



# The Tongues of the Saints:

## The Azusa Street Revival and the Changing Definition of Tongues

**T**he Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has always derived its identity from claiming to be Christ's restored church on earth, with which the apostolic gifts of the Spirit contemporaneously reside. The return of the gifts of the Spirit to the Church, namely contemporary revelation and speaking in tongues, lent legitimacy to the Church's claim of restoration. One must ask, then, how did the Church react to the rise of Pentecostalism, a movement which itself claimed to uniquely possess the apostolic gifts of the Spirit? By examining the teachings of President Joseph F. Smith and numerous Latter-day Saint journals during the rise of the Azusa Street Revival, we can discover how the Church responded to the rise of Pentecostalism by reexamining its own practice of tongues.

The Azusa Street Revival, which began in Los Angeles in 1906, is largely seen as the primary impetus for the promotion and spread of Pentecostalism. Numerous religious practices differentiated and marginalized Azusa Street from mainline American Protestantism, including its extemporaneous spiritual gifts, interracial worship, and an ecstatic worship style. Most notably, the Azusa Street Revival emphasized the speaking of tongues, a key component of Pentecostalism.

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It cannot be said that the rise of the Pentecostal movement necessitated the Church to modify its doctrine on *glossolalia*, the speaking of heavenly tongues, but it did cause the Church to reexamine and stress the redefined position of tongues among its members in an attempt to dismiss the Azusa Street claims of a modern-day Pentecost. Such an examination allows us to explore an example of the lengths to which ostracized religious groups go in order to gain acceptance in hegemonic American society. When confronted with a competing claim of apostolic restoration and while attempting to reenter society, the LDS Church emphasized a redefined practice of tongues rather than the Church's prototypical practice.

This reexamination of the Church's practice of glossolalia occurred as the Church was preparing to reenter American society after decades of isolation, both forced and self-imposed. Historian Thomas G. Alexander penned a study documenting this transition, which will be useful for this essay. Alexander argues that beginning in the 1890s, "Mormons began groping for a new paradigm that would save essential characteristics of their religious tradition, provide sufficient political stability to preserve the interests of the church, and allow them to live in peace with other Americans."<sup>1</sup> This led the Church to abandon, modify, or de-emphasize doctrines and practices the Church had previously held dear and essential; in this case, glossolalia proper was discouraged in favor of *xenoglossia*, or the ability to speak a foreign language previously unknown to the speaker. This de-emphasis was in part due to the diminishing need to view tongues as a necessary proof of the veracity of the Church; Mormons were gaining testimonies regarding the Church without relying solely on tongues and other gifts of the Spirit, save contemporary revelation. Terryl Givens largely agrees with Alexander's dating, arguing that following the Manifesto ending plural marriage that was issued by President Wilford Woodruff, the Church reexamined its doctrine and culture in an attempt for "accommodation and integration" into American society.<sup>2</sup> Neither of these authors, however, focused on the impact the transition had on glossolalia in the Church, previously a prominent divine gift. This paper helps close that gap, examining President Smith's completion of an effort to reclassify glossolalia as part of a larger effort to gain favorability for the Church in the larger American society.

Let us first (too) briefly examine how Azusa Street viewed glossolalia. Tongues were heavily emphasized on Azusa Street, and the Pentecostal newspaper, the *Apostolic Faith*, documented instances of tongues as the movement spread, first up the West Coast, then nationally, and eventually internationally. The *Apostolic Faith*

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carried the essential message of Azusa Street: “The wonderful sign in 1906 is the restoration of tongues, which foretells the preaching of the pure gospel to all nations, which must be done before the Gentile Times end.”<sup>3</sup> The tongues signaled a return of the biblical apostolic age, the time Jesus’ disciples received the gifts of tongues, evinced by tongues of fire appearing over their heads, as a precursor to spreading the gospel. In support of the return of the apostolic times, Pentecostals sometimes reported seeing “cloven tongues” above the heads of those practicing glossolalia, or bright lights filling rooms immediately before tongues were spoken.<sup>4</sup>

Similar to the Apostles’ description in Acts, the contemporary Pentecostal tongues were gifted for a particular and specified purpose: “The gift of languages is given with the commission, ‘Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.’”<sup>5</sup> This commission had influenced Pentecostal leader Charles Parham’s belief that xenoglossia was the true apostolic gift, for even the unlearned could then spread the gospel to the world by speaking foreign languages through the Holy Spirit. The gift of xenoglossia allowed the Pentecostal movement to spread internationally; the *Apostolic Faith* reported a group of Pentecostal missionaries leaving for Africa on September 13, mere months after the Pentecost fell on Los Angeles. The missionaries had been given “the gift of the Uganda [*sic*] language, the language of the people to whom she [a missionary] is sent. . . . Her husband is with her and her niece, who also has been given the African language.”<sup>6</sup> In its two years of publication, the *Apostolic Faith* reported missions to every habitable continent except South America.

