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GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

A Research Paper Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for elective
P-200

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The topic of spiritual gifts is a relatively recent theological development. Beginning in 1971 and following on the heels of the Pentecostal movement of the early 1900s and the Neo-Pentecostal movement of the 1960s, a great deal of material has been written about the gifts of the Spirit. The following chart, based on the number of listings in the Christian Periodical Index, bears this out.¹

<u>Years</u>	<u>Gifts, spiritual</u>	<u>Gift of Tongues</u>
1956-1960 (5)	1 listing	0 listings
1961-1965 (5)	3 listings	17 listings
1966-1970 (5)	2 listings	11 listings
1971-1975 (5)	19 listings	20 listings
1976-1979 (4)	20 listings	8 listings

Yet the vast amount of material does not mean that all has been written on the subject. The history of spiritual gifts, for example, is one area where scholarly work is practically nonexistent. What is available does no more than scratch the surface.

Nor does this mean all that has been written has been especially helpful. In fact, the release of so many books and articles within such a short span of time has caused much repetition. C. Peter Wagner writes:

In preparation for writing, I read 48 books on spiritual gifts, . . . By the time I passed 20 books, I began to suspect that there is much repetition in current literature. After 48 I was sure of it.²

Nor does this mean that there is an abundance of scholarly work in general on the subject. Most is written for layman and pastor alike, and it seems that the authors followed Kenneth Kinghorn's methodology when he wrote:

This volume . . . was written for the nonspecialist. The professional scholars can fend for themselves.³

This paper does not attempt to remedy that situation. Instead, it is a bringing together of the material this writer read (thus making it repetitious itself) into one document for his own use. But this was not done haphazardly. To make this information into a paper, three criteria were used. First, only whatever was seen as most important was included. Hence many illustrations and examples have been omitted, for, while they may clarify and concretize the various topics, they add little substance to the discussion. Second, a conscious effort was made to place the material within a Lutheran context. This meant restating some items on the basis of the formal (Scripture) and material (Gospel) principles of the Lutheran Confessions. Last, but actually first in importance, any interpretation of spiritual gifts had to proceed on the basis of the grammar, historical setting, and context of Scripture itself. All was to be done exegetically, not experientially.

Before going any further, it will be helpful for the reader to know what the term "spiritual gift" means in this paper so as to avoid misunderstanding. It is not limited to just the spectacular gifts of the Neo-Pentecostal movement, i.e., glossolalia, interpretation, miracles, and healing. Rather, the focus will be on the spiritual gifts in general

based on four key passages. They are I Co. 12-14, Ro. 12:1-11, Eph. 4:1-16, and I Pe. 4:10-11. (All Scripture passages will be from the New American Standard Bible.) This author's own working definition flowing out of these passages is:

A spiritual gift is a special attribute which is given by the Holy Spirit to every believer according to God's grace. This attribute is given to empower the believer to serve in the building up of the Church as this gift is used within the context of the Church.

This author found that focusing on the total subject of spiritual gifts had the beneficial by-product of putting the whole Neo-Pentecostal movement into better perspective. Too often, when spiritual gifts such as glossolalia or healing are mentioned, two attitudes surface--charisphobia and charismania.⁴ The latter glories in them; the former avoids them. Neither should be the case. Neither has to be the case. In fact, the Church can be benefited greatly by the current emphasis on spiritual gifts, but only when the topic is approached in a totally Christocentric way. In other words, when it comes to spiritual gifts, Christians must look singly at Christ while seeking to serve Him through the ministry of varied gifts which the Spirit bestows on the Church.⁵ It is this Christological emphasis in the midst of the Holy Spirit's work that is most important. That was Paul's approach to the subject (I Co. 12:3), and it must be the same today. Without it, spiritual gifts become abused and possibly a detriment to the Church. It is for that reason that a separate section dealing with the relationship between the Spirit and Christ will be included.

The format for this paper is relatively simple. First,

a brief section on the history of spiritual gifts will be given. This will be followed by an indepth doctrinal study of the subject. On the basis of that study, each gift will be discussed with the purpose of providing a definition for that gift. And last, the benefits and dangers involved with the use of spiritual gifts within the Church today will be discussed. But, while the format is relatively simple, the topic of spiritual gifts is not. Thus it is wise always to keep in mind Paul's advice when exploring the subject.

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware (I Co. 12:1).

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

In the original outline for this paper there was a lengthy section planned for providing the history of spiritual gifts. But, after reevaluation, it has been left out. There are two reasons for this. First, it was not a high priority when research was done and, as a result, very little time was spent on the historical antecedents. What would have been included here would have been no more than a regurgitation of what was read. Second, there isn't much to write about. As mentioned in the introduction, scholarly material is scarce. In fact, of all the references in this paper's bibliography, only three had a historical survey of any length. They are listed here so as to provide the location where one can find a basic history concerning spiritual gifts.

Kinghorn, Kenneth, Gifts of the Spirit, pp. 9-19.

Stuenkel, Walter, A Lutheran Approach to Biblical Picture of Spiritual Gifts, pp. 33-36.

Wagner, C. Peter, Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow, pp. 19-27.

However, this does not mean that the history of the subject of spiritual gifts should be overlooked. C. Peter Wagner believes there is much gold to be mined in this area and makes this comment about such research:

It is reasonably certain that evidence will continue to build showing that charismatic gifts were operative in

segments⁶ of the church in many different eras of church history.

Such certainty is well founded. On the basis of Scripture, there can be no doubt that the Spirit never ceases to work within the Church, continually bestowing His gifts (I Co. 12: 7-8). Even when the Church goes through a dark age, His presence is there.

Still, it must be admitted that there has been much ignorance and neglect on man's part throughout the past ages about this aspect of the Spirit's work. However, since 1971, this has changed. Kenneth Kinghorn captures the implications of this recent attention to spiritual gifts when he writes:

In a new way, Christians are experiencing various spiritual gifts, and are asking perceptive questions about the nature and function of these gifts. One may fairly say that never in the history of the Christian Church has there been such a wide-spread interest in the biblical teaching about this vital aspect of the Christian life. For this enthusiasm we can give thanks to the Lord of the church, for out of such interest may come fresh insight and renewed vigor for the people of God.

CHAPTER III

THEOLOGY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Words Used for Spiritual Gifts

There are three words used in the four key passages which are translated "spiritual gifts": Χαρίσματα, Πνευματικά, and δωρεά. The first, Χαρίσματα, is by far the most common, and it is found in Ro. 12:6; I Co. 12:4, 9, 28, 31; I Pe. 4:10. The root stem is Χαρ, from which is formed the familiar Χάρις or grace. Thus any word study of Χαρίσματα must flow out of an understanding of Χάρις.

The basic meaning of Χάρις outside of Scripture is that of something which brings well-being among men, i.e., joy, delight. From that basic meaning a variety of individual meanings are derived: grace, favor, beauty, thankfulness, gratitude, delight, kindness, and others.⁸ Later uses of the word indicate another connotation had been added, that of a ruler's favor. This in turn led to the idea of favor and power from a supernatural source.⁹

But it is in the New Testament that the meaning of Χάρις is greatly enriched, for there God's undeserved and unmerited favor and kindness toward man finds expression. Of course, the reason for this enhanced meaning is Christ Himself (Ro. 5:15). The grace of God is always grace in Jesus Christ. That is how God's grace is revealed, and it is in Christ alone that God's

grace is found. Man can do nothing to merit this grace. It is given solely through the Person and Work of Jesus. This makes Paul's use of χάρις at the beginning and end of his letters more than just an empty wish for salvation. It is the one word which captures the essence of God's decisive saving act in Jesus Christ as well as all the consequences in the present and the future.¹⁰

Sinners who are called and embraced by this grace of God in Christ find that this grace now determines the entire course of their lives. The reason for this new spiritual atmosphere is that God's grace gives the gift of the Holy Spirit at conversion. The Spirit then takes up residence in the individual, claims possession of him, and leads him to live a life to the glory of God and in service to his neighbor (I Co. 3:13).

With the Spirit's presence comes innumerable benefits of God's grace, but, for this discussion, the benefit of the Χαρίσματα, gifts of grace, is the important one. Χαρίσματα is a verbal noun derived from χαρίζομαι. It means "gifts freely and graciously given" or "favors bestowed." What must be emphasized above all else is the given aspect. These gifts are just that--gifts. They come from God's love and mercy as He works through His Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. As with that initial gift of the Spirit Himself, these gifts are not rewards for service or living a good Christian life or anything else. The usage of Χαρίσματα in Scripture allows for no other meaning than this gift concept.

However, a certain distinction needs to be maintained

between Χάρις and Χαρίσματα. Χάρις refers properly to God's attitude, His gracious disposition toward man, His favor, and it is an attitude that finds its highest expression in Christ. From this attitudinal grace flows God's innumerable blessings, of which the greatest is that initial gift of the Spirit. Commonly referred to as the gift of grace, or saving grace, it refers to those who are brought to faith in Christ by the Spirit which results in their salvation. Such saving grace is available to all sinners without distinction or preference.¹¹ Eph. 2:8 expresses this concept with "For by grace you have been saved through faith, . . . it is the gift of God." Χαρίσματα, the gifts of grace, on the other hand, refers to the gifts God gives through His Spirit to such redeemed individuals. As will be seen later, these gifts are given variously and with distinction upon those who have been embraced by God's saving grace. A slight alteration of Eph. 2:8 might express this idea. "For by grace you have received a spiritual gift, . . . it is the gift of God."¹² Χαρίσματα, then, are gifts of grace and are as undeserved as the gift of grace which brings salvation. The source is God as He works through His Spirit, and man is the passive recipient in both the initial gift and the spiritual gifts.

The second word is Πνευματικά, and it is found in I Co. 12:1; 14:1; 12, 37. It is derived from the word Πνεῦμα, and it conveys the idea of belonging to the realm of the Spirit (also spirit, but not for this discussion), or of the essence of the Spirit, or manifesting the Spirit.¹³ Except for I Pe.

2:5, it is used exclusively by Paul and mainly in I Corinthians. In I Co. 14:37 it is a masculine noun, and means "spiritual men," that is, those who manifest the Spirit of God in their lives more than other Christians by their love and concern for others. The three other uses are neuter nouns, and can be translated "spirituals" or "spiritual things (gifts)."¹⁴ Colin Brown states:

In I Cor. 12:1; 14:1 . . . pneumatica is used in a more restricted sense in reference to spiritual gifts, more or less equivalent to charismata.¹⁴

Elsewhere in Paul's letters, though, the use of πνευματικά as a neuter noun seems to indicate the whole range of activities, attitudes, and experiences which draw their significance from the Spirit in contrast to the merely physical and worldly (Ro. 15:27, I Co. 9:11). This has led some to distinguish between πνευματικά and χαρίσματα. Typically, it is argued that πνευματικά is either inspired speech or the spectacular gifts of the Spirit.¹⁵ The reasoning here is based on a combination of the word's meaning and Ro. 1:11. First, πνευματικά describes those gifts which belong to and are accentuated by the Spirit, and, because they so contrast with human or worldly gifts, they cannot find explanation in terms of natural ability. Inspired speech and/or spectacular gifts would best show this contrast. Second, Ro. 1:11 uses πνευματικά as a qualification word for χαρίσματα. Thus, as a qualifying word, πνευματικά has a more restricted meaning, hence, inspired speech, a spectacular gift. χαρίσματα on the other hand, as a word qualified, has a broader meaning. It can be used for any and

all of the spiritual gifts. What all this means is best explained by E. Earle Ellis.

. . . in I Cor. 12:1 the "spiritual" gifts (or persons) are connected directly with "speaking" ἐν πνεύματι; when in I Cor. 12:4ff., other charisms come into consideration, the expression broadens.¹⁶

Even more important, I Co. 14:1 then can be given a decidedly Pentecostal flavoring. The "desire earnestly spiritual gifts (πνευματικά)" would mean to be zealous for inspired speech and the spectacular gifts.

This writer believes such reasoning is forced and somewhat contrived. The word does not demand such a meaning.¹⁷ In fact, Colin Brown sees just the opposite as true, that is, πνευματικά is the more general or "ambiguous" term.¹⁸ That this is so is indicated by Paul's use of the term as an introductory word (I Co. 12:1). Also, Eph. 6:12, where πνευματικά refers to evil spirits, gives added credence to the idea that πνευματικά was a more general term than χαρίσματα. Considering the context of I Co. 12-14 is spiritual gifts in general and that Paul's usage is somewhat ambiguous, this writer sees πνευματικά as practically a synonym of χαρίσματα in I Co. 12-14. As such, the πνευματικά are indeed supernatural, not because they are so manifestly unusual, but because they are given by the Holy Spirit.

The third word is δωρεάς (Eph. 4:7) or δώρα (Eph. 4:8), and Bruner gives the following meaning:

Dorea(n), like epaggelia ("promise"), is used in the most gracious associations in the New Testament. For instance, in describing the gospel in his locus classicus Paul writes that we are "justified freely (dorean) by his

grace" (Rom. 3:24). Dorean is a word literally "for nothing," "unmerited," "given as a gift," "without a cause."¹⁹

It is with the word δωρεά that the impossibility of man earning any spiritual gift from God is emphasized. For example, in Acts 8:18-24 Simon Magnus tries to buy the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter's reply (vv. 20-23) quenches his and any other attempt to obtain the gift (δωρεάν) by human means. Like χαρίσματα and πνευματικά, δωρεά means a gift of God's grace.

Before moving on to the next section, it is wise to comment on I Co. 12:4-6 where there is a triadic description of spiritual gifts. In verse four the word used is χαρισμάτων which designates the gracious gifts which the Spirit distributes. In verse five the word used is διακονιών, ministries, which reminds the reader that all gifts are intended for service for others. In verse six the word used is ενεργημάτων, workings, which emphasizes what God does.²⁰ But a strict correlation should not be made between the three words and the three persons of the Trinity. Rather, the emphasis is on the fact that there is one source for the gifts--the Triune God. In any discussion on spiritual gifts, then, the Giver must never be forgotten. God is the source of all gifts of grace.

A Lutheran Perspective on Spiritual Gifts:

Justification and the Means of Grace

Lutheran theology is very explicit on its material principle. The one article of Christian doctrine at which all theological thinking has its beginning, its center, and its

culmination is justification by faith, that is, man is saved solely by the merits of Jesus Christ, and this salvation is appropriated by an individual through faith. The reason justification is placed at the center is because Scripture itself does so (I Co. 2:2). Thus spiritual gifts must relate to justification without contradicting or superceding it.

