

character, attitude and ministry. We cannot separate doing from being. To be like Jesus we need to do as Jesus did. Ministry is a vital part of spiritual transformation. If you do not get involved in ministering to others then you will not grow as you should. If you do not minister, your church will not grow as it should.

My dear fellow church member, please don't underestimate your importance. You are a key to the health and vitality of your local church. As you minister in the power of the Holy Spirit your church will grow and so will you!

May the Lord bless you.

Christopher

'Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.' **Ephesians 3:20-21**

How to find your ministry

An understanding of Spiritual Gifts

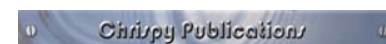
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Step Four: Informing the church and getting networked

Now that you have a handle on your potential areas of ministry, you need to hook up with others. Seek the advice of your pastor or fellowship leader as to how best you can network with others who have similar contributions to make.

The easiest way to inform the church office of your areas of potential ministry is to make a copy of your personal inventory form and send that in. Your church secretary may want to enter the details on the church database so that the Elders can call upon you when there are specific ministry opportunities.

Conclusion

Actually, there is no conclusion! Needs change and people develop and mature. The process of matching personal attributes to church needs is ongoing.

I believe that God's purpose for each of us is that we become more and more like Jesus Christ and that we help others to be and do likewise. Jesus is a model for us in

If you want to identify your general area of ministry then all you need do is add together each of the church need items ticked for each of the numbers between 1 and 14. Are you confused? Don't be. Let me explain it this way. You have ticked a whole lot of church needs and now all you are doing is categorising your responses into the ministry grouping 1 to 14. OK? To do this you just count how many needs, prefaced with, say, an 8, you have ticked... and so on.

The last form is headed **Your Personal Ministry Areas**. It is a list with empty boxes next to each ministry area for you to record your totals. Once you have done this, merely multiply the figure by the factor alongside it and you will have a rough indicator of your general areas of ministry. Naturally, the ministry areas with the highest totals are your particular areas of potential contribution.

As an example, let's say that you ticked 'Visiting the sick' and 'Visiting old people'. You would then place a '2' in the box next to item 12 *Mercy ministry*. You would then multiply this by 16 to give a relative indication in comparison with the other areas of ministry. In this particular case, the computed figure would be... 32.

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	11
2.	Lists and Categories.....	17
3.	Manifestations and Ministries	23
4.	1 Corinthians 12.....	31
5.	Nine Manifestations of the Holy Spirit	37
6.	1 Corinthians 14.....	63
7.	Romans 12:6-8 and Ephesians 4:11	71
8.	Ministry Descriptions.....	77
9.	A Working Model.....	95
	Workbook.....	102

Step Three: Matching your personal inventory to church needs

This next step will take a little longer but it will be worth it because this is where the 'rubber hits the road'. Take your **personal inventory list** and, for each item on it that you have ticked, work through the full list of church needs. On the Church Needs list, tick those needs that you feel you could meet, fully or partially, by applying the ability or skill listed and ticked in your personal inventory. In other words, are you willing and able to meet that need? This process will require you to make as many passes through the list of church needs as there are ticked items on your personal inventory.

Every identified item on the list of church needs is a potential ministry area.

As mentioned, I have prefixed each of the church needs with a number from 1 to 14; these correspond to the 14 ministries listed and described in chapter 7.

If you added any specific items to the list of church needs, you will need to match it as closely as you can to an existing item. Then, use the same prefix number for your addition to the list.

leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.’ (Rom 12:3-8)

Step Two: Inventory of church needs

You need to have a list of your church’s needs. Step three will involve matching your personal inventory to the church’s needs and so you obviously need to have a specific list with which to work.

You will find a worksheet just after the Personal Inventory sheet at the back of this workbook that is headed **Church Needs**. This is really just a draft list to get you going. You may need to customize it for your particular congregation. All you need to do is to cross out those needs that don’t apply and add in needs that do apply, but are not yet on the list.

Don’t concern yourself at this point with the numbers that preface each description of a need. They play a part a little later on and I will explain their use then.

Insert your name in the box at the top left of the form and your contact details in the box at the top right. Your leaders may want to keep a data-base of ministries and will then ask you to let the church secretary have a copy of your list.

Foreword

Would you like to be involved in your local church? Are you familiar with the term ‘ministry’ but not sure what it means for you? How is ministry different from the exercise of spiritual gifts?

My hope is that this little book will help you answer these, and other questions. More than this, I pray that it will assist you in becoming a ‘minister’ within your church.

My aim is to help you, and other members of the local church, to operate within your areas of ministry. This book is neither a detailed treatment of biblical texts nor an in-depth description of spiritual gifts. I have written this book, rather, to provide you with basic insight into this vital area of Christian life.

In church terms, a **ministry** is an area of regular service in and through the local church.

A church grows when its members minister. It grows best when they minister in areas for which they have both talent and anointing. It seems to me, however, that many church members do not know how, or where, to minister. As a result, neither they, nor their churches, are growing.

Several church-growth gurus have developed questionnaires in an attempt to solve this problem. They

designed these questionnaires to help Christians ‘find’ their ‘spiritual gifts’. I suspect, however, that the problem isn’t just a lack of ‘finding’ and also has a lot to do with one-man-band leadership styles. What do I mean by this?

Many church members do not get involved in ministry because the leaders attempt to do everything themselves. Pastors, typically, try to manage the members by giving them tasks and calling these jobs ‘ministries’. These duties are often just extensions to the Pastor’s own ministry.

Ministries develop when we as church members apply our talents and skills, with passion, to needs within and through the church. As we do this, the Holy Spirit manifests Himself supernaturally to give power and effectiveness to our ministries.

Most churches seem to view themselves as organisations rather than as extended families. The leaders view members as unpaid staff who need training and management to serve the organisation. I believe, however, that the local church is an extended household, the family of God.

A family is not primarily an organisation. It does not have its own mission, vision and targets. A church family is a nurture centre in which its members can mature. It provides a setting where they can relate to each other and to Jesus, who is the head of this home. Serving within an

feel passionate (use the third column on the form). Passionate? Yes, what do you believe is important? Which of these things motivate you to urgent action? For instance, say that you listed the fact that you are good at comforting those in distress – do you feel the urgent need to do something to help when you hear of or encounter someone in distress?

OK. Now your inventory is complete. Well done! By looking at the items, especially those you have ticked, you should have a good idea of what you have to offer to the church and to society.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is

4. How have I been equipped?

Finally, in order to make sure your inventory is as comprehensive as possible, answer the following three questions. If you come up with something that is not already on your list then ask yourself, “Is there any reason why this should not be part of my personal inventory?” If you cannot find any reason why not (Like “I hate doing that!” or “Despite my training I am useless at it!”) then add it to your list and place a tick next to it. OK?

The three questions are:

- What have I been trained to do?
- What have I experienced?
- What have I read a lot about?

5. What am I passionate about?

Boy oh boy, is this exercise never going to end? Here is one last thing to do. Read your list and, for one last time, tick those things about which you

area of ministry should be as simple as exercising an adult child’s role within a family.

We do not need elaborate questionnaires to help us ‘find’ our ‘gifts’. Nor do we need to be managed or given jobs in order to get us involved. We are children of God and members of His household. We are *‘God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do’* (Eph 2:10).

The only questionnaire you need to fill out has just three parts:

- What are the talents that are within me as gifts from God?
- What abilities have I developed during my life so far?
- What are the needs in and through the church that I can meet by passionately applying my talents and skills under the anointing of the Holy Spirit?

Sadly, most current books on this subject have served to complicate rather than simplify. Part of the problem is the widespread confusion between ‘ministries’ and ‘manifestations’. The word ‘gifts’ describes both manifestations and ministries and as a result many confuse the two. The way I see it is that we exercise ministries, and the Holy Spirit initiates manifestations. **A ministry is what we do, but a manifestation is the supernatural**

work of the Holy Spirit. We minister, and He manifests through us as we minister¹.

This book aims at going further than bringing clarity. My purpose in writing it is to help you to become joyfully *functional* within your local church.

I have devoted the first three chapters to discussing the problems concerning confused understanding and practice. Chapters four, six and seven are simple studies of the key biblical texts regarding ministries. Chapter five is a description of nine manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Chapter eight contains descriptions of various areas of ministry and in Chapter nine I present a working model and a workbook.

I use the term 'in and through the church' often. God calls us to minister within the church. However, the church is an extended Christian family within secular society. Our ministries should therefore impact society, through the church.

If you are not interested in the background to the subject of gifts, and the problems associated with them, I guess you could skip straight to chapter four. If you are fully conversant with the biblical exegesis of 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4 then you could omit chapters 4, 6 and 7.

¹ The Holy Spirit can of course manifest His gifts through anyone at any time. He is not limited to or by areas of ministry.

So, your Personal Inventory might now look something like this;

I am good at	<i>communicating with children</i>	√	√	√
	<i>arts and crafts</i>	√		
	<i>organising small groups of people</i>			
	<i>having fun</i>	√		
	<i>listening to others</i>	√		

3. What do I enjoy doing?

Now continue to work on your personal inventory by including what you enjoy doing most. Place another tick (in the next column) against those things you enjoy that are already on the list. Add any new items that come to mind now as you think about what you enjoy doing (and place ticks next to them).

The result should be a comprehensive list of your personal abilities, skills, and talents - Hope I gave you enough space!

This is an important step; DO NOT SKIP IT!

I do not want to treat you with any disrespect, but forms sometimes scare people, so I am going to reproduce just a portion of what your form might look like at this point. Here it is:

I am good at *communicating with children* ✓ ✓ ✓
arts and crafts
organising small groups of people
having fun

However, my strong recommendation is that you read this entire book, after all, it isn't very long.

May God bless you as you work through this book. My prayer is that you will be motivated to start ministering. My hope is that as you minister you will be amazed and gratified by the wonderful manifestations of the Holy Spirit in and through you.

Christopher

2. For what do people praise me?

As a rule, people praise us when we do something well. Read through your existing list and place a large tick (✓) against those 'I am good at.....' items where people have acknowledged your contribution. If something comes to mind that is not yet on your list, then just add it and place a tick next to it. OK?

- *Am I good at planning things?*
- *Am I good working with people from other cultures?*
- *Am I good at analysing and evaluating things?*
- *Am I good at speaking easily to people about my faith in Jesus?*
- *Am I good at generating money?*
- *Am I good at delegating?*
- *Am I good at making people feel appreciated?*
- *Am I a good host?*
- *Am I good at giving others wise, biblical advice?*
- *Am I good at interceding in prayer?*
- *Am I a good leader?*
- *Am I a good musician or do I sing well?*
- *Am I a good public speaker?*

Now compile your inventory on the sheet styled **Personal Inventory**, which you will find at the end of this workbook.

..... **Please do this now**

Thank you, but this part of the exercise isn't quite complete. You now need to ask someone who knows you well to review your list and to add to it anything you have overlooked (or been too modest to mention).

Workbook

Now it is time for you to get serious about identifying your ministry. Perhaps you are working through this book on your own but I hope that you are part of a fellowship group or special ministries workshop.

If you already know your ministries and you are practicing them to good effect then you do not need to complete this workbook. God bless you and thank you so much for your valuable contribution to the household of God. For the rest, here are four simple steps into ministry.

Step One: Abilities and skills inventory

1. **What do I do well?** List the things that you believe you do well. Do you make things? Do you use words well? Do you listen well? Do you relate to others well, perhaps to a particular age group?