The speaking of heavenly tongues, the classic definition of glossolalia, was also present alongside xenoglossia. “Many are speaking in new tongues, and some are on their way to the foreign fields, with the gift of language.”<sup>7</sup> The Pentecostals on Azusa Street clearly differentiated between glossolalia and xenoglossia, indicating that both were present during the revival. Glossolalia was not confined to speaking alone, for instances of writing in “unknown languages” were also reported. Some experienced both types of tongues, receiving “many tongues, also the gift of prophecy, and writing in a number of foreign languages.”<sup>8</sup> In this manner, Azusa Street could spread their message through either voice or print, making their missions more effective.

While the role of tongues on Azusa Street could be examined more in depth, let us now consider the role of tongues in the early LDS Church, for a reexamination of the Church’s use of glossolalia occurred at the turn of the twentieth century,

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due in part to the Church's reaction to Pentecostalism. The role of glossolalia in the Church, especially while the Church was based in Nauvoo, has been the subject of some scholarly conversation. This paper contributes to that conversation by reconsidering the prominence of tongues in the post-Nauvoo Church, mainly by responding to the arguments of Dan Vogel and Scott C. Dunn presented in "The Tongues of Angels: Glossolalia Among Mormonism's Founders." It is widely agreed that glossolalia was present and popular during the genesis of the Church. Glossolalia among the Saints and Church leaders was widespread, beginning in Ohio and quickly spreading through New York, Pennsylvania, and Missouri. Tongues flourished in the Church, most notably in Kirtland, and turned into a "widespread, persistent, and integral feature of early Mormon religious experience."<sup>9</sup> In the early Church, tongues were encouraged and practiced by both lay members and Church leaders, including Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and Heber C. Kimball, among others. In fact, according to W. W. Phelps, one of Smith's scribes, nearly every early Saint spoke in tongues at some point.<sup>10</sup> Glossolalia was also manifested during conferences and official Church business. This included Smith speaking in glossolalia at a Church conference on January 22, 1833, and glossolalia spreading among the Church authorities when the Prophet, First Presidency, the Twelve, and the Seventy were gathered together in conference in January of 1836 and during the time surrounding the dedication of the Kirtland Temple.<sup>11</sup>

In the midst of widespread usage of tongues, Joseph Smith and Church leaders issued warnings about the proper place of tongues, although this does not appear to have stalled or eliminated the use of tongues. The warnings were not about speaking in tongues as such, but only about the doctrinal impact of the glossolalia spoken by the Saints. Joseph Smith informed the Relief Society in May of 1842, "You may speak in tongues for your own comfort but I lay this down for a rule that if anything is taught by the gift of tongues, it is not to be received for doctrine."<sup>12</sup> Smith is almost certainly mentioning glossolalia here rather than xenoglossia, for Saints were not previously claiming doctrinal revelation through xenoglossia. Previously, Smith had declared in 1834 that tongues were "not given for the government of the Church," but for teaching and preaching.<sup>13</sup> Importantly, glossolalia was not to be used by Saints for receiving revelation apart from the Church hierarchy. Such individual claims of divine revelation, no matter how accurate, challenged the charismatic and revelatory power of Joseph Smith. Other warnings were issued as well. Parley P. Pratt warned Saints in the *Millennial Star* in 1840 against the public use

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of tongues: “Never give out appointments for speaking in tongues; . . . either speak in tongues to an assembly who have come together for the purpose of hearing you thus speak, . . . for this is not pleasing in the sight of heaven.”<sup>14</sup> Pratt was indeed instructing the Saints not to publically display their tongues during mission appointments, nor to give appointments for the express purpose of speaking in tongues. Instead, glossolalia was to be used for personal edification and verification of the restored gospel. Furthermore, Saints were advised to always have interpreters present, lest the devil come and manipulate the teachings.<sup>15</sup>