As has been shown in the previous section, Scripture's use of the terms for spiritual gifts agrees completely with justification as to its source: the Triune God. Just as through the Father's love, Christ came to earth, fulfilled the Law, took sinful man's punishment, and reconciled the world to His Father, so also it is the Spirit who bestows spiritual gifts. But the source is not the only place where agreement must occur. Neither can one's understanding of spiritual gifts be at variance with the way by which God bestows such blessings: the means of grace. Again, it is justification and its relationship to the means of grace which is the basis for integrating spiritual gifts and these means.

It is the conviction of the Lutheran Confessions that God has bound man to certain means or instruments by which justification is imparted to man. They are Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the Word. A quote from the Smalcald Articles will bear this out:

Accordingly, we should and must constantly maintain that God will not deal with us except through His external Word and Sacrament.²¹

This is not to say that God is bound to these means. To limit the freedom of God's action is not implied, for the Augsburg Confession says:

. . . the Gospel and the Sacraments. Through these, as through means, He gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where He pleases, in those who hear the Gospel.²²

Granted, the connection with the means of grace is still the overriding factor, but the "when and where He pleases" leaves room for God to act as He sees fit. Thus the Lutheran Confessions assert that the rule is that God sees fit to work through these special means, while for Him not to is the exceptional or miraculous. No one should expect to meet Him in any other way. Man is bound to these means, and, as a result, should look to them for the spiritual blessings God would bestow on him.

Yet this is not a mechanical, "ex opere operato," idea. Rather, the means are effective solely, as the above quote from the Augsburg Confession stated, because the Spirit is working in them. Stuenkel writes:

In these means of grace the Holy Spirit is active, and through them He invites, urges,²³ persuades, and draws men to realize their justification.

But justification is not the only work which the Holy Spirit does through these means. Flowing out of this initial activity comes the continual activity of sanctification, that is, leading the individual to serve God and man with good works. A person is justified not so he can continue to sin but for the purpose of giving the divine help needed to stop sinning. Such sanctification, though, is never perfect this side of death (I Jn. 1:8). While justification is complete due to God's declaration of total forgiveness for those covered with Christ's redeeming blood, the old Adam is always at work in the lives of all believers (simul justus et peccator). This makes con-

tinual contact with the means of grace imperative. It is there that God, through His Spirit active in them, strengthens a Christian in his sanctification and gives him the power to crucify the old Adam (Gal. 2:20).

What does all this have to do with spiritual gifts? Simply this: when one receives a spiritual gift, he receives it as the Spirit works through the means of grace. As mentioned before, while it is theoretically possible that God would work apart from the means, for all practical purposes, it is through Word and Sacrament that the Spirit bestows spiritual gifts. In other words, when a person receives the initial gift of the Spirit at his conversion through these means, he also receives the gifts the Spirit has apportioned for his life as well. And, as with sanctification, it is through the means that continual contact with the Spirit brings the insight to discover what gifts one has and the power to utilize them for the good of all. It is this concept which is very important to remember when dealing with some of the controversial gifts as will be seen later.

At this point, however, the practical application is that it is always sinners who possess spiritual gifts, and such gifts are the work of God in Christians through the means of grace. Thus spiritual gifts are not a result of a person's increase in sanctification. God gives them to all believers whether mature or not. While growth in the Christian may lead to a better use of spiritual gifts, possession of them has nothing to do with how far one has progressed, only with God's

grace in giving them through these means. Richard Jensen puts it this way:

Language concerning these gifts should never, therefore, be language about people and their growth. It should always be language about God and His unbelievable grace.²⁴

The Relationship of Jesus and the Holy Spirit

While it would be interesting to detail the work of the Holy Spirit throughout Scripture, it is beyond the scope of this paper to do so. For helpful treatments on this valuable background material, please refer to:

Michael Green, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, pp. 18-47.
Lorenz Wunderlich, The Half-Known God, pp. 59-74.

What is important for this paper, though, is the relationship of the work of the Spirit to Jesus Christ. Two key passages will be the basis for this discussion.

... no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit (I Co. 12:3).

But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me (Jn. 16:13, 14a).

The task of the Spirit is to bear witness, to glorify, to honor Jesus Christ. His work is totally Christocentric (notice how this expresses the material principle of Lutheranism) as He works to place the confession "Jesus is Lord" at the very center of every person's life. It makes no difference whether one is a Christian or an unbeliever, the Spirit's work is to obtain this statement of faith in Christ as the Savior. This makes the heavy emphasis on evangelism in the New Testament

understandable. As the message of Jesus Christ crucified and risen is proclaimed (means of grace), the Spirit works through that proclamation to bring people to faith or keep them in that faith. Not by pointing to Himself, but by giving power to that message, by showing the need for Christ (Jn. 16:8), by revealing Christ's attractiveness, and by bringing about that commitment to Christ as Lord. Once such a relationship between Christ and the believer has been established, the Spirit continues to bear witness to Christ in every aspect of the Christian's life, including spiritual gifts, so that the Lordship of Jesus is affirmed and expressed. Oswald Sanders uses the illustration of a person in a dark room. Until a light is switched on, no one can see him. What the light does for that person, the Holy Spirit does for Christ.²⁵ He also gives a quote from Charles Ross that is most enlightening:

It was the delight of the Son to glorify the Father; it is the delight of the Spirit to glorify the Son. Not that the Holy Spirit adds anything to the personal and mediatorial glories which now encircle Him as seated on the throne of His glory; but the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus in the view and experience of men. Indeed, it is truly delightful to notice the different instances of glorifying that we have here. The Son glorified the Father on earth; the Father glorified the Son in heaven; and now again the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ on the earth, in the hearts of His people.²⁶

This Christocentric ministry of the Spirit has two practical results. First, for the Christian, it is the Spirit who makes Christ's graceful work of love and forgiveness a present reality. While basically a repetition of what was just said, the implications of this need to be noted. By pointing to Christ, this makes what happens today through the power and

presence of the Spirit the same work that Christ worked in the past.²⁷ There are not two different works--that of the Spirit and that of Christ, but one--that of the proclamation of the Kingdom of God to the hearts and minds of lost sinners so as to bring them into God's Kingdom. The only difference is time and extent. What Jesus could do only locally and for a few short years, the Spirit does omnipresently and for the duration of time. Added to that, He can take up residence not only with a person but also within him. This means the wish to be a historical contemporary of Jesus is a wish of ignorance. Jesus is with a believer in a far more powerful way than just walking beside someone. By the Spirit's indwelling, the teaching of Christ is heard and at the same time given Spirit-led insight. Christ's death and resurrection is given deeper significance than could ever have been grasped by just being with Christ. Thus, through the Spirit's witness to Christ, continuing Christ's work both with and within a person, Christians are indeed blessed by God.²⁸

Second, for the topic of spiritual gifts, the Christocentric ministry of the Spirit has the practical result of giving an important criterion for judging whether a gift is from God or rightly used. Very simply, does the gift or its use glorify Christ? If it glorifies man or some spiritual experience, then it fails the test of being a properly used spiritual gift. But, if it honors Christ, then the evidence par excellence is present for its acceptability. This means any gift dealing with speech must have its content focusing on Christ as

Lord. If the gift is one of service, then Jesus is the reason for that service. And this same criterion applies to all other gifts as well. The Spirit's ministry is Christocentric. All that is said about spiritual gifts must reflect that. Oswald Sanders has captured this fact well when he says:

The Spirit in turn is jealous for the glory of the Son. . . . He cannot bear to see a cooling of love for Christ. He longs to see the Lamb of God vindicated and adored in the scene of His humiliation and rejection. To this end He directs all His powers.

The Spirit's primary concern is to glorify Christ, and to secure the acknowledgment and practical manifestation of His Lordship in our lives. He does not add anything to the personal glories of the ascended Christ, but He glorifies Him ⁱⁿ the experience of men. He reveals and explains Him.

Baptism and the Fullness of the Spirit

This is a somewhat controversial topic today. Many Neo-Pentecostals speak of baptism in the Spirit as an operation of the Spirit distinct from and in addition to His regenerating work, and that it is to be sought and obtained by the believer.³⁰ When so received, the individual gives evidence of the occurrence by being able to speak in tongues. Such evidence of glossolalia or other spectacular gifts shows that the person has been filled with the Spirit. This interpretation is usually based on certain descriptive passages within the Book of Acts with little reference to the didactic passages of the Epistles. As such, this position has been thoroughly discredited, especially by Frederick Bruner in his book A Theology of the Holy Spirit. Since such a rebuttal is not particularly germane to this paper, it will not be dealt with here. But what the concepts of baptism and fullness do mean has a certain importance for this

study and therefore will be presented. What follows is by no means a complete treatment of the subject, just some key points. For a more indepth discussion, please refer to John R. W. Stott, Baptism and Fullness, which this writer found to be a most helpful book.

Baptism of the Spirit is a descriptive phrase for justification, that is, for receiving the Holy Spirit at conversion. That this is so is seen by a close look at I Co. 12:13:

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Basically, what this verse is saying is that the result of the baptism in the Spirit is a union between Christ and the members of His Church, His Body. The result has occurred because of the work of the Holy Spirit in adding members to the Church by bringing them to faith. Four facts about this verse will bear this out:

1. This baptism is common to all believers as seen by the use of the word "all" twice in the verse.
2. It is a past event in the believer's life as indicated by the aorist tense "we were all."
3. The "into one body" refers to the Church, the body of Christ as determined by the context. Thus, by this baptism, there is incorporation into the Church, and this happens at conversion.
4. The mention of Jew, Greek, free, and slave shows that there is no distinction when it comes to this baptism. If one has been baptized in the Spirit, he has become a member of the Church through his conversion.³¹

What this implies is that such a baptism in the Spirit is synchronous with the reception of Christ.³² It can be nothing else than the universal Christian experience of receiving the gift

of the Spirit, which, then, is the initial Christian experience.³³

For Lutheran theology, this is intimately related to water baptism. As stated earlier, water baptism is one of the means of grace by which the Spirit is sent into the life of an individual. For infants especially, who cannot respond to the external Word nor examine themselves to receive the Lord's Supper, baptism alone remains as the vehicle to impart God's grace. At these occasions of infant baptisms, there is occurring both water and Spirit baptism at the same time (Acts 2:38-39). For the child, it is the initiatory experience of the Spirit's saving work within his life. While water baptism for adults does not carry this same beginning experience of the Spirit simply because the Word, another means of grace, has already conveyed that blessing, there is still a close connection between the two. It is in adult water baptisms where the Spirit baptism is experienced anew. That previous baptism of the Spirit becomes powerfully present in the life of the believer now baptized with water. Whether infant or adult, though, the emphasis is the same. The baptism of the Spirit is the initial, universal Christian experience of being brought to faith in Christ through the gift of the Spirit, and that Spirit baptism occurs through the means of grace, particularly water baptism.

Many authors would not agree with that "experience anew" in the above paragraph. For them Spirit baptism is a one-time affair and not repeatable.³⁴ In a sense this is true. When

one is baptized, he receives Christ and that is a once-for-all event in his life. But in another sense it is not true. There is a continual experience of Spirit baptism, that is, repeated hearing of the words of absolution, both publicly and privately through the means of grace. Luther called it daily baptism, and, while he was referring to water baptism, the intimate relationship between the two (Christian baptism is baptism with water and Spirit) makes such a phrase applicable to Spirit baptism. Daily baptism is nothing more than a returning to the promises in water baptism where the Spirit, who has given spiritual life, assures the individual that he has eternal life and works to create the Christian life daily. Baptism is not the end product, a once upon a time event. It is the beginning, the down payment of the Spirit's further work, who is now free to be active within a Christian's life. Therefore, daily that person experiences the Spirit's recreating work. Paul uses the idea of earnest money to convey this fact (II Co. 1:22; 5:5). In other words, baptism, whether water or Spirit, usually both at the same time, is the pledge that more will follow.³⁵

In actuality, though, the question of whether Spirit baptism is a one time event or not is mostly semantics. What Lutherans call daily baptism, that continual return to the promises of baptism in repentance and faith to draw upon the power of the Spirit, is termed "fullness of the Spirit" by others. Stott's definition is:

When we speak of the baptism of the Spirit we are referring

to a once-for-all gift; when we speak of the fullness of the Spirit we are acknowledging that this gift³⁶ needs to be continuously and increasingly appropriated.

In either case, it is a repeated return to the means of grace so that the Spirit can control more and more of a person's life. The key passage here is Eph. 5:18-21, for it contains the phrase "be filled with the Spirit." The verb has four points which need to be noted:

1. It is an imperative. The fullness of the Spirit is obligatory.
2. It is plural. The fullness is applicable to the whole Christian community.
3. It is passive. Man cannot aid in this filling. Rather, by contact with the means of grace, he is filled by the Spirit.
4. It is present tense. Since a present imperative refers to continuous action, the fullness is both present and continuous.³⁷

In other words, to be filled with the Spirit, like daily baptism, means that one returns to the promises which God has given at baptism, or in the Word, or during the Lord's Supper, so that the Spirit can exercise more and more control over one's being. To be full of the Spirit is to be in daily contact with the Spirit and governed by Him so that the Christian is transformed into the image of Christ. The fullness of the Spirit leads to restrained and rational Christian behavior.³⁸

This has an important practical implication. To be filled with the Spirit is evidenced, not by how many or what spiritual gifts one has, but by how one uses them as he lives his Christian life. It is the moral, not the miraculous, that makes a Spirit-filled Christian. One may be an immature baptized

Christian, but to stay a babe in the faith, leading a carnal life, shows a lack of fullness. As Stott says, the need is not to be baptized as some Neo-Pentecostals claim, but

. . . to recover the fullness of the Spirit which they have lost through sin or unbelief, thus becoming what the Corinthian Christians were, namely, "unspiritual" or "carnal."³⁹

Spiritual Gifts

On the basis of the above doctrinal study, the thrust of this paper now turns to the topic of spiritual gifts in particular. What follows, though, is not a continuous discussion of the subject. Rather, individual aspects of spiritual gifts will be treated separately.

Definition

Every author has his own definition of spiritual gifts, yet certain features are present in nearly all of them. These common characteristics are:

1. It is a special something. The various words describing just what kind of gift it is are: qualification, ability, attribute, and capacity.⁴⁰ This writer prefers the word "attribute" because it has a more general, all-inclusive nuance to it. The other words can be seen within this "umbrella" nature of "attribute." At the same time, "attribute" has the connotation of a "distinct feature" which is what a spiritual gift is in the life of a Christian. It is a distinguishing feature that the Spirit has given him.
2. Given by the Holy Spirit. This is always included for the obvious reason that Scripture says so in I Co. 12:7, 8.
3. To every believer. Again Scripture is explicit here-- I Co. 12:7, 8, 11.
4. According to God's grace. There are two reasons for this phrase. One, the word χαρίματα means "gifts of grace." Two, Ro. 12:3 includes this concept.