Here are some more specific questions to consider before you compile your list:

1. Introduction

When God scattered the nations at Babel He confused their language so that they could no longer understand each other. Similarly, 'Tongues' is a spiritual 'gift' that has caused almost as much confusion in the church since its rediscovery in the Pentecostal revivals of the early nineteen hundreds. Today it is not just Tongues that causes confusion, but the teachings concerning spiritual gifts in general.

Why do I say this? To start with, there seems to be a confusing lack of differentiation between **manifestations** of the Holy Spirit and **ministries** performed by members of the church. Both are commonly referred to as spiritual 'gifts' and we are generally encouraged to 'seek' them for use in our own lives. Of course, we should seek to serve in and through the church and we can ask the Holy Spirit to manifest His power through us. However, we cannot claim His ministry as ours and that is essentially what we are doing when we confuse His manifestations with our ministries.

Three points of confusion:

- Ministries confused with Manifestations
- Ongoing confused with immediate
- Natural confused with supernatural

To add to the confusion, 'gifts' are usually described as permanent spiritual abilities. The Holy Spirit is said to give

specific supernatural abilities to particular believers. These 'gifts' are seen as ongoing in our lives although they sometimes lie dormant, waiting to be discovered, or 'stirred up' through the laying on of hands by an Apostle or Prophet.

'Gifts' is a generic word used to describe a range of spiritual activities.

Most current Charismatic teaching concerning spiritual gifts excludes any natural abilities and skills we might have. According to this thinking, someone with the gift of prophecy should discount any natural ability to speak well or to study effectively. Gifts, they say, are purely supernatural and require no practice, study, or talent. On the other hand, those in more conservative circles often teach that 'gifts' are merely ordinary, rather than supernatural abilities. For instance, they see the 'Word of Knowledge' as a good sermon; knowledgeable words preached to the congregation. Similarly, they believe that 'Gifts of Healings' come only through medical attention or natural process.

My understanding is that the word 'gift', within a local church context, is a vague word used to describe a full range of ministry activities. For instance, your service to the church, say, as a bookkeeper, is a gift to the body of Christ. Equally, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in healing is a gift to the person being healed... and so on.

should not be surprised if the Holy Spirit manifests in gifts of Healings and Miracles.

If we all deploy our ministries in and through the church then the church will be empowered and be able to impact the society in which it exists and thus extend the Kingdom of God.

If at first you don't succeed, try and try again

Did you notice the little word 'persistence' in the model? At first, it might be necessary to experiment a little to see if a particular area of ministry is for you. However, once you have found your ministry or ministries, persist. Get educated, trained, and practice over and over again. Do not be put off by apparent failures, for God trains us through failure. Persist!

of the society in which the church exists must largely determine the ministries that are required.

The last part of this book consists of a series of work sheets to help you get to grips with your area of ministry. For now, though just meditate a little on the following questions:

Our ministries are born as we deploy our abilities, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, into meeting needs within and through the church.

- What do I do well?
- For what do people praise me?
- What do I enjoy doing most?
- What are the needs in my local church?

Please stop reading now and think about this. Answer the four questions as best you can.

Meeting needs in Jesus name

As we start to minister in and through the church, meeting perceived needs, the Holy Spirit manifests His abilities through us. Because of His manifestations, the recipients of our ministry are blessed. For instance, the Holy Spirit will often manifest in a Word of Wisdom or Discerning of Spirits through someone ministering counsel to another. An evangelist working with huge crowds in rural Africa

Are these differences in understanding important, or am I just splitting hairs? Does it really matter how we understand these issues so long as we are 'in the Spirit'?

Yes, it does matter. If you believe that the Holy Spirit has permanently given you some specific gift, then you will surely seek to determine what it is. The many 'Find your spiritual gift' questionnaires seek to help you to do this. Once you have determined your gifting then you will probably set about trying to activate the gift. For instance, if you decide that you have the gift of prophecy then you might quite easily think that you have a duty to prophesy whenever you are in a group setting. Conversely, you might feel that if someone speaks in tongues then you could not possibly interpret because you do not have the gift of interpretation. Pity the poor soul who is desperately sick but does not receive ministry because you do not believe that you have the gift of healing. Pity the person who comes to you for counsel but whom you turn away because you do not 'have' the gift of a Word of Wisdom.

Pity the poor person who is desperately sick but is not ministered to because nobody in the group believes that they have the gift of healing.

Another real problem with the idea that we 'possess' spiritual gifts is the pride it can engender. I attended a teaching on gifts many years ago where the international Pentecostal teacher informed us that the Holy Spirit arranged the gifts in hierarchical order. 'Tongues',

As you minister, the Holy Spirit gives power and effectiveness to what you do by manifesting Himself through you.

according to him, were at the bottom, and 'Miracles' were at the top. He taught that we should all be ambitious and attempt to obtain the greater gifts. Those with only Tongues should strive to move up the pecking order until they attain the exalted position of miracle worker!

It is usually good practice to first state the negative side of an issue before dealing with the positive. So, in the next chapter I will deal in more detail with some of the misconceptions and erroneous teachings I have already mentioned, before setting out a clear model for understanding and applying spiritual 'gifts'.

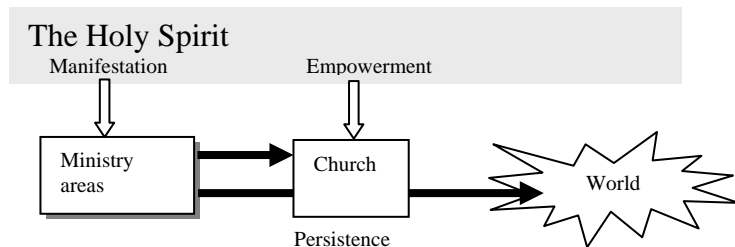
Before going any further, though, let me state in plain terms what this book is all about. In over three decades of church leadership I have seen how keen most people are to fill in questionnaires that claim to help them discover their spiritual gifting. What happens after they complete the quiz is

Finding and exercising your ministry is a natural and logical process. First, identify what you are good at doing, what you are trained to do, and what you love doing. Next, look for needs within, and through, your local church that you are capable of meeting. Then get on and minister!

We can raise aptitudes and skills to very high levels merely through the application of training and practice but they will never change lives for eternal good without the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

What is your passion?

Aptitudes we might have; training and education we might have; but we are unlikely to ask for God's anointing for ministry if we have no passion! Passion is an 'intense enthusiasm for something or a keen interest in a particular subject or activity'. Passion, not guilt or duty, causes us to deeply desire to use what we have for the good of the church and for the extension of God's kingdom.

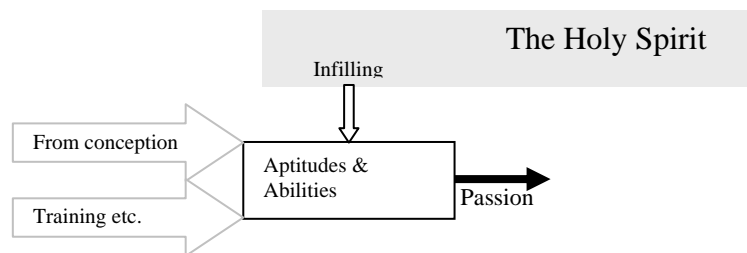


Ministries are for the edification of the church and the transformation of the world and so they must, of necessity, be triggered by needs. The needs of the body of Christ and

Start your search by evaluating Talents, Skills and Knowledge

Whether or not you hold a Creationist or Traducian view, it is surely reasonable to start your search for a ministry by evaluating your talents, skills, and knowledge specialisations. It is also reasonable to assume that you should be good at what you are skilled at, and that you should enjoy performing in these areas.

I believe that, to a great extent, our abilities come to us by genetic transfer and that we, during our years on this planet, develop these aptitudes and talents by receiving education and by practicing. However, we must not overlook the decidedly supernatural aspect of our lives as Christians. We are born again of the Spirit of God and we are able to ask for, and experience, the infilling of the Holy Spirit.



It is He who empowers us ‘from on high’ and it is this ‘anointing’ that gives effectiveness to what we say and do.

most revealing. Some folk attempt to wear the revealed ‘gift’ as a sort of spiritual badge of favour. Others aggressively practice ‘their gift’ irrespective of whether they are equipped, trained, and authorised to do so. However, most just sigh and wait for the next questionnaire to arrive.

I believe that the church is an organism and that every part of it has a function. These functions are ‘ministries’. Finding and exercising your ministry is a natural and logical process. **First, identify what you are good at doing, what you are trained to do, and what you love doing. Next, look for needs within, and through, your local church that you are capable of meeting. Then get on and minister!**

As you minister, the Holy Spirit gives power and effectiveness to what you do by manifesting Himself through you. For instance, as you counsel He may give words of knowledge and wisdom. As you minister to the sick, He may heal. As you present the Gospel He may manifest miracles. It is as simple as that!

Does this seem too simple? We live in a world where complex is good and overcomplicated is best. Yet Jesus kept everything very simple. When asked to identify the greatest of all the teachings of the Old Testament He responded simply with “Love God and each other”. No questionnaires, no complex formulations, no statistical analysis of a thousand instances, just a simple instruction followed by “and you will be blessed if you do it.”

Now it's time to examine the meaning of the word 'gifts' and the lists that attempt to prescribe them.

development that takes place as we mature. Knowing all this, He encourages us to minister in specific ways within and through the church.

So then, we come into this world with aptitudes and we develop these into definite abilities through education, training, and practice. Musical talent is a good example. Some people are born with musical talent yet still need to practice and learn in order to develop this talent into a ministry. Others are not musically gifted and, no matter how much they learn, train, and practice, they seldom raise their performance beyond a mechanical presentation.

I entitled this book 'How to find your ministry'. Now you are ready to do just that. Here we go!

Aptitudes and abilities are skills, knowledge components, and the talents that are genetically passed down to us. They are also developed through education, training, and practice. Some argue that God gives us our talent and cite scriptures such as Isaiah 49:5 as proof of this. Unfortunately, the scriptures are far from clear as to our individual spiritual origins. Some say that God creates a spirit for every human born into this world, complete with aptitudes (Creationist theory of the origin of the soul). Others hold that our parents pass on our aptitudes to us (Traducian theory)¹⁰. If God specifically creates each of us, at least the immaterial components, then it follows that our aptitudes are His specific endowment to us. It follows, for some, that any ministries that employ these talents must therefore be preordained.

‘And now the Lord says — he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself...’

There is a fine, yet definite, line between God’s foreordination and His foreknowledge. It is clearly beyond the scope of this book to argue this difference. I believe that we are born into this world as genetic products of human ancestry (Traducian theory). God obviously knows us and fully comprehends the strengths and weaknesses we have inherited. He also appreciates the learning and skills

¹⁰ There is a third theory, pre-existence, that I will not go into here.

2. Lists and Categories

Most translations of 1 Corinthians 12:1 read something like ‘Now about spiritual *gifts* brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.’ The Greek word translated as ‘spiritual gifts’ is transliterated as *pneumatikōn*, which means ‘spiritual matters’. However, the word usually translated as ‘gift’ is the Greek word *charisma*, which means ‘a result of grace or favour experienced’. In the English translations of 1 Corinthians the word ‘gift’ is often inserted because the context, or grammatical structure of the sentence, indicates that this is reasonable. I make these points because many assume that when they read the word ‘gifts’ in their translation of the Bible it always means a supernatural ability given by the Holy Spirit. This is not necessarily the case. The Greek words used are much more general than that and cover a wide range of graces. In Romans 5:15 and 6:23, for instance, Paul uses the word to describe the gift of eternal life. In 1 Corinthians 1:7 it is used to describe the broad blessings that God has given to His church. In addition, in 2 Corinthians 1:11 the word describes the answers to prayer. It is, of course, also used to describe spiritual manifestations, but it should not be applied just to the nine manifestations indicated in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.

