

From a New Zealand newspaper is Old Joab Morris' story, 25 years before his eviction from the mountain in southeast Oklahoma.

Same article, word for word in an Australian paper dated Dec. 14, 1897

Strangest of the strange sects are the True Believers of southern Kansas. The head of the Believers is Joab Morris, a horse trader. One of his sons-in-law, Bohall, is the preacher of the sect. Another, named Darling, is the master of an "unknown tongue," with which he impresses the credulous. Morris and Darling cannot read or write; Bohall can barely read. At night the meetings are held when the spirit moves. The men sit at one end of the Lovell, the women at the other. The grunting of pigs and the lowing of cows come to the ear over the low partition. The sermon of Joseph Bohall is made up of familiar phrases caught from frontier preachers. Suddenly among the listening worshippers, James Darling jumps to his feet---"ki yi, how poco pori, ki yi", he said, as taken down by a reporter, and then he sat down trembling in limb, and shuffling and patting his feet upon the ground. "The Holy Ghost, speaking in the unknown tongue," was solemnly whispered around and the feeling grew intense. The audience swayed their bodies into unison as Bohall resumed his talk. The spirit had entered into the faithful, and all so was forgotten in this religious ecstasy. Then Darling rose again and interpreted for those not blessed with the gift of the unknown tongue. "Be faithful and persevering and you will succeed," he said was the meaning of what he had said before in the new tongue, and the interpretation was accepted with prayers, amen's, and utter belief. There was a session of experiences, and each one in turn related how the spirit had worked within him and caused him to do this or that in the furtherance of the faith of the True Followers. The faithful then formed in a circle. Two basins of water were brought out of the house. One was handed to the side of the ring formed by the women and the other was given to the men. Morris and Bohall each tied a towel about their loins and washed their feet, and then each washed those of the person next to them. That person in turn took the towel and girding up his or her loins, and washed the feet of the one who sat next. This was kept up until the feet of all the faithful had been washed. Then the holy sacrament was partaken of. Pokeberry wine and coarse bread were used. During all this time, Darling broke out occasionally with speeches in the unknown tongue, which speeches he translated immediately. They were mostly exhortations to the faithful to persevere, and promising future happiness for so doing. Towards the end of the meeting, Darling would go into fits of trembling and feet shuffling before he spoke. His nervous sufferings seemed real and they affected the crowd sympathetically. Then came the ceremony of the holy kiss. The faithful stood in a circle, men and women alternating. Each preacher kissed the woman on his right hand, then the man next to the woman, and so on round the circle, until they had kissed everybody there. After the first got well under way in his kissing tour the next one followed, and the scene soon resembled an old fashioned country dance in the figure of "grand chain," or, as the callers used to announce, "Right hand to the lady, left hand to the gent; all hands round." By this time the True Followers were nearly in a frenzy, and they sobbed, groaned, and prayed aloud. After quiet had been restored which was not for several moments, Joab Morris arose with a Bible in his hand and began to preach. He

cannot read, but he said he could answer any question about anything in it, for those who could read, only know what they read, but as Christ spoke through him, he knew its meaning. then the "unknown tongue" Interrupted Morris' vigorous preaching and pounding of the book he held in his hand, and the 'ki-i-pooo-po-cu-ki-yi' from Darling's strong lungs sounded shrilly in the night. The startled horses stopped munching hay and the pigs roused up and squealed. The faithful never learned what the Holy Ghost said to them this time, for the man who spoke in new tongues fell into a trance and was carried into the house. He often does this, they say, and sometimes does not come to life for many hours. For some time Joab Morris has preached the coming of Christ in the near future and the wisdom of ceasing work and selling all one's goods to prepare for the great event. Morris is a tall, finely built man. Darling, the man who has the gift of the 'unknown tongue,' is a heavy, stupid, and surly fellow, ignorant as a human being could well be, and almost idiotic in his appearance and actions. He has the power of working himself into a religious frenzy, which always results in unconsciousness. The Believers cure, or profess to cure, by the laying on of hands. A farmer named George Huffman had two children ill. Both were treated in this manner and both died without medical attendance. A physician in the neighborhood says that they had chicken pox and could easily have been saved. They believe that they can pick up snakes unharmed, although one has died in trying it. They claim that his faith was not perfect. The meetings of the True Followers are not always without dramatic incident. It is told of one who joined that as he was about to partake of the sacrament he who spoke the unknown tongue forbade him, saying the new member was still possessed of a devil. Great excitement and consternation followed, and the entire assembly set to work to pray the devil out. After several hours of struggle the devil fled from the repentant brother and took to his heels down a ravine in the black jacks, with the whole congregation yelling at his heels. The devil was finally treed and shot to death with real powder and ball, and the church again went into a session in which the cleansed brother was allowed to partake of the sacrament. The True Followers have a bay-horse rider and a black-horse rider. The black horse goes about the country when it is not yet time, but when Christ is near or the earthquake is about to come, the bay-horse rider will scour the country, giving warning to the True Followers, that they may be on their knees when the end is come.