5. To empower the believer to serve in the building up of the Church. Again, Scripture is determinitive here-- I Co. 14:12.

6. To be used within the context of the Church. Here Paul's illustration of the human body in I Corinthians 12 is the reason for the inclusion of this concept.

On the basis of these six points, all of which are entirely Scriptural, the definition this writer will be using is:

A spiritual gift is a special attribute which is given by the Holy Spirit to every believer according to God's grace. This attribute is given to empower the believer to serve in the building up of the Church as this gift is used within the context of the Church.

Distribution

As mentioned in the definition, every believer is given a spiritual gift by the Holy Spirit (I Co. 12:7). Such universal and divine distribution has two practical implications. First, it is indeed reassuring that the Spirit supervises the administration of the gifts. It is His wisdom that gives the gifts, not some religious board or individual. This avoids the temptation to make status symbols of certain gifts or establish such control over gifts that only those which are wanted are seen. The Spirit gives as He wills, not as man determines. Second, only those gifts which are needed for a particular time and place are given. An individual has gifts which fit perfectly God's plans and purposes. Sometimes the distribution agrees with a person's wants; sometimes it doesn't. But at all times the gifts have a specific place in the ministry of an individual as he lives his Christian life.

Equally important in the discussion of distribution is the understanding of how these gifts have become available for

the Spirit to give them to Christians. Eph. 4:7-11 indicates that they are won for believers by Christ's death on the cross. By quoting Ps. 68, Paul is showing that the same God who redeemed Israel in the Old Testament by the Exodus has descended to earth and gone to Calvary to defeat sin, death, and the devil. The consequence is that the victorious Christ now gives spiritual gifts for the good of the Church just as God did for Israel through His Exodus triumph. In other words, all spiritual gifts have been bought by Christ's blood. They are extremely costly, each and every one of them.⁴¹

Again, two implications surface. First, to depreciate oneself as being unable to do anything significant for the Lord because he is not gifted is both undiscerning and ungrateful.⁴² It is undiscerning because Scripture says everyone has a gift. It is ungrateful because such an attitude fails to recognize the price Jesus paid to make these gifts available. There can be no depreciation of oneself under the guise of humility in this area. Second, this gives all the gifts an equal dignity and status. Each and every gift is to be highly esteemed because they were purchased at Calvary.

Put both of these facts together (given by the Spirit and won by Christ), and there is absolutely no room for competition in the realm of spiritual gifts. No one has to run after certain gifts which someone has deemed best--they are distributed by the Spirit. No one can boast about having a certain gift--they were all purchased by Christ. No one should be envious of another's gift--his has the same dignity and

status as all others. As Kenneth Kinghorn says:

In the church there are no second class Christians, and there are no super Christians. While Christians do differ in function, they all stand equal in status.⁴³

Another aspect in the distribution of spiritual gifts that should be considered is the question of when they are given. Scripture gives no clear word on this, but it seems probable that it is at conversion. Three reasons are usually given for this inference:

1. Gifts are given by the Spirit which seems to rule out the possibility of it being before conversion.
2. Gifts are given to every believer which seems to demand that it be at conversion. If it were after conversion, some would have a gift and others would not.
3. Gifts are given for the good of the Church which indicates that, when one becomes a member of the Church at conversion, he receives a gift to serve within the Church.⁴⁴

Whether this is so or not is really beside the point. The more important question deals with when the spiritual gift was discovered and put to use. It is at that time that the ministry of the individual finds expression through a spiritual gift. Thus, when a Christian endeavors to discover his gift, he can be sure it will be there.

This naturally leads to the question of how many gifts an individual can have. Scripture gives no set number other than to say everyone has at least one. This means that three assertions about the number a Christian may have can be made.

1. An individual has at least one (I Co. 12:7).
2. An individual may have more than one. Scripture doesn't negate this but confirms it with the life of Paul.
3. No one has all the gifts. The metaphor of the body rules this out (I Co. 12:15-21).⁴⁵

Purpose

There are five reasons why spiritual gifts are given by the Spirit. While these purposes overlap, they all emphasize various aspects of God's rationale for giving them.

1. Christians need these supernatural gifts because they are fighting supernatural foes. Without them, the Church would be sapped of much of its power to fight Satan and his cronies.

2. Heb. 2:4 indicates that the spectacular gifts were used as divine credentials for the apostles and prophets to authenticate their messages and work. However, since Scripture has been written, this purpose is no longer needed.

3. I Co. 14:12 cites the purpose of building up or edifying the Church. Spiritual gifts are to be used to encourage and help those within the Church. They are given to help others grow as Christ's disciples, and, when properly used, they strengthen the saints of the Church.

4. I Co. 14:20-25, where Paul seems to indicate that a manifestation of intelligible speech leads an unbeliever to repentance, shows that spiritual gifts extend the Church's ministry and work. As Christ's body, each individual in the Church relates intimately to every other Christian there. The exercise of gifts is not to be thought of as operating independently of this supporting body of Christian believers. Rather, this unity enables the Church to reach out to the unchurched more effectively so as to bring more people into the Church.

5. The special ministries of Eph. 4 have a specific function all their own. They are to equip the saints, and they are to do so in two ways. First, they are to repair the saints, that is, fix up broken and dislocated lives for active service once again. Second, they are to prepare the saints, that is, get them ready for active service.⁴⁶

What these purposes point out, especially the last three, is that spiritual gifts are not for self-edification. They are God's equipment and enabling for effective service, not means by which one draws attention to himself or to satisfy

his own ego. Some may counter this not for self-edification assertion by quoting I Co. 14:4 ("one who speaks in a tongue edifies himself"), but this argument may or may not reflect Paul's intention in writing these words. William McRae argues that it doesn't. He says Paul is not speaking of the purpose of gifts in this verse but the by-product of their use. One by-product of the use of any gift is self-edification. A Christian gets a certain degree of satisfaction when he uses his gift. But this is not a purpose. It is only an accompanying circumstance. He also mentions I Co. 13:4 ("love does not seek the things of itself") and says this indicates that self-edification is not a valid purpose for spiritual gifts.⁴⁷ Still, one cannot be dogmatic about the question. On the one hand, why would only tongues be given this self-edification purpose? But, on the other hand, despite McRae's argument, Paul may be indicating that tongues do have this purpose. The experience of many Neo-Pentecostals seems to bear this out. Whether a by-product or a purpose, though, this does not affect the general, primary function of spiritual gifts. They are for the common good of the Church (I Co. 12:7).

Talents and Gifts

Spiritual gifts are distinct from natural talents or abilities. They differ by their source, nature, and purpose. At the same time, gifts and talents may dovetail into each other and become interrelated. As a result, the fine line between the two cannot be absolutely drawn in the practical realm. However, the differences can be explored theoretically.

Both gifts and talents come from God, but there is a difference. God gives talents to all people. They are part of one's unique personality, and both atheist and Christian are so blessed. Spiritual gifts, on the other hand, are a special outpouring of God's grace only to believers. Thus talents are given to everyone; gifts only to believers. This is seen in three ways:

1. Talents depend on natural ability. What we are born with, those we are to develop and use. Gifts depend on spiritual endowment. Without the Spirit present to give power to the gifts, they would be ineffective.⁴⁸
2. Talents are present from birth,⁴⁹ while it is probable that gifts are given at conversion.
3. The purpose of talents is to instruct, inspire, or entertain on a natural level. They deal with the physical and social aspects of life, and do not permanently change men. Gifts are given for the benefit of the believer's relationship to God. Christian service and spiritual growth, the purposes of gifts, deal with man on his deepest level of existence. They are able to bring about real life-saving changes in people by directing them to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.⁵⁰

But gifts and talents often are related to each other. Many times a person with a talent will have it become a spiritual gift. While it is impossible to detail its change, suffice it to say it is some type of heightening, intensification, or "Christianizing" (giving it proper motive and objective).⁵¹

The reason for this dovetailing of talents and abilities rests in the fact that God is the same God in both creation and new creation. His foreknowledge sees every future need of the Church and thus works out His perfect will in the creation of an individual. The Spirit then transforms that talent into a gift. Why God doesn't do this in every case is left to His

wisdom. But He does do it enough that the relationship between gifts and talents must be acknowledged along with their differences.

Fruit and Gifts

For providing a concise differentiation between spiritual gifts and spiritual fruit, Kenneth Kinghorn has one of the best.

Scripture distinguishes between spiritual gifts and spiritual fruit. The fruit of the Spirit (see Gal. 5: 22-23) consists of a ninefold cluster of graces--all leading to moral virtues. Spiritual fruit has to do with our relationships and the spiritual quality of our lives. Spiritual gifts, on the other hand, have to do with our calling and our function in ministry. Spiritual fruit relates to what we are; spiritual gifts relate to what we do.⁵²

This makes spiritual fruit a most important aspect in the Christian's life. Every Christian is expected to progress in his sanctification, and the fruit of the Spirit is the normal, expected outcome of such Christian growth, maturity, and Christlikeness.⁵³ These nine "graces" describe what every Christian should long to be. Unlike spiritual gifts, the Spirit works to produce the same fruit in all Christians. Thus fruit is not discovered like gifts, but it is developed through continual contact with the Spirit in the means of grace. It is a gradual affair, one where the believer walks with God, letting God shape his character.

This has one basic implication for spiritual gifts. For effective and proper use of the gifts, the fruit of the Spirit is a prerequisite. I Co. 13:1-3 makes this abundantly clear. Without love, one of the fruits, the gifts are worthless. John Stott summarizes this relationship between fruits and

gifts this way:

Here is a Christian who makes great claims in the realm of experience, but lacks love, joy, peace, kindness, and self-control: I think all of us will say that there is something wrong with his claims. But here is another Christian who, whatever his experiences and gifts may be, brings us in his character a sweet savour of the Lord Jesus: it is surely his company that we all prefer. For we see in him a token of God's grace and a temple of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁴

Christian Roles and Spiritual Gifts

When looking over the lists of spiritual gifts, it is obvious that most of them describe activities which are expected of every Christian. For example, all Christians are to witness to non-Christians about the Gospel, but only some have received the gift of evangelism. These activities which all Christians are to do, whether one has received the corresponding gift or not, are called Christian roles. They are to be performed because it is God's revealed will that all Christians do these activities. Thus the absence of a gift is no reason to shirk Christian responsibility. As Leslie Flynn writes:

But even if we don't have a divine plus in a particular area, we are still obliged to obey commands in that sphere.⁵⁵

While this brief treatment hardly does justice to the relationship between Christian roles and spiritual gifts, this is one topic which is easier to illustrate than to explain. Hence here are examples of this relationship.⁵⁶

<u>role</u>	<u>gift</u>
instructing others	teaching
encouraging others	exhortation
doing kindness for others	showing mercy
financial support	giving

But not all gifts have such corresponding roles. The

spectacular gifts of tongues, interpretation, miracles, and healing are no where commanded in Scripture for all to perform. Thus there is no need to promote these gifts. They should not be forbidden, but neither should they be sought as roles for all Christians.

Permanence

This is another controversial topic. Some claim the above four spectacular gifts have ended. Others agree and add the gifts of apostleship and prophecy to the list of those no longer present today. A few even claim that all have ceased to exist after the Apostolic Age. On the other hand, others claim that all the gifts are given today in some form or another. This author believes the latter case is true but acknowledges that both sides have their strengths and weaknesses. Donald Bridge and David Phypers in their book Spiritual Gifts and the Church have a thoughtful argument for the permanence of spiritual gifts. Their reasons are (and this writer concurs):

1. To say they have ceased goes beyond the clear statements of Scripture. If anything, Paul's regulations on the use of tongues and his command not to forbid them (I Co. 14:39) indicate he saw no end to any of the gifts, especially tongues.
2. It requires the dismissal of those experiences of the gifts by sincere and godly Christians as counterfeit in direct contradiction to the evidence of their lives and ministries.
3. It creates an artificial division between the dramatic and less dramatic gifts when God had given them all for the functioning, growth, and expansion of the Christian Church.
4. Since all the gifts are appointed by God for the healthy exercise and edifying of the Church, there is room

for a cautious and careful exercise of them all.⁵⁷

The reasons for certain gifts' cessation is given a fair hearing in William McRae's book entitled The Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts. His reasons are:

1. On the basis of Heb. 2:3-4 and I Co. 13:8-13, certain gifts are temporary. The Hebrew text shows that the role of miraculous gifts is that of confirmation. God authenticated His messengers and messages by them when there was not a New Testament canon to do so. The Corinthian text, while not explicitly stating that these gifts are temporary, gives added testimony to their transitory character.
2. The evidence of the Old Testament shows only two temporary outbreaks of such miraculous gifts: Moses and Elisha--Elijah, not a continuing presence of them.
3. The Book of Acts points out that the miraculous gifts appear on the Biblical scene only during periods of prophecy and/or new revelation.
4. Church history indicates very little evidence of the existence of these gifts.
5. The nature of some gifts, such as apostle, suggest they are temporary. When the last of the Twelve died, so did the gift.⁵⁸

McRae's argument is persuasive, but it goes beyond Scripture's explicit witness. Much is deduced rather than extracted from the Bible. Also, to limit the function of certain gifts to only a confirmatory function goes against Paul's statements that there are other purposes, the main one being the edification of the Church. To quote church history when so little research has been done is dubious at best. Therefore, this writer believes that the gifts, in some form or another, continue today.

Number

Another area where there is little agreement by the var-

ious authors is that of the number of spiritual gifts. For example, Flynn lists 19, Hoover 21, Bridge 18, Wagner 27, and Kinghorn 20. There are two reasons for this. First, both the gifts and the lists in Scripture overlap. This causes some writers to treat certain gifts separately, while others treat them together. To see how this could be confusing and lead to such varying counts, the seven lists in the four key passages are provided on the following page. The question marks indicate an uncertainty as to whether the gift is the same or not. These problems will be discussed as the gifts are defined in the next chapter. One point of interest here is the gift of prophecy. It is the only gift to appear in all the lists. (I Pe. 4 has the general term "speech" which would include prophecy.) Such attention to this gift means it rates high in importance. This is confirmed by Paul's praise of the gift in I Co. 14.

