

Article

Love Speaking Understanding: Possible Steps toward Greater Church Unity Regarding Tongues through Biblical Theology

Christian Ramsey

Department of Christian Studies, Southwestern Christian University, Bethany, OK 73008, USA;
christian.ramsey@swcu.edu

Abstract: Paul's address regarding spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 is conspicuously centered around his address of love in chapter 13. It could appear Paul is emphasizing that love is to be at the center of the exercise of spiritual gifts. If that is the case, one question in the context of Global Pentecostalism seems to be "How does love intersect with the gift of tongues in community and why does it matter?" In our day of political and social division, Jesus persists in his desire for Church unity. In the context of this Special Issue, the investigation herein proposes suggestions grounded in biblical theology for adjustments in the expectations of the manifestation of tongues and the practice of tongues in the local assembly. The expression of tongues, for various reasons, is a point of contention within the body of Christ. Addressed here are the questions of a requirement of God to manifest tongues, and the legitimacy of exercise of uninterpreted tongues in the assembly. This study hopes to add to the conversation in revisiting a biblical theology for both.

Keywords: biblical theology; charismatic; Christianity; Pentecostal; spiritual gifts; tongues; church unity; Corinthians; interpretation



Citation: Ramsey, Christian. 2023. Love Speaking Understanding: Possible Steps toward Greater Church Unity Regarding Tongues through Biblical Theology. *Religions* 14: 1341. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14111341>

Academic Editors: Ken L. Young and Corné J. Bekker

Received: 23 August 2023
Revised: 20 September 2023
Accepted: 18 October 2023
Published: 24 October 2023



Copyright: © 2023 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

As many have said, "The Church is reformed and always reforming".¹ As such, intentional reflection in an attempt to see what the Spirit is currently saying to the Church is a worthwhile endeavor. The same is true regarding one's segment of the Church. But peering into one's own circles through the lens of biblical theology can be both difficult and uncomfortable at times. However, just as individual Christians are directed to test themselves to see if they are genuinely in the faith and to make their calling and election sure, embarking on such a venture is ultimately profitable for groups as well. Such reflection not only guards against the drift from the Lord that Hebrews 2 warns of; it fosters a closer walk with him and others. This discussion engages with global Pentecostalism from the perspective of biblical theology to consider aspects of reform, refinement, or refocus. Specifically, this work addresses the following questions: "Do all speak in tongues?" and "Why the Requirement of Interpretation in the Assembly?", offering Scriptural considerations that might benefit Pentecostalism, the greater Church as a whole, and even those outside the Church.

2. Materials and Methods

Through a largely exegetical and theological approach, this study investigates Scripture concerning certain aspects of the gift of tongues in the context of ecclesiology, noting germane guidance and warnings as well as consequent benefits and detriments. The discoveries are compared to common understandings and practices of global Pentecostalism. Considering the information gleaned, suggestions for aligning more closely with Scripture with a view to greater Church unity are proposed. Given the nature of such an article, the sources are by no means exhaustive, but rather intend to represent general perspectives from different groups within Christianity. Likewise, the presented topics are complex, and

not generally intended to be resolved here. Rather, they are meant to be honestly surveyed to glean potential steps forward in the greater conversation that appear to be beneficial and loving to the body of Christ as well as unbelievers. The work consists largely of a historical–grammatical exegesis of 1 Corinthians 12 concerning tongues in the Church. This investigation does not address the argument of whether tongues are for the Church today, and neither does it engage in the discussion regarding tongues being unknown or unknown languages.

3. Discussion

3.1. Background

Biblically and historically, it seems godly transformation occurs through knowledge or experience (or through a synergy of both). Ultimately, both are needed, but each are legitimate means through which God reveals himself. Through a concomitant experiential encounter with those in the upper room, the Holy Spirit birthed the Church in Acts 2 during Pentecost. A major component of this grand experience is that those in the upper room begin speaking in tongues of τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ (the mighty acts of God). These tongues are foreign languages they previously did not know. The thrust of the experience is interpreted by Peter as ushering in a new kind of life for whosoever will repent of their sins and walk with Jesus—a life empowered by the Spirit.

Likewise, global Pentecostalism grew from those experiencing God through the Holy Spirit in a dramatic way. In Cherokee County, North Carolina, Topeka, Kansas, and later on Azusa Street in California, it seems the Spirit broke in granting similar experiences, including manifestations of tongues unparalleled in the Church for centuries before.² The gift of tongues was a keystone for the movement soon becoming part and parcel of the distinctive identity of the movement. This experience overshadowed denominational and other barriers, which may have previously existed between those now joining in community. As it grew, the movement became known for many things, but generally speaking it was a movement of inclusive embrace. Those in the early movement welcomed others, bridging ecumenical lines, racial divides, and socioeconomic differences. Further, men and women were both prominent; all who shared such a dramatic experience with the Spirit (or those wanting to or open to it) were welcomed.³ The wall of separation was, as it were, torn down.

However, divisive exclusion soon raised its head. Clashes ensued over personality issues and racial preferences. The oft-quoted statement that “the color line was washed away in the blood” was unfortunately only true (practically speaking) for a short time (Olsen 1998). Doctrinal schisms quickly arose as well. In 1911, William Durham denounced the doctrine of sanctification known as “the second blessing,” and his view was labeled “demonic” (Goff 1998). The oneness doctrine denying the Trinity and affirming that Jesus is the Father and the Holy Spirit added division shortly thereafter, and had spread nationwide by 1915 (Gill 1998). The same penchant for both unity and division seems to remain within global Pentecostalism today. However, there are reasons to be optimistic about the future.

