

## **“Manifestations of the Spirit: What do African Wesleyans Believe about Tongues, Deliverance Ministry, Healing, Being Slain in the Spirit, etc.?”**

As I was praying, studying and researching on the topic given to me, which is: **“Manifestations of the Spirit: What do African Wesleyans Believe about Tongues, Deliverance Ministry, Healing, Being Slain in the Spirit, etc.?”** “I thought I should begin with the Trinity? According to John Connor, in his book, “WHAT WESLEYANS BELIEVE,” the Holy Spirit is a person of the Trinity. The word Trinity means that there are three persons in the God- head of one nature and character. They are the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Just as the Father is God, and the Son is God, so the Holy Spirit is God. There is only one living and true God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not separate but are one.

African Wesleyans believe that the Holy Spirit is God. There are not three Gods, but one living and true God. The Holy Spirit as the unseen God at work among us sometimes can be seen, felt, heard or experienced in some direct ways. **When the unseen shows itself in the seen that is what is called “Manifestation.”** It is talking about something happening that causes a physical or bodily response in that could be seen and heard.

There are nine (9) manifestations of the Holy Spirit: under three headings

### 1. **For inspiration**: Utterance, Speaking, Worship, and Inspirational Manifestations

- 1) **Speaking in Tongues**: Speaking in a language unknown to the speaker which will praise God and edify the spirit of the speaker. Speaking in tongues is a gift and is to be used in private prayer unless the message is interpreted in a believers’ meeting.
- 2) **Interpretation of Tongues**: Interpreting the speaking of tongues in a believers’ meeting as God gives the utterance to the speaker in a different language then immediately following, the speaker brings forth the interpretation in the dominant language of either the speaker or of the people present.
- 3) **Prophecy**: Bringing forth a message of prophecy from God in the language of the people present that will do any combination of the following: **instruct, edify, exhort or comfort them**. This can be foretelling the future or forth-telling a current and timely message.

### 2. **For Revelation**: Information, Instructional, Knowing, Manifestations

- 1) **Word of Knowledge**: Receiving special information from God concerning any given situation.

- 2) **Word of Wisdom:** Receiving instruction from God on what to do with the information which was received through word of knowledge.
- 3) **Discerning of Spirits:** Receiving information from God concerning the presence, non-presence, and identity of spirits about which the believer by his five senses cannot know; and whether the spirits be good or evil.

### 3. **For Power:** Action, Outreach, Impartation, Manifestations

- 1) **Operating Faith (Believing):** Manifesting the faith of Jesus Christ which makes it possible for a believer to bring to pass the impossible at the believer's command according to the promises made to us in the Word of God, revelation of word of knowledge, word of wisdom, and / or discerning of spirits. 8)
- 2) **Working of Miracles:** Bringing about in the name of Jesus Christ supernatural phenomena which defy explanation or exceed natural law.
- 3) **Gifts of Healing:** Ministering healing in the name of Jesus Christ **to restore, to cure, to make sound or whole, or to physically reconcile.** This manifestation is not simply prayer for the sick but rather an extension of working miracles.

### A. **WHAT AFRICAN WESLEYANS BELIEVE ABOUT HEALING?**

We must realize at the outset that physical sickness came as a result of the fall of Adam, and illness and disease are simply part of the out working of the curse after the fall, and eventually leads to death. However, Christ redeemed us from that curse when He died on the cross: "surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows ..... by his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4-5). This passage refers to both physical and spiritual healing that Christ purchased for us. For Peter quotes it to refer to our salvation "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed." (1 Peter 2:24).

All Christians would agree with me that in the atonement Christ has purchased for us not only complete freedom from sin but also complete freedom from physical weakness and infirmity in His work of redemption. Our full and complete possession of all the benefits that Christ earned for us will not come until Christ returns. It is only at His coming that we shall receive our perfect resurrection bodies.

The healing miracles of Jesus certainly demonstrate that at times God is willing to grant a partial foretaste of the perfect health that will be ours for eternity.