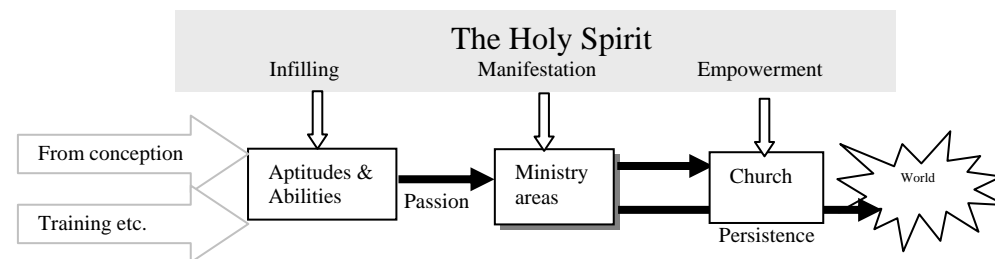
To transliterate is to represent a letter or word written in one alphabet using the corresponding letter or letters of another, so that the sound of the letter or word remains approximately the same

The word *charisma* is used in Romans 1:11 in a particularly significant way. This verse reads, *'I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong.'* Here is ground for a good working biblical definition of a 'gift'. **A gift is a spiritual grace imparted through someone for building up the church.** Paul apparently saw himself as a sort of 'delivery man' for the Holy Spirit. Of course, Paul's apostolic ministry was, in itself, a gift to the church. In the above definition, 'spiritual grace' includes the idea of both human ministries and supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

I need to re-state two points regarding the Gifts of the Spirit. Firstly, that the word 'gifts' is a general word covering a range of graces of the Holy Spirit to the church. These gifts of grace include the ministries of Teachers, Pastors, and so on. They also include the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's power in healing and miracles, and so forth. To define 'gifts' only in terms of the nine manifestations listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 is both limiting and misleading.

My second point flows from the first. It is wrong to refer to Christians as possessing specific gifts. I believe that Christians are, in their capacity as ministers, gifts to the church. I believe that the manifestations of the Holy Spirit through Christians are also gifts to the church. However, to refer to Christians as 'gifted' and as possessing certain spiritual abilities is, in my opinion, incorrect.

9. A Working Model



I think the model is easy to understand. We come into this world with *aptitudes and abilities*. As we grow, we develop these through *training* and education. The Holy Spirit *fills us* with His spirit so that we can be effective. We *passionately* apply our skills and abilities by channelling them into *areas of ministry*. As we do this, the Holy Spirit *manifests* Himself supernaturally. We *persistently* deploy our ministries in and through the *church* and the Holy Spirit *empowers* us. As a result, we impact the world with the Gospel, giving God the glory before all of mankind.

Ministry of administration

Once again, this needs little amplification. Secretarial, bookkeeping, filing, cataloguing and office-type work of all descriptions are included in this category of ministry. As

This is a very practical and hands-on area of involvement in and through the church.

with serving and helping ministries, this is a very practical and hands-on area of involvement in and through the church.

One last thought here. The church is not the only beneficiary of ministries. We are to exercise our ministries in and *through* the church. Just as individual believers deliver ‘gifts’ to others, so the church blesses the world in Jesus’ name. This is obvious in some ministry areas, such as evangelism and missionary work, but it actually applies across the board. Not only Christians are the objects of mercy; the unsaved also need healing in Jesus’ name.

Let me progress now to a working model that pulls everything together and gives a framework for the practical application of what I have written so far.

The scientific mindset of our generation biases us towards breaking everything down into its component parts and then listing them. Once we have reduced everything down to a simple list, we somehow believe that we understand the subject. Listing spiritual gifts is a misleading obsession that we need to re-evaluate.

‘I don’t like the sound of all those lists he’s making – it’s like taking too many notes at school; you feel you’ve achieved something when you haven’t.’ Dodie Smith, ‘I Capture the Castle’, 1948

I have just finished reading through one of the latest books on Spiritual Gifts that lists no less than 30 gifts. The author defines a spiritual gift as ‘a special ability that God gives, according to his grace, to each member of the body of Christ to be used for the development of the church’. This sounds fine so far, but these ‘special abilities’ are later described in terms of a ‘gift mix’ that needs to be

Reductionism is the analysis of something into simpler elements or organized systems, especially with a view to explaining or understanding it.

discovered. He then goes on to state that once discovered this bouquet of gifts is used for ones’ entire lifetime. The idea he presents is clear – gifts are special spiritual abilities that Christians permanently possess.

If we assume that gifts are special supernatural abilities we possess then we will want to know which ones we ‘have’. Because of our innate ‘scientific’ mindsets, we invariably

attempt to do this by referring to a list of these special abilities. We hope that we will be able to identify our gifts from such a list. This process is in itself misleading. Anyone who believes in the inspiration of the Bible will tend to view as authoritative any list purporting to be extracted from scripture.

Those who develop these lists of gifts tend to categorise them into groups such as ‘Power gifts’, ‘Gifts of communication’, ‘Sign gifts’ and so on. These categories are also not very helpful as they serve to create an impression of scholarly authority, and this too is misleading. A nicely grouped list gives the impression of logical and scholarly precision but it really just means that someone has listed a whole bunch of things and then grouped them.

As I see it, there are two other dangers implicit in lists of ‘spiritual gifts’. The first is that a list creates the impression that God restricts Himself to that particular set of defined ‘gifts’. As a result, it is easy to think that anything not on the list cannot be from the Holy Spirit. The passage in 1 Corinthians that mentions nine manifestations of the Holy Spirit does not, in any way, indicate that there are only nine manifestations. However, we tend to assume that it does.

The second danger is that these lists inevitably confuse manifestations and ministries by combining them. For instance, Ephesians 4:11 lists five church ministries, one of them being that of a Pastor. The author of the book to

of regarding these as purely mundane and unspiritual. Here is what it says in Exodus 31:1-6, *‘Then the LORD said to Moses, “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts — to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship. Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you’.* So you can see that God regards even highly practical skills as ‘spiritual’. We need anointing to preach effectively and we need anointing to perform a craft effectively. By ‘effective’, I mean having life-changing impact.

Mercy ministry

Spending time with, helping, and praying with and for, those who are in distressing circumstances.

This ministry area involves spending time with, helping, and praying with and for, those who are in distressing circumstances. This includes ministering to those in prison, those suffering affliction, the mentally distressed, the poor, underprivileged, and the handicapped.

Giving ministry

We all need to give generously of our time, talents, and money. This is not only a basic Christian duty but it is a major catalyst for spiritual growth. Those with the ministry of giving go far beyond the general call to generosity. They

Those with the ministry of giving go far beyond the general call to generosity.

raise funds and give personally in a substantial way. In a sense, they are the financiers of the Kingdom of God.

Serving & Helping ministries

Some people refer to this as the ministry of 'helps'. In the everywhere-present 'gifts questionnaires' this category is a sort of catch-all for those who cannot be slotted into any other ministry 'pigeon hole'.

This category of ministries has to do with the practical aspects of life. Gardening for old folk, shopping for the locked-in, repairing church equipment, making meals, manning soup kitchens etc. etc. etc. However, do not make the mistake

Serving and helping ministry has to do with the practical aspects of life. However, do not make the mistake of regarding these as purely mundane and unspiritual.

which I referred earlier describes this as 'the gift of shepherding' but he also lists other gifts such as 'Hospitality', 'Mercy', 'Organization', 'Word of Wisdom', 'Counselling' and so on. The Lord Jesus has given some people to His church to function as 'pastors' and these pastors exercise various other ministries in the church such as hospitality, counselling, and so on. As they minister to the church, the Holy Spirit manifests supernatural Words of Wisdom etc. So you can see how such a composite list of 'gifts' can and does confound ministries (such as counselling) and manifestations (such as Word of Wisdom).

It is time to take a careful look at the differences between Ministries and Manifestations and this is the subject of the next chapter.

Secondly, by virtue of the fact that leadership and Eldership are not synonymous, woman can be leaders. Certainly, the Old Testament records the exploits of woman leaders and the New Testament, whilst it restricts Eldership to the male gender, does not prohibit female leadership in other areas. Anointed women should minister in all aspects of church life. The scriptural headship model excludes them only from the office of Elder.

Ministry of encouraging

One of our greatest needs as Christians is to be encouraged. Life is hard and fast and the prevailing attitude of the world is essentially critical. Criticism brings us down but encouragement lifts us up. We need to offer to others compassion regarding their past, encouragement regarding their present, and hope regarding their future. The ministry of encouraging involves finding ways and opportunities, in word and deed, to affirm others so that they feel valued and relevant.

Criticism brings us down but encouragement lifts us up.

Corinthians 14:14-15). Tongues are from man to God and not from God to man (1 Corinthians 14:2-3). Tongues, when spoken in a congregational meeting must be interpreted so that all can say “Amen” (1 Corinthians 14:16-17).

Someone exercising the ministry of Interpretation of Tongues is one whom the Holy Spirit frequently uses to manifest this particular gift. To interpret the manifestation of Tongues requires little or no expertise or aptitude but it does require obedience and bold and clear articulation.

Leadership ministry

This ministry requires very little amplification. However, two aspects require comment. Firstly, leadership is not restricted to Eldership. There are many levels of leadership within the church (Worship, Ladies ministry, Sunday school, Fellowship group etc.). Elders are jointly responsible for the oversight and governance of the church and are, in this sense, leaders of leaders. Deacons represent the functional management of the church and they are accountable to the Eldership.

Leadership is not restricted to Eldership.

3. Manifestations and Ministries

I have made the point that ministries are often confused with the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. This is nowhere more apparent than the way in which some teachers understand Ephesians 4:11. They label the five² categories mentioned as ‘ascension gift’ ministries and claim that they are official positions within the church. From this comes the practice of designating individuals to specific offices with titles such as Pastor, or Apostle, or Prophet.

There is nothing in the scripture to indicate that the five ministries of Ephesians 4:11 are of a different order to those referenced in 1 Corinthians 12:28-30.

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ...’

² There is even argument as to whether there are four or five offices. The Greek sentence structure makes it possible to combine Teacher and Pastor.

There is nothing in the scripture to indicate that the five ministries of Ephesians 4:11 are of a different order to those referenced in 1 Corinthians 12:28-30. Significantly, three of the ministries mentioned in Ephesians are part of the list given in 1 Corinthians 12. A simpler way of interpreting this passage is to see the five rather as a partial listing of ministries.

The Holy Spirit manifests through any Christian, as and when He chooses. Individual Christians do not possess these 'gifts'. The Holy Spirit gives them through individual believers for the benefit of others in the church. He also gives them for the general benefit of the body of Christ locally or as a whole. He can, and usually does, manifest through anyone, at any time, as the circumstances demand. However, He will often manifest in accordance with the ministry performed by a particular individual. For instance, if you were exercising a counselling ministry you would expect (and desperately need) wisdom, knowledge and discernment. The Holy Spirit would most likely manifest these 'gifts' through your counselling ministry. Suppose, however, that there is a need for, say discernment, and that someone exercising the ministry of 'counselling' is not present. In this event the Holy Spirit will usually not hesitate to impart His 'gift' through whoever is available and obedient. Please note that the person receiving the Word of Wisdom has received the gift

The Holy Spirit manifests through any Christian, as and when He chooses.