Yet while the Church may have issued warnings about exuberant tongues, tongues were still prominent in the lived religion of the Saints. Vogel and Dunn cite numerous instances of both glossolalia and xenoglossia being spoken during the life of Joseph Smith, including occurrences under the approval of Church leaders.<sup>16</sup> And despite the claim that a renewed deemphasis of glossolalia by Joseph Smith beginning in 1839 “virtually removed [glossolalia] from Mormon worship,” Vogel and Dunn recall times that tongues were present in the post-1839 performance of the Saints’ religion. This includes an 1857 quote from Apostle Heber C. Kimball regarding his ability to speak in tongues and Hannah Savage speaking in “the tongue of Adam” with Medora Gardner translating during a Relief Society meeting in 1896, indicating that glossolalia was present as well.<sup>17</sup> We can draw from Vogel and Dunn that a redefinition of tongues may have been attempted during Joseph Smith’s time, but glossolalia was not wholly removed from the lives of the Saints. Instead, the discouraging of glossolalia impacted only the doctrinal relevance of a Saint’s glossolalia, not the practice of it. That is, glossolalia itself was not de-emphasized or banned among the Saints, but the Saints were reminded that tongues could not produce revelation apart from the Church authorities, solidifying Smith’s role as the Church’s revelator. Indeed, tongues continued to prevail among the Saints, acting as a personal devotion and testament to the restored gospel and apostolic gifts.<sup>18</sup>

Tongues continued to play a role in the Church during its migration west under Brigham Young, albeit a slightly different role. While in Nauvoo and during the exodus to Utah, women were heard singing in tongues. While in Winter Quarters, Brigham Young addressed the Saints in tongues and even “conversed” in tongues with Heber C. Kimball.<sup>19</sup> It is probably doubtful that Mormons used tongues as a conversational language, yet perhaps Young at one time envisioned such a possibility. According to John G. Turner’s recent biography of Young,

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“Young and other early Mormons understood speaking in tongues as a foretaste of the divine language of heaven, which Adam had spoken but which had then become a Babel of confusion.” Young saw his creation of the new Deseret alphabet as “a step and partial return to the pure language which has been promised unto us in the latter days.”<sup>20</sup> While the routinization and structuring of glossolalia may have limited its mystical function, it would have allowed for expanded proselytization to non-English speakers, furthering the Church’s mission and solidifying the role of tongues in the Church.

Under the presidency of Brigham Young, the presence of xenoglossia also increased, often without formal distinction from glossolalia. One such instance occurred during a meeting between Young and Ute band leaders in May 1850. One morning, Brigham Young required the use of a translator to converse with the natives. Following the singing of two hymns in the afternoon, however, the gift of tongues struck Young and he “proceeded to speak in tongues. When he asked the Utes if they had understood the mystical language, they all said yes.” Jared Farmer cites that Young’s physician also “performed glossolalia,” which a band leader clarified as the doctor having spoken Sioux.<sup>21</sup> While the use of the terms *glossolalia* and *mystical* to refer to Young speaking the natives’ language may be Farmer’s own authorial prerogative, the accounts do make it clear that Young’s xenoglossia appeared much as glossolalia did, through an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Alongside the xenoglossia spoken by Young, a renewed outpouring of glossolalia was seen in Utah. The Mormon Reformation of 1855–57 saw a similar increase of religious enthusiasm as the Saints had experienced in Kirtland. In the midst of a famine, a plague of grasshoppers, controversies with natives, and tensions with the federal government, religious faith was lukewarm, in the opinion of Church leaders. While the reformation was guided by strict preaching, rebaptisms, and monitored repentance, “it also produced an outpouring of spiritual gifts: ‘Brethren generally confessing their Sins and wrong doings and receiving forgiveness [*sic*] & testimonies to the Gospels power the presence of the Holy Spirits, Angels, and the Spirit of Joseph Smith. Angels singing; Tongues &c &c.’”<sup>22</sup>

Despite the claims by some scholars that glossolalia began to decrease toward the end of Joseph Smith’s life and continued until near extinction at the beginning of the twentieth century, it appears that tongues continued in the lives of the Saints. Thomas G. Alexander cites myriad uses of tongues, writing that “at the turn of the [twentieth] century, such experience [of glossolalia] was still widespread in