And the ministry of healing seen in the lives of the apostles and others that this was part of the ministry of the new covenant age. As such it fits the larger pattern of blessings in the new covenant. Many or all of which give partial foretastes of the blessings that will be ours

when Christ returns. We believe that we already possess some of the blessings of the kingdom, but those blessings are not yet fully ours.

### **1. The purposes of Healing**

Wesleyans believe that Healing is one of the spiritual gifts and as such has several purposes.

- a) It functions as a sign to authenticate the gospel message, and to show that the kingdom of God has come.
- b) Healing brings comfort and health to those who are ill, and thereby demonstrates God's attribute of mercy toward those in distress.
- c) Healing equips people for service as physical impediments to ministry are removed.
- d) Healing provides opportunity for God to be glorified as people see physical evidence of His **goodness, love, power, wisdom and presence.**

### **2. WHAT ABOUT THE USE OF MEDICINE?**

As Wesleyans, we believe that we should use medicine if it is available because God has created substances in the earth that can be made into healing properties. Medicine should be considered part of the whole creation that God considered "**very Good.**" We should willingly use medicine with **thankfulness** to the Lord. When medicine is available and we refuse to use it would put ourselves or others in danger. To refuse to use effective medicine, insisting that God performs miracle of healing is wrongly forcing a "test" on the Lord our God. It is also tragically wrong to rely on doctors or medicine instead of relying on the Lord.

But if medicine is used in connection with prayer, we should expect God to bless and multiply the effectiveness of the medicine. For example, Isaiah received from the Lord a promise of healing for King Hezekiah, but told Hezekiah's servants to bring a cake of figs and apply it as a medical remedy to a boil that the king suffered from: "and Isaiah said, **"Bring a cake of figs. And let them take and lay it on the boil that he may recover. "(2 Kings 20:7)**

We also see Jesus healing explicitly where medical means have failed, when a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years and could not be healed by any one, then came up behind and touched the fringe of His garment and immediately her flow of blood ceased. (Luke 8:43 – 44). **There was no disease that Jesus was unable to heal.**

### **3. BUT WHAT IF GOD DOES NOT HEAL?**

Nonetheless, as Wesleyans, we must realize that not all prayers and use of medicine for healing will be answered or result in healing. Some times God will not grant the special faith according to James 5:15, that healing will occur. And at times God will choose not to heal because of His sovereign purposes.

In these cases we must remember that Romans 8:28 is still true: though experience the sufferings of This present time, and though we groan inwardly as we wait for ..... for the redemption of our bodies (Rom 18, 23) nonetheless we know that in every thing God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28). **This includes working in our circumstances of suffering and illness as well.**

## **B. WHAT AFRICAN WESLEYANS BELIEVE ABOUT SLAIN IN THE SPIRIT**

The Wesleyan Church of Sierra Leone is aware of the claim by Charismatic and Pentecostal movements that certain preachers have powers equals that which Christ Himself had, by blowing or breathing on someone, and he/she will receive the preacher's anointing and baptism of the Holy Spirit. According to them one of the common manifestations of the Holy Spirit is that of being "Slain in the Spirit," when a person loses all motor control over their body and falls to the floor or ground. The context for it is always at revival meetings or at all-night prayer meetings. It is often brought on when the preacher comes directly to a person and prays over him/her and they begin to shake and fall to the ground.