Healing ministry

I have already dealt with the manifestation of healings and do not need to add anything here. The Holy Spirit establishes and validates the ministry of healing by frequently healing people through the one ministering.

Healings are a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit but can include surgery, medication, and so on.

Ministry of tongues and Interpretation

As previously noted, tongues spoken in a congregational meeting (Sunday service, fellowship group etc.) must be interpreted. This is necessary so that everyone can associate with the praise offered to God. There are two indicators that tongues and interpretation are both manifestations and ministries. 1 Corinthians 14:27-28 has; *'If anyone speaks in a tongue, two – or at the most three – should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.'* In 1 Corinthians 12:28 it lists *'those speaking in different kinds of tongues'* with the other ministries.

I have said this before but it bears repeating; tongues are a form of praise and worship, not of prophecy (1

mean active oversight. What might surprise you is that I believe that the exact same two provisos should apply to all preachers, other than a Teaching Elder, whether they are men or women. If teaching has to do with developing doctrine then why should we allow almost *any* man to teach while we exclude *all* women from this ministry?

Miracle working ministry

Miracles are works of the Holy Spirit that defy the laws of natural science. We cannot explain them away with the use of deduction or logic.

This is sometimes a sub-set of ministries such as apostolic and evangelistic. However, in 1 Corinthians 12:28 Paul sets it just after the apostolic, prophetic, and teaching ministries and so we need to view this as a ministry in its own right. I

have defined a ministry as an area of regular service in and through the local church. In the case of miracles, healing, and tongues with interpretation, the lines between ministry and manifestation may seem blurred. A miracle is the supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit, not a human ability. However, those through whom the Holy Spirit regularly manifests this gift are referred to in 1 Corinthians 12:28 as ‘workers of miracles’. The ministry is by a person but the manifestation is the work of the Holy Spirit.

and that the person ministering has merely delivered it. This is the very heart of the matter. We are called to serve each other and to build up the church. We serve others by ministering to them with grace, love, and humility. We deliver to them the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The difference between manifestations and ministries is profound and must not be confused. **Ministries are what we do to build up the church and to extend the Kingdom of God. Manifestations are what the Holy Spirit does in and through us, particularly as we minister.**

Ministries develop as we deploy our abilities, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, in meeting needs within and through the church.

Ministries can be mundane or spectacular, spiritual or secular. They are usually expressions of human ability and

The difference between manifestations and ministries is profound and must not be confused.

knowledge applied with passion, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, as in the case of Interpreting of Tongues, they require

very little ability, knowledge, and training. Manifestations are supernatural and the Holy Spirit is not limited by our lack of knowledge or ability. Ministries are, in the main, what we do. Manifestations are what the Holy Spirit does. We minister and the Holy Spirit manifests through us to

give power and effectiveness to the ministry. You can see how confusing and potentially misleading it is when ministries are combined with manifestations in some sort of 'gifts list'.

To make matters worse, we are often encouraged to *discover* our gifts. If we applied the term 'discover' only to ministries, I would have less of a problem. Some folk, particularly the young or depressed, do not have a clear concept of their areas of ministry. But, how can we think of 'discovering' within ourselves something the Holy Spirit does as and when He chooses? Ministries can and should be identified and practiced but manifestations are the sole domain of the Holy Spirit.

Ministries are, in the main, what we do. Manifestations are what the Holy Spirit does.

As I have already mentioned, the lists of ministries and manifestations given in the Bible are not exhaustive. Rather, they indicate a wide range of spiritual activities. However, at the risk of falling foul of my own criticism, I have produced a list. I compiled it from the ministries mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4. Next to some of these ministries, I have listed the nine

The lists of ministries and manifestations given in the Bible are not exhaustive. Rather, they indicate a wide range of spiritual activities.

Teaching involves establishing doctrine.

church. In other places Paul refers to women prophesying (1 Corinthians 11:5 for instance). Acts bears reference to the fact that women functioned in prophetic ministries, or at least prophesied (Acts 2:17 and 21:9). The issue therefore was not whether women should participate in church services. The concern was women who spoke (as in 'argued') against or contrary to their husband's authority, and thus invalidated the biblical principal of male headship.

Paul writes in 1 Tim 2:12, '*I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man*'. Paul links teaching and authority and it is reasonably clear from the development of his argument that Eve's deception and Adam's abdication of headship are the root reasons for his pronouncement. If, as I believe, the issue is authority/headship, then the prohibition is really against developing doctrine. To say that a woman can teach other women, or children, but not adult males, does not really address the underlying issue. I hold that women should preach and teach the Word of God with two provisos; (a) that they preach expositively from a particular portion of scripture, and (b) that they are under the functional authority of a Teaching Elder. By 'functional', I

If teaching has to do with developing doctrine then why should we allow almost *any* man to teach while we exclude *all* women from this ministry?

Teaching ministry

Teaching is primarily concerned with interpreting the biblical text and helping believers to apply it to their lives. On the face of it, there appears to be little difference between Preaching and Teaching but I offer the following differences. Preaching, as I see it, is more an expression of the prophetic than the teaching ministry. It is a form of God speaking to us. For preaching to have authority, it must be a faithful explanation of a portion of scripture. A topical treatment of some or other issue is not, in this sense, prophetic, and does not carry the same authority. Teaching, on the other hand, can be either a systematic exposition of a Bible book or extended portion, or it can be a treatment of a particular topic. Teaching is selective and involves developing doctrine and so the authority lies largely with the one teaching. For this reason, I believe that ‘teaching’ is the exclusive prerogative of a Teaching Elder.

Teaching is primarily concerned with interpreting the biblical text and helping believers to apply it to their lives.

Some question whether a woman should preach and teach. I believe that the issue in all of Paul’s teachings concerning woman and ministry has to do with biblical ‘headship’. In Ephesians, he sets out the divine order for the family with the man as head of the home. In 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 and 14:33-38 he relates the same headship principle to the

manifestations given in 1 Corinthians 12. I have produced these lists merely to indicate the differences between manifestations and ministries – they are NOT exhaustive.

MINISTRIES	MANIFESTATIONS ³
Apostolic	Faith
Prophetic	Prophecy
Teaching	Word of Knowledge
Miracle working	Miracles
Healing	Healings
Pastoral	Word of Wisdom
Tongues & Interpretation	Tongues & Interpretation
Leading	Discerning of spirits
Encouraging	
Giving	
Serving & Helping	
Mercy	
Administration	
Evangelism and Missionary	

I don’t really have a problem with expanding the lists given in 1 Corinthians, Romans, and Ephesians to include **ministries** that can be identified in other parts of scripture. The problem is, though, that expanded lists tend to give an impression of specialisation; that not all Christians should perform these functions. Let me explain what I mean. Some people intercede in prayer with great anointing and

³ The Holy Spirit can and does manifest Himself in any way through anyone at any time and the manifestations listed are not exclusive to or prescribed by the ministries listed next to them.

indeed have an intercessory ministry. However, God calls us all to intercede. Other people are effectively used by God to deliver the oppressed from demonic influence and they could be regarded as having deliverance ministries. But, once again, we can all drive out demons in the power of the Holy Spirit and under the authority of the Lord Jesus. 'Giving' is a general Christian obligation yet some have ministries that serve to fund other specific ministries, churches, and Christian institutions on a far more extensive scale.

Not all spiritual manifestations that occur are from God. We should validate everything against the scriptural revelation and measured against God's self-disclosure in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. For me, apparent manifestation of 'gold teeth', for instance, just don't pass this test and should be regarded either as hoaxes or demonic. There is certainly no biblical precedent for the miraculous appearance of gold fillings. Equally, I fail to see how the constitution of a person's teeth glorifies God! If the recipients of gold fillings were desperately poor people then I might see some logical connection between God's grace and gold teeth. Even then, I would wonder why the Holy Spirit didn't just materialise gold ingots or actual money. The spectacle of worshippers examining each other's mouths, to check for 'blessings', is bizarre, to say the least.

Having said all this, I do not expect you to accept what I have written thus far unless I demonstrate that it comes

Missionary ministry involves taking the gospel of salvation to other people groups, cultures, languages, and localities.

Pastoral ministry

The prime pastoral roles are caring, guiding, and protecting. The word *pastoral* means literally 'to do with shepherds'. The scriptures sometimes refer to Christians as 'sheep'. Those who look after us spiritually, and sometimes practically, are pastors.

The pastoral ministry includes such things as hosting or facilitating small groups, providing accommodation or meals to guests or those in need, counselling, mentoring, church discipline and rehabilitation, youth work, and so on.

The prime pastoral roles are caring, guiding, and protecting. Pastors are not the paid clergy who hatch, match, and dispatch!

Unfortunately, in many church groups, the Lead Elders or church-supported pastoral workers are called 'Pastors' and are expected to behave like religious professionals. Modern

Pastors handle everything concerned with church affairs, including hatching (baby blessings), matching (weddings) and dispatching (funerals).

God not only speaks words but He also imparts the power to respond to His words. As a result, the prophetic often includes an impartation of spiritual power to the congregation or to individual believers. My cry to God is “Please, Lord, enable me to teach truth to your people and impart spiritual anointing through me so that they can respond effectively to the truth they receive.”

Evangelism and Missionary ministries

The evangelistic ministry is involved with presenting the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ as saviour. Those exercising this ministry also identify and train others in the church to reach out to the lost. The Lord calls all disciples to witness, to testify, and to articulate the Gospel message, yet only some have evangelistic ministries.

The evangelistic ministry is involved with presenting the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ as saviour.

Sub-sets of this area of ministry could be such things as one-on-one or house visitation, radio or TV evangelism, children’s outreach, rallies, gospel-based outreach to the aged or underprivileged, and so on⁹.

⁹ I use the words ‘and so on’ purposefully because I do not want to give the impression that areas of ministry are limited to the few that I list in this book

from a sensible analysis of scripture. The two definitive biblical passages dealing with ministries and manifestations are the 12th and 14th chapters of 1 Corinthians. So, I have devoted chapters four and six to a brief study of these key passages.

‘able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus’, and is ‘God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work’ (2 Tim 3:15-17).

Many people have the idea that a prophetic ministry only involves speaking unrehearsed statements in church. A few see it as delivering veiled and mysterious prose to the Pastor. Yet others regard it as seeing and interpreting bizarre visions. Now, it may sometimes include such things

Prophetic ministry has a lot to do with the anointing of the Holy Spirit in the lives of others.

but it is more likely to be a component of a strong preaching ministry.

It is naive to think that a person with a prophetic ministry will always display a genuine manifestation of prophecy every time he or she speaks. A certain international speaker⁸ and author based in America (where else!) believes that he stands in the office and anointing of a Prophet. Because of this, he contends that the Holy Spirit will speak through him every time he opens his mouth within a congregational setting. I believe this to be error.

Prophetic ministry also has a lot to do with the anointing of the Holy Spirit in the lives of others. This ministry is all about communicating what God has to say to His people.

⁸ Naming names is seldom productive. I would prefer to direct my criticism at doctrines and practices rather than at individuals.

Some church leaders and scholars are afraid to acknowledge the validity of the prophetic ministry in today's church. They fear that prophecy diminishes the divine inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of scripture. There is of course no record in the New Testament of any Prophet actually writing anything that was later accepted into the canon of scripture. Those in non-cultic circles do not claim that the exercise of the prophetic ministry actually establishes new scripture.

Prophecy strengthens, encourages, and comforts the church. It does not replace or augment scripture.

1 Corinthians 14:3 tells us that *'everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort'*. These three functionalities, not the production of scripture, are therefore the primary mandate for those exercising a prophetic ministry.