3.2. Modern Advances

Early Pentecostals abhorred institutionalism and human organization; some left Azusa once a title was put up (Keener 2016, p. 8). However, Pentecostal denominations now provide valuable organizing and organizations for missions, training, education, and more, which makes sense; Craig Keener understands the vision for the Pentecostal revival from the outset was renewing Christianity as a whole.⁴ Additionally, increasing numbers of Pentecostal scholars are rising to the highest levels of education. Regent University even has entire programs (up to Ph.D. level) in Renewal Theology, thereby fostering such education. Such education fosters a greater ecumenical spirit. Whereas “in the past, nobody wanted to talk to the Pentecostals, and the Pentecostals didn’t want to talk to any of the other churches because they saw them as a lost cause” (Hollenweger 1998), today, global Pentecostalism bridges multiple boundaries. In fact, the Catholic charismatic movement became one of

the largest single groups within the movement (Keener 2016, p. 8).⁵ It seems the modern global Pentecostal movement is growing in its initial vision.

3.3. Modern Struggles

It is this trajectory that this study seeks to further. However, doing so involves considering doctrines and practices that, though precious, may not be beyond dispute biblically, or the most loving option. As in the early days, it seems that today the bridging of various boundaries is accompanied by an increasing exclusion and division. One significant arena which appears to provide occasion for new walls of separation within the Body of Christ seems to be perspectives concerning the issue of tongues. Two aspects commonly held within global Pentecostalism are the expectation of God to manifest the evidence of tongues upon Spirit baptism without exception (and as a potential gift for all, subsequent to tongues as evidence) and the free exercise of uninterpreted tongues in the assembly (despite scriptural directives to the contrary).

These are two sides of the same coin. The former involves entry into the community, fostering an understanding that a kind of new “circumcision” is required for equal status in the community. The latter involves life within the community and occasions confusion and division among those gathering with that community (Christians and non-Christians). Additionally, the insistence of these two issues erects barriers between Christians of other traditions and those interested in (or young in) the Christian faith. This is not the intent, to be sure, but effects are often independent of motives. This work offers suggestions for a way forward that would remove undue barriers while still magnifying the Lord whose Spirit is indeed active in and among his people. Though both questions fall under the question of “Why tongues?” addressing tributary questions individually to focus on the scope of this article is beneficial. The guiding questions for this investigation are “Do all speak in tongues?”, “Why is interpretation required in the assembly?”, and “Does love insist upon its own way?”.

3.4. Do All Speak in Tongues?

It seems from Paul’s discussions in 1 Corinthians 12–14, the controversy regarding the gift and exercise of tongues is prevalent since the Early Church. There is biblical warrant for multiple types and purposes of tongues and differing audiences (divine and human). However, this study only concerns only the facets mentioned above. The first being the matter of whether all speak in tongues, biblically speaking. In 1 Corinthians 12:29–30, Paul asks a series of questions. One of which is, “Do all speak in tongues?” Opinions regarding the answer (and what Paul is really asking) vary, and it is understandable why. Thomas R. Schreiner perceives tongues as “the most controversial gift Paul discusses”. He believes the text strongly suggests the Corinthians see the gift of tongues as a mark of some greater spirituality, which prompts Paul to “place tongues in proper perspective”. He notes a “discrete reference” to the gift of tongues is likely intended behind Paul’s teaching that Christians are not inferior if lacking a certain gift (1 Cor 12). Regarding Paul’s question, Schreiner bluntly states that Paul clarifies it is never God’s intention that all speak in tongues (Schreiner 2006, p. 364). Indeed, Paul’s questions all seem to infer an answer in the negative. Leon Morris notes the series of rhetorical questions as Paul “hammers home” the reality of diversity. From this, he reasons that no gift may be thought less of due to the fact all have it because, in fact, all differ (Morris 1985, p. 173). At first glance, it seems the plain meaning of Paul’s rhetoric is to emphasize that all do not speak in tongues, so expecting tongues to be for all appears to be out of line with God’s way of things. A deeper look at Scripture only reinforces this position.

Paul Ellingworth and Howard A. Hatton note the seven rhetorical questions and agree with Schreiner that the answer to Paul’s questions is “No”. They also note the TEV, which features a translation with negative statements, and remark that many languages need to use similar statements, such as, “Not every person. . .” (Ellingworth and Hatton 1995, p. 289). Similarly, William Baker affirms the negative response expected, and illustrates with

the NLT depiction of “Of course not!” He adds that “contemplating the whole church body being filled with only one type of gifted member recalls the ludicrous image conjured up in 12:17 of the human body as just one part”. He echoes Schreiner’s conclusion in offering it is neither helpful nor God’s design to gift everyone in the Church the same way. Baker argues such would destroy the inherent diversity and interdependence God has in mind, and as such disables the prerogative of the Holy Spirit to give gifts as he wills (Baker 2009, p. 186). Kenneth Schenck offers that the fact of God’s deliberate diversity in the body provides a strong word of caution to groups thinking all Christians will speak in tongues if they are truly spiritual. Schenck concludes that “Paul does not have this expectation, nor does he think that would happen in a perfect world”. He observes that some believe that the gift of tongues is like the gift of faith, and therefore reason that all Christians have faith, but not all receive the “gift” of faith. Consequently, they reason, all Christians speak in tongues (as evidence of the Spirit), and some may additionally receive the “gift” of tongues. However, Schenck observes Paul does not use the word “gift” in 12:28–30, and ultimately concludes that Paul “starkly implies” all will not speak in tongues (Schenck 2006, pp. 180–81). The conclusion offered here is not merely a modern interpretation; ancient sources have this understanding as well.

Beyond the indicators presented thus far is the matter of interpretation impacting Church ontology. Church fathers including Augustine, Chrysostom, and Ambrosiaster also answer Paul’s question in responding, “No, all do not speak in tongues”. Augustine says appropriate gifts are given to each member of the Church and sees it as impossible that all should have the same gift (Wilken and Kovacs 2005, p. 212). Chrysostom agrees, emphasizing diversity, which is meant to draw those in the body closer through their interdependent need (Chrysostom 1889, p. 188). Ambrosiaster agrees. He considers it “obviously impossible” that all should have the gift of healing; therefore, it is equally impossible that all should have the gift of tongues (Ambrosiaster 2009, p. 181). C. K. Barrett, with similar bluntness, refers to Paul’s questions, stating, “It was evident that the answer was No,” (Barrett 1968, p. 296). Jon Courson also agrees the answer “is obviously ‘No’” based on the “wonderful, needful diversity” in the Church (Courson 2003, p. 1073). Schreiner notes the Greek “μή”, arguing it is “abundantly clear” that every question expects a negative response, and argues gifts are distributed in a manner in which they are not shared equally (Schreiner 2018, p. 270). Verlyn D. Verbrugge concurs, while underscoring that there is no single gift given to everyone, including tongues (Verbrugge 2008, p. 369). It seems there is ample reason to think the expectation within global Pentecostalism for all to speak in tongues is at odds with Scripture. But some offer that Paul’s question refers to whether all speak in tongues in the congregation, as opposed to Christians having the gift in general.