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the church.” This included tongues being used during healing rituals, being spoken in the Tabernacle by a missionary, and being expressed through song. Alexander posits that instead of tongues having been in decline since 1839, tongues did not begin declining until the early twentieth century. One reason for mistaking an early decline may be due to the fact that “glossolalia declined more rapidly among men than among women,” according to Alexander. With men running the Church, writing the histories, and issuing doctrine, it is easy to write an androcentric history of glossolalia, and thereby to attribute a decline in tongues among men as a decline among all members. Yet the practice was clearly supported and sustained by Mormon women’s religious experiences. In fact, at least six of the eight instances of tongues Alexander cites between 1899 and 1908 were women practicing the gift of tongues, while men recorded the majority of these cited events.<sup>23</sup>

The role and acceptability of tongues in the Church began to be reexamined at the turn of the twentieth century. Church leaders, led by President Joseph F. Smith, deemphasized glossolalia, the type of tongues seen on Azusa Street, by first cautioning about the potential danger of tongues without proper ecclesiastical limits. President Smith warned about the potential manipulation by the devil and apostates, stating, “There is perhaps no gift of the Spirit of God more easily imitated by the devil than the gift of tongues. Where two men or women exercise the gift of tongues by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, there are a dozen perhaps that do it by the inspiration of the devil. . . . Apostates [can even] speak in tongues.” In fact, due to the importance of the gifts of the Spirit to the Church of Jesus Christ, the devil would specifically imitate such gifts in order to deceive the Saints. “The gifts of the Spirit and the powers of the holy Priesthood are of God, they are given for the blessing of the people, for their encouragement, and for the strengthening of their faith. This Satan knows full well, therefore he seeks by imitation-miracles to blind and deceive the children of God.”<sup>24</sup> While these warnings against demonic influence had been issued by Joseph Smith as well, they took on a more pointed meaning with the rise of Pentecostalism.

Furthermore, the Church shifted the proper ecclesiastical sphere for tongues, declaring that tongues should be used only in missionary work, which essentially removed the power for all Saints to speak in tongues.<sup>25</sup> Even President Smith expressed his diminishing need for tongues. “I do not want the gift of tongues, except when I need it. I needed the gift of tongues once, and the Lord gave it to me. I was in a foreign land, sent to preach the gospel to a people whose language I could not

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understand. . . . [A] hundred days after landing upon those islands I could talk to the people in their language as I now talk to you in my native tongue.”<sup>26</sup> President Smith demonstrated the completion of the change the Church experienced in the definition of tongues. Transitioning from frequent and early use of glossolalia, the “language of Adam,” under Joseph Smith, traversing through Brigham Young’s interchangeable and mixed use of both glossolalia and xenoglossia in Utah, the Church, in the early twentieth century, had arrived at a place where xenoglossia was seen as the proper definition of tongues over and against glossolalia.<sup>27</sup>

This transition in the use of tongues served a protective function for Mormons. As Spencer Fluhman explains, tongues were perhaps the most disturbing part of Mormon religiosity for non-Mormons, and indeed may have been a deciding factor in the anti-Mormon violence in Missouri. Missourians cited glossolalia as a main reason for labeling Mormons as delusional. Parley P. Pratt responded to a letter circulating in Missouri, one accusing that Mormons “openly blaspheme the most High God, and cast contempt upon His Holy Religion, by pretending to receive Revelations directly from Heaven—by pretending to speak in unknown tongues by direct inspiration.”<sup>28</sup> They had, according to accusations, “pretended revelations from heaven—their personal intercourse with God and His angels— . . . and the contemptible gibberish with which they habitually profane the Sabbath, and which they dignify with the appellation of unknown tongues.” This sort of religious enthusiasm was not seen in other denominations. While there were biblical precedents for tongues, there were no American precedents, according to anti-Mormons, making the Mormon’s glossolalia suspect.<sup>29</sup> The Church utilized public scrutiny to reinterpret essential Latter-day Saint practices; in this case, xenoglossia was emphasized over and against glossolalia, thereby giving tongues a more pragmatic and “acceptable” function.