Being "Slain in the Spirit" is becoming a much sought after experience even though it is not a sign of spirituality. It is common today for new-style Pentecostal Churches to use the term "Resting in the Spirit." **These churches use comforting terms like "Rest" instead of "Slain" that creates fear because it is linked with death.**

Advocates of this practice make a claim that there is scriptural support for this sign. But does this claim hold up? These are some Bible references that are used to support the practice:-

- a) 2 Chronicles 5:14 " The priest could not perform because of the cloud ..."
- b) Matthew 17:6 The Disciples fell down terrified..."
- c) Matthew 28:4 The guards were afraid of him shook and became like dead men
- d) John 18:6 Jesus – I AM HE - they dew back and fell"
- e) Acts 9:4 – 8 Soul – fell to the ground when he heard a voice ..."
- f) Rev. 1:17 ---- I fell at his feet as though dead

Wesleyan Church of Sierra Leone have had an examination of the Bible, it clearly shows that there is no evidence for such an experience. There is no record in the Scriptures of anyone falling under the power of the spirit when the apostle or the Lord Himself prayed for them or laid hands on them. For example, Christ breathed on the apostles, and said "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" but they did not fall out.

As Wesleyans we strongly believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not something that can be passed on by breathing on or laying hands on someone. Jesus is still the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit.

He has not given that honor to mankind and certainly not to any one man.

This practice is a kind of deception in the church today.

**Spiritual experiences that cannot be honestly justified by God’s word should be suspected, and certainly not be sought after.**

The claim of a scriptural basis for it does not hold up. Scripture speaks of things like it in some way but they are not the same thing.

### **C. WHAT AFRICAN WESLEYANS BELIEVE ABOUT TONGUES**

#### **What is speaking in tongues?**

This is a gift of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12: 7-11). Speaking in tongues is prayer or praise spoken in words/language not understood by the speaker. It is also a prayer or praise directed to God and it comes from the spirit of the person who is speaking. **The Greek word “glossa translated “tongue” is used not only to mean the physical tongue in a person’s mouth, but also to mean a “language.”** In the New Testament passages where speaking in tongues are discussed, the meaning “**Language**” is certainly in view. It is unfortunate that English translations have continued to use the phrase “**speaking in tongues**” which is an expression not otherwise used in ordinary English and which gives the impression of a **strange experience**, something completely foreign to ordinary human life.

The definition of tongues indicates that speaking in tongues is primarily speech directed toward God. The apostle Paul says “**one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God**” (1 Cor 14:2) and if **there is no interpreter present at the church service, that someone who has a gift of speaking in tongues should keep silence in church and speak to himself and to God**” (1 Cor. 14:28). If there is speaking in tongue, without interpretation no meaning will be communicated.

Other New Testament translators used the phrase “**speaking in tongues**” as “**ecstatic speech**” thus giving further support to the idea that those who speak in tongues lose awareness of their surroundings or lose self-control or are forced to speak against their will. Some in the Pentecostal movements have allowed frenzied and disorderly conduct at worship services, and this has in the minds of others perpetuated the notion that speaking in tongue is a kind of ecstatic speech. But this is not the picture given in the New Testament on the day of Pentecost. At Pentecost which was the point at which the gospel began to go to all nations, it was appropriate that the disciples gathered in Jerusalem “**began to speak in other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance.**” The result was that Jewish visitors to Jerusalem from various nations all heard in their own languages a proclamation of the mighty works of God. (Acts 2:11). The disciples were also able to stop speaking in tongues so that Peter could give his sermon to the crowd more explicitly.

On that day of Pentecost speech in tongues was in known languages that were understood by those who heard: “each one heard them speaking in his own language” (Acts 2:6). What caused the amazement was that Galileans were speaking in different languages.

It seems, therefore, that at times speaking in tongues may involve speech in actual human languages, sometimes even in languages that are understood by some of those who hear. But at other times the speech will be a language that no one understand ( I Cor 14:2).

**“If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, Let each of them keep silence in church and speak to himself and to God” ( 1 Cor. 14:27-28).**

Wesleyans believe speaking in tongues to be scriptural. But if no one known to have the gift of interpretation is present in church, speaking in tongues should be in private. We do not emphasize it as a means to be a born-again Christian. We do not practice it but we do not forbid it (I Cor 14:39). If one has the gift he/she could speak in tongues. But no speech in tongues without interpretation is allowed in our church services. **We also believe that just as not all Christians are apostles and not all are prophets or teachers, and not all possess the gift of healing, or miracles so also not all speak in tongues.** Paul implies this when he asks a series of questions including “Do all speak with tongues?” “Do all interpret? (I Cor. 14:30). The expected answer is no.