William W. Menzies sees nuance in Paul’s context between his desire for all to speak in tongues (1 Cor 14:5) and the implied negative response indicating not all speak in tongues (1 Cor 12:30). Menzies (Menzies 1993, p. 141) argues “all believers at the time of their baptism in the Spirit begun speaking in tongues,” and they may even continue in “personal prayer language for edification”. But he clarifies that not all become agents through which God manifests himself in and to the congregation. Thus, the statements are complementary. Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave (Duffield and Van Cleave 1983, p. 341) agree with Menzies, clarifying Paul wants all to use tongues for the purpose of a “prayer language” (1 Cor 14:2, 4). But even granting the concept of a “prayer language” (which is not described in Scripture) to align this kind of speaking in tongues with the experience of Spirit baptism in Acts 2 is incongruent, confusing categories. In Acts 2, they speak *to people* in *earthly* languages *about God*, and in prayer, they speak *to God* in “*heavenly*” or *unknown* languages *about personal matters*. Schreiner acknowledges their position, but he argues an interpretation that considers the context of the indicated statements would conclude otherwise. He offers Paul’s argument minimizes tongues and exalts prophecy. Schreiner notes, however, that Paul reminds readers that “speaking in tongues is still a good thing,” but he argues Paul “is hardly suggesting” all ought to speak in tongues. He reasons that

those arguing all should be speaking in tongues based on 1 Corinthians 14:5 should also be arguing that all should be single, since Paul desires this gift for all in 1 Corinthians 7:7 (Schreiner 2006, p. 364). Further, Paul's questions seem to address not merely life in the gathering, but life as a "part" of the Church body (1 Cor 12). It does not seem reasonable that ministries like apostles, the gifts of helps, or any cease to be one's part in the Body once the gathering is concluded. As such, it seems Paul's questions in 1 Corinthians 12:29–30 are not limited to the congregational assembly, but apply to one's place in the body of Christ, the Church (1 Cor 12:27–28). Biblically, tongues are indeed a gift for some; Scripture is clear, and the Spirit wills it so. However, there is every indication the gift is not for all.

William Baker surmises the Corinthians "exalted too highly and treasured too widely" the gift of tongues, seeing it as a sort of status symbol. Opinions vary, but does Baker's description of the Corinthians' value of tongues not seem reflective of modern global Pentecostalism's valuation of tongues? After all, despite strong exegetical, theological, and ontological reasons, there remains a tenacious grip of the exaltation of tongues beyond scriptural direction. Baker posits another tool that Paul enlists in attempt to convince the Corinthians to appropriately deprioritize tongues. He offers Paul makes a "determined effort" to place the gift last on all three of his lists (Baker 2009, p. 186).

3.5. Why Is Tongues Last in Paul's Lists?

Is there intentional meaning in the order of Paul's lists of gifts? Perhaps this is a gnat among camels, but the observation is worth considering. Ronald Trail notes tongues and interpretation appear last on all three lists, and concludes this indicates a problem concerning this gift (Trail 2008, p. 164). Stephen C. Barton notes the shock this likely stirred, given that tongues seems to be the Corinthians' "preeminent sign" of possessing the Spirit. Adding to this shock is Paul's exhortation to "greater" gifts, with prophecy being the referent, not tongues (Barton 2003, p. 1342). Similarly, Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer note "St. Paul's own authority" for ἀπόστολοι, προφῆται, and διδάσκαλοι being above the rest, and γένη γλωσσῶν and ἑρμηνεία γλωσσῶν being last (Robertson and Plummer 1911, p. 284). Baker agrees, stating "it is nearly certain" Paul's lists bespeak a ranking, at least regarding the top three and the last two (Baker 2009, p. 185). However, J. Rodman Williams reasonably argues these previous positions are "quite inadequate". He offers that tongues and interpretation are listed last due to them being given last, observing the other seven are found in the Old Testament. Further, Williams keenly observes that tongues and interpretation are "the Spirit's own self-expression", pointing particularly to the community of believers that moves in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit (Williams 1996, p. 395). David Lim agrees that the conclusion of tongues and interpretation being of least importance because they are listed last "is insupportable", and astutely observes all five lists of gifts in the New Testament contain different orders (Lim 2007, p. 468). It does indeed seem that, though an item's order in a list may be significant, it does not seem so in this case. Yet, if order does not provide warrant for tongues and interpretation being "less", it also does not provide warrant for them being "greater". And this leads back to the previous points of scriptural exegesis, tradition, and reason, converging on the conclusion that all do not speak in tongues. Additionally, there is the matter of experience. The effects of either conclusion matter in the lives of both pastors and parishioners.

One issue this creates is that of pastors wrestling with understanding and quantifying spiritual manifestations for their denominational ministry reports. On one hand, Scripture is clear the Holy Spirit distributes gift as he wills (1 Cor 12:11), which seems to be agreed upon across traditions. Arguments exist in global Pentecostalism that all speak in tongues upon filling with the Spirit (or even salvation, depending on the group). Either way, there are those who prophecy, can affect healings, receive a previously unknown ability and unction to help or evangelize, or have their priorities or temperaments vastly transformed, etc. but do not speak in tongues. One's conclusion on this matter impacts the lives of such people. One option is that Pentecostal pastors can tell their people they are not yet

filled with the Spirit, despite dramatic post-conversion changes (not crediting the Spirit on their reports for filling such ones in their flock). Another option is that such pastors can philosophically (and theologically) contradict the position that speaking in tongues is *the* initial evidence of such filling by acknowledging other giftings, if they appear first, as such evidence. This conundrum seems to add to the case that there appears to be too much emphasis on tongues as occurring first and the expectation (or even requirement) that all Christians speak in tongues. How might love respond to these matters?

