passage to mention it, the **emphasis** (in context) is on prayer being conducted on a holy basis and "without wrath and doubting" (NKJV)--not on the fact that prayer must be given with one's hands lifted up.

**F.** The lifting up of hands in prayer or praise is not a pervasive cultural practice today, at least not in Western nations. Its origin among modern Christians is associated with the popular charismatic movement, and is designed to get its practitioners to feel a type of tingling sensation (beginning in the fingertips) as the "Holy Spirit" comes in a special way into his being. This puts the emphasis on 2 wrong counts: (1) on feeling and the senses (see section V); and (2) on receiving the Holy Spirit instead of giving oneself to serve and obey God. Because of this association with the counterfeit charismatic movement, the believer would be wiser not to practice the lifting up of hands in prayer or praise.

#### IV. DANCING (MUSIC), HAND-CLAPPING, AND DRAMA

**A. DANCING:** There are more than 25 references in the Bible to dancing. The great majority are mentioned in a positive way; some are mentioned in a neutral way (as simply mentioning it in contrast to mourning); and 4 are mentioned in connection with the wicked (Exodus 32:19; Job 21:11; Matthew 14:6; and Mark 6:22).

1. In Scripture, approved dancing is never shown as occurring between the opposite sexes, or among them. The probable reason, given sinful human nature and human history, is that this would lead at least some of God's people to think in sexual terms, which in turn, would lead to immorality.

2. The swaying of hips, or other similar dance movements, are definitely sexually provocative behavior, which the Lord would certainly not have endorsed.

3. Although we do not know the precise nature of the approved dances in Bible times, much of it may have been closer to modern ballet--which is not usually sexual (or sensual) in nature. All we can be certain of is that Biblically approved dancing could not have been such as would lead God's people into immorality.

4. Music usually, although not always, accompanies dancing (or similar movements). Music may appropriately be lively, and evoke emotion, but if it encourages actions referred to in #1 and #2 above, it should be avoided. Most of the time, for music to encourage such behavior--including shouting or jumping up and down, etc.--it has an excessively strong beat (often syncopated), which produces much dissonance (ie., lack of harmonious sound). All such music and behavior during a worship service violates the "decency and order" principle because God is not a God of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33,40).

5. The "dancing" (or other behavior) which often accompanies modern charismatic worship services involves at least 3 problematic areas: (1) the congregation (both men and women) engage in certain movements together, in the same room (see #1 above); (2) the movements often include the swaying of hips (see #2 above); and (3) often there is jumping around and/or shouting here and there, with or without music, which produces sounds more like the world than the church (see #3 above).

**B. HAND-CLAPPING:** There are 9 references in Scripture to hand-clapping. One was on the occasion of the coronation of a new king (II Kings 11:12); two of them are metaphorical, in which nature praises God (Psalm 98:8; Isaiah 55:12); five of them refer to hand-clapping as a sign of scorn, or derision; and only one (Psalm 47:1) tells God's people to clap their hands in praise of God. But note that Psalm 47, like all the Psalms, are songs which were sung. Thus, its reference to hand-clapping may have been metaphorical; or, if literal, it probably was done during the song in rhythm to it. There is no example of actual hand-clapping in a worship service recorded in the Bible.

1. In modern Western societies, as in Biblical times (see II Kings 11:12, and the metaphors of Psalm 98:8 and Isaiah 55:12), hand-clapping directed at someone constitutes praise of that person--unless the occasion is negative, and then it becomes sarcastic scorn, or derision. And in modern times, it is also associated with applauding a performer after a performance (ie., entertainment).

2. When anyone does something in a religious service (speak, pray, sing, act out a parable or drama, etc.), he does it to honor the Lord. Therefore, applause inappropriately gives honor and praise to that person instead of to the Lord. Furthermore, the believer would not want to encourage others who do things in a worship service to think of themselves as entertainers--which, in our modern culture, would be the tendency if applause were given.

3. Some Christians may argue that the practice of saying "amen" during or after a

believer has spoken, prayed, sang, etc. constitutes the same thing as hand-clapping. But that is not the case. The Old Testament Hebrew word for "amen" means "sure, so be it." The New Testament Greek word for "amen" means "firm, so be it." (And the Greek word for "amen" originated from the Hebrew word for "amen.") In other words, when someone says "amen" during or after a segment of a worship service, he is really affirming the truth of what the person is saying, singing, etc. Thus, while such a practice does tell the person who led out that what they did was appreciated, it does not directly give honor or praise to that person. Instead, it is directed at the Lord, and telling Him that those in the congregation agree with the honor and praise which was just given to Him.