At the turn of the century, the Church was also in the midst of a conflict between science and tradition, as many religious organizations were. The Church therefore had a vested interest to routinize and regularize forms of worship in an attempt to diminish claims of extreme supernaturalism in the face of scientific discovery. Just as the reliance on scientific discovery and methodology rose in the early twentieth century, so also did the discomfort with overt displays of supernaturalism and gifts of the Spirit rise, not only among the general public but also among Saints themselves. Church officials began to discourage the gift of tongues in Church meetings, for emphasis was placed on an orderly and respectful worship

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experience instead of a prophetic and supernatural one. In Alexander's words, "The reconstruction of Latter-day Saint doctrine, . . . while addressing the reconciliation of church doctrine with scientific theory, had brought supernaturalism into question. . . . The church leadership could tolerate and even encourage personal spiritual experiences. On the other hand, public displays of prophecy or glossolalia tended to the discomfort of some members and perhaps even to disharmony in the organization." To replace the supernatural gifts and glossolalia, the Church emphasized testimony meetings and temple ordinances for the dead, practices that were either publically acceptable or practiced behind closed, sacred doors.<sup>30</sup>

The de-emphasis on tongues by the Church leadership did not always match the lived religious experience of Church members. A letter appeared in the *Improvement Era* in 1904, just over a year before the first meeting on Azusa Street, recounting the former prominence of speaking in tongues in the LDS Church and lamenting the loss, as the author saw it, of this gift. In an article entitled "Passing of the Gift of Tongues," Dr. James X. Allen recounted his amazement that a returned missionary from Scandinavia had never heard anyone speak in tongues. The way Allen phrased his surprise is telling: "This same young brother was reared in Utah. His father and mother, as also he himself, are good Latter-day Saints. He has filled an honorable mission, and is today strong in the faith, and yet, he has never heard and experienced one of the most common gifts of the gospel, as enjoyed years ago."<sup>31</sup> For Allen, tongues were prominent enough in the lived religion of the Church to expect others to have experienced or to have at least witnessed them. In his telling, there should be no Mormon who had not yet experienced or witnessed this gift, let alone one from Utah and a good Latter-day Saint family. How tragic was this lack of glossolalic experience, a lack of experience in one of the most common gifts the Church had to offer!

Allen reiterated the common prevalence of tongues in the early Church, confirming the report of W. W. Phelps: "In the early days of the Church—where I was reared—there were so many of the Saints who enjoyed the gifts, and there were none among my acquaintances who had not heard the sweet sound of the gift of tongues. . . . In fact, we were wont to regard the speaking in tongues, [and] the interpretation of tongues . . . as an essential part of the latter-day gospel." From Allen's account, it appears that some Mormons became almost disillusioned with the Church after the de-emphasis of tongues. "If men now think they can get along without the gifts of the gospel, may not the time come when they may

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believe they can get along without its ordinances?”<sup>32</sup> The gift of tongues, among other things, had helped confirm the veracity of the restored gospel for Mormons. If the Church could redefine this gift of the Spirit, this gift that lent credence to that claim of restoration, what did it mean for the other Church doctrines?

After Allen’s article, the Church periodically published articles affirming the new official role of xenoglossia over glossolalia proper. A question-answer style article appeared in the *Liahona* in 1907, asking about the nature of Peter’s xenoglossia on the day of the apostolic Pentecost. The answer, presumably written by the editor, stressed that the original Pentecost featured xenoglossia, striking a similar tone to Charles Parham’s belief on the nature of tongues at the biblical Pentecost. It then recounted the episode of “an experienced elder” who had practiced xenoglossia. By referring to an experienced elder, the Church could, in a way, adopt a different stance than Allen’s. Allen, who was reared in the early days of the Church, claimed that glossolalia proper was common in the Church; this article countered that xenoglossia was more prevalent in the early church, which “confirms the view of President [Joseph F.] Smith.”<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps due to the Church’s de-emphasis on glossolalia, only one Latter-day Saint journal at the turn of the twentieth century made a direct, albeit somewhat implicit, reference to the speaking in tongues by the Pentecostal movement. It appears the Church, possibly because of the disillusionment of some members such as Allen, minimized its conversation on gifts of the Spirit, and tongues explicitly, save for the few references mentioned above. Yet the national and international attention gained by Azusa Street meant the Church could not fully ignore the movement.