1 Corinthians 13:5–6 reveals in part that love does not insist on its own way, and rejoices in truth; Colossians 3:14 describes love as the perfect bond of unity. It appears the expectation of all speaking in tongues is not clearly scriptural or the Church's historic experience. It seems reasonable (and loving) to adjust these expectations in light of so many researchers (and those in traditions they represent) to remove unnecessary barriers global Pentecostalism has inadvertently erected around itself. After all, in the Acts 15 Council regarding controversies of spiritual indicators and experience, Peter does not present tongues as evidence of receiving the Spirit. He very well could have; it occurs in his presence. Yet, he does not say the litmus test is tongues; rather, the litmus test is hearts being purified by faith.

So, perhaps adjusting the expectation of the gift of tongues to being for some (not all) and accepting tongues as one initial evidence (not the only evidence) of being filled with the Spirit would better align with Scripture and a biblical theology of who God is and how he works, being, thereby, a loving response. Such adjustments could reasonably foster Church unity by toppling undue walls of separation between Church traditions which are erected by the requirement of the experience as a sort of "new circumcision" before one is acknowledged as having arrived as a genuine part of the group (even within global Pentecostalism itself). Adding to the previously mentioned barriers is the stumbling block facing unbelievers and "outsiders" witnessing tongues in the assembly without an interpretation. The question as to why Scripture requires interpretation of tongues in the assembly is worthy of genuine reflection.

3.6. *Why Is Interpretation Required in the Assembly?*

The entirety of 1 Corinthians 14 appears to be written to instruct the Church on the proper use of spiritual gifts within her public assembly (especially the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and interpretation). Duffield and Van Cleave astutely conclude the Corinthians overlook certain realities. Three of these are that a person has control over one's own spirit, God's gifts are to be used intelligently to edify the Body, and the gifts belong more to the Church than the individual exercising them. These scholars succinctly highlight that regarding tongues specifically, Paul is "prohibiting uninterpreted tongues in public meetings," (Duffield and Van Cleave 1983, pp. 340–41). This inescapable truth in Scripture seems plain enough, yet uninterpreted tongues are still allowed and even encouraged at times in churches throughout the global Pentecostal movement. To be clear, in no way is Paul anti-tongues (so it seems neither should Christians be). Williams rightly observes Paul is regulating the gift of tongues and not forbidding it (Williams 1996, p. 217). Duffield and Van Cleave clarify "Paul limits the gift of tongues to personal prayer language [in private] unless accompanied by interpretation (1 Cor. 14:13, 27, 28)," (Duffield and Van Cleave 1983, p. 339). Keener makes a similar point that tongues in prayer are a form of praying not with one's mind, but with one's spirit, "and hence are preferably balanced by interpretation". He highlights Paul contrasting Luke's generally corporate presentation of tongues by emphasizing here the exercise of tongues in a private devotional manner (unless interpreted) (Keener 2012–2013, p. 813). Again, those with the gift of tongues are free to employ it in the assembly to praise the Lord, pray, sing, or speak to the gathering; the purpose is not an issue. However, if there is no interpreter present, "one must hold his peace". Additionally, one has control over one's spirit. Tongues are indeed a vocal gift God gives the church, but one "which must always be interpreted," (Duffield and Van Cleave 1983, pp. 337–42). Ultimately, Scripture is clear that tongues are simply not to be

spoken in the assembly unless interpreted. The reasons for this command vary, but the requirement remains.

Lim reasons tongues need interpretation to be effective, and Duffield and Van Cleave agree, concluding that for tongues, whether exercised for edification of the church or as a sign gift, “interpretation is essential,” (Lim 2007, p. 468; Duffield and Van Cleave 1983, p. 339). Thomas C. Oden also notes Paul’s requirement for tongues speakers to remain silent unless there is an interpreter. He reasons the Spirit seeks to accurately communicate “God’s merciful will to save,” and that Gentiles with many languages await a comprehensible declaration of the words of life (Oden 1992, p. 65). Craig Blomberg agrees arguing that it “remains indisputable” that the value of a clear proclamation of God’s word goes far beyond “more unusual phenomena,” including tongues, in both noncharismatic and charismatic circles (Blomberg 1994, p. 276). It appears that in addition to the lack of clear proclamation, Scripture reveals consequences which are more than an omission of a good, but an active stumbling block (to both believers and nonbelievers).

Some may wonder why any in the gathering would stumble over uninterpreted tongues. After all, if all Christians have spoken in tongues at some point (or expect to), this would suggest the assembly would have no problem with uninterpreted tongues.⁶ But this same passage (1 Cor 14:20–25) appears to reveal that both unbelievers and ungifted Christians are both stumbled by uninterpreted tongues. More than that, the instructions regarding tongues in the assembly being interpreted follow the love chapter. Is it then possible that the requirement of interpretation is the loving option? If so, why would love be concerned with whether tongues in the assembly are interpreted? It seems one need not venture too far to discover people who have experienced exactly what Scripture warns will occur (leading to barriers between even whole Christian traditions). As such, this passage is as timely now as it ever was.

