

# Opening 'Pandora's Box'

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I am saddened that some in the Southern Baptist Convention are attempting to make the "SBC tent" large enough to contain Pentecostalism. Their first step to "SBC Pentecostalism" is the "public " propagating of Private Prayer Language.

Recent quotes by some of the PPL proponents reveal its "Pentecostal" nature:

- (Wade) Burleson said he prefers to use the term "Spirit-spilled" instead of "Spirit-filled." And while all Christians are filled with the Spirit, some Baptists simply have not learned to "just let the Spirit move," he said.
- (Dwight) McKissic - says he's "too Pentecostal to be Baptist and too Baptist to be Pentecostal."
- Bob Cleveland labeled himself as a "Pentecostal-Calvinist-Southern Baptist."

Their statements reveal that they are more "in sync" with the Pentecostal Free-Will Baptist and Sovereign Grace (Charismatic) Ministries denominations than the SBC. My questions to the PPL proponents are:

- How far will we widen the SBC tent?
- Where will we draw the line?

PPL proponents argue that since the Baptist Faith and Message is silent about PPL, then it should be accepted. Since the BF&M

(Baptist Faith and Message) is also silent on “public speaking in tongues” and “being slain in the spirit,” shall we accept those Pentecostal practices also?

I support diversity under the SBC tent, but I think propagating PPL has crossed the SBC line. We, as Southern Baptists, must have distinct doctrinal qualities – and propagating PPL is not, and never has been, one of them! I am convinced that if the SBC ever embraces PPL, “Pandora’s Box” – a source of many unforeseen troubles – will be opened!

Propagating PPL will open Pandora’s Box for other Pentecostal practices such as “public speaking in tongues” and “being slain in the spirit,” which are PPL’s “sisters.” Dr. Paige Patterson wisely said, “One of the interesting things about private tongues is that they never stay private. They always become public, so it’s a misnomer to begin with. And it also becomes divisive invariably, as Paul warned that it would.” Mark it down: Propagating PPL is an inroad for other Pentecostal practices in the SBC.

Church history proves that PPL is directly related to Pentecostal theology. Southern Baptist history also proves that Southern Baptists, as an overwhelming majority, have never embraced Pentecostalism. Folks, the PPL issue has gotten silly; let us stop trying to make the SBC something that it has never been! James Petigru Boyce, a founding father of the SBC, would roll over in his grave if he saw the SBC “flirting” with Pentecostalism.

May we, as Southern Baptists, nip Pentecostalism in the bud, and make our “voting language” known and public, not unknown and private, in San Antonio!