The gift of tongues just like every other gift is not given by the Holy Spirit to every Christian who seeks it, He apportions to each one individually as He wishes ( 1Cor 12:11)

## **D. DELIVERANCE MINISTRIES**

### **WHAT IS DELIVERANCE MINISTRY?**

Deliverance Ministry is **the removal of spirit oppression through prayer, reading of the scriptures, and casting out demons.** In other words, Deliverance Ministries are activities carried out by individuals or groups aimed at solving problems related to demons and spirits. It is reaching out to the **broken hearted and oppressed** through personal one to one deliverance sessions and through deliverance and healing services. If one **suffers trauma, sexual** or other abuse, **rejection, witchcraft, self-harm or dabbed in the occult**, one needs healing, **be set free and restored.** **Many deliverance ministries deal with demonic influence spiritually, socially, physically and materially.**

Leaders and adherents of these ministries emphasize the activities of evil spirits in many physical, psychological or emotional maladies that people experience. Some believe identifying and listing all curses and spirits affecting their lives is necessary. Others expect the blood of Jesus pleaded on their lives and prayed for bottle of anointing oil sent to them. Some believe they have demons and spirits that need to be cast out. The new sensational teachings have misled some in the church into such beliefs.

**Deliverance Ministries focus on casting out the demon or spirit believed to cause the affliction.** The method of casting out varies: - some people or Christians directly recite Biblical examples in prayer intended to command a demon to depart an afflicted person.

Ministries also organize the removal from homes of items that are believed to harbor demons including **toys, artworks, artifacts and other works depicting pagan gods, frogs, snakes, and images.** Members are instructed to burn all items that are related to idol worship. Some seek to remove all influences that allow the demon to take control over the individual. The individual must take responsibility and be involved in the process. Some are urged to attend **all sorts of deliverance seminars, break through seminars or breakthrough crusades** and so on. In between them are special church programmes. **These are used to manipulate people and tie their deliverances to observing these programs which also seek “special seed offering.” People give not only their money but time, loyalty, and even sanity to these ministries to a level of ministry worship, a form of idolatry.**

God in his wisdom has made deliverance a simple act of faith and will. It is some Christians who have complicated it. They have turned deliverance ministry into a religious ritual involving a specialized deliverance church which focus is on deliverance activities. Why are the churches packed with people? They are led to assume that some men of God “have some special VIP honor in relating to God. Many pastors have accepted this position because it gives them some power and influence. Unfortunately believers end up being deprived of their own empowerment that comes through their direct relationship with Christ.

Deliverance Ministry is very popular in Sierra Leone. As Wesleyans we believe in biblical deliverance and healing. This means that God is the one who rescue someone from **bondage, oppression, hardship or dominion by evil.** It is God who brings deliverance. **“Deliver us from evil,** (Matt 6:12-13). Deliverance ministry principles are also part and parcel of the Christian life, thus a responsibility of every Christian. They are essential principles beneficial for **one self, for loved ones and for those burdened.** We are all ordained to be used to deliver others in one way or another, **spiritually, socially, materially and physically.** Some of us may never verbally expel a single demon in one’s life time but we can pray and fast for people. Thus every Christian is in some form of deliverance ministry.

Biblical deliverance and healing is not centered on a deliverance ministry nor deliverance church. Rather it is **truth-centered and Christ - centered.** It is centered on bringing biblical truths that sets captives free by drawing closer to God and deliverance principles in His word. It is the truth of His word that sets us free in whatever area we may be under attack. When the truth comes and is applied all the legal doorways that demons entered through are closed. **There is no binding and losing of demons involved, no special anointing oil, no laying on of hands, no powerful prayer.** The truths enable you to receive what some call “truth deliverance”. The biblical truths one learns are the ones that bring freedom. **“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free** (John 8:32)

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