**C. DRAMA:** Spiritual truth can sometimes be made clear when it is acted out. After all, baptism acts out the identification of the believer with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; and the Communion service (with its foot-washing preparatory service) acts out the identification of the believer with the crucified Savior. Dramatic productions may also represent a type of parable which is acted out. Therefore, they are not inherently wrong in a religious setting. However, dramas should be used sparingly, and not as a substitute for the straightforward teaching and preaching of the Word, for the following reasons:

1. It is very easy to confuse an acted-out parable (ie., religious drama) with the world of entertainment, especially in our modern age. Slipping into an entertainment mode brings with it the evil tendencies of giving praise and glory to the performers as performers rather than to the Lord. Encouraging the congregation to say "amen" instead of applauding could be one way to minimize this danger. Another way would be to have them conducted outside an actual church sanctuary. And, of course, using drama sparingly would seem prudent in this context as well.
2. Frequent use of religious dramas runs the real risk that some believers will come to view them, not only as religious entertainment, but also as something which competes with worldly entertainment. The church cannot hope to compete with Hollywood's ability to bring excitement; nor does that kind of excitement make it conducive for the reception of the Holy Spirit.
3. There is no record of Jesus or the apostles using drama as a way of preaching the truth, even though dramas were a part of the culture of their day. Instead, they preached, taught, and told stories in order to convey spiritual truth. Their example should make us cautious in our use of drama for that purpose. It seems reasonable, then, to avoid using drama as a substitute for the regular teaching and preaching services of the church. It would be wiser to conduct them during special occasions called just for that purpose.

## V. FEEL-GOOD RELIGION

**A.** Many modern churches, even outside the major charismatic movement, are using

worldly marketing techniques to increase their attendance and membership. This is because modern Christianity has slipped into the worldly habit of thinking (at least subconsciously) that numbers are the proof that good things are happening at church. But even a superficial glance at both the Old and New Testaments should make it clear that the majority have rarely been on God's side. This includes the majority of those who have professed to belong to Him!

**B.** Focusing on numbers partly **reflects** the modern secular generation in Western nations, which in turn, then also **contributes** to its adoption in the church. The result is that many churches are doing almost whatever it takes to put the emphasis on making people feel comfortable. This includes giving away material prizes, having hot drink and donuts just before the worship services, the adoption of worldly music (see IV. A. 4 above) with Christian words, encouraging freer movement of the body during singing, etc. (see III.; IV. A., B. above), the increasing use of drama to replace straightforward Bible teaching and preaching (see IV. C above), etc. In other words, the motto seems to be: "Ask not what you can do for your church; ask what your church can do for you."

**C.** The following Bible principles should warn us against these modern trends, and against the modern charismatic movement in general:

1. Acts 20:35: When Scripture declares that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," it is also warning churches not to attempt to attract people by an intentional policy of giving them material things that appeal to their senses; such activity encourages a selfish "Me generation" attitude which needs no encouraging. That does not mean that churches should go out of their way to provide uncomfortable surroundings. What it does mean is that the simple message of Jesus Christ and His truths, both preached and lived out by members of the congregation, should be what attracts people to your church.

This Bible passage also is a restatement of another principle, which is even true in the secular world: you get out of something what you put into it. Jesus probably would not have gotten much out of "church" during His public ministry, when church leaders generally rejected Him and wanted to get rid of Him. Yet it was His habit to go to "church" every week (Luke 4:16). He put His presence, and sometimes His words, there for those honest souls in attendance.

2. I Corinthians 2:14: This text announces the principle that spiritual things are spiritually understood. If people come to church largely because of an appeal to their physical senses, they won't get as much spiritual food as they should.

3. II Timothy 4:2-5: This passage is both a warning against watering down Bible truths and a prophecy which particularly applies to our modern era. Timothy was a pastor, and the apostle Paul encouraged him to "preach the word" (v. 2, NKJV), for the alternative was to preach to those with "itching ears" (v. 3), who demand religious teachers who only preach smooth and comfortable things, and not "sound doctrine" (v. 3).

An emphasis on appealing to the physical senses to attract people to church and to be comfortable, most of all, will eventually lead to a trend toward watering down the messages of God's Word. And that's exactly what we are witnessing in so many churches today. May God help us!

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