The prophetic ministry involves the speaking forth of the Word of God under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of prophecy is to build up, encourage, and comfort God's people. It might or might not include foretelling future events. It may or may not include warnings and cautions.

We must test everything said or written as 'prophetic' against the scriptures, just as the Bereans did when Paul preached (Acts 17:11). It is the Bible, not prophecy that is

4. 1 Corinthians 12

The twelfth and fourteenth chapters of first Corinthians contain the bulk of biblical teaching on spiritual 'gifts'. I have not produced an exhaustive verse-by-verse analysis. However, what I have done should be enough to give you an idea of the intended meaning.

The best way to read this chapter is with your Bible open. Read each verse and then think about the comments I have made.

I have already dealt with verse one earlier on so I will go straight to verse 4⁴.

Vs 4 *There are different kinds of gifts but the same Spirit...* There are many graces from God but the same Holy Spirit gives all of them.

Vs 5 *There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord...* The word 'service' is a translation of the Greek *diakonion*.

⁴ Verses 2 and 3 are hard to understand and do not add significantly to the discussion on the nature of spiritual gifts. The early Corinthian church existed within a pagan religious culture. Glossolalia (tongues) was a fairly common occurrence in pagan religions and many believed them to be a sign of divine favour. Paul cautions the believers against accepting as authoritative just anything in a translation of tongues.

We can also translate it as ‘ministry’ or ‘administration’. It is a word used to describe the service performed by a slave for his master or a servant for her lord. The Good News Bible renders the verse as, *‘There are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served.’*

This verse gives the first of two classifications of ‘gifts’ in 1 Corinthians 12 ... MINISTRIES.

Vs 6 *There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men ...* Here the Greek word translated as ‘working’ also means ‘effects’ or ‘manifestations’. It conveys the idea of various results caused by the same originator.

This verse gives the second classification of ‘gifts’ ... MANIFESTATIONS.

Verses 4, 5 and 6 indicate that there are two basic categories of spiritual gifts - namely ministries and manifestations.

Gifts = Ministries + Manifestations

Vs 7 *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good...* The Holy Spirit manifests Himself through each member of the body. He gives His gifts for the common good of the church. To ‘manifest’ means to show or render apparent and so this does not refer to an internal ability, but an external manifestation. It is not a

leaders; and be involved in matters of church discipline. Taking our clues from Paul, we can also deduce that those with apostolic ministries are the founders and ‘fathers’ of church groups, national and international ministries, and other ‘kingdom’ initiatives.

Prophetic ministry

Old Testament prophets were the teachers of Israel and established doctrine, spoke direct words from God, and operated with great boldness and authority.

The prophetic ministry involves the speaking forth of the Word of God under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The prophetic ministry described in the book of Acts is of an entirely different nature. The nearest thing to an Old testament Prophet in the early days of the church was a man named Agabus. *‘He took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, "In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles."'* (Acts 21:11). Now, Agabus got the gist of what was going to happen to Paul but he got the detail wrong. It was actually the Gentiles (Romans) who arrested Paul and tied his hands. It was because they were going to hand him over to the Jews that Paul appealed to Caesar. An Old Testament prophet might well have lost his head for these factual errors!

- **The apostolic ministry involves the recognition and releasing of leadership and other ministries.** 2 Timothy 1:6 has; *‘For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.’* Paul’s letters to the churches and to Timothy and Titus make it clear that he often exercised the leadership development aspect of his apostolic ministry.
- **The apostolic ministry involves training others in ministry and the succession of teaching and training within the local churches.** The book of Acts records how Paul chose Timothy and trained him and how Barnabas chose John Mark. 2 Timothy 2:2 has *‘And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.’*
- **The apostolic ministry is involved in church discipline.** Paul pronounced a course of discipline with regard to the member of the church at Corinth who was sleeping with his father’s wife (1 Corinthians 5:1-13).

So, we can expect those functioning in an apostolic ministry in today’s church to establish new local churches; to preach and teach; to minister in signs and wonders; to recognise and release leaders; to teach and train new

demonstration of the Christian’s gifting but of the Holy Spirit’s ability.

The Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest picks up on the present indicative passive tense of ‘is given’. He translates the verse as, *‘But to each one there is constantly being given the clearly seen operations of the Spirit with a view to the profit of all’*. It could I suppose be taken to mean that the Holy Spirit is constantly allocating ‘gifts’ to new believers. However, it makes better sense to understand this verse as referring to a repeated action of the Holy Spirit in the life of each believer. Combined with the use of the word ‘manifestation’, the sense is not that of a one time deposit of spiritual ability. The sense is rather of the ongoing involvement of each believer in manifesting the abilities of the Holy Spirit. These demonstrations of the Spirit’s power are as He wills them.

Vs 8-10 These verses set out nine manifestations of the Holy Spirit. that I will attempt to define and describe in the next chapter.

Vs 11 *All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as He determines...* The word translated, as ‘gives’ is a combination of two Greek words, *diairoun* and *idia*. The first of these two words means to divide or distribute among a group. The Holman’s Standard Christian Bible translates the word as ‘distributing to each ...’

Vs 12–30 Verses 7 to 11 deal with *manifestations* and are introduced by that actual word in verse 7. However, verses 12 to 30 deal with *ministries*. The analogy is of the various parts of a human body working together so that the whole body benefits from each area of specialisation.

Verse 27 sums up the concept with the words *‘Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.’*

Verse 28 reads in the Young’s literal translation as *‘And some, indeed, did God set in the assembly, first apostles...’* Not all members of the body have the same ministry. This is obvious from the preceding verses.

In the New Testament the words first, second, and third indicate order of time, or of place, or of order of importance. In this case, chronological order makes no sense because of the historical record in the book of Acts. They must mean order of importance. Verse 31 bears this out, where it speaks of ‘greater gifts’.

The ministries mentioned in order of importance are Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers. The others are lumped together, or relegated to lesser importance, with the words ‘then’ and ‘also’. Those mentioned first actually constitute three of the five listed in Ephesians 4:11. This indicates that neither of the passages are exclusively definitive lists.

Vs 31 is translated in the NIV as, *‘But eagerly desire the greater gifts.’* However, the translators give as a footnote an

- **The apostolic ministry involves establishing local churches.** More than this, the apostolic ministry is involved with establishing Christ-centred foundations in local churches. 1 Corinthians 3:9-11 reads; *‘For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.’*
- **The apostolic ministry involves preaching and teaching the Word of God.** 1 Timothy 2:5-7 has; *‘For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time. And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle — I am telling the truth, I am not lying — and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles.’*
- **The apostolic ministry involves signs and wonders, the working of miracles.** Acts 5:12 records that *‘the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people’*. 2 Corinthians 12:12-13 has; *‘The things that mark an apostle — signs, wonders and miracles — were done among you with great perseverance’*.

*Apostolic ministry*⁷

The word *apostolos* means ‘one who is sent forth’ as a messenger or delegate or ambassador. Jesus chose twelve men from among many followers to be His Apostles (Luke 6:12). After they had been with Him for some time, He sent these Apostles out to prepare the way for Him in the towns and villages of Israel. After their brief journeys, they returned and travelled with Jesus until His death. After His resurrection, they all stayed on in Jerusalem and only Peter ventured out to fulfil his calling as a ‘sent one’.

In Galatians 2:8 Paul referred to Peter as an apostle to the Jews, and to himself as an apostle to the gentiles. The book of Acts and the Epistles document Paul’s apostolic ministry. He planted churches, established doctrine, evangelised, healed, worked miracles, taught, and raised up Elders. I can deduce from the record of his life that the features of an apostolic ministry, at least his ministry, are as follows:

Those with apostolic ministries are concerned with founding and building up local churches, trans-local ministries, and other kingdom initiatives.

⁷ I give more attention to the apostolic and prophetic ministries because they are the focus of much current dispensationalist type doctrine and often feature in books and articles on the church of today.

alternative translation more in keeping with the context of the passage as a whole. There they have, ‘*But you are eagerly desiring...*’ In other words, instead of encouraging the believers to desire the greater gifts, Paul is admonishing them for doing so.

As a point of interest, the main line of translation adopted in the NIV, ‘*But eagerly desire the greater gifts*’, actually points to the conclusion that the ‘gifts’ in question are not abilities permanently given to individuals. How could Paul have instructed Christians to desire gifts they did not yet have, if he believed that the Holy Spirit had already conferred them permanently at birth, re-birth, baptism, or spiritual infilling?

I find it difficult to describe the nine manifestations of the Holy Spirit because the Bible just does not define them for us. The best I can do is to look for instances in the life of Jesus and His early followers. This of course is a very subjective process. We all have preconceived notions of what the nine manifestations actually are. We tend, for instance, to assume that Jesus was manifesting a Word of Knowledge when He said to the Samaritan woman, “*You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.*” (John 4:17-18). Nothing in this account states that Jesus was manifesting a Word of Knowledge. We apply that ‘label’ to His words because, at least in Charismatic circles, we make this assumption.

In the next chapter I give some simple research and reasoning in an attempt to loosely define the 'gifts of the Spirit'.

8. Ministry Descriptions

I think it would be helpful if I described the different ministries before bringing everything together in a working model. Here is the list again:

- Apostolic ministry
- Prophetic ministry
- Evangelism and Missionary ministries
- Pastoral ministry
- Teaching ministry
- Miracle working ministry
- Healing ministry
- Ministry of tongues and Interpretation
- Leadership ministry
- Ministry of encouraging
- Giving ministry
- Serving & Helping ministries
- Mercy ministry
- Ministry of administration

same way as a battery retains the electrical charge it receives. We then have the responsibility of ministering this power to others in Jesus name and for His glory. The influx of this power enlivens the recipients, charges them with spiritual potency, and equips them to serve God. Depending on our capacity, and the anointing that God gives, this transfer of anointing can make a profound impact on the recipient. In a sense, the transmission of this power serves as a priming agent for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. When we impart anointing to others, we give them a precious resource that the Holy Spirit can use to achieve many things. When others minister to us in this way then we too receive a valuable resource. In this general sense, we could refer to this form of ministry as a 'gift'. However, a manifestation of the Holy Spirit goes far beyond the little 'giftlets' we are able to give. When He exercises His power directly, or through us, then mighty miracles occur, the knowledge and wisdom of heaven manifest, and the very Word of God thunders forth.

Now, on to the subject of ministries.

5. Nine Manifestations of the Holy Spirit

Now, as promised, I will attempt to define the nine manifestations of the Holy Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12. I feel I need to do this so that you may better recognise a manifestation of the Holy Spirit when it occurs through you or others. Once again, I need to repeat the caution that these nine are not the only ways in which the Holy Spirit manifests Himself in and through believers.

The Word of Wisdom and the Word of Knowledge:

The words in the Greek are *logos sofias* - a word of wisdom or a wise word, and *logos gnōseōs* - a word of knowledge or a knowledgeable word.

We usually articulate these manifestations of the Spirit through speech,⁵ but what does 'wisdom' mean and how does it differ from 'knowledge'? Perhaps the best way to answer this is to identify Paul's other uses of the words and

⁵ 'Logos' does not necessarily indicate speaking and can also describe thoughts and concepts.

then determine their meaning from the context of these other occurrences.

In Romans 11:33 Paul quotes from Isaiah 40:13 *‘Ob, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!’* Here the prophet sets wisdom together with knowledge. By doing this, he indicates that the two are different from each other. In Hebrew parallelism synonyms are placed on succeeding lines and are not combined like this in one sentence. For instance in 1 Corinthians 1:19 Paul quotes Isaiah 29:14, which is a passage phrased in typical Hebraic parallelism;

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;
the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”

Here intelligence is a synonym for wisdom.