Dated February 22, 1908, a letter was published in the *Liahona* at the height of the Azusa Street Revival. Confined to an editorial section, the letter manifests both the Latter-day Saint view of Pentecostal tongues and the change in the role for tongues as propagated by Joseph F. Smith:

Benighted fanatics in heathen countries are not the only persons who are being deluded by a “gift of tongues” emanating from a wrong source. Here in the United States, during recent years, in the full blaze of a much boasted Christian enlightenment, scholarship and civilization, many pious and educated persons have been carried away by the same delusion. The persons here referred to, filled with missionary zeal, and claiming to be possessed of “the gift of tongues,” by which they were able to “preach the gospel” to the inhabitants of

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such heathen countries as China, Japan, India, etc. have gone to those remote parts of the earth expecting to preach to the natives, without study or other effort to acquire the language, and dismal failure has been the result in every case, so far as we have yet learned.<sup>34</sup>

Pentecostalism is undoubtedly referenced here, despite its lack of explicit mention. The Church, completing its redefinition of tongues as xenoglossia rather than glossolalia proper, was already applying this redefinition in an attempt to “give an opinion as to whether this gift of tongues [of the Pentecostals] . . . comes from the Spirit of the Lord, or from some other source.”<sup>35</sup> Clearly they originated from some other source, maintained the *Liahona*.

The editorial highlights two foreign Pentecostal missionaries for their purportedly unsuccessful attempts at xenoglossia. Despite mentioning the missionaries by name, their religious inclinations and association with Pentecostalism are not explicitly mentioned, leading us to believe that the Church did not want to explicitly mention Pentecostalism or Azusa Street, perhaps thinking it would lend credibility to the new movement. T. J. McIntosh was a Pentecostal preacher who traveled to China in 1907.<sup>36</sup> His mission, as described by the Latter-day Saint editorial, was an utter failure. “From the day of his arrival in China until now neither he nor his wife has been able to speak a single sentence in Chinese. I do not speak from rumor, but from personal knowledge, and the personal admission of failure by Mr. McIntosh himself.” By claiming firsthand knowledge of this failure, the author attempts to lend legitimacy to the account. In fact, the author continued, McIntosh had to use a translator to even function daily in China, meaning his claim to xenoglossia failed in even the “simplest affairs of every-day life.”<sup>37</sup>

A second missionary couple mentioned in the editorial traveled to Calcutta, India, where they experienced the same purported failure. Reverend Garr was a pastor in Los Angeles in 1906 when the Azusa Street Revival began. After being baptized by the Holy Spirit, Garr was endowed with the gift to speak Bengali, which had prompted his mission to India.<sup>38</sup> “Rev. A. G. Carr [Garr] and wife went there, also expecting to speak to the people in this supernatural way. But did they? . . . I have attended two of their services. Mr. Garr, in reply to a personal question of mine as to whether either he or his wife had been able to talk in the native language of India, said that they had been unable to do so.”<sup>39</sup> There exist Pentecostal accounts, however, that dispute the failure reported by the *Liahona*. The Pentecostal

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newspaper, the *Apostolic Faith*, reported success in the words of Mrs. Garr herself, combating the LDS firsthand account. “God is spreading Pentecost here in Calcutta . . . [and] the Spirit is giving the interpretation, song and writing in tongues, and other wonderful manifestations of His presence among us.”<sup>40</sup> Mrs. Garr’s definition of “tongues” is ambiguous here—she could have meant either glossolalia proper or xenoglossia. It is plausible that she deliberately left the word ambiguous in order to mask a failure to communicate in the native language. Regardless, there were certainly competing interpretations as to the exact work of tongues in Calcutta.

Although these accounts do not explicitly mention Azusa Street, or even speaking in tongues in America, the view of the Latter-day Saints would not have changed depending on the location of the tongues, especially when the nature of the criticisms are taken into account. The *Liahona* could not fault Pentecostalism for the sphere in which its tongues were spoken in these accounts, for they were in agreement with the Latter-day Saints’ redesignated proper sphere for speaking in tongues only on missions. According to the First Presidency, tongues were given to the Church only for “preaching among peoples whose language is not understood.” Non-missionaries should “let speaking in tongues alone and . . . confine [their] speech to [their] own language.”<sup>41</sup> The Latter-day Saint editorial confirmed that the Pentecostal foreign missions utilized xenoglossia, according to the proper Latter-day Saint understanding, yet did not mention glossolalia proper, or the speaking in heavenly or unknown tongues, which was still common on Azusa Street.