3.7. Why Is Interpretation Required in the Assembly?

In 1 Corinthians 14:20–25, Paul reveals that tongues, a sign (σημεῖόν) of God’s activity, “takes a negative turn”. Which negative turn is discussed among scholars (Baker 2009, p. 196).⁷ Paul explores the negative consequences tongues without interpretation have on nonbelievers attending the assembly. Schenck admits the argument “is somewhat difficult” to follow, but it reveals the negative impact of uninterpreted tongues as even hindering them from coming to Christ (Schenck 2006, p. 197). Verbrugge similarly observes that 1 Corinthians 14:22–23 “is by far one of the most difficult to interpret in this section”. However, he offers keen insight into what may well appear to be contradictory statements, at least initially. He observes the expectation for Paul to indicate prophesy as being a sign for unbelievers (since they would understand the message and so turn to Jesus), and tongues being a sign for believing “insiders” familiar with tongues. However, verse 22 appears to say precisely the opposite. Verrugge follows four clues to align tongues as a sign for unbelievers and “outsiders,” while at the same time, an occasion for these unbelievers and “outsiders” to say the assembly full of tongues speakers are “out of their minds” (μαίνεσθε). His clue with the least certainty is that verse 22 is a quote of the Corinthians, or at least a representation of the thinking of the “problem people” in Corinth that Paul intends to refute (Verbrugge 2008, p. 383). John Fotopoulos refers to this approach as “the popular rhetorical convention of a *partitio* where orators commonly quote their opponents and then proceed to refute them as they prepare for the central arguments of the speech,” (Fotopoulos 2002, pp. 182–83).⁸ Though perhaps not the strongest consideration, this is a reasonable position, considering Paul quotes the Corinthians elsewhere only to then correct their mistaken thinking.⁹ But Verbrugge continues.

Verbrugge goes so far as to say Paul’s statement is best translated as a rhetorical question, “So, then, are tongues a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, and prophesy a sign not for unbelievers but for believers?” To this question, Paul would answer a resounding “No!” (Verbrugge 2008, p. 383). Like Verbrugge, Morris posits the Corinthians quite possibly argued that speaking in tongues is a sign to outsiders that God was at

work, but prophecy only conveys a message to believers. Additionally, he agrees with Verbrugge, seeing it as a rhetorical question (Morris 1985, p. 189). Verbrugge offers other clues, alluding to the sense of verse 22 being a rhetorical question like ὥστε, which can introduce such a question, and οὖν in verse 23, which he says has the same nuance. He reasons that Paul cites the consequences of their misguided thinking, and appears to use οὖν “as a mild adversative” to what is obvious to him (Verbrugge 2008, p. 383–84).¹⁰ If this is correct, the aim of tongues seems to be toward believers, and the command concerning interpretation could well be for the loving protection of unbelievers and “outsiders” from unnecessary barriers to Jesus. Scripture does reveal a connection between tongues and the gospel; perhaps further clarity resides there.

Opinions vary as to a relationship between the gift of tongues and proclamation of the gospel. As mentioned above, there are different kinds of tongues, and they have different purposes. P. C. Nelson contends the purpose of the gift of tongues in Acts 2 “was not to make the gospel intelligible to people of different languages;” it was merely evidence of Spirit baptism (Nelson 2009, p. 75). However, Acts 2 records the disciples declaring “the mighty works of God”, so it seems reasonable that God’s arguably most mighty acts of the gospel would be on their lips. Understandably, Duffield and Van Cleave disagree with Nelson declaring that the tongues of human languages in Acts 2 is “to show that the Gospel was for all races and nations”. They then connect this with 1 Corinthians 14:22, offering the sign may consist of “known languages by which witness is given to the unsaved”, since there are unsaved who speak various tongues (Duffield and Van Cleave 1983, p. 337). But if that were the case, Paul would not need to be so unwavering regarding interpretation of tongues in the assembly; the lost speaking particular tongue would already understand. It appears that Paul sees uninterpreted tongues as a hinderance to the gospel.

But more than a hindrance, Morris boldly declares, “the result [of uninterpreted tongues] will be disastrous”. He explains that Paul imagines the entire assembly with everyone speaking in tongues (what seems to be the epitome of the “wildest dreams” of those seeing tongues as the most desirable gift). But then inquirers enter, whether ungifted believers (“outsiders”) or unbelievers. What happens? Morris notes that Paul clearly states the uninterpreted tongues do not convince those entering that God is among them. Rather it convinces them that the believers are all are crazy (Morris 1985, p. 189). Schreiner agrees such activity does not lead unbelievers to repentance and faith, but instead verse 23 reveals its effect is unbelievers actually rejecting the gospel (Schreiner 2018, p. 291). Why? It seems the “chaotic atmosphere” is neither healthy nor beneficial to anyone, whether believers or not (Baker 2009, p. 196). If uninterpreted tongues “spook unbelievers and drive them away”, it seems apparent that avoiding such tongues in the assembly (Schreiner 2006, p. 365) would be of significant benefit. Again, such restriction seems to be the option showing love for God and neighbor.

3.8. How Might Tongues Be a “Sign for Unbelievers”?

The kind of “sign” tongues may be for unbelievers is debated. A common position is that in view of Paul’s quotation from Isaiah, the sign is one of judgment. Duffield and Van Cleave reason the sign is not necessarily a convincing of unbelievers unto salvation; Paul clarifies that prophecy does that. Therefore, he offers it is a sign of judgment witnessing “the unbelief and doom of the unrepentant,” (Duffield and Van Cleave 1983, p. 342). Williams understands Paul’s application of God speaking to an “uncomprehending people” in Isaiah as God now speaking through glossolalia, but unbelievers “turn a deaf ear”. As such, Williams reasons, the very fact that unbelievers spurn God speaking through tongues is a judgment on them. The judgment, he offers, is “they are all the more confirmed in their disbelief,” (Williams 1996, p. 399).¹¹ However, if unbelievers are truly “uncomprehending people” (as Williams himself describes them), it seems unreasonable for God to blame people for genuine ignorance. Blomberg also understands uninterpreted tongues as a sign for unbelievers, but sees the condemnation as less deliberate on their part. He likens them to unbelieving Israelites of the past, and offers they “wind up being condemned (even if

inadvertently)" by those speaking in tongues. He seems to indicate they remain lost, but it is not outright rebellion; they reject the gospel because "insane babblers" are offering it (Blomberg 1994, p. 271). There are other facets of grasping the "sign" as one of judgment as well, and not all see it as judgment on the hearers.

Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner move the light of judgment away from outsiders and toward the church. They ruminate on the responsibility and negative role of the church in Paul's illustration. They highlight Paul's focus on unbelievers in 14:23–25, springing from his reference to Isaiah. Ciampa and Rosner extrapolate that the use of uninterpreted tongues in the assembly not only does not result in converting unbelievers, but further alienates outsiders from God (Ciampa and Rosner 2007, p. 742). Baker places the judgement even more on the church's shoulders. He understands the sign as being a judgment on the church uttered by unbelievers who leave never to return, declaring Christians are "out of their minds". He, like many others, emphasizes that uninterpreted tongues do not demonstrate God's power to unbelievers, but instead appear as "uninhibited craziness". Ultimately, Baker concludes uninterpreted tongues are a sign which will "drive" unbelievers and outsiders from God to their own condemnation (Baker 2009, p. 201).

Whatever the nuance of judgment, Scripture bluntly reveals outsiders witnessing uninterpreted tongues will think the speakers are out of their minds. Schreiner aptly sums up Paul's thrust in stating "believers should *not* be the agent of judgment on unbelievers. . . driving unbelievers away" with tongues (Schreiner 2006, p. 365). Further, he submits that the church should not be commended for this effect on unbelievers, because the church is to be an agent of salvation for unbelievers, not one of judgment (Schreiner 2018, p. 292). There is every indication that those in the global Pentecostal movement would agree that the Church should be an agent of salvation and even seek to be such an agent personally. But uninterpreted tongues in the gathering has every indication of being a major stumbling block, and love always protects. Stephen C. Barton illuminates that Paul's argument implies the standard of love (in the context of gifts edifying) which applies to both believers and unbelievers. He notes the difficulty in following Paul's argument, but adduces Paul is inverting the Corinthians' evaluation of tongues in stating unintelligible tongues "will be a stumbling block to unbelievers," (Barton 2003, p. 1344). Robertson and Plummer also address the grievous irony that the gift the Corinthians particularly pride themselves on is a gift that if exercised in public without the additional gift of interpretation excites derision from unbelievers (Robertson and Plummer 1911, p. 317).

If tongues are indeed a sign of judgment on outsiders, wisdom and love seem to dictate care in the proper exercise of this gift for their good. If tongues stumble outsiders, as described above, Blomberg accurately concludes Paul's paragraph cannot be applied, "as some Pentecostals sometimes do, to claim the exercise of tongues-speaking is designed to convert unbelievers," (Blomberg 1994, p. 274). Now, global Pentecostalism rightly values speaking in tongues, and other traditions could learn much regarding the reality, expectation, and need of such manifestation gifts. However, Blomberg has warrant in suggesting Paul would say to those within global Pentecostalism that greater emphasis on "immediately intelligible and more cognitive gifts" is necessary (Blomberg 1994, p. 275). Duffield and Van Cleave keenly note that tongues with interpretation can be a sign to unbelievers. In such cases, tongues (with interpretation) can be a sign of God's presence or a sign to God and his word when unbelievers understand the language that is spoken (Duffield and Van Cleave 1983, p. 338).

Still, in our modern day, many who witness tongues without interpretation (for at least the first time, and maybe every time) come away thinking Christians (or at least "those" Christians) are out of their minds. Blomberg notes that the excesses within global Pentecostalism are well known. He ponders that perhaps they are main reason the movement (and by extension, all conservative Christianity) is wrongly stereotyped and rejected by brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ as well as the watching world (Blomberg 1994, p. 276).¹² It seems a biblical theology concerning germane contexts of ecclesiology and pneumatology lights a way forward for an adjustment that would further topple undue

walls of separation within the Church, as well as a wall between unbelievers and the Lord. Furthermore, whereas genuine love seeks the true good of another, it seems adopting Paul's requirement of interpretation for public expressions of tongues is the loving option.

4. Conclusions

4.1. *All Do Not Speak in Tongues*

Global Pentecostalism rightly grasps the biblical nature and necessity of the gift of tongues, as well as many benefits (including edification of the Body and a potentially miraculous witness when interpreted, and edifying oneself in private, where no interpretation is needed). However, perhaps there is an overemphasis. Tongues evidencing the baptism in the Holy Spirit is indeed biblical evidence. Additionally, openness to and even desire for the gift of tongues is a good thing, biblically speaking. However, Scripture also reveals the gift of tongues is not for every Christian, and that does not make them less a part of the Body. Additionally, there appears to be a strong biblical case that not all speak in tongues, whether at Spirit Baptism or in the assembly through a gifting of the Spirit. Is it possible that when any tradition stands alone in the Body of Christ with a particular doctrine, that doctrine may not have the theological warrant that tradition asserts? There seem to be logical, philosophical, and theological difficulties in pressing such doctrine too far. However, even if this doctrine is correct, it bodes a conundrum for pastors trying to explain immediate transformations in people who pray to receive the fullness of the Spirit and begin expressing other gifts of the Spirit instead. It additionally fosters difficulty for pastors counseling those who battle the despair of never receiving the baptism in the Spirit (despite other manifestations). Furthermore, it occasions a complication for pastors counseling those looking down on others without the experience of tongues as having "not arrived" spiritually or not being a "full gospel" Christian. Is it loving that a gift of the Spirit should continue to be a wall of separation between "us" and "them", thereby dividing the Body? Scripture reveals love does not insist upon its own way, and is the perfect bond of unity. The Early Church models how the Spirit forges unity from division, regarding preferences with warrant in tradition and theology.

The Church faces this in Acts 15 with God's given sign of circumcision. The Council concludes Jews may gladly continue with devotional expression in the Torah, including circumcision, but Gentiles are not bound to such an expression or experience for full equal inclusion in the Body. Perhaps there is a lesson for us there. Perhaps tongues should not be a "new circumcision", separating "us" from "them", and we could emphasize the equal standing of fellow Christians before the Lord, regardless of the gift the Spirit gives them. Additionally, even if those holding to this doctrine are correct, and as such see themselves as the "strong" ones, does Paul not direct the strong to bear the weaknesses of others, accept them, and not to quarrel over opinions (Rom 14–15)? Paul indicates all do not speak in tongues. As such, removing the (sometimes unspoken) requirement of such a sign may be one step toward fostering greater unity in the Body of Christ.