Second, the lists mentioned in Scripture are probably just illustrative and incomplete. Although some would disagree on this point, there is no convincing reason for believing that Scripture has given an exhaustive catalog of the gifts. If anything, the rather haphazard arrangement of gifts (some are repeated, some are listed only once, lists vary in length) indicates that each list is a limited selection from a much larger total. This would certainly be indicative of God Himself who is a God of rich and colorful diversity and loves to give generously and in variety.⁵⁹ Such an open ended approach to the number of gifts also keeps churchmen from boxing God into

<u>I Co. 12:6-10</u>	<u>I Co. 12:28</u>	<u>I Co. 12:29-30</u>	<u>I Co. 13:1-3</u>	<u>Ro. 12:6-8</u>	<u>Eph. 4:1-16</u>	<u>I Pe. 4:9-11</u>
Wisdom						
Knowledge			Knowledge			
Faith			Faith			
Healing	Healing	Healing				
Miracles	Miracles	Miracles				
Prophecy	Prophet	Prophet	Prophecy	Prophecy	Prophet	
Discernment						
Tongues	Tongues	Tongues	Tongues			
Interpretation		Interpretation				
	Apostle	Apostle			Apostle	
	Teacher	Teacher		Teaching	Teacher	
	Helps (?)			Serving		
	Administration (?)			Government		
			Poverty			
			Martyrdom			
				Exhortation		
				Giving		
				Mercy		
					Pastor	
					Evangelist	
				Hospitality (v. 13)		Hospitality

Also I Co. 7:7 Celibacy

certain categories. To allow for more gifts is to be open to God's giving of any gift whether it is in Scripture or not.

But, for the purposes of this study, the gifts examined in the next chapter will be limited to those listed in Scripture. Those are the ones where definite information can be gleaned from the Bible itself. To go beyond the Biblical witness leaves one on uncertain ground, for the authority of God's Word is missing. This writer agrees with Kenneth Kinghorn when he writes:

If we move out beyond the charismata clearly indicated in the New Testament, we have difficulty knowing where to stop. When we depart from a Biblical base we find it almost impossible to avoid speculation.⁶⁰

With that limitation in mind and this doctrinal study finished, the necessary background material has been presented to look at each of the gifts in particular.

CHAPTER IV

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

Introduction

The space and time limitations involved in a study such as this do not allow for the indepth exegetical work needed to give each gift the "fine tooth comb" treatment.⁶¹ What follows, though, will be enough to draw some conclusions. The format for the gifts presented first, sixteen in total, will be the same. First, a brief study of the word itself will be done. Second, how other authors have viewed the gift will be noted. Third, this writer's conclusions will be presented. Fourth, a definition based on those conclusions will be assigned each gift.

The order for the presentation of all of the gifts will be fairly simple. The five enabling gifts of Eph. 4 are first, and these are followed by the other eleven. After this first set of gifts will come a second set of three, poverty, martyrdom, and celibacy. Since these are seldom given much attention, they will only be briefly explained in this paper. Following them will be a separate treatment of the four spectacular gifts. While other authors give these final four a lot of attention, just a few conclusions by this writer will be presented in this study.

There is no attempt to rank the gifts. Scripture does

not do so other than Paul's list in I Co. 12:20 where apostles, prophets, and teachers head the list. Yet Paul does indicate there is a further gradation of the gifts in I Co. 12:31 ("desire the greater gifts"). Not because one gift is superior than another, but because one brings more edification to the Church. That is why the intelligible prophecy is preferred over the unintelligible glossolalia. Thus the ranking is practical. The greater gifts are those which deal with the ministry of the Word, that is, bringing a person into closer fellowship with Christ through the Gospel. This means that one time exhortation may do that, while another instance may see teaching or serving perform that function. There is no hard and fast order. The best one is the one used for the edification of the saints.

The Sixteen Gifts

Apostle (ἀπόστολος)

There is no single meaning for the word "apostle." This can be seen by the 38 pages devoted to the word in "Kittel's" Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (hereafter abbreviated TDNT) and 10 pages in Colin Brown's Dictionary of New Testament Theology (Hereafter referred to as simply Colin Brown).⁶² In fact, the latter source says:

. . . if we take the growth of the canon seriously, we shall have to recognize that the concepts of the apostolate vary in the various New Testament writings. However we try to understand these various conceptions in their historical settings, we cannot avoid hypothesis.⁶³

The variety of meanings is given expression in TDNT as follows:

1. A man who is sent and sent with full authority.
2. A man who is lawfully charged to represent the person and cause of another (Jn. 13:16).
3. A commissioned representative of a congregation (II Co. 8:23).
4. A comprehensive term for bearers of the New Testament message. This is used primarily of the Twelve, but it also applied to the first Christian missionaries, including some who didn't belong to even the wider groups of disciples (Acts 14:4, Ro. 16:7).
5. Jesus Himself (Heb. 3:1).⁶⁴

Combining these meanings (except 5) with Paul's statement in I Co. 9:1 about an apostle having to have seen the risen Lord Jesus, the TDNT says:

By the commission of Jesus a number of men, especially those who were closest to Him during His life, became His representatives in the sense that they took His place and thus assumed an authoritative position in the little company of Christians. Yet this altered situation meant that they also became missionaries, and this form⁶⁵ of their work was what really characterized their office.

Nearly every writer breaks this gift into a restricted and broader sense. The restricted sense focuses on the person of the apostle, that he was an eyewitness of the historic Jesus, personally appointed and authorized by the Spirit (I Co. 9:1; Mk. 3:14; Jn. 14:25,26). This definition limits it to the Twelve, Paul, possibly James (Gal. 1:19), and maybe one or two more. In this restricted sense, the gift ceased with the death of the last of these early apostles. The broader use focuses on the work of an apostle, that he was sent with authority. Thus, by taking the characteristics of an apostle's work and applying them to today's church scene, two aspects of the gift are seen as continuing beyond the

Apostolic Age:

1. The work of a missionary because he is sent by a church to another place (Acts 13:1-5), he preaches the Gospel where others have not gone (Ro. 15:20), he adapts to a culture to win people to Christ (I Co. 9:19-23), and he responds to open doors from the Lord (I Co. 16:5-9).

2. The work of one who has authority over a number of churches because he is so recognized by other believers (Acts 9:26-30), he trains the leadership of these churches (II Tim. 2:2), he is concerned for the spiritual welfare of new believers (I Thess. 2:1-12), and he is responsible for understanding and maintaining pure doctrine (I Tim. 2:4).⁶⁶

In this broader sense, a missionary with church planting goals and/or denominational leaders might have this gift.

This writer sees that the gift proper has ceased. When Paul listed the gifts, apostle appeared at the top each time. This shows that he is using the term in the restricted sense of those special few individuals commissioned by Christ Himself. What confirms this restricted use is that Eph. 2:20 connects the apostles with the foundational work of building up the Church by writing Scripture. But, since Scripture has been written and the foundation laid, there is no longer any need for their foundational work in the Church. Thus there can be no new revelation as a first century apostle would have been needed to give it. The Bible is God's complete revelation for all time, and man is bound to that means of grace.

But God is a God of variety (I Co. 12:4-6), and, therefore, He can use people today to do some of the other work that the apostles did. Paul started churches, and certain men do so today. Paul was an authoritative leader over churches, and certain men fill that position as they use Scripture

for their guide. Thus the gift of apostle continues today but only in these "lesser," secondary ways. The individual could be a missionary, a church leader, or both. C. Peter Wagner breaks the gift into two distinct gifts, apostle and missionary, but this writer would keep them together.⁶⁷ Both flow out of the same word--apostle--and both find their best expression in an apostle--Paul.

An apostle is one who takes the Gospel message in its totality and uses it to start new churches wherever this may be, and/or uses it when he exercises authority over a number of churches.

Prophet (προφήτης)

The noun for prophet means "one who proclaims and expounds divine revelation." While New Testament usage refers mainly to the Old Testament prophets, it is used of John the Baptist, Jesus, others who proclaim the Kingdom of God, and those who possess this gift. In its verb form it can be understood in an ethical, paracletic sense (I Co. 14:3, 31), in a revelatory sense (Mt. 26:68), or in a predictive sense (Mt. 15:7).⁶⁸ Two words commonly used for the work of a prophet are foretelling (telling the future) and forthtelling (speaking forth to the present situation) of which the latter is much more common in the Biblical witness. The prophets were vehicles of divine revelation who bore witness to God's truth.

When this writer was taking notes on the various authors' treatments of the spiritual gifts, two gifts far surpassed all the rest in material written about them: tongues and prophecy. But, while most authors (those in this paper's bibliography)

agreed upon the use, abuse, and restrictions concerning glossolalia, no such consensus exists for prophecy. Still, even though each writer has his own emphasis, four basic positions surface.

1. It is a foundational gift which has ceased. William McRae describes it as "the capacity to receive and speak forth⁶⁹ truth which has been given by direct revelation from God." The key words are "direct revelation." Prophecy's purpose was for use before the completion of Scripture. Once the New Testament was written and God's revelation for mankind completed, the gift was no longer needed. Hence it is not present today.

2. It is a direct revelation from God as needed in specific situations which continues even today. Michael Green describes it as ". . . the Spirit taking over and speaking directly from Christ through you, in words you had never intended to use at all."⁷⁰ The purpose of this "direct revelation" is not just foundational, but it also gives encouragement, conviction, and guidance (I Co. 14:3). Its use is limited due to Scripture, but it has not ceased.

3. It is the ability to interpret and explain Scripture so that God's revealed Word hits men right where they are as they are in need of it. A prophet is the man who is able to forcefully and relevantly proclaim and expound the Bible and its Law/Gospel message. A series of quotes from Leslie Flynn gives the essence of this interpretation. "Any prophecy today must of necessity be the unfolding of the significance of that completed message. . . . All modern prophecy that is true is but the republication of Christ's message. . . . Prophecy⁷¹ applies the perennial Scripture to the present scene."

4. It is both direct revelation and the proclamation of Scripture. Kurt Koch says prophetic insight in the present can be "the unconscious inspiration of someone who preaches the Gospel," and "All preaching that is inspired by God."⁷²

This writer believes that the same is true of prophecy as that which he wrote of apostle. Therefore, much of what follows is a straight repetition of that previous paragraph with only appropriate words and concepts changed. The gift of prophecy proper has ceased. When Paul listed the gifts,

prophet appeared second. This indicates he is using the term in the high Biblical sense of direct, divine revelation.

A prophet was one to whom the Word of God came and who spoke that very Word.⁷³ That prophets in this sense were temporary is confirmed by Eph. 2:20 in that there is no longer any need for their foundational work. There can be no new revelation as a first century prophet would have been needed to give it. The Bible is God's complete revelation for all time, and man is bound to that means of grace.

But God is a God of variety (I Co. 12:4-6), and therefore He can use people today to do some of the same work that the prophets of old did, namely, work through that revealed Word of the apostles and prophets to make it real and near to people today. Thus the gift of prophecy continues today but only in this "lesser," secondary sense of exposition or proclamation of Scripture--interpretation number three above.⁷⁴

This means that interpretations two and four above do not meet with this writer's approval. The two basic reasons are that Scripture is complete so that no new revelation is needed and they violate man's dependence on the means of grace. Interpretation number one above is too limited, for other work of the prophet continues past the Apostolic Age. Thus prophecy has not ceased, and, while it is theoretically possible that God may give direct revelation, man should not look for that as a lifelong gift. Rather, one who positively and redemptively applies the Biblical message to man's current situation would continue the gift and keep the means of grace in its proper

role. In this writer's experience, though limited and non-authoritative for others, he has heard what he considers to be gifted preachers but never a direct revelation from God through some individual.

A prophet is one who takes the Gospel message in its entirety, proclaims its Law/Gospel content with exceptional clarity, and applies it to the needs of man with a view to evangelize or edify.

Evangelist (εὐαγγελιστής)

Literally this means "preacher of the Gospel." It is found in the New Testament in Eph. 4:11, Acts 21:8, and II Tim. 4:5. The TDNT says it was originally a function rather than an office, and it was closely connected to the gift of apostle. That connection appears to have been that the evangelist was a pupil of the apostle and continued on the work of the apostles both as a missionary and in the congregation.⁷⁵ In other words, he, like apostles, led people to Christ by proclaiming the glad tidings about Jesus Christ.

Reading the various authors on the gift of evangelist is an effort in repetition as all say about the same thing. The emphases are on the content of the message--the Gospel of Jesus Christ, proclaiming it effectively--persuasion evangelism, and having a large measure of success--disciples are made. Many also mention the difference between the Christian role where everyone should witness to their faith (Acts 1:8) and the gift of evangelism where there is a special passion for the work as well as unusual success.

This writer agrees with these other authors' conclusions

and makes them his own.

An evangelist is one who effectively and persuasively proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ so that unbelievers respond in conversion and discipleship.

Teaching (διδάσκαλος)

The Greek word means "teacher," and is used of Jesus (Mt. 8:19), John the Baptist (Lk. 3:12), Jewish scholars (Lk. 2:26), and an official of the Church (Acts 13:1). Men having this gift had the task of explaining the Christian faith to others and of providing a Christian exposition of the Scriptures.⁷⁶

Authors today are fairly well in agreement on what is the gift of teaching. Usually two elements surface: content and communication. The teacher imparts not just any subject but Biblical truth. At the same time, he makes that truth come alive for others. Through this individual, God's Word is presented in a learnable and relevant way so that it can be applied. This is what distinguishes it from a talent. The gift of teaching uses the Gospel to initiate involvement and obedience. It leads to a change in one's life. A talent for teaching often does no more than give understanding of a topic. Seldom does it drastically change one's life. Thus some may have a talent for teaching but are not good Sunday School teachers--they lack the gift. Others have both the gift and talent and are a real blessing to their students. Women also have this gift, but St. Paul restricts their use of it so that they do not exercise authority over a man by lecturing him in public worship (I Tim. 2:12).

Again, this author agrees with such an assessment about this gift.

A teacher is one who acquires the various truths of the Word of God, studies them, and then communicates them clearly so that people can apply those truths to their lives thereby helping them to grow to spiritual maturity.

Pastor-Teacher (ΠΟΛΥΤΗΝ)

This is the hyphenated gift of Eph. 4:11. Due to the Greek grammar, this gift has two aspects: pastor and teacher. Because of this, some assert that to have the gift of pastor requires that of teacher as well.⁷⁷ Others believe that the separation of the gifts elsewhere, that is, teacher stands alone in the other lists, leaves room for one to have the gift of pastor alone or with that of teacher.⁷⁸ This author believes it is impossible to be dogmatic about the question. Scripture does not give enough information. Thus, while it is true that the word ΠΟΛΥΤΗΝ appears elsewhere apart from the gift of teaching, this is the only listing of the gift of pastor, and it is connected with the gift of teaching. For all practical purposes, it is an open question. For this study, though, the gift of pastor will be treated alone since teacher has already been discussed.

The word for pastor is literally translated as "shepherd," and, as a gift, is used figuratively of those who watch over a "flock" of Christians. As a shepherd has the responsibility for the temporal welfare of a flock of sheep, so a pastor has responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of Christians. In this sense, Peter became a pastor when Jesus told

him to "shepherd My sheep" (Jn. 21:16).