Speaking tongues in the proper sphere does not guarantee success, however. In the eyes of the Church, the Pentecostal missionaries failed in their xenoglossia for a simple reason: they “ha[d] not the necessary ‘key of knowledge’ to do this, as have the elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday [*sic*] Saints.”<sup>42</sup> The Latter-day Saint priesthood contained the “keys of the kingdom” and the ability to confer the Holy Ghost upon converts (see D&C 7:7; 68:15–21; 81:2; 107:1–100, *inter alia*). The Pentecostal tongues could not be successful simply because they did not have the keys of the priesthood, regardless of the Pentecostal accounts coming from the foreign mission fields. It is entirely plausible that the Church classified the Pentecostal tongues as failures in order to maintain its legitimacy and identity as the only true apostolic Church. The “complete failure” among the “sectarian zealots and missionaries or would-be missionaries” proved “the source

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of the wonder-exciting phenomenon to be evil. . . . No fiasco attends this gift when it emanates from the right source.” In a final and curt dismissal, the *Liahona* made clear where it stood: “Why is it that such beneficent results flow from the exercise of the gift of tongues by missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday [sic] Saints, while failure, chagrin and distress attend attempts to employ it made by missionaries of other denominations? Because that Church is the only one in the world which possesses divine authority to confer upon converts the Holy Ghost, of which the genuine gift of tongues is at once a fruit and a proof.”<sup>743</sup>

At the end of the Azusa Street Revival, the First Presidency issued another warning about those speaking tongues with messages not approved by the Church. As before, the Church did not refer to the Pentecostal movement by name. Addressed to the “officers and members” of the Church, the letter informed members how to gauge the veracity of tongues: “When . . . tongues, prophecy, impressions or any extraordinary gift or inspiration, convey something out of harmony with the accepted revelations of the Church or contrary to the decisions of its constituted authorities, Latter-day Saints may know that it is not of God, no matter how plausible it may appear.” Since the Church receives direct revelations from God, and then communicates said revelations to the members, any gift of tongues purporting to be from God had to be consistent with the revelations of the Church, for “the Holy Ghost does not contradict its own revealings.”<sup>744</sup> While the Church left open the option for members to receive personal revelation, that revelation could only affect the member receiving the revelation and the member’s family, but no one else.

The recategorization of speaking in tongues, by which we mean the de-emphasis of glossolalia in favor of xenoglossia, by the Church coincided with the rise of the Pentecostal movement at Azusa Street in Los Angeles. While one cannot claim a cause-and-effect relation between the two, the rise of Pentecostalism did cause the Church to discreetly emphasize its reexamined position on tongues—that is, categorizing the legitimate role of xenoglossia in missions while de-emphasizing glossolalia proper—all while attempting to maintain its identity as the true restored church. With the rise of the Pentecostal movement, the Church avoided explicitly mentioning the Pentecostal movement and demonstrated caution when referring to the gifts of the Spirit as a whole, due largely to the disillusionment with the gifts some members felt. The Church, therefore, made deliberate attempts to link the new categorization of

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tongues back to the Prophet Joseph while warning about the dangers of those outside the Church speaking in tongues. It is not easy to say if the Church felt threatened by Pentecostalism's speaking in tongues, but Azusa Street did require the Church to delicately stress the changing role of tongues in the Church while maintaining the Church's identity as Christ's true restored apostolic church on earth.

### Notes

1. See Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1986), 14.
2. Terryl L. Givens, *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2007), xiv–xvii, 191–93.
3. *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 8 (May 1907).
4. *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 1 (September 1906); no. 2 (October 1906).
5. *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 1 (September 1906).
6. *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 2 (October 1906).
7. *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 1 (September 1906).
8. *Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 1 (September 1906).
9. Dan Vogel and Scott C. Dunn, “The Tongue of Angels: Glossolalia among *Mormonism’s* Founders,” *Journal of Mormon History* 19, no. 2 (1993): 10; Lee Copeland, “Speaking in Tongues in the Restoration Churches,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 24, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 16–17; John G. Turner, *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2012), 26–33, 64, 131.
10. Vogel and Dunn, “The Tongue of Angels,” 13.
11. Vogel and Dunn, “The Tongue of Angels,” 11; Copeland, “Speaking in Tongues in the Restoration Churches,” 20; *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 1:323, 2:376, 2:383; Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, vol. 1 of the Journals series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2008), 180–82, 213–16. See also Samuel Morris Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death* (New York: Oxford University, 2012), 158–63.
12. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 119; quoted in Copeland, “Speaking in Tongues in the Restoration Churches,” 23.
13. *History, 1838-1856, Vol. B-1*, September 8, 1834, in *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/history-1838-1856-volume-b-1?p=8>, p. 8. See also, *History of the Church* 2:162.
14. *Millennial Star*, September 1840; also quoted in Copeland, “Speaking in Tongues in the Restoration Churches,” 23.
15. *History, 1838-1856, Vol. C-1*, added addendum to July 2, 1839, in *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/history-1838-1856-volume-c-1?p=547>, p. 547.