In 1 Corinthians 1:22 Paul notes that *‘Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom...’* The Greeks were famous for their intellectual approach to life and so we should understand ‘wisdom’ here as intelligence and knowledge.

Again in 1 Corinthians 2:1 Paul uses the word ‘wisdom’ in the context of knowledge when he writes, *‘When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.’* In verses 4 and 5 of that passage he continues; *‘My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but*

cannot assume that the so-called five-fold ministries constitute church offices.

Now it is true that 1 Corinthians 12:28 uses the words *‘and in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers...’* Some translations use the word ‘placed’ in preference to ‘appointed’. You also need to note that just three of the five are listed here as the top three... what happened to pastors and evangelists? All that we can deduce is that some ministries have priority over others and that it is most likely therefore that those in Eldership would exercise them. Therefore, within the Eldership team one should find Apostolic Elders, Prophetic Elders and so on. 1 Tim 5:17 has; *‘The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching’.*

So far, I have described the various manifestations of the Holy Spirit and have provided the biblical basis for my understanding. It is now time to describe ministries in more detail. However, before I do so, I need to comment briefly on the difference between ‘anointing’ and ‘manifestations’.

The Holy Spirit fills us with power from on high. This occurs, not once, but on many occasions. We receive this anointing, as a response to prayer, through the laying on of hands, preaching, or simply being in the presence of God. We retain this anointing of spiritual energy in much the

Many people had prophetic ministries but it is questionable whether there was actually an authoritative church office of 'Prophet'. In Acts 13:1-3 it tells of the prophets and teachers of the church of Antioch who, in response to the command of the Holy Spirit, sent Paul and Barnabas off on their missionary journeys.

Laying hands on people and commissioning them to ministry is a leadership function, not necessarily the function of someone standing in the apostolic office.

Many modern Charismatics teach that these five ministry areas are 'ascension gifts' to the church and are therefore in a different class to the ministries described elsewhere. They also contended that these five represent trans-local offices within the larger church of God.

We find a key to understanding in verse 7 where it says '*But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.*' The letter is to the whole church in Ephesus, as the first verse of chapter one attests, not just to the Elders, or some five-fold ministry team. From among these church members, all who had God's apportionment of grace for ministry, Christ Jesus gave some to be apostles etc. The verb is 'gave' not 'appointed' and the assigned task is to '*prepare God's people for works of service...*' not to govern. Elders are appointed to govern the household of God and it may be that some Elders exercise apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral, or teaching ministries. Eldership is a church office but we

on God's power.' Here, and in the other passages cited, there is a strong connection between wisdom and knowledge.

In his book 'Renewal Theology', J. Rodman Williams takes texts such as 1 Corinthians 2:6-7 to indicate that 'a word of wisdom is in some way an explication of the mystery of God that centres in Jesus Christ'. His definition of a Word of

Words of Wisdom and Words of Knowledge are supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit. They are not just human abilities to study and to determine sound applications.

Knowledge, on the other hand, is 'an inspired word of teaching or instruction that occurs within the context of the gathered community.' He compares a Word of Wisdom with a Word of Knowledge as follows; 'word of wisdom has more to do with the speaking forth of the central mysteries of Christian faith... Word of knowledge likewise is concerned about the truth of God but operates more in terms of articulation. It is the knowledge of a spiritually enlightened mind that, in correspondence therewith, clearly sets forth the truth for others to understand...' As you can

A Word of Knowledge is information imparted directly by the Holy Spirit within a number of contexts.

see, he finds little difference between a Word of Knowledge and a Word of Wisdom and places them both within the teaching and preaching ministries of the church.

Wayne Grudem, in his Systematic Theology, favours the definition of a Word of Wisdom simply as ‘the ability to speak a wise word in various situations’. He favours the definition of a Word of Knowledge as ‘the ability to speak with knowledge about a situation.’ The problem with this sort of definition is that it lifts these two activities out of the category of supernatural manifestation and it places them in the arena of normal human ability and interaction.

A Word of Wisdom is a realisation, imparted by the Holy Spirit as to how to apply knowledge.

Most modern charismatic teaching describes a Word of Knowledge as supernaturally imparted revelation of things not known naturally by the person concerned. A Word of Wisdom is the supernaturally imparted understanding of how to apply knowledge in a particular circumstance.

Guy Duffield and Nathaniel van Cleave, in ‘Foundations of Pentecostal Theology’, observe that wisdom in the context of spiritual gifts ‘probably means an insight for “practical conduct or action”’ whilst knowledge brings to light ‘the principles of doctrine that form the basis’ of the application’.

Christian Schwarz defines a Word of Knowledge as that which ‘enables Christians to generate, collect, and analyze ideas which are important for the health of the church’. He

called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (Eph 4:1-16).

I included the ‘five-fold ministry’ in my list in chapter three. Many teachers hold that these five designations describe offices within the church. However, is there solid scriptural support for this view?

The early church *Apostles* were obviously leaders who wrote most of the New Testament. *Prophets* existed in the early church, as did *Evangelists*, *Teachers*, and *Pastors*. Some of them, like Peter, were well known, but others were not.

Firstly, the word ‘gift’ is the Greek *charismata*, which here describes the seven areas of ministry listed. Manifestations *per se* are not in view here. Both the phrasing of the passage and the subject matter indicates this. The passage covers the combination of spiritual and practical areas of church life.

The New Living Translation states this passage as; *God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out when you have faith that God is speaking through you. If your gift is that of serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, do a good job of teaching. If your gift is to encourage others, do it! If you have money, share it generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.* This translation clarifies the distinction between the prophetic ministry and the manifestation of prophetic utterances. It also confirms in its use of words such as ‘God has given us the ability to do certain things well’, that the subject of this passage is human ministry.

Ephesians 4:11

The full passage reads as follows; *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were*

defines a Word of Wisdom as that which ‘enables Christians to help others apply existing knowledge to specific situations.’

My own view is that both Words of Wisdom and Words of Knowledge are supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit. They are not just human abilities to study and to determine sound applications. Paul’s words to the Corinthians apply; “*My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power...*” (1 Corinthians 2:4).

I also believe that Knowledge and Wisdom are closely linked. Knowledge indicates source and Wisdom indicates application. A Word of Knowledge is information imparted directly by the Holy Spirit within a number of contexts such as studying the Bible, counselling, or ministering prophetically or in prayer. A Word of Wisdom is a realisation, imparted by the Holy Spirit, as to how to apply knowledge. We could receive such wisdom directly from the Holy Spirit, or we could glean it from research and study.

In all cases, a Word of Knowledge and a Word of Wisdom must be communicated for the edification of the church. This can apply either generally, or with respect to a particular member of the church.

We do not need to speak these ‘words’. We can write them, sing them, demonstrate them or present them artistically.

However, to classify as a genuine manifestation of the Holy Spirit, they must be 'for the common good'.

The Lord Jesus evidenced supernatural knowledge when He spoke to the Samaritan woman (John 4). The way He answered the question about paying tax to the Roman government was a wonderful example of a Word of Wisdom (Matthew 22).

I have drawn my understanding of these spiritual manifestations from an appreciation of New Testament texts in which the words knowledge and wisdom occur. My understanding of 'gifts' as either human ministries or supernatural manifestations also influences me. My own experience supports the definitions I have given.

A while ago I was praying with the leadership group before the start of the Sunday morning service. Someone in the group prayed that God would meet the need of everyone who came to the service. Someone else prayed that we would be sensitive to peoples' needs and that we would be prepared to minister to them. As they prayed, I saw a clear picture in my mind. I observed a man in his late sixties or older walking into the church. I saw him moving down a row of chairs and I observed exactly where he sat. As I was 'watching' this mental scene unfold, I heard a voice saying, "I am going to do something special with him today and he will never be the same again."

7. Romans 12:6-8 & Ephesians 4:11

The only passages of scripture other than 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 that have a major influence on our understanding of ministries and manifestations are Romans twelve and Ephesians four.

Romans 12:6-8

Verses 3 to 5 give the context of the Romans passage where it reads; *For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*

In verses 6 to 8 it has, *We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.*

After we had finished praying, I drew one of my fellow Elders aside and explained what I had seen and heard. I wanted to ensure that God got the glory from what was to happen and that it would not appear later that I was just selectively 'spiritualising'.

The people started arriving and just before the service begun, the man I had seen in vision entered the building. I recognised him immediately and watched with wonder as he edged down the row to find a place where the seats on either side of him were unoccupied. The service started and in due course I got up to preach. Mid-way through my sermon I felt strongly motivated by the Holy Spirit to address this man. I stopped what I was saying, paused for a moment and then looking him in the eye said; "Sir, I don't know you. You are a visitor to this church and I do not wish to embarrass you but the Holy Spirit has told me that He is going to do something special with you today and that you will never be the same again." He nodded vigorously and responded, "I know. It is true!" I went on with the sermon and then concluded the service.

It so happened that the man was a long-term friend of someone in the congregation who had invited me to lunch that day. They also invited the man in

question and I was able to chat with him. This was his story.

He attended a denominational church that had two pastors, one white and one black. He had been brought up in a politically ‘right wing’ home and was prejudiced against black people. He was, by his own confession, a racist. During the week, he would phone the church office to find out who was preaching. If they had scheduled the black pastor to preach then he would stay at home or worship elsewhere. When he did go to his home church, he would try, by any means, not to sit next to black folk. He would pick a row that was more or less empty, sit himself down, and place his Bible on the seat to one side of him and the church notices on the seat on his other side. He would thus pretend that he was reserving seats. He confessed to me that when he entered our little church he adopted the same subterfuge. As he ‘booked’ the seats on either side of his chair, he was suddenly and unexpectedly guilt-stricken. The Holy Spirit convicted him of his sinful racist attitude and he immediately removed his belongings from the adjacent chairs. As he did so a group of black folk entered the church and occupied the seats to either side of him. God changed his heart in that moment but the confirmation came when I addressed him in the middle of the sermon.

Vs 33(b)–38 I am not going to comment in any detail on these verses. To deal adequately with this issue would take the focus away from the theme of this book and would require far more space than I can afford here. However, commentaries that elaborate on the obvious and fail to deal with difficult or controversial passages constantly irritate me, so I will briefly state my view in chapter eight, under the heading of ‘Teaching Ministry’.

Vs 39–40 *Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.* This is a concise concluding statement. Speak in tongues (with interpretation) in the congregation, and prophesy in the congregation, but do everything in an orderly and God-honouring way.

The other passages dealing with spiritual gifts are in Romans 12 and Ephesians 4. I will deal with these in the next chapter.

Vs 26 *What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. It is not necessary to claim that everyone attending a church service always contributes something, but it is clear that many should participate and that everything said and done should be for the edification of the church.*

Vs 27-28 *If anyone speaks in a tongue, two — or at the most three — should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God. Paul is establishing a principle not a law. Tongues must be limited and always interpreted within the congregational setting.*

Vs 29–33(a) *Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. Again, Paul is establishing a principle not a law. ‘Prophets’ are those who have a prophetic ministry. The fact that an immediate revelation takes precedence over other forms of prophecy indicates that prophetic ministry is more than unrehearsed and immediate ‘words from God’. It must also include pre-received messages and sermons.*

Faith:

The only thing that most commentators agree on concerning the manifestation of Faith is that, in the context of spiritual gifts, it is not ‘saving faith’. Of course, when it comes right down to it, there is little difference between the application of faith for salvation and faith for miracles, or anything else within the parameters of the spirit-filled life.