4.2. *Interpretation Is Required in the Assembly*

Another wall of separation seems to be uninterpreted tongues in the public assembly. Scripture seems abundantly clear that such exercising of the gift of tongues does not impact outsiders positively for the gospel. In fact, the converse is indicated. Uninterpreted tongues alienate and repulse unbelievers and outsiders. Further, such tongues do not convince outsiders that God is among the assembly, but rather that those in the assembly are out of their minds. Why would anyone insist on such expression of gifts to the detriment of those for whom Christ died? God is a God of order; God is for people; God's gifts are for the building up of people. God is love, and those in global Pentecostalism share God's heart, desiring all to know the Lord and experience him in a real way. Additionally, one would be hard-pressed to find anyone within global Pentecostalism who wants to hinder the gospel. As such, a second step forward could be a closer alignment with a biblical theology through obeying the Scriptural requirement of interpreting tongues in the assembly. This

adjustment will also foster unity in the Body, as well as the good of unbelievers, and the glory of God.

4.3. *The Goal and the Need*

With all this I mind, perhaps a first step in the way forward could be to humbly hold the movement's distinctives dear, without demanding it of the whole of the Body of Christ. It may be of benefit to both maintain the belief in Spirit-inspired initial evidence of tongues (and the potential for any to speak in tongues), while at the same time not clinging to these as the only correct understanding of Scripture and expecting the rest of the Body to also hold these dear. After all, the Spirit distributes gifts as he sees fit. Can we be comfortable with God being God and perhaps choosing differently than we think he will? A second step forward could be a return to the Scriptural requirement of allowing tongues in Christian gatherings only when interpreted. This would remove stumbling blocks associated with uninterpreted tongues for those both inside and outside the Church. Additionally, it would foster greater unity among Christians who understand the gifting and those who do not. Both steps would likely foster unity in the Body around what is clear in Scripture, and assuage what seems to be significant distractions from the gospel for non-Christians.

Various groups will always have their distinctive emphases, and that is basically a good thing (God deserves multifaceted praise and glory for all aspects of his nature, character, and actions). However, whereas God is a God of unity, and love is the perfect bond of unity, it seems worthwhile to ponder whether the separations formed by unwavering and unquestioned adherence to a given emphasis are of God. Among many inside and outside the Church, there seems to be a particular aversion to tongues for some reason. Perhaps these adjustments in doctrine and practice can alleviate a multiplicity of concerns without compromising what is clear in Scripture. In our day, there is a great need for unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. With the advent of the internet, social media, and the like, it seems the voices clamoring for our attention have grown exponentially. As a result, discernment is ever more critical for the child of God. In order to discern the voice of God, God's word through God's Spirit in God's community is indispensable. Unity in the Body is needed maybe now more than ever. Even with the various biblical, theological, and philosophical reasons for these adjustments, and the potential benefits associated with them, some may still be fearful about such an adjustment.

4.4. *A Possible Fear of Aligning Tongues to a Biblical Theology*

One may rightly wonder why, in the light of Scriptural exegesis and biblical theology, would there be an issue with such adjustments in the doctrine and practice of tongues? Perhaps the issue is one of identity. It is not uncommon for a group to align their identity too closely with a particular practice or belief (specific formulas or methods of baptism, particular understandings of what occurs during the eucharist, assembling on a certain day of the week, etc.). Indeed, the identity of global Pentecostalism began as an inclusive community welcoming all from any Christian background who shared the same experience in the Spirit (or was open to it). However, it seems the movement has become an exclusive group, not only seeming unwelcome to those not having the same experience, but at times appearing to hold itself above such others. The Holy Spirit is a humble Spirit, glorifying not himself, but the Father and the Son. God is love, and love does not demand its own preferences (1 Cor 13:5). As usual, it seems gazing on the face of God and reflecting upon his divine nature and character is the best model for global Pentecostalism moving forward.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ For example, see Michael Horton, “Semper Reformanda” in: *Tabletalk Magazine* (1 October 2009); www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/semper-reformanda accessed on 25 November 2019); Paul Haffner, *Mystery of the Church*, Leominster 2007, p. 117; Anna Case-Winters, “Ecclesia Reformata, Semper Reformanda: Reformed and Always to Be Reformed” in: Robert H. Bullock, Jr. (ed.), *Presbyterians Being Reformed: Reflections on What the Church Needs Today*, Louisville 2006, p. xxix; and Andrew Atherstone, “The Implications of Semper Reformanda” in: *ANVIL*, 26 (1/2009), p. 31.
- ² Many date the birth of modern Pentecostalism with the Azusa Street Revival (1906), however speaking in tongues occurred at earlier in Topeka, Kansas (1901) and Cherokee County, North Carolina (1896). For further reading, see “Did You Know?,” *Christian History Magazine-Issue 58: The Rise of Pentecostalism* (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 1998). For an in-depth study see Bartleman, Frank. *How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles: The Story behind the Azusa Street Revival*. Edited by Cecil M. Robeck Jr. and Darrin Rodgers. Azusa Street Book Series. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2017.
- ³ For a brief treatment of ethnic, and gender inclusion see “Did You Know?,” *Christian History Magazine-Issue 58: The Rise of Pentecostalism* (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 1998); David D. Daniels, “They Had a Dream,” *Christian History Magazine-Issue 58: The Rise of Pentecostalism* (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 1998); Gastón Espinosa, “The Silent Pentecostals,” *Christian History Magazine-Issue 58: The Rise of Pentecostalism* (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 1998).
- ⁴ Keener references others including L. W. Oliverio, Smith Wigglesworth, and Aimee Semple McPherson.
- ⁵ Keener notes “Anderson, *Pentecostalism*, 152 (but cf. 155), and idem, *Ends of the Earth*, pp. 212–13, suggests more than 120 million Catholic charismatics; the figure is even higher in Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, 102”.
- ⁶ See Paul A. Hamar, *The Radiant Commentary on the New Testament, The Book of First Corinthians* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1980), p. 110 and Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (Los Angeles, CA: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1983), pp. 342, 337–38 for the presumption all Christians speak in tongues as evidence of the baptism in the Spirit.
- ⁷ Baker observes the sign might be that people will not listen, as also (Marion L. Soards, *Understanding the Bible Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1999), p. 292 (Soards 1999)), and thus are condemned as other agree, like (C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Black’s New Testament Commentary (London: Continuum, 1968), p. 323; F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, New Century Bible, (London, Oliphants, 1971), p. 133; Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997), p. 240). Baker offers it is “most likely a sign of judgment here” as with (David E. Lanier, “With Stammering Lips and Another Tongue: 1 Cor 14:20–22 and Isa 28:11–12,” *Criswell Theological Review* 5:1991, p. 278). He posits it may mean a “double sign”—a positive sign for insiders, and a negative sign for outsiders, like (Christopher Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and Its Hellenistic Environment*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/75, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995, p. 181; Karl Olav Sandnes, “Prophecy—A Sign for Believers,” *Biblica* 77:1996, p. 10).
- ⁸ Fotopoulos’ context is the Corinthian discussion regarding idol food, but the principle seems to apply here as well.
- ⁹ For example, 1 Cor 6:12; 8:1; 10:23.
- ¹⁰ Verbrugge, like Morris, cites Galatians 4:16 as an example ὥστε introducing a rhetorical question.
- ¹¹ Rodman notes Barrett: “When they are not met with faith (cf. Heb. 4:2) tongues serve to harden and thus to condemn the unbeliever,” (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, HNTC, 323).
- ¹² For televangelism and modern culture, Blomberg refers readers to Quentin J. Schultze, *Televangelism and American Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker 1991).