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16. Vogel and Dunn, “The Tongue of Angels,” 2-24.
17. Vogel and Dunn, “The Tongue of Angels,” 23-24.
18. Vogel and Dunn, “The Tongue of Angels,” 16–24.
19. Turner, *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet*, 131, 157.
20. Turner, *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet*, 249. It certainly is true that a main impetus for the creation of a new alphabet was to create a phonetic language easier to read and write, which would help the Mormons in their missions to non-English speakers. Yet the quote by Young makes it appear that this phonetic alphabet could accomplish the same function as glossolalia did before Babel; glossolalia, the language spoken by Adam and understood by all before Babel, would be reconstituted in this easily understood phonetic alphabet. See Turner, 249.
21. Jared Farmer, *On Zion’s Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2008), 78–80; Turner, *Brigham Young*, 214. It is interesting that the native heard Samuel Sprague, the physician, speak Sioux despite the fact that natives in the Great Basin mostly spoke Numic. See page 23. Farmer does not mention this discrepancy, leaving it unclear how precisely the tongues were manifested.
22. Turner, *Brigham Young*, 254–64; Farmer, *On Zion’s Mount*, 92–96.
23. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 294-98. All quotes and examples of tongues are found on p. 294.
24. Smith made this comment at general conference in April of 1900. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1998), 201, 376.
25. Copeland, “Speaking in Tongues,” 24. See also Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 294.
26. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 201.
27. Copeland, “Speaking in Tongues,” 20. This allows for most missionaries to claim the gift of tongues while studying in the Missionary Training Center (MTC) before their call to a foreign land. Bruce McConkie iterates such in his book *Mormon Doctrine*, “[T]he Lord’s missionaries learn to speak and interpret foreign languages with ease, thus furthering the spread of the message of the restoration. When the elders of Israel, often in a matter of weeks, gain fluency in a foreign tongue, they have been blessed with the gift of tongues.” *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), “Tongues.” Perhaps tellingly, this transition in tongues seen in the Church from Joseph Smith to President Smith mirrored a transition seen in Brigham Young’s personal use of tongues.
28. Parley P. Pratt, *History of the Late Persecution Inflicted by the State of Missouri Upon the Mormons [1839]*, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December 3, 2012, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/parley-p-pratt-history-of-the-late-persecution-1839>, 9–10.
29. J. Spencer Fluhman, *“A Peculiar People:” Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2012), 53–58. For another example, see Terryl Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University, 1997), 44.
30. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 293–98. Alexander states, “These public prophecies should be distinguished from personal religious experiences which continued into the new century and were not discouraged” (295). The speaking and interpretation of tongues, however, were among the discouraged personal experiences.
31. James X. Allen, “The Passing of the Gift of Tongues,” *Improvement Era*, November 1904, 109.

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32. Allen, "The Passing of the Gift of Tongues," 109, 111.
33. Editorial, "Gift of Tongues," *Liahona: The Elders' Journal*, July 1907, 120–21.
34. Editorial, "Speaking in Tongues," *Liahona: The Elders' Journal*, February 22, 1908, 955.
35. Editorial, "Speaking in Tongues," 955.
36. L. Grant McClung Jr., "Explosion, Motivation, and Consolidation: The Historical Anatomy of a Missionary Movement," in *Azusa Street and Beyond: Pentecostal Missions and Church Growth in the Twentieth Century*, ed. L. Grant McClung Jr. (South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing, 1986,) 18.
37. Editorial, "Speaking in Tongues," 955.
38. Maynard Ketcham and Wane Warner, "When the Pentecostal Fire Fell in Calcutta," in McClung, *Azusa Street and Beyond*, 27–28. See also Gary B. McGee, "'Latter Rain' Falling in the East: Early-Twentieth-Century Pentecostalism in India and the Debate over Speaking in Tongues," *American Society of Church History* 68, no. 3 (September 1999): 648–65.
39. Editorial, "Speaking in Tongues," 955–56.
40. Sister A. G. Garr, "In Calcutta, India," *Apostolic Faith*, April 1907, 1.
41. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 294.
42. Editorial, "Speaking in Tongues," 956.
43. Editorial, "Speaking in Tongues," 956, 958.
44. Joseph Fielding Smith, Anthon H. Lund, and Charles W. Penrose, "A Warning Voice," *Improvement Era*, September 1913, 1148–49.