I would define the manifestation of faith as the God-given ability to act boldly on the prompting of the Holy Spirit. This ‘gift’ of faith often enables us to say or do something we would not normally be brave enough to undertake.

A good example of the manifestation of Faith is when Peter said to the lame man at the Gate Beautiful, “*In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk!*”. Then, taking him by the right hand, he helped him up and ‘*instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong*’ (Acts 3:6-7). Peter did not pray for healing, nor did he lay hands on him, or anoint him with oil. He simply pronounced him able to walk! This is the manifestation of Faith.

In a less dramatic way, this manifestation occurs whenever a believer responds obediently to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and acts in a way, which in the normal course of things, should not possibly achieve the desired results.

The effects of such words and actions of faith may be immediate or may be manifest over time. There may be an immediate and impressive act by which God displays His power. Alternatively, there may be the slow and steady development of a great and lasting work of God. In either event, it is the Holy Spirit manifesting Himself in and through believers. He inspires us to put full confidence and trust in Him for whatever it is that He calls us to say or do.

When people put their faith in Christ Jesus for salvation, a similar thing occurs. They believe something that they can neither experience sensually nor understand intellectually. They respond 'in faith' by confessing that Jesus is their Lord and by believing that they are born again of the Holy Spirit.

The manifestation of faith is the God-given ability to act boldly on the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Two personal examples may help to clarify my definition of the Gift of Faith. When I was a very new believer, I had to drive from Port Elizabeth to Graaff Reinet on business. I took with me a set of Christian teaching tapes that someone had lent me and I was looking forward to hours of good input. At the last moment, a colleague asked for a lift. He was very talkative and I didn't get an opportunity to listen to the tapes. Fortunately, he stayed on in Graaff Reinet and I was able to drive back alone. I stuck the first tape into the machine in the

Paul means is this; "People, grow up! You think that speaking in tongues is a sign authenticating your status as spirit-filled Christians. It is not! Quite the contrary, if unbelievers heard you all babbling away in tongues, without interpretation, they would think that you had lost your minds! In the past God spoke sternly to His people through the action of the Assyrians, although the Israelites could not understand their strange tongue. Therefore, if unbelievers came into your meeting and *they* spoke in tongues then *that* would surely be a sign, a sign of God's displeasure and discipline, not to them but to *you!* However, if the same unbelievers came into your meeting and heard prophecy that addressed them directly, they would surely take that as a positive sign that God is really among you." This explanation makes sense of the quotes from the Old Testament and it is consistent with the development of thought throughout the 1 Corinthians 14 passage.

Leon Morris, in his commentary on 1 Corinthians states, that 'perhaps Paul means that, as those who had refused to heed the prophet were punished by hearing speech that was not intelligible to them, so would it be in his day.' He goes on to refer to B.C. Johanson's suggestion that we should phrase verse 22 as a rhetorical question which Paul then goes on to refute in the verses that follow; '*Are tongues, then, a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers, and prophecy for believers, not for unbelievers?*' This is essentially the same thought as I have presented, but from a different perspective.

saying through the prophet is something like; “I have spoken plainly to you but you would not listen and so I will now instruct you through a people whose language you will not understand.” Thus, when the Assyrians invaded Israel, and the people of God heard their unintelligible language, they realised that God was ‘speaking’ to them in stern discipline and punishment. The idea here is not that the Israelites interpreted the tongues of the Assyrians as prophecy. It was the punitive action of the Assyrians that ‘spoke’ to them.

Now, returning to the 1 Corinthians passage, you need to read 14:22 in the context of the quote from Isaiah. Verse 24 makes it clear that tongues are not a positive sign for unbelievers and verse 22 is at least clear in its negative statement that tongues are not a sign for believers. So then, tongues are a sign for neither believers nor unbelievers. The latter part of the verse, where it says that *‘prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers’*, mirrors the difficult phrasing in the first part of verse 22. This also appears contradictory because in verses 24 and 25 it states that unbelievers will in fact regard prophecy as a sign that God is really among His people.

The whole problem would be neatly resolved if we expand verse 22 to read; ‘Tongues, then, are a sign not when spoken by believers and heard by unbelievers, but they are a negative sign when spoken by unbelievers and heard by believers. Similarly, prophecy is a positive sign to unbelievers when spoken by believers.’ I believe that what

happened was that I had my finger on the fast-forward button of the dashboard and started to listen. After half an hour or so the tape suddenly stopped. The machine was dead. I pulled out the tape and reinserted it. No joy. I tried another tape. Nothing. I was very disappointed. I knew that I needed to hear the teachings and that I wouldn’t get another chance to listen to all the tapes for some time. I expressed my frustration to the Lord but resigned myself to a silent drive home.

Now, that type of tape player had a separate control for fast forward and that still worked. I pushed the button but of course, all I heard was a high-pitched babble. Then the strangest thought occurred to me. It was more than a thought; it was a conviction that if I released the pressure on the button I would be able to slow down the fast-forward to normal speed. The machine just did not work that way and I knew it. Strangely, though, I had faith that it would. So I eased off the pressure on the button and the gabble became clearer, wavered, then slower, and then stabilised. It was not technically possible but it happened!

Now I had another problem. How was I going to drive with one finger applying a constant pressure to the fast-forward button? It couldn’t be done. Again, faith welled up within me and I knew what I had to do. I removed my finger and the tape continued playing at normal speed!

When that tape was finished, I ejected it and inserted the next. Not once did I touch the play button yet tape after tape played normally. As I drove into my home garage, the last tape was coming to its end. Suddenly it stopped and try as I might I could not get the machine to work again. I took the car in to the audio specialists but they told me that the tape player was unusable and that they would have to replace it. They confirmed that the fast-forward only had one speed... fast.

A more recent and different example is when I was convicted to start a theological seminary. I was in Florida, USA, and had been visiting a small seminary in a town called Bradenton. I spoke to the president of the seminary about how South Africa needed its own Christian distance learning higher education institution. His response was "Why don't you start one?" As he said those words, the Holy Spirit imparted a gift of Faith to me and I knew that this was possible.

If I knew then the hard and long road that lay ahead, I would have quaked in my boots. However, at that moment I knew with the certainty of the Gift of Faith that the Holy Spirit would create a seminary through me. Nine years have gone by and today the seminary is fully accredited and registered

Vs 13-17 Once again, Paul makes the point that only interpreted tongues edify the gathered church. The context is prayer, sung worship, praise, and thanksgiving. This text also contains a reference to 'singing in the spirit' and the context is the gathered church in worship.

Vs 18 -19 These verses again make it clear that the context is the gathered church. Paul makes the point that it is better by far to *speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.*

Vs 20 *Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.* This is a straightforward call to mature and responsible behaviour and attitudes.

Vs 21-25 This difficult passage seems to give contradictory teachings. First Paul says that *'tongues, then, are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers'*. A few lines further on he tells us that a stranger entering a church meeting where everyone is speaking in tongues will think that they are out of their minds.

The clue to understanding this apparent contradiction is the quote from Isaiah 28:11 where it says *'Very well then, with foreign lips and strange tongues God will speak to this people'* (Deuteronomy 28:49 validates this). The context of this prophecy is the disobedience of the people of God and the resultant punishment, through the agency of the Assyrians, that is about to fall upon them. In effect, what God is

worship. Prophecy is from God to the believer and is for the edification of the church.

Vs 4-5 *He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. I would like everyone of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophecy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church is edified.* Chapter 14 deals with behaviour in the gathered meetings of the church. Tongues are a form of prayer and so someone needs to interpret and make them intelligible to the other believers present. Uninterpreted, they edify only the individual believer concerned and not the church as a whole.

Vs 6 *Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?* The message is clear; tongues must be interpreted if they are used within the gathered church context. They are words of praise and worship to God and do not, as is the case with prophecy, directly strengthen, encourage, or comfort the church.

Vs 7-11 elaborate on the relative lack of legitimacy and value of uninterpreted tongues within the gathered church setting.

Vs 12 *Since you are zealous in spiritual matters (gifts), try to abound in things that build up the church.* The purpose of all ministries is to build up the church and, through her, to extend the Kingdom of God in the world.

for graduate and post-graduate programmes. At last count, it had over 2,100 students.

Gifts of Healing:

Most commentators make much of the fact that the plural tense is used in 1 Corinthians 12:9. i.e. *gifts* rather than *a gift*. Some say that there are different ‘gifts’ to cure different sickness. Others claim that the plural refers to many people having different gifts of healing.

Healings are a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit but can include surgery, medication, and so on.

Once again, the factor that directs my understanding is the belief that all of the listed ‘gifts’ in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 are manifestations of the Holy Spirit. The plural form indicates to me that He heals many dimensions of infirmity. It also indicates that He heals in many different ways. Healing of wounds, healing of infections, and healing of emotions are all included. Similarly, the means of affecting the healings are many and diverse. Healing might occur through prayer, anointing with oil, rest, counselling, diet, exercise, surgery, or medication.

As with the other manifestations listed, healings are a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. I believe that this definition includes such things as surgery, medication and

so on. It is quite common for doctors to confess that all they can do is to assist the healing process but that they do not consider themselves 'healers'.

There is a fine line between a healing and a miracle. For instance, the supernatural replacement of a missing or damaged organ would surely class as a miracle. Another difference between miracle and healing is the time it takes to affect the result. We would usually see the gradual restoration of a sick person as a healing but the instantaneous cure of a serious condition as miraculous.

I believe that God still heals people miraculously in our day. I believe this because of the testimony of the scriptures. I also believe it because I have personally received a precious gift of supernatural healing.

When I was ten months old, I developed a blockage of the bowel. My parents rushed me to hospital where they operated on me. They called the surgery performed on me an Intussusception. The surgeon was the professor in charge of the medical faculty at the University of Cape Town. After he had performed the operation, he told my parents that there was no chance of recovery. The bowel had telescoped into itself and the blockage was more extensive than any he had previously seen. In addition, Gangrene had taken hold and had poisoned the entire system. He told my mother and

6. 1 Corinthians 14

Again, as in chapter four, I have not gone into a lot of detail but I hope that what I have given is enough for you to grasp the principles involved.

Vs 1 *Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially prophecy.* This verse links chapter fourteen back to the discussion on manifestations and ministries in chapter 12. Paul singles out prophecy as a priority ministry because it builds up the church.

Vs 2 *For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God...* As I have already stated, tongues are from man to God, not from God to man. They are therefore not a form of prophecy but rather they are a form of praise and worship. Verses 14 to 17 describe the outworking of this principle where it speaks of *praying* in a tongue, *praising* God with one's spirit, and *giving thanks* in a normally unintelligible form.

'...Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit'. Unless someone interprets the tongue, no one in the church meeting will understand what is being prayed.

Vs 3 *But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.* Tongues are from the believer to God and are an expression of praise and

Holy Spirit heals yet we must work together with Him by praying, laying on hands, anointing with oil, and so on. This is an important point. Far too many people sit in church waiting for God to wag their tongues for them so that they can speak in tongues! Similarly, how can we expect to lay hands on someone for healing if we do not get up and walk over to them? How can a prophecy be of immediate benefit to the congregation when someone whispers it shyly to the pastor after the service has ended?

Be bold and be obedient! It is a wonderful experience to know that you have just delivered a precious gift of God to someone in great need of it.

father that I would die within a few days but that the hospital staff would call them when the final moments came.