Authors today usually describe this gift in terms of the shepherd metaphor rather than explain it. When doing so, three aspects surface:

1. He leads the flock. The pastor gives spiritual leadership so that people choose paths that are the will of God and not entrapments into evil.
2. He feeds the flock. The pastor gives his people Biblical nourishment.
3. He protects the flock. The pastor warns and guards his people like a spiritual watchman to keep them from falling prey to anti-Christian influences.

One side note, the gift of pastor and the office of pastor are not identical. For any particular church, there is one man who is called to be the pastor. He is publicly to carry out the ministry of Word and Sacrament in behalf of the whole congregation. Every church is to have such a pastor, obtained by a proper call, and he sees to it that all is carried out decently and in good order. This office of pastor may or may not be filled with one gifted as a pastor. On the other hand, a congregation usually has more than one person with the gift of pastor, and it includes men and women alike. They serve as Sunday School teachers, youth counselors, Bible study leaders, and others. But those so gifted are all under the called leadership of the pastor of the congregation and are in no way to usurp his position. Also, as with the gift of teaching, women must be careful not to exercise public authority over men. But notice carefully that the restriction is on where and when women use their gift, not that they don't have it. This puts fresh insight into the women's ordination

question. Women can have the gift of pastor, but Paul's words make it clear that they cannot hold the office of pastor in a church. But, whether male or female, pastor or layman, one who has this gift will

. . . feed, strengthen, heal, bind up, bring back, seek, lead, protect, sacrifice himself, and demonstrate concern for his flock of spiritual sheep. He will know them personally and they will know him. He will minister because he wants to. He will serve with eagerness as a spiritual example to the flock.

As with the previous gift, this author agrees with the above summary of other authors' writings, but leaves open the question of whether teaching must accompany the gift.

A pastor is one who assumes responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers with the goal of leading them to a closer walk with Christ, feeding them Biblical truth to bring them to spiritual maturity, and protecting them from anti-Christian influences to preserve their spiritual lives.

Knowledge (γνῶσις)

The New Testament usage means "knowledge," and, like its Hebrew counterpart יָדַעַ, it emphasizes the experience of knowledge. This leads to a close connection between knowledge of God (His deeds and demands), and an obedient, grateful acknowledgement of that Christian knowledge.⁸⁰ To know God is to know Him with one's head and heart. This means that having such knowledge is indicative of the fact that God has first known the individual (Gal. 4:9).

There is some disagreement over the exact nature of this gift. The use in I Co. 12-14 doesn't give much information other than in 13:2 where it is connected with "mysteries." Scripture in general is just that--too general to be of much

specific help. Because of this, three different assertions are made about the gift:

1. It is the ability to understand and transmit the spiritual knowledge of God revealed to and by the apostles before Scripture was written. It is a foundational gift which teachers in the early church needed to maintain pure doctrine while the New Testament was being written. As such, it ceased when the canon was completed.⁸¹
2. It is the ability to understand truth that is unknown by natural means. It isn't related to intelligence, but is information that only God could have supplied supernaturally in a given situation.⁸²
3. It is the ability to understand the great truths of Scripture and expound them clearly. Here the individual grapples with the mysteries of the Gospel, clarifies them, and presents them to others in an understandable form.⁸³

This author believes no hard and fast dogmatic statement can be made, but the third description appears best. First, it allows for the continuation of the gift as opposed to the first description. Second, it is more in keeping with God's working through the means of grace as opposed to the second description. By emphasizing knowledge of the mysteries of the Gospel as revealed in Scripture, Scripture, as a means of grace, becomes the medium and the message for such knowledge. There is no doubt that God could give needed information on the spot to someone, but that is much too limited. It may possibly be an aspect of the gift, but not the gift in its entirety. Third, Scripture's use of knowledge in general, despite the reservation noted earlier, indicates that there is a close working with the facts of God and His work as revealed in Scripture. The gift of knowledge, then, would heighten or intensify this general Christian knowledge. These three reasons point to the third description as the best explanation

of the gift of knowledge.

Knowledge is the exceptional understanding of the truths of Scripture which, by study and systematization, are presented to others in an understandable manner.

Wisdom (σοφία)

In I Corinthians Paul contrasts the wisdom of men with the wisdom of God. The latter is "mysterious and hidden" (2:7), which means wisdom is not based on rational evidence. The wisdom of God does not consist of immediately intelligible and universal truths. Rather, wisdom is the beneficial and providential design of God underlying all of history and working out the fulfillment of history.⁸⁴ This God has done through His actions, specifically through Christ's death on the cross to effect salvation for all. Of course, this crucifixion as the wisdom of God is folly to the non-Christian. Such an unbeliever fails to understand its redemptive significance as well as the Scripture's witness to that wisdom. Also, this wisdom which is of God does not rest naturally within sinful man. No one can gain it by accumulating knowledge. Rather, its possession depends on the Word of Christ to give it content and the Spirit to bring it enlightenment. God's wisdom is revealed in Scripture. Added to all of this is a strong practical and moral aspect as seen in the Epistle to James.⁸⁵ Thus it is cognitive in that information about God's actions become understood and life-changing in that one orders his life on the basis of that wisdom.

Most writers see this gift as the practical application of the knowledge of Scripture, thus making knowledge the raw

material wisdom uses.⁸⁶ The emphasis, however, is not on the knowledge aspect so much as on the application, the declaring of that knowledge to a specific situation. Wisdom is said to be putting knowledge to work. The person who has this gift is a problem solver. He's the person who comes up with the answer at a deadlocked board meeting based on insights from Scripture. In other words, he knows and knows what to do with what he knows. Through him the right course of action has been indicated.

One author disagreed here. William McRae says it is the temporary gift of "receiving, knowing, and presenting the wisdom of God."⁸⁷ Basically, he equates this with the inspiration of Scripture, and says the results of such wisdom is "contained in the epistle of our New Testament."⁸⁸

The second view is much too limited in this writer's opinion. While the wisdom of God is comparable to the whole system of revealed truth, this body of knowledge aspect is only part of the meaning of wisdom. Also included is that practical, life-changing aspect. There is an application role involved in wisdom, and, when one does so effectively as he uses Scripture, problems will be solved and Christians edified. Both aspects continue today: insight and practical application.

Wisdom is divine enlightenment regarding the will and work of God as revealed in Scripture, and applying the resultant insights to daily life.

Faith (πίστις)

The word can be translated as "faith," "belief," or "trust," and appears over 550 times in the New Testament in

various forms.⁸⁹ While its most common meaning is that of saving faith, that is, the faith by which a Christian appropriates the saving merits of Christ's Easter work and applies them to himself, that is not the meaning here. Such saving faith is predicated of every Christian, while only certain Christians have the gift of faith. Rather, it is the faith whereby an individual trusts God to provide even in the most impossible circumstances.⁹⁰

The various writers are in one accord on this gift, and, typically, describe it as a faith that can move mountains (I Co. 13:2). It is an heroic faith which laughs at impossibilities and cries, "It shall be done!".⁹¹ Of course, it is limited to only those things which God wants, but the individual with the gift of faith has a sure perception of the will of God on a particular matter and believes that God will do it even when all the odds are against it happening.

This author agrees and believes Donald Bridge and David Phypers define this gift superbly.

The gift of faith is the outstanding faith given to some Christians enabling them to rely on God in a special way for the accomplishment of some specific task, or for the provision for their daily needs, or ~~for~~⁵² some special demonstration of His nature and power.

Discernment (διακρίσις)

In the New Testament, the noun for discernment is used in the sense of distinguishing or differentiation. In Heb. 5:14 the distinction is between good and bad, while in the gift list of I Co. 12 it is between spirits.⁹³ It is probably related to "test the spirits" in I Jn. 4:1.

Most writers agree that the gift is present today, and that it is the ability to discern whether a spirit is from God or not. The exception is again William McRae. He believes that the completion of the canon may have eliminated the need for this gift.⁹⁴ He is not dogmatic about this, but writes that the temporary nature of this gift is indicated by the role of Scripture. Before the New Testament was written, the gift was needed to judge who or what was or wasn't of the Spirit of truth. After the canon was formed, then the gift was no longer needed as Scripture would provide the norm for distinguishing between spirits. Other writers counter by saying that Satan can imitate every gift and pervert all truth, and thus the need for the gift is still present today. While most grant that a person so gifted would use Scripture as the standard and that Scripture has supplanted much of the need for this gift, the ability to see a phony before the difference is manifest to all by his results would be invaluable. Such a person would be an "advance warning system" who would prevent confusion and false doctrine from infiltrating the Church, whether it be of human or Satanic origin.

This writer sees the gift as continuing today but in a limited way, for Scripture has taken the place of this gift to a great degree. Still, certain individuals are able to see right through a person before his mistakes become publicly known. Other ways of describing this gift may be as intuition or an uneasy feeling, but, for those so gifted, it is the Spirit leading them to distinguish between the Spirit of truth and a

spirit of error.

The gift of discernment is the ability to distinguish between someone who is guided by the Spirit and someone who is lead by a spirit of error, human and/or Satanic.

Exhortation (παράκλησις)

Literally, the word is translated "the one called alongside of," but there are a variety of meanings within the New Testament. First, there is the call or summons concept, usually to give aid (Lk. 8:41). Second, there is the sense of exhort or encourage (II Co. 10:1). Third, there is the idea of comfort or console (II Co. 7:6). A related word, Παράκλητος, gives the flavoring this word embodies as it is the name Jesus gives the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:26, "Helper" or "Comforter"). For the spiritual gift, then, the word has various connotations, but the essence is encouragement.⁹⁵

While describing it differently, the authors are, for the most part, in agreement on this gift. They see the gift working mostly in the private, person-to-person realm of Christian counseling, although it may be exercised occasionally in public. It is usually described as a two pronged ministry. First, there is an exhortation aspect whereby the individual encourages another to pursue some course of action. Second, there is a comforting aspect whereby the individual encourages another in view of a past trial or tragedy.⁹⁶ In either case, encouragement describes the gift because, when the gift is used properly, others are strengthened, reassured, and lead to maturity.

If any of the gifts could be termed a "consolation prize," this is the one. In a world where sin and Satan abound, encouragement and exhortation are very much in demand. The person who has this gift will soon know it. People will come to him for help and consolation. It is a most practical and necessary gift. Blessed is the church which has individuals practicing this gift. To see the truth in this, follow the life of Barnabas in Scripture. This man obviously had the gift of exhortation.⁹⁷

The gift of exhortation is the ability to encourage another individual by either exhorting him to some course of action or consoling him during a trial with the result of growth toward spiritual maturity.

Giving (μεταδίδωμι)

The word has the nuances of "presenting," "giving," "bestowing," and others, but basically means "to give," "to contribute."⁹⁸

The various authors emphasize two basic points with this gift. First, it is not to be confused with the Christian role of giving. All are to give proportionately according to their faith. However, those with the gift look for opportunities to give much more, that is, with liberality (Ro. 12:8). Second, the characteristics of such a gifted giver are noted. He does so with great joy, with the single motive of sharing his wealth to promote the work of the Lord, without pride, unpretentiously, and freely. This person has been freed from greed, and loves to give his material possessions away to promote God's work. This he does with wisdom and stewardship.

Of course, it is not the amount that counts but the ability to give and to give in such great proportion to what one has received from the Lord.

Such is also this writer's conclusions, and he has found Ray Stedman's definition helpful.

It [the gift of giving] is the ability to earn and give money for the advancement of God's work and to do so with such wisdom and cheerfulness that the recipients are immeasurably strengthened and blessed by the transaction.

Showing Mercy (ἐλεάω)

The word can be translated "to feel pity" or "to show mercy." In the New Testament, such mercy is seen primarily as an attribute of God as He gives man salvation in Jesus Christ (Tit. 3:5). It is also used of people showing mercy to other people (Jas. 2:3). As a spiritual gift in Ro. 12:8, the word implies both attitude and action. The person feels compassion and acts to do something to help.

This, too, is a gift where much agreement exists between the writers. All assert that it is both attitude and action. It is the capacity to do acts of mercy. Most authors include Paul's qualification in Ro. 12:8, that is, cheerfulness. Such acts are not done with grumbling but joy. Flynn includes the obvious, but important, aspect that it is the Spirit who works such supernatural love and compassion which characterizes this gift.¹⁰⁰ This person is not just an humanitarian but one who shows mercy in Christ's name. The only disagreement among the authors concerns who is shown these acts of mercy. McRae says it is anyone who is in need and appeals to the parable

of the Good Samaritan.¹⁰¹ Flynn believes it is primarily exercised toward those within the Church and appeals to the purpose of gifts--the edification of God's people.¹⁰² Most authors agree with McRae.¹⁰³

As a gift, showing mercy moves beyond compassion. The kindness and supernatural love involved demand action. And these acts of undeserved aid are done with cheerfulness as they are motivated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This writer believes such individuals would never stop with just those inside the Church walls. Their compassion would reach out to all who need help. Such is the essence of the gift. It looks for ways to show mercy.

The gift of showing mercy is displayed by one who feels genuine compassion for all in need, whatever their affliction, and translates that attitude into actions which are done cheerfully, to glorify Christ, and relieve the pain of those suffering.

Leadership (πρῶτον), Administration (κυβέρνησις)

The word for leadership is literally translated "to stand before," and has various meanings, such as, to stand over, set over, superintend, preside, or rule.¹⁰⁴ In six of the eight times it is used in the New Testament, it designates one in a leadership position. The other two times, both in Titus 3, it is used in the sense of "devote" or "engage in." The word for administration, from which the word "cybernetics" is derived, is a noun meaning "ship master," that is, one who pilots a boat. The verb form means "to steer a ship," which also contributes to the "helmsman" or "administrator" concept of the noun. Such a man directs the affairs of the boat.

The authors split into three camps on this gift.

1. McRae, Kinghorn, and Flynn believe the two are practically identical. A person so gifted gives vision and direction to a project by setting the goals and making sure that all is done decently and in good order. McRae defines it as the "capacity to organize and administer with such efficiency and spirituality that not only is the project brought to a satisfactory conclusion but it is done harmoniously and with evident blessing."¹⁰⁵

2. Wagner and Hoover and Leenerts contend that they are two separate gifts. While giving very similar definitions, it appears that the difference lies in the idea that leadership involves the delegating and transfer of responsibilities to others who follow them, while administration¹⁰⁶ is the ability to make a church organization run smoothly.

3. Yohn answers the question by saying that the two are identical in a general sense, that of the function of leading, but distinct in that administration is a refinement of the general gift of leading. Administration, then, is one aspect of the total leadership responsibility in which things get done through people. Thus a leader may do everything by himself, while an administrator delegates responsibility.¹⁰⁷

This author agrees with Rick Yohn's assessment of the relationship between the two gifts and William McRae's definition of the gift. The two have the same function, that of setting and/or understanding goals as well as carrying out the project to a blessed end by seeing that it is done decently. At the same time, this leadership may be done by someone who has acquired the refined aspect of the gift, that of administration. He gets it done by delegating responsibility. In either case, the job gets done and done well.