References

- Ambrosiaster. 2009. *Commentaries on Romans and 1–2 Corinthians*. Edited by Thomas C. Oden and Gerald L. Bray. Translated by Gerald L. Bray. Ancient Christian Texts. Downers Grove: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press.
- Baker, William. 2009. 1 Corinthians. In *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians*. Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers.
- Barrett, Charles K. 1968. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians, Black’s New Testament Commentary*. London: Continuum.
- Barton, Stephen C. 2003. 1 Corinthians. In *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*. Edited by James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Blomberg, Craig. 1994. 1 Corinthians. In *The NIV Application Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Chrysostom, John. 1889. Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the First Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians. In *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*. Edited by Philip Schaff. Translated by Hubert Kestell Cornish, John Medley, and Talbot B. Chambers. A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series; New York: Christian Literature Company, vol. 12.
- Ciampa, Roy E., and Brian S. Rosner. 2007. 1 Corinthians. In *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Edited by Gregory Kimball Beale. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.
- Courson, Jon. 2003. *Jon Courson’s Application Commentary: New Testament*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

- Duffield, Guy P., and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave. 1983. *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*. Los Angeles: L.I.F.E. Bible College.
- Ellingworth, Paul, and Howard A. Hatton. 1995. *A Handbook on Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians*. UBS Handbook Series; New York: United Bible Societies.
- Fotopoulos, John. 2002. The Rhetorical Situation, Arrangement, and Argumentation of 1 Corinthians 8:1–13: Insights into Paul's Instructions on Idol-Food in Greco-Roman Context. *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 47: 164–97.
- Gill, Kenneth. 1998. Dividing over Oneness. In *Christian History Magazine-Issue 58: The Rise of Pentecostalism*. Carol Stream: Christianity Today. Available online: <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/dividing-over-oneness> (accessed on 5 June 2023).
- Goff, James R., Jr. 1998. Sanctification Scuffles. In *Christian History Magazine-Issue 58: The Rise of Pentecostalism*. Carol Stream: Christianity Today. Available online: <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/sanctification-scuffles> (accessed on 5 June 2023).
- Hollenweger, Walter J. 1998. Pentecostalism's Global Language. In *Christian History Magazine-Issue 58: The Rise of Pentecostalism*. Carol Stream: Christianity Today. Available online: <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/interview-pentecostalism-global-language> (accessed on 5 June 2023).
- Keener, Craig S. 2012–2013. *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary: Introduction and 1:1–14:28*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, vols. 1–2.
- Keener, Craig S. 2016. *Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Lim, David. 2007. *Systematic Theology: Revised Edition*. Edited by Stanley M. Horton. Springfield: Logion Press.
- Menzies, William W. 1993. *Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective*. Edited by Stanley M. Horton. Springfield: Logion Press.
- Morris, Leon. 1985. *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, vol. 7.
- Nelson, Peter Christopher. 2009. *Bible Doctrines: Discover Profound Truths for Everyday Living*. Revised Edition. Springfield: Gospel Publishing House.
- Oden, Thomas C. 1992. *Life in the Spirit: Systematic Theology*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, vol. III.
- Olsen, Ted. 1998. American Pentecost. In *Christian History Magazine-Issue 58: The Rise of Pentecostalism*. Carol Stream: Christianity Today. Available online: <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/american-pentecost> (accessed on 5 June 2023).
- Robertson, Archibald, and Alfred Plummer. 1911. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*. International Critical Commentary. New York: T&T Clark.
- Schenck, Kenneth. 2006. *1 & 2 Corinthians: A Commentary for Bible Students*. Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. 2006. *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology*. Westmont: IVP Academic.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. 2018. *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*. Edited by Eckhard J. Schnabel. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. London: Inter-Varsity Press, vol. 7.
- Soards, Marion L. 1999. *Understanding the Bible Commentary: 1 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- Trail, Ronald. 2008. *An Exegetical Summary of 1 Corinthians 10–16*, 2nd ed. Dallas: SIL International.
- Verbrugge, Verlyn D. 2008. 1 Corinthians. In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Romans–Romans–Galatians (Revised Edition)*. Edited by Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, vol. 11.
- Wilken, Robert Louis, and Judith L. Kovacs, eds. 2005. *1 Corinthians: Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators*. Judith L. Kovacs, trans. The Church's Bible. Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Williams, J. Rodman. 1996. *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, vol. 2.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.