My mother's father was a Methodist lay preacher and a very devout man and he called on the congregation of his local church to pray. In the early hours of the next morning, the doctor called my parents to the hospital to say good-bye to me. When they arrived, the doctor told them that I was on the point of death. My mother sat at the foot of the bed praying and as the sun peeped over the horizon, I made a sound that indicated that the bowel was again working. The crisis had passed. God had reached down and saved my life.

That morning a number of folk from his church contacted my grandfather. "What happened at 2:00 am?" they asked excitedly, "I was woken by the Holy Spirit and instructed to pray for Christopher!" Thank you Lord!

The family doctor confessed that he did not disbelieve the biblical stories but that he had not expected to see a miracle in his day.

Miraculous Powers:

Miracles are works of the Holy Spirit that defy the laws of natural science. We cannot explain them away with the use of deduction or logic. They are perhaps the most obviously supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

Biblical examples include deliverance from prison (Acts 5:18-20; 12:5-10; 16:23-30), Elymas' blindness (Acts 13:8-12), the raising of the dead (Acts 9:36-42), and Philip's instant transportation from Gaza to Azotus (Acts 8:39-40).

Miracles affect both the animate and the inanimate. Healings apply only to the body and the mind but miracles have a far wider application. For instance, Jesus' turned water into wine, withered a fig tree, walked on water, and calmed a storm with a word of command.

The personal examples I gave of Faith and Healings had distinctly miraculous aspects to them. By faith, I removed my finger from the fast-forward button but the fact that the tape, and succeeding tapes, played was miraculous. The gift God gave me as a ten-month-old baby was a Gift of Healing but it was also miraculous. There is a fine line separating one manifestation of the Holy Spirit from another. God cannot be restricted to our definitions.

Miracles are works of the Holy Spirit that defy the laws of natural science.

tongue is different?⁶ A much simpler, logical, and contextual understanding is that there is but one manifestation referred to as Tongues. When experienced privately it is a form of prayer and an expression of praise and worship. In this setting, it obviously needs no interpretation. When experienced in the gathered church it is still a form of prayer, worship, and praise but someone needs to interpret it so that everyone present can say "Amen". The overriding argument is, of course, the very dogmatic statement in 1 Corinthians 14:2, '*For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God.*' It does not read, 'anyone who speaks in one kind of tongue', or 'anyone who speaks in a private tongue...' The whole of 1 Corinthians 12 is set in the context of the gathered church, not a believer's private devotions.

Now I need to make one last point regarding all the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. God's desire is that we should grow up to be His responsible sons and daughters. As a result, He does not override our wills as though we were irresponsible automatons. Rather, He works with and through us. The manifestations of the Spirit are an example of this. Although God initiates them and they are supernatural in nature, they proceed through us via our minds and our bodies. The Holy Spirit initiates tongues of praise but we need to voice them. That involves the conscious use of mouth, vocal chords, and breath. The

⁶ Romans 8:23 and 2 Corinthians 5:2-4 are cited as evidence but this really stretches the meaning of 'groan', contradicts the 'inward' aspect, and lifts the texts right out of their intended context.

words, that someone with the ministry of Interpretation of Tongues was in the congregation. If no recognised interpreter was there, and someone spoke out in tongues, then that person would need to *'pray that he may interpret what he says'* (14:13).

The important thing is that everyone in a meeting should understand what others are saying. Because tongues are supernatural expressions of praise and worship, they should also be encouraged in private, but then, of course, they need no interpretation.

There is a teaching that there are two different types of tongues; a public tongue and a private prayer language. The verse quoted in justification of this is 1 Corinthians 12:10 *'... different kinds of tongues...'* So, they say, one kind of tongue is the public utterance and another kind is a private prayer language. They make this claim in order to justify the belief that 'public tongues' are interpreted as words from God to man (prophetic words), whereas private tongues are from man to God (prayer). This just doesn't make scriptural sense for a number of reasons. To start with, why look beyond the obvious meaning of 'different kind of tongues (languages)'? Ten people speaking in tongues one after the other would undoubtedly sound very different. Some tongues may sound similar but they would all be different. Another reason is that logically, there is no apparent need for an interpreted tongue that is really a prophecy. How does this differ from a word of prophecy? Where is there any indication in scripture that a prayer

Prophecy:

Prophecy is communication from God to man (1 Corinthians 14:2-3). Prophecy is the 'forth telling' of God's word and does not necessarily include 'foretelling'. In other words, prophecy does not always say something about the future.

Dr. Grudem defines prophecy as 'telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind'. I think that this is too narrow a definition.

Prophecy is a supernatural manifestation of God's word to His people. It is the Holy Spirit communicating to the church.

The instructions given in 1 Corinthians 14 indicate that in a church meeting a number of people may prophesy. Paul tells the one currently speaking to stop and yield the floor to anyone who has an immediate revelation. In Dr. Grudem's words, this would be a demonstration of giving priority to something that God has 'spontaneously brought to mind.' However, Paul also describes the others involved as 'prophets'. Prophecy is not therefore limited to immediate spontaneous speech. It would be ludicrous for Paul to be saying, "Although the Holy Spirit is immediately and spontaneously speaking through you, you should stop and yield to someone else through whom the Holy Spirit is also simultaneously and immediately speaking". God favours order and does not sponsor chaos!

Old Testament prophets were not only Israel's teachers but some of them, Isaiah for instance, give every indication of delivering what appear to be carefully worded and structured sermons. It seems reasonable to expect the same as part of the church's application of prophecy. Preaching can include prophecy and prophecy can include preaching.

My view is that prophecy can be either unrehearsed or pre-prepared. It can be loosely phrased or carefully structured. It can be in words given directly by the Holy Spirit or in words chosen by the person prophesying. It can be a forecast of future events or a declaration of anything that God wants communicated to His people. It is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit communicating to the church. As such, it includes preaching, words of prophecy, written communications, and even dramatic and artistic forms.

Many charismatic and Pentecostal teachers have confused the interpretation of tongues with prophecy. It is common to hear an interpretation of tongues prefaced with the words "The Lord would have you know..." or something similar. For me, 1 Corinthians 14:2 settles the matter when it states that tongues are a supernatural manifestation of praise and worship and are thus from man to God. Prophecy is a supernatural manifestation of God's word to His people and is thus from God to man. We need to interpret tongues, not to convert them into a form of prophecy, but to make them intelligible to the gathered church so that all can say "amen".

The day of Pentecost upper room experience recorded in Acts chapter 2 sheds light on the nature of tongues. The huge crowd of people who heard the 120 disciples speaking in tongues were from '*every nation under heaven*' yet each one '*heard them speaking in his own language.*' It does not say that the disciples were speaking in every language, but that the foreigners *heard* them in their mother tongues (Vs. 8 also states this).

Think of the logistics for a moment. We know from verse 41 that about 3,000 people responded to the Gospel that day and were baptised. From this, we can assume that the crowd present must have numbered many thousand. How could 120 disciples, each speaking in a different language, get into close proximity to those whose mother tongue they were apparently speaking? Imagine the cacophony and the confusion! I am being facetious, but did one disciple quickly hold up a huge sign saying 'Russian speakers over here!' and another 'Latin here!?' I think not. No, the only way it could feasibly have happened is if the disciples were speaking what to some might have seemed like gibberish, and the Holy Spirit manifested the gift of interpretation to the actual hearers. The fact that some made fun of them and said, "*They have had too much wine?*" (vs. 13) backs up this understanding of what was taking place.

Paul encouraged all to speak in tongues, as he did, but he instructed that they should only do so in the church meetings if someone was present to interpret. In other

In 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 it has *'The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by [with, in] one spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one spirit to drink.'* The first half of this passage refers to our inclusion in the one body of the church. Water baptism stands as a sign of the new birth and by virtue of that, inclusion in the body of Christ, the Church. At rebirth, the Holy Spirit immerses us into the believing community. However, the second part of the passage speaks more of an infilling of the energy of the Holy Spirit for life and ministry.

It is probably better to refer to 'baptism' as inclusion into the church at the time of spiritual re-birth, and 'infilling' as subsequent empowering experiences. I do not believe, however, that we should place too much emphasis on the actual words we choose to use to describe these spiritual realities. What for me is clear from scripture is that the Holy Spirit both includes us in the community of faith at rebirth, and empowers us for service continually thereafter.

Another reason why we cannot regard tongues as the only, and even initial, evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in a believer's life, is that the Acts record mentions prophesying as an initial manifestation as much as it mentions tongues. In addition, the scriptures record instances where believers were, for the first time, powerfully impacted by the power of the Holy Spirit, yet did not appear then to speak in tongues. Paul is an example of this.

Distinguishing between spirits:

A simple search of the New Testament reveals that *pneuma* (spirit) applies equally to the Holy Spirit, the human spirit, and to demonic spirits. To distinguish

Distinguishing between spirits is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit whereby He reveals the spiritual origin of a word, behaviour, or characteristic.

between spirits is therefore the manifestation of the Holy Spirit whereby He reveals the spiritual origin of a word, behaviour, or characteristic. He reveals whether the phenomenon originates from Himself, or from the human spirit, or from a demonic spirit. This spiritual discernment warns and guides us and it enables us to make the right prescriptive choices in counselling and in other situations. For instance, if a particular behaviour is demonic in origin, then the person concerned needs deliverance from the evil influence in the authority of the Lord Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit. If the origin is the person's own spirit then a better approach would be to counsel and to teach the person to apply the Word of God.

Perhaps another personal example would be helpful. Whilst living in East London my wife had made friends with our elderly neighbour. She was a nominal Christian of sorts and someone had given her two little books of daily readings. She gave them to my wife Pat because we were "born-again" and

she thought that we would probably like that sort of stuff.

When I got back from work that day the two little books were lying on the kitchen counter. As my eyes fell on them, I knew intuitively that there was something very wrong with them. I picked one up and examined it. It had a pretty cover with pictures of flowers and attractive lettering. Inside, each page was devoted to a day of the month and had a short Bible text and some points on which to meditate. Everything looked fine but I was still bothered. I searched for details of publisher or sponsoring institution but could find nothing.

Then a thought occurred to me and I paged through the entire booklet looking for one word.... Jesus. There was not a single reference to the Lord Jesus Christ! It turned out that the booklets were distributed free of charge by a pseudo-Christian cult.

Tongues and Interpretation: I have already made the point that tongues are a supernatural expression of praise and worship and need to be interpreted if uttered in the gathered congregation.

Classic Pentecostal doctrine holds that tongues are the only evidence of the 'baptism of the Holy Spirit'. I find this

scripturally insupportable. In the first place, we need to define the meaning of 'baptism' in, or of, the Holy Spirit. Many Charismatic's use the term 'Baptism' in the Holy Spirit when in fact they mean 'Infilling'.

The Lord Jesus used the words 'Holy Spirit' and 'baptise' together only in Acts 1:5 (11:16). "*John baptised in [with] water, but before many days you shall be baptised in [with] Holy Spirit.*" Acts 2:1-4 tells of the fulfilment of that prophecy.

What you need to note here is that on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was empowering the disciples, but He was also giving birth to the church. The Old Testament records the tragic day when God separated the peoples of the

Tongues are a supernatural expression of praise and worship and need to be interpreted if uttered in the gathered congregation

world by causing them to speak in different languages. They had become united in their idolatry and the confusion of their 'tongues' effectively dispersed them. The book of Acts

contains the detail that on the day of Pentecost Jerusalem was host to '*God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.*' At Babel, God separated mankind into the different nations of the world. In Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, God united representatives of these nations into a new nation, the church. Many languages separate humanity but tongues of praise unite us all again in one new nation, the church.