The gift of leadership is displayed by one who knows the goals involved in the work of the Church and is able to lead people to do that work harmoniously so that a blessed and God pleasing accomplishment of those goals results.

Helps (ἀντίδουλαις), Serving (διακονία)

Since the noun form of helps occurs only in I Co. 12:28,

its meaning is somewhat uncertain. But, on the basis of its verb uses (Lk. 1:54; Acts 20:35; I Tim. 6:2), the concept involved is probably that of helping someone in his work or that of doing good deeds. The word for serving means just that--serving. Its most common uses are waiting at a table (Acts 6:2) and performing duties (Lk. 10:40).

Again, the authors split as to whether there is one gift or two. The two viewpoints are:

1. Stedman, Flynn, Yohn, and McRae consider the two to be the same gift. It is the ability to give help, to lend a hand, which enables another worker to devote more time to a spiritual ministry and/or to encourage and strengthen another spiritually.¹⁰⁸

2. Wagner, Hoover and Leenerts, and Kinghorn believe the two are separate gifts. While closely related, helps is a more person-centered ministry, while serving is a more task-orientated ministry. Kinghorn describes it this way: "The gift of helps enables one to see the needs of others and to respond willingly to the opportunity to minister. The gift of serving usually leads one to supply material and temporal services to the Christian community." Helps, then, refers to the relief of an individual's burden and service to the needs of a certain task.¹⁰⁹

This author sees a distinction between the two words and separates them into two gifts. The use of the word for helps in Scripture, though limited to just three uses of the verb and one for the noun, indicates this is a person-centered ministry which involves relieving a burden or responsibility. The use of the word for serving in Scripture, particularly the waiting on tables, indicates a task-centered ministry which helps accomplish certain goals. They are related but distinct.

The gift of helps is displayed by one who gives assistance to the life and ministry of other Christians thereby relieving them of spiritual and temporal burdens so that they can devote more time to a spiritual ministry.

The gift of serving is displayed by one who makes use of available resources to meet material and temporal needs so that desired goals can be achieved.

Hospitality (φιλοξενία)

The Greek word has two components: φιλο means "love" and ξενία means "stranger." When the two are together, the meaning is "hospitality." Colin Brown says hospitality is expected from the whole Church (I Pe. 4:9) and recommended as a virtue to Christians (Ro. 12:13).¹¹⁰ To be hospitable is to have a love for guests.

From the above study, a problem arises as to whether this is a spiritual gift or not. The only two times it is mentioned in connection with spiritual gifts, it is not in the list proper. In I Peter it comes before and in Romans afterwards. Also, it seems to be commanded to the whole Church in both cases. This has led Kinghorn and Yohn to not even mention it as a gift. McRae, while acknowledging that it should be a gift, does not discuss it.¹¹¹ However, Flynn, Wagner, and Hoover and Leenerts do treat it as a gift.¹¹² They justify their inclusion of it by appealing to the context in I Pe. 4 in that, right after Peter mentions hospitality, he goes on to talk about spiritual gifts. This contextual link implies that Peter saw hospitality as a gift. Of course, this is somewhat speculative, but it is also reasonable. Flynn's treatment of the gift is the most indepth. He sees the gift as applying to one who opens his home and warmly welcomes a guest so that the guest feels at home. The recipient receives the blessings of acceptance, fellowship, and love, while the host may receive divine direc-

tion and blessing (Heb. 13:2). While every Christian is to be hospitable, the person so gifted has a knack for doing it, and he is probably happier with guests around the house.

This author does not see this gift as coming from Scripture. The argument for its inclusion on the basis of context is persuasive but inconclusive. However, since the possibility exists that hospitality may be a gift in I Peter, and, since the Spirit could very well give the gift, it makes sense to include it as such here. The following definition is the one Flynn gave in his book 19 Gifts of the Spirit.

The gift of hospitality is that supernatural ability to provide open house and warm welcome for those in need of food and lodging. ¹¹³

Poverty, Martyrdom, Celibacy

These three are gifts in the sense that they are exercised by some for the strengthening and edification of the Church. The problem is that they are not included in the major gift lists of I Co. 12, Ro. 12, Eph. 4, I Pe. 4. Thus most writers do not treat them as spiritual gifts. Of the books in this bibliography, only Wagner and Bridge and Phipers had treatments of any length on them. But this writer believes they should be included. I Co. 13, where poverty and martyrdom are found, is a part of Paul's treatment on spiritual gifts. In fact, it is right in the middle, and this indicates its close connection with the gifts. The purpose of chapter 13 is not to give a sermon on love which interrupts the discussion on gifts, but it is there to show the uselessness of gifts without love. Celibacy is considered a gift because Paul called it so in I Co. 7:7.

Poverty

Voluntary poverty is simply the giving away of one's possessions and voluntarily living at poverty level in order to serve God more effectively. This means the individual has the gift of giving, but, through the gift of poverty, is able to go beyond proportionate giving to relinquish all wealth. The motives may include providing for the poor, to resist temptation, or to show faithfulness to God.¹¹⁴

Martyrdom

Martyrdom is the willingness and ability to undergo suffering, even if it means death, for the sake of Jesus Christ. It is true that many Christians were and are killed for their faith and probably did not have this gift. They were forced into the situation. Others, though, will willingly and even cheerfully undergo pain and death for the Lord. Such an attitude in opposition to man's self-preservation nature must be a gift from the Spirit. Through martyrs the Church is edified. Their example has strengthened others going through such trials. The way they suffered and died has brought their persecutors to inquire about the Christian faith and be converted. And their persecution has caused others to go and establish churches elsewhere. While Christians should never seek out martyrdom, those who have the gift are an edification to the Church.

Celibacy

Celibacy is the gift to remain single and enjoy it. Through this gift, an individual can serve the Lord with greater

freedom because he is able to devote more time and energy to church work.

The Spectacular Gifts

Tongues (glossolalia), interpretation, healing, and miracles are four of the most controversial spiritual gifts today. The Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal movements have made them, especially tongues, the gifts to seek and dwell on to the virtual exclusion of the others. On the other hand, others have reacted to this overemphasis by virtually denying the existence of these gifts. Kinghorn has termed it charisphobia and charismania, terms which seem quite appropriate.¹¹⁵ It is not this author's intention to devote undue attention to these gifts nor to ignore them. At the same time, he recognizes there is a need to hear both sides and come to a proper Biblical understanding so as to avoid unfortunate extremes. For that reason, the following books will be recommended for those who wish to have a more indepth study of these four gifts. For content and publishing information see the attached bibliography.

Bruner, Frederick, A Theology of the Holy Spirit
 MacGorman, J. W., The Gifts of the Spirit
 Jensen, Richard, Touched by the Spirit
 Gee, Donald, Concerning Spiritual Gifts
The Charismatic Movement and Lutheran Theology
The Lutheran Church and the Charismatic Movement

As for this paper's presentation of these gifts, it will be different than that of the previous gifts. Rather than separate the treatment into four distinct parts, this author's conclusions based on his readings will be presented yet heavily footnoted to show where further information can be found. How-

ever, a definition will end the treatment as before.

This author would also like to confess that he has had little contact with the Neo-Pentecostal movement other than in books. This hampers a study such as this, for it is mostly head knowledge without having undergone a "Neo-Pentecostal experience" or having a close relationship with someone who has. Therefore, if at times the discussion seems too general or not applicable, this may be the explanation. What follows, though, is what this writer sees as the Biblical picture for these gifts.

Tongues (γένη γλωσσῶν)

A. There are four basic kinds of tongues today.

1. Speaking under demonic influence. This is one gift that Satan can easily imitate, simply because it is so subjective and hard to evaluate.¹¹⁶ Also, other religions besides Christianity have speaking in tongues as a part of their worship service.¹¹⁷ Kurt Koch's book, Charismatic Gifts, relates numerous cases of demonic glossolalia.

2. Speaking under psychological and human response to religious emotion. Such speaking occurs when it is encouraged, expected,¹¹⁸ and results in status within the religious community.

3. Speaking in a foreign language unknown by the speaker but known by those who speak it. Such seems to be the case at Pentecost.¹¹⁹

4. Speaking in a "heavenly" language which can be known only by God's giving someone the gift of interpretation. Such seems to be the case at Corinth, especially in light of Paul's three analogies: musical instruments, the human tongue, and other languages.¹²⁰

Of these four, only the last two can be properly called spiritual gifts.

B. The gift of tongues is not a sign of the Baptism of the Spirit. This was discussed earlier (pp. 19-23). Baptism of

the Spirit is the same as conversion. For a Christian to ask for such a Baptism is nonsensical. It is like asking your wife to marry you.¹²¹ On the other hand, tongues is one of the gifts which may be given to an individual because this Baptism has placed the Spirit within a person. Of course, it could just as well have been any other gift.

C. The gift of tongues is not to be sought. The Spirit distributes gifts as He deems best. This means that no other gift is to be sought either.¹²² Gifts are to be discovered and then developed. This sequence is important because spiritual gifts are received, not achieved.¹²³

D. The gift of tongues is not to be forbidden. They can be a valid spiritual gift. Paul is not calling an halt to tongues in I Co. 12-14 (cf. I Co. 14:39), just to the abuse.¹²⁴ Two rules of thumb apply here and to the previous paragraph: "Seek not, forbid not,"¹²⁵ ". . . abuse is no argument for disuse but rather calls for right use."¹²⁶

E. There is both a public and private purpose for this gift. As mentioned before (p. 29), there is some question about ascribing a private, self-edification purpose to tongues when no other gift is explicitly given such a purpose. However, since most writers recognize that this is the case, it is included here. Through tongues, one is able to speak to God in prayer and praise in a whole new dimension. There is an element of freedom which leads the person to thank and glorify God as never before. It appears that the deepest longings of the heart are released by God in such prayer,

praise, and song.¹²⁷ In this private use, God is addressed, not man. Therefore, any interpretation which purports to be a direct message from God to man is suspect.¹²⁸ Also, such a direct revelation would violate the rule of man's dependence on the means of grace for God's revelation.

In its public purpose, it originally had two roles.

1. It was a gift which confirmed the message of the apostles and prophets. This function has ceased.
2. It edifies the Church. While this author found little explanation how this is so, as a spiritual gift it must. One possibility is that it is a means of worship.¹²⁹ Another is that it is inspirational to the faithful.¹³⁰

F. If the gift of tongues is to be used in public, then an interpreter must be present (I Co. 14:5). Unless one so gifted is there, tongues will not edify the Church because no one will know what is being said.¹³¹ In fact, without interpretation, tongues become a menace in worship services.¹³²

G. The reference to Is. 28:11 in I Co. 14:21-22 can have three meanings. All are based on the meaning the Isaiah passage has, that is, God's punishment of Israel was to be in the form of strange tongues. These tongues, such as the foreign tongues of Assyria, came to Israel because they did not believe. They were disobedient, and these tongues were a sign of God's judgment, a sign of His separation from His people.¹³³ From this understanding, then, comes the following interpretations:

1. Since the Corinthians preferred unintelligible speech, they were sailing dangerously close to the judgment of God. Their unrestricted use¹³⁴ of tongues was a sign of God's displeasure with them.

2. The Isaiah text is fulfilled in the New Testament by the Jews' rejection of the Christian faith. The gift of

tongues the Corinthians displayed was a sign that God was judging the nation of Israel and turning from it to the Gentiles.¹³⁵

3. The emphasis on tongues was disastrous for evangelism. Unbelievers would think Christians were crazy, and this would cause them to harden their hearts. While prophecy might lead a person to faith, tongues might cause one to blaspheme.¹³⁶

While all have their difficulties, this author prefers the last interpretation. The first one goes too far. It makes a spiritual gift a sign of God's judgment. The second is too specific. The gift of tongues is a judgment against the Jews, but they also turn away the Gentile unbelievers. The third, by accenting evangelism as Paul typically did, brings into focus the detrimental effect tongues has on bringing someone to Christ.

H. The gift of tongues is not a sign of Christian maturity. As stated before (pp. 31-32), it is a Spirit-filled, fruit bearing life that characterizes a mature Christian, not the possession of a certain gift. As proof of this, read I Corinthians. They were carnal yet gifted.

I. The gift of tongues is not the way to grow into spiritual maturity. Rather, this comes from contact with the means of grace. Sanctification is not a sudden acquisition of spiritual completeness but a gradual growth process as the Spirit controls more and more of a person.¹³⁷

The gift of tongues is displayed by one who can speak in a language which he has never learned.

Interpretation (ἑρμηνεία)

A. This is the attendant gift to speaking in tongues which

must be present if public manifestation of glossolalia is to occur.¹³⁸

B. The purpose of this gift is to draw attention away from the speaker and focus it on God by explaining what is being said.¹³⁹

C. Basically, it makes known what otherwise would be unintelligible speech.

The gift of interpretation is displayed by one who makes known in the vernacular the message of one who speaks in tongues.¹⁴⁰

Healing (ἰαμάτων)

A. This gift is unique in that it is described with two plural words: gifts and healings. The actual Greek phrase used in I Co. 12:9 is "gifts of healings." This could very well indicate that the gift means the ability to heal any and all diseases, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual. There is Biblical evidence for all three. Mt. 13:15 has an instance of spiritual healing; Lk. 4:18 emotional; Acts 5:16 physical.¹⁴¹ Of these three, emotional and spiritual healings are more frequently bestowed. Physical healings are rare for the simple reason that the Spirit does not wish to bestow it now as He did in the early church.¹⁴² Also, God has other ways to effect physical healings besides the immediate and miraculous.

B. God heals in a variety of ways.

1. Instantaneously. This is most often thought of when the gift of healing is mentioned. But God cannot be so programmed. It is only one way He heals.

2. Gradually. Sometimes God heals a person directly but does so over a period of time.

3. Through medication. Medical science is not to be despised.¹⁴³

C. There are some things this gift cannot do.

1. It does not heal every illness. The 100% death rate bears this out.

2. It does not account for all healing. Demonic and psychic healings are also possible.

3. It does not depend on the person's faith. Rather, it is God's will that makes the difference. When He doesn't grant healing, He has other purposes. Usually it is to test faith and cause Christian growth through trial.

4. It does not exist equally in all centuries. The Spirit gives it as the Church needs it.¹⁴⁴

D. James 5:14-16 does not mean that healing will always occur if a certain ritual is followed. Rather, the passage is saying that Christians are to use prayer and the best available medical research, which was oil in that age, since both methods of healing come from God.¹⁴⁵

E. With the miraculous aspect of this gift, it is helpful to distinguish between God's power and His willingness to heal. No one can deny that He has the power to intervene in the life of an individual and heal him. But neither can one claim to know fully God's will.¹⁴⁶ As mentioned before, sometimes God does not heal so that Christian virtues such as longsuffering, patience, and endurance can be produced.¹⁴⁷

F. While healing is possible, it should be remembered that the greater responsibility of the Church is to seek the salvation of an individual. The Book of Acts bears this out as the number of miracles decreased as time passed, while the proclamation of the Gospel moved more and more into the foreground of Apostolic activity.¹⁴⁸ Flynn captures this last point well with, "A body with crutches thrown away or a wheelchair dise

carded is great. But a soul with sins gone, removed as far as the east is from the west, is much greater."¹⁴⁹

The gift of healing is displayed by one whom God uses as His instrument to cure illness and restore health in the lives of others.

Miracles (ἑνεργήματα δυνάμεων)

A. This author likes Ray Stedman's definition of this gift, that is, "the ability to short-circuit the processes of nature by supernatural activity."¹⁵⁰ As such, it overlaps with healings, but it is a more general term for God stepping into His universe through an individual and setting aside the ordinary laws of nature to do something extraordinary.¹⁵¹

B. There are three reasons why miracles are not present today in the number they were in the New Testament Age.

1. The need for them to authenticate the apostles and prophets is gone. When the New Testament was written, the need for such confirmation ceased.¹⁵²

2. Miracles are not needed to validate the New Testament message today. Changed lives and the existence of the Church itself give evidence of God's presence in the world.¹⁵³

3. The more mature a Christian is, the less he looks for miracles as some type of sign. In fact, Jesus says faith does not need signs (Jn. 20:29). As Flynn writes, "But ordered lives are more important than rearranged molecules. The Lord would rather Christians walk by faith, not by signs."¹⁵⁴

C. As with healing, the greater miracle is salvation, not the breaking of physical laws by God's omnipotent power.

D. Miracles do not create faith (Lk. 16:31; Acts 4:16), nor do they increase faith (Mt. 12:39).¹⁵⁵ The creation and growth of faith comes through the means of grace. A miracle may draw attention to the Gospel, but it is the Gospel which does the

working of spiritual life.

E. Not all miracles are from God (Mt. 24:24; Rev. 13:13-14).¹⁵⁶

The gift of miracles is performed by one who is able to short-circuit the processes of nature by being the instrument through whom God chooses to perform such powerful acts.

CHAPTER V

USE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

How spiritual gifts should be used in the Church is an important question. Since they are in Scripture and were evidently used in the early Church, there is ample precedent for their use today. But it is not the objective of this paper to detail such a process of discovery, development, and use. This author believes that the many published books on the subject treat that topic much better than he could because of his limited practical experience. Also, it may not be all that helpful. Since each church is different, each will use them differently. But certain dangers and benefits for the use of spiritual gifts can be documented, and knowledge of them can be helpful. Thus the final portion of this study will focus on those dangers and benefits plus some general observations about the discovery of spiritual gifts. This author believes that such a treatment will aid in showing how God, despite man's misuses, is leading His people back to a rediscovery of the power available to them through faith in Him and His spiritual gifts of grace.¹⁵⁷

Dangers

Gift Projection

C. Peter Wagner has the most indepth study on this pro-

blem.¹⁵⁸ Basically, it is the projection of a certain gift by people who have the gift unto the whole Christian community, or, using Paul's terms, they desire the whole body to be an eye. When they do so, they unwittingly impose guilt and shame on other Christians by chiding them for not being as successful in this area as they have been. Today, this syndrome is particularly evident with the gifts of tongues and evangelism. What these people fail to recognize is that the Spirit does not give everyone the same gifts. Thus, for example, not everyone can be a persuasive evangelist. Those who are should realize that, and, rather than throw a guilt trip on other Christians, help them to fulfill their Christian role of witnessing. C. Peter Wagner writes:

They tend to say, in honest humility, "Look, I'm just an ordinary Christian, no different from anyone else. Here's what I do, and God blesses it. If you just do what I do, God will bless you in the same way." What they don't say, unfortunately is, "I can do what I do because God has given me a certain gift or gift-mix. If you discover that God has given you the same, join me in this. If not, we will love and help each other as different members of the Body."¹⁵⁹

Gift Glorification

This is a subtle twist of the previous problem. Instead of projecting a gift onto others, the gift itself is projected into the limelight. It is elevated over all the other gifts and becomes an end instead of a means. The most obvious gift to which this is done is tongues, although no gift is exempt. So, for example, we find Neo-Pentecostal groups glorifying tongue speaking as a spiritual status symbol. To be able to speak in tongues is to be a part of the in-group,

a first class Christian. All others are really missing the boat. Wagner writes:

When this happens, gifts tend to become ends in themselves. They glorify the user rather than the giver. They benefit the individual rather than the Body. They produce pride and self-indulgence. The Corinthians had fallen into this trap, and Paul writes I Corinthians 12-14 in an attempt to straighten them out. All of us need to take fair warning and avoid gift exaltation.¹⁶⁰

Boasting and Discouragement

Paul himself recognized these two problems. In I Co. 12:15 the foot is discouraged because it is not a hand. In the Church, some are disappointed because they don't have a certain gift or they envy the gifts others have. Basically, they are discontented with the gift the Spirit has given them. Rather than rejoice in the fact that they have received a gift, they feel short changed. Such discouraged or discontented Christians obviously will not use their gifts in joy and to the fullest potential for the edification of the Church. The opposite extreme is the person who is so proud of the gift he has that he boasts about it. This is quite close to gift glorification, and involves overrating one's own gift while disparaging others who possess gifts which are considered to be lesser or inferior. Paul speaks to this problem in verse 25 with reference to the self-assured eye. Both ends of the totem pole are ignorant of the fact that Christ paid for all the gifts with His blood. They are equal in status. There should be no discontent or boasting. William McRae writes:

Yet, some Christians despise their gift of helps and count of little value the God given ability to serve in

a "lesser" capacity. Surely every gift is to be esteemed of great worth. It has been dispersed by our ascended Lord who purchased it at Calvary.¹⁶¹

And later on he says:

There is no place for pride in spiritual gifts . . . a gift is received by grace and grace alone.¹⁶²

Spurious Gifts

Every gift can be imitated by Satan.¹⁶³ Every gift can be misused by man.¹⁶⁴ Paul seems to indicate this in I Co. 12:3 where he asserts that anyone who says "Jesus be accursed" is not of the Spirit. This means care must be taken so that counterfeit or abused gifts do not sneak into the Church. Three tests are given to help evaluate the genuineness of a gift: 1. Does it honor Christ? (I Co. 14) 2. Is it practiced in love? (I Co. 13) 3. Does it edify the Body? (I Co. 12:7). The third question implies the strict following of any restrictions Paul may have placed on a gift. But notice, the abuse of gifts or the presence of counterfeit gifts do not mean gifts are to be prohibited. Rather, Christians are to strive to exercise genuine gifts properly. Donald Bridge and David Phypers write:

Here is a constant, humbling challenge to the Christian seeking or exercising gifts. Does such a Christian desire gifts in order that he may better proclaim Jesus as Lord? In exercising his gifts can the Christian honestly claim that his sole desire is the uplifting and displaying of Christ?¹⁶⁵

Imbalance in Doctrine

Before 1971 little emphasis on spiritual gifts, other than the Neo-Pentecostal emphasis, could be found. Today,

material abounds. Christians are to take care in seeing that extremes are avoided in the Church. Spiritual gifts are not to be forgotten. Neither are they to be overemphasized. To do the former means an important aspect of Christian life is neglected. To do the latter means Christ Himself might be overlooked. A proper balance on all the Spirit's work in a Christian's life from creation of faith to spiritual fruit to spiritual gifts needs to be maintained. Kinghorn writes:

So, let us not make too much or too little of spiritual gifts. To become a fanatic about spiritual gifts catapults us out into the open sea of confusion; to ignore God's offer of spiritual gifts leads us into the dry dock of ineffective striving.¹⁶⁶

False Yardstick of Spirituality

The possession of any particular gift does not indicate the level of one's spiritual maturity. That this is so is proved by the church members at Corinth. They were gifted but carnal. Neither does the possession of a gift guarantee the proper use of that gift.¹⁶⁷ All a spiritual gift indicates is that one has received the gift of the Spirit at conversion and that God has kept His promise by apportioning a gift to the individual. The mark of spiritual maturity is indicated by the fruit of the Spirit. How much control the Spirit has in a person's life in effecting a disciplined walk with Christ is the key to maturity, not the simple possession of a gift. Thus one does not become a better Christian by receiving a gift. Rather, it is by continual contact with the means of grace through which the Spirit empowers a believer to live a dedicated, Christian life, which includes a proper use

of spiritual gifts, that growth to maturity occurs. John Stott writes:

There can be no doubt that the chief evidence is moral, not miraculous, and lies in the Spirit's fruit, not the Spirit's gift.¹⁶⁸

Benefits

Mobilized Laity

A church runs most effectively when all the members are involved in its mission. This is pointed out by Paul's Body of Christ image in I Co. 12. Each member of the Body has a function. No one part is too insignificant to play a role, and no one part is too significant to be able to forget about the rest of the Body. The Church, as Christ's Body, needs all its members to exercise their gifts for it to function as smoothly and effectively as it should. Spiritual gifts can aid in getting this lay participation. Once it is known that everyone has a gift, people will realize that they have a responsibility to exercise that gift. Through Gospel motivation and Biblical guidelines, people are helped in finding areas in which they can perform well. This mobilization of the laity has great impact on church growth and greatly expands the ministry of the Church. True, it is not the only solution to the problem of lay involvement, but Scripture indicates that it is certainly one way to bring this blessing about within the Church (I Co. 12:7). Donald Bridge and David Phypers put it this way:

Recognition of the true nature of the Church today and

the obligation of all Christians to exercise various gifts should bring stagnant congregations to life as every member seeks to play his part in strengthening of the community.¹⁶⁹

Christian Witness

As mentioned above, mobilization of the laity through spiritual gifts has a significant role to play in the growth of the Church. This author knows of no better treatment of this relationship between church growth and spiritual gifts than C. Peter Wagner's books Your Spiritual Gift Can Help Your Church Grow and Your Church Can Grow. In chapter 5 of the latter book, "Let's Join Laymen's Lib!", Wagner gives a brief introduction to spiritual gifts and the potential of their use for church growth. This is followed by an important study dealing with evangelism and engrafting.¹⁷⁰ Approximately 10% of a congregation's membership has the gift of evangelist (although most churches have only .5% actively using the gift!), and it is these people, complemented by the Christian witness of the other members, that bring the unchurched to a relationship with Christ. But the other 90% are just as important. They take that new Christian and help him become a responsible church member. The whole area of Christian nurture and enfolded into the church is best performed by people who are using their spiritual gifts. Wagner writes:

The greatest potential for evangelistic effectiveness in a church comes from a combination of the 10% of the mature Christians who have the gift of evangelist with those recent converts of less than three years in the Lord in a program planned and designed for church growth. Put this together with the 90% who know and are using their other spiritual gifts, and you have developed the kind of mobili-

zation that produces an extremely high growth potential.¹⁷¹

Spirit-filled Leadership

Another positive result of spiritual gifts is the placing into positions of leadership men who are so gifted. Too often, churches elect their leadership on the basis of what seems to be the natural qualifications based on secular institutions. The reasoning is that if one is a good corporation leader, he would make a good church leader. While this may be so, a better procedure is to discover those who display the characteristics of the gift of leadership and place them in such positions. But this, too, is no guarantee of effective church government. Acts 6:3 and I Tim. 3-4 indicate that the New Testament Church required of its leaders qualities that were predominantly spiritual and moral. Both fruit and gift are emphasized. When such a Spirit-filled, gifted leader has authority in a church, that church is well on its way to being well run. Kenneth Kinghorn writes:

Leadership in the church stands in contrast to a secular understanding of leadership. In secular leadership we think in terms of a boss, or one who rules over others. By way of contrast, the spiritual gift of administration equips one to serve. . . . the Biblical requirements for leaders stress the quality of one's life above all other factors. . . . fortunate indeed is the church where the gifts of administration are in proper operation.¹⁷²

God's Will and the Christian's Life

William McRae has a good section dealing with this benefit, and the four points presented here are from his book The Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts.¹⁷³

1. The discovery of one's spiritual gift will function as a signpost to direct one in God's will for his life. The emphasis here is that an individual's gift is given by the Spirit and, therefore, is in perfect harmony with the Lord's will for his life. Thus knowing which gifts one has gives concrete and specific direction in certain situations. For example, if someone believes he has the gift of evangelism, he will be careful to concentrate on that area instead of getting involved in teaching or anything else which would take time away from his evangelism work. The practical result is that Christians have insight into answering the question, "How do I fit in?" Hoover and Leenerts write, after commenting on I Co. 12:27ff, "Those 'parts' we call spiritual gifts. Everyone in the church is a part, has a spiritual gift. Therefore, to know what part (spiritual gift) you are, helps you identify your part in the work of the church."¹⁷⁴

2. Spiritual gifts help to set priorities in one's life. This flows out of the above signpost benefit. By knowing one's spiritual gift, one can set priorities for both church and secular life. Instead of losing time and wasting effort, such time and effort is brought into better focus by setting priorities. McRae writes, "No correct perspective of ourselves is possible apart from knowing our gift. The discovery of this God-given ability will provide a basis for establishing priorities."¹⁷⁵

3. Spiritual gifts help in giving one self-acceptance. To know one has a gift purchased by Christ at Calvary is to give one's life dignity. To know one is needed in the church is to give one a sense of purpose and worth. Discouragement and envy can be changed into self-acceptance and contentment through a proper understanding of spiritual gifts. Wagner writes, "Christian people who know their spiritual gifts tend to develop healthy self-esteem. . . . they learn that no matter what their gift is, they are important to God and to the Body. . . . Crippling inferiority complexes drop by the wayside when people begin to 'think soberly of themselves!'"¹⁷⁶

4. Spiritual gifts aid in identifying an area for concentrated training and development. In a market flooded with books, correspondence courses, and self-study guides, help is needed to show which of these is going to benefit the believer most. Gifts will do that, for they show what areas to develop. McRae writes; "Knowing your spiritual gift will be a major factor He will have a particular area upon which to focus and concentrate in his spiritual education."¹⁷⁷

Glorify God

When dangers are avoided and the above benefits abound, one final benefit will appear--God will be glorified. St.

Peter writes:

That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ; to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever.
(I Peter 4:11)

Discovery of Gifts

Many books on spiritual gifts have separate treatments on how one can discover his spiritual gift. Almost all include such items as prayer, confirmation by others, experimentation, desires, and study. While these step-by-step processes are helpful for finding one's spiritual gift, this paper will deal with only four general aspects about the topic of discovery. The reason for this is that a general presentation of spiritual gifts has been the objective of this paper from the beginning. Particular practical applications have been left to more experienced writers. For those desiring further information about the process of discovery, the following two books are helpful.

C Peter Wagner, Your Spiritual Gift Can Help Your Church Grow, pp. 111-135.

Leslie Flynn, 19 Gifts of the Spirit, pp. 192-204.

When it comes to discovering one's gift, two extremes must be avoided: dogmatism and neglect. Neglect is basically not giving a hoot about whether anyone discovers his gift or not. There are three common reasons for this. First, there is an ignorance of God's provision of such gifts for His

Church. Second, there is lethargy concerning God's activity in the lives of His children. Third, there is an unwillingness to respond to this aspect of God's call to service and ministry.¹⁷⁸ Such neglect has the undesirable effect of short-circuiting the total ministry of the Church. Dogmatism is making the discovery of a certain spiritual gift an indubitable fact. Only Scripture contains such unquestionable knowledge. The Bible says a person has a gift, but it doesn't say which one. While the various processes of discovery make it possible for a fair degree of certainty about which gift one may have, such human certainty is not to be placed on the level of Scripture. When someone says he has a particular gift, he should always recognize that he may be wrong. At the same time, God is not a God of doubt, but assurance. His silent confirmation through one's desire, success, and others' advice gives one a high degree of confidence. It is part of God's plan for a believer that he be able to say, "I have a particular gift," as long as that statement is not put forward as unquestionable, for the indubitable facts are those revealed in Scripture.

Another aspect that should be remembered when discovering gifts is that of one's church (denominational) position. The basic principle here is that when someone voluntarily joins a particular church body, he ought to be subject to the discipline and authority of that church. This is particularly true with spiritual gifts because there is not universal agreement about them, their existence, or their use, especially the spectacular gifts. This means that it is the responsibility

of the person to find out where his church stands so that he knows the parameters within which to explore the possibilities as he moves to discover his gift. Once this is done, the person has the option of staying and being faithful to that position or leaving and finding a church which holds to the same view on spiritual gifts as that individual does.¹⁷⁹ Discovering one's spiritual gift means being faithful to one's church's declarations on the gifts at the same time.

The discovery of a spiritual gift takes time. Even though the various books have five or six keys or steps to discovery, all focus around one major fact--Christian discipleship. Spiritual gifts are discovered as one spends time with Christ in the Word and Sacrament. As spiritual maturity occurs in all areas of Christian experience, that is, as Christians positively respond to God's will with obedience in Christian roles, spiritual gifts will be discovered. When Christians walk with the Lord, using the appointed means of grace, His Spirit acts on and in their lives. This growth in grace results in knowledge of just how God would use them. Through the cultivation of one's life with his Lord, gifts will be discovered and properly used.

One final aspect about discovery is that if a church's leadership is going to urge its members to discover spiritual gifts, they had better be ready for the results. People will respond to the Spirit's prompting. They will want to get involved by using their gifts. But the whole process could backfire if there is no outlet for the exercising of the various

gifts. This is frustrating for the member and disastrous for the church as expanding ministry possibilities are lost. In fact, without opportunities to serve, members may actually transfer to churches where they can be useful. For pastors and enablers, one word of caution is always in vogue: Have outlets!

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The study of spiritual gifts has been, is, and will be a blessing to the Church. Through them, Christians will become intimately involved in the total ministry of the Church. On the basis of them, churches will have Spirit-filled leadership. By the exercise of them, the Church will be edified and its outreach will be greatly increased. But most important of all, with the study of the Holy Spirit and His gifts, people will come to see the real meaning of the Spirit's activity in their lives. Lorenz Wunderlich has said this eloquently, and his words are used as a most fitting conclusion to this study.

For many, however, the truths concerning the Holy Spirit remain more remote simply because they have not become as current and as vibrant in our day-to-day lives as God so eagerly wants them to be. Once they have the understanding, not as a matter of academic knowledge but as an unwavering conviction, that their entire spiritual existence, its beginning and continuance in time and its glorification in eternity, is completely dependent on the Spirit of God, then and only then will they be eager to use all the grace and power extended to us by Him. Then and only then will they be led to the realization that it is more than a truism to confess: "I am a Holy Ghost Christian." Then and only then will they be impelled to the conviction that the Holy Spirit is the lord and giver of life in the fullest sense.¹⁸⁰

NOTES

¹Christian Periodical Index, vols. 2, 3, (Buffalo: Rauch and Stoeckl Printing Co., Inc., 1966, 1971), vols. 4, 5, 1979 ed. (Houghton, N. Y.: Houghton College Press, 1976, 1979, 1980).

²C. Peter Wagner, Your Spiritual Gift Can Help Your Church Grow. (Glendale, Ca.: Regal Books, 1974), p. 27.

³Kenneth Kinghorn, Gifts of the Spirit. (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1976), p. 5.

⁴Ibid., p. 95.

⁵Frederick Dale Bruner, A Theology of the Holy Spirit. (Grand Rapids, Mi.: Wm. B. Eerdmanns, 1970), p. 319.

⁶Wagner, p. 25.

⁷Kinghorn, p. 19.

⁸Colin Brown, ed., The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology (Grand Rapids, Mi.: Zondervan, 1975), II, 115.

⁹This and much of what follows is dependent on Walter Stuenkel, A Lutheran Approach to Biblical Picture of Spiritual Gifts (an unpublished paper), pp. 16-18.

¹⁰Brown, II, 115.

¹¹Stuenkel, p. 18.

¹²Herman Seyer, The Stewardship of Spiritual Gifts (Madison, Wi.: Fleetwood Art Studios, 1974), p. 26.

¹³Brown, III, 706-707.

¹⁴Ibid., III, 707.

¹⁵E. Earle Ellis, "Spiritual Gifts in the Pauline Community," New Testament Studies, 20, (1974), p. 129; Donald Bridge and David Phypers, Spiritual Gifts and the Church (Downers Grove, Il.: Intervarsity Press, 1973), p. 21.

¹⁶Ellis, p. 129.

¹⁷Bridge and Phypers, p. 21.

¹⁸Brown, III, 707.

¹⁹Bruner, p. 168.

²⁰Michael Green, I Believe in the Holy Spirit (Grand Rapids,

Mi.: Wm. B. Eerdmanns, 1975), p. 117.

²¹Theodore Tappert, ed., The Book of Concord (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 313:10.

²²Ibid., 31:2.

²³Stuenkel, p. 30.

²⁴Richard Jensen, Touched by the Spirit (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Publishing House, 1975), p. 81.

²⁵Oswald Sanders, The Holy Spirit and His Gifts (Grand Rapids, Mi.: Zondervan, Revised 1970), p. 73.

²⁶Ibid., p. 71.

²⁷Jensen, p. 116.

²⁸Green, p. 46.

²⁹Sanders, p. 73.

³⁰Ibid., p. 63.

³¹Ibid., p. 66.

³²Ibid., p. 63.

³³John R. W. Stott, Baptism and Fullness (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, Revised 1978), p. 36.

³⁴Sanders, p. 63.

³⁵Jensen, pp. 50-51.

³⁶Stott, p. 47.

³⁷Ibid, pp. 60-61.

³⁸Ibid., p. 57.

³⁹Ibid., p. 66.

⁴⁰Leslie Flynn, 19 Gifts of the Spirit (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1974) p. 20; Willaim McRae, The Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts (Grand Rapids, Mi.: Zondervan, 1976), p. 18; Wagner, p. 42; Kinghorn, p. 22.

⁴¹McRae, p. 28.

⁴²J. W. MacGorman, The Gifts of the Spirit (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1974), p. 31.

⁴³Kinghorn, p. 25.

⁴⁴McRae, pp. 35-36.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 31.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 89.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 33.

⁴⁸Flynn, p. 22.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 22.

⁵⁰Ray Stedman, Body Life (Glendale, Ca.: Regal Books, 1972), p. 54.

⁵¹Stott, p. 94.

⁵²Kinghorn p. 21.

⁵³Wagner, p. 88.

⁵⁴Stott, p. 79.

⁵⁵Flynn, p. 34.

⁵⁶For a longer list, see Flynn, p. 35.

⁵⁷Bridge and Phypers, p. 30.

⁵⁸McRae, pp. 90-98.

⁵⁹Stott, pp. 88-90.

⁶⁰Kinghorn, pp. 39-40.

⁶¹The paper should not be unduly long, and the quarter is short when three other classes compete for time.

⁶²Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mi.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964), I, 407-445; Brown, I, 126-136.

⁶³Brown, I, 134.

⁶⁴Kittel, I, 421-423.

⁶⁵Ibid., 431.

⁶⁶David Hoover and Roger Leenerts, Enlightened With His Gifts (St. Louis: Lutheran Growth, 1979), p. 42.

- ⁶⁷Wagner, p. 207.
- ⁶⁸Brown, III, 81.
- ⁶⁹McRae, p. 45.
- ⁷⁰Green, p. 171.
- ⁷¹Flynn, pp. 51-52.
- ⁷²Kurt Koch, Charismatic Gifts (Quebec, Canada: The Association For Christian Evangelism (Quebec) Inc., 1975), p. 111.
- ⁷³Stott, p. 100.
- ⁷⁴Leslie Flynn's treatment of prophecy, pp. 48-55, is one of the best in this writer's estimation for understanding this present day manifestation of the gift of prophecy.
- ⁷⁵Kittel, II, 737.
- ⁷⁶Brown, III, 768.
- ⁷⁷McRae, p. 60; Rick Yohn, Discover Your Spiritual Gift and Use It (Wheaton, IL.: Tyndale, 1974), p. 72.
- ⁷⁸Wagner, p. 144; Hoover and Leenerts, p. 44.
- ⁷⁹Yohn, p. 72.
- ⁸⁰Kittel, I, 707.
- ⁸¹McRae, pp. 65-66.
- ⁸²Yohn, p. 97.
- ⁸³Wagner, p. 218.
- ⁸⁴Hoover and Leenerts, p. 49.
- ⁸⁵Ibid., p. 50.
- ⁸⁶Donald Gee, Concerning Spiritual Gifts (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1949), p. 44.
- ⁸⁷McRae, p. 64.
- ⁸⁸Ibid., p. 65.
- ⁸⁹Hoover and Leenerts, p. 58.
- ⁹⁰Green, p. 181.

- ⁹¹Flynn, p. 141.
- ⁹²Bridge and Phypers, p. 54.
- ⁹³Brown, I, 504.
- ⁹⁴McRae, pp. 73-75.
- ⁹⁵Kinghorn, p. 88.
- ⁹⁶McRae p. 50.
- ⁹⁷Flynn, pp. 84-88.
- ⁹⁸Brown, II, 41.
- ⁹⁹Stedman, pp. 50-51.
- ¹⁰⁰Flynn, p. 133.
- ¹⁰¹McRae, p. 53.
- ¹⁰²Flynn, p. 136.
- ¹⁰³Wagner, p. 223; Hoover and Leenerts, p. 57; Bridge and Phypers, p. 89.
- ¹⁰⁴Flynn, p. 126.
- ¹⁰⁵McRae, p. 52; Kinghorn, p. 85; Flynn, p. 126.
- ¹⁰⁶Wagner, pp. 155, 162; Hoover and Leenerts, pp. 54, 55;
- ¹⁰⁷Yohn, p. 44.
- ¹⁰⁸Stedman, p. 50; Flynn, p. 101; Yohn, p. 10; McRae, p. 47.
- ¹⁰⁹Wagner, pp. 224, 225; Hoover and Leenerts, pp. 53, 54; Kinghorn, pp. 83, 84.
- ¹¹⁰Brown, I, 690.
- ¹¹¹McRae, p. 45.
- ¹¹²Flynn, pp. 108-115; Wagner, pp. 69-73; Hoover and Leenerts, p. 59.
- ¹¹³Flynn, p. 110.
- ¹¹⁴Bridge and Phypers, p. 80.
- ¹¹⁵Kinghorn, p. 95.
- ¹¹⁶Yohn, p. 119.

- 117 Flynn, pp. 183-184.
- 118 Kinghorn, p. 100.
- 119 Stedman, p. 47.
- 120 Green, p. 162.
- 121 Flynn, p. 182.
- 122 McRae, p. 77.
- 123 Wagner, p. 45.
- 124 Bruner, p. 298.
- 125 Flynn, p. 190.
- 126 Bridge and Phypers, p. 102.
- 127 Green, p. 163.
- 128 Kinghorn, pp. 103-104.
- 129 Bridge and Phypers, p. 75.
- 130 Bruner, p. 146.
- 131 Hoover and Leenerts, p. 62.
- 132 Green, p. 164.
- 133 Ibid., p. 165.
- 134 Ibid., pp. 165-166.
- 135 Stedman, p. 48.
- 136 Hoover and Leenerts, p. 62.
- 137 Flynn, p. 183.
- 138 MacGorman, p. 44.
- 139 Kinghorn, p. 104.
- 140 Wagner, p. 235.
- 141 Yohn, pp. 25-26.
- 142 Stedman, p. 45.
- 143 Yohn, pp. 28-29.

- 144 Flynn, pp. 170-173.
- 145 Kinghorn, p. 71.
- 146 Ibid., pp. 70-71.
- 147 Green, p. 176.
- 148 Hoover and Leenerts, p. 63.
- 149 Flynn, p. 178.
- 150 Stedman, p. 46.
- 151 Flynn, p. 162.
- 152 Ibid., p. 165.
- 153 Kinghorn, p. 74.
- 154 Flynn, p. 167.
- 155 Yohn, pp. 113-115.
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Good, solid doctrinal study but missing some gifts when discussing the gifts individually. Does include poverty, celibacy, and martyrdom. Helpful sections on dangers and benefits. Includes a long section on Baptism of the Spirit.
- Brown, Colin, ed. The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology. 3 vols. Grand Rapids, Mi.: Zondervan, 1975.
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This is already a "classic" rebuttal against the excesses of the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal movements. Doesn't deal with spiritual gifts in particular, but it is required reading to fully understand the aforementioned movements.
- The Charismatic Movement and the Lutheran Church, 1972 and The Lutheran Church and the Charismatic Movement, 1977.
These are two pamphlets put out by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. They deal primarily with the Neo-Pentecostal movement within the Lutheran Church. The first is more doctrinal, the second more practical. Both provide valuable insight into the spectacular gifts from a Lutheran perspective.
- Ellis, E. Earle. "Spiritual Gifts in the Pauline Community." New Testament Studies, 20 (1974), 128-44.
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This is possibly the best introduction to spiritual gifts today. Although not much on the doctrinal aspects, the indepth treatments on each gift are superb. A positive, helpful approach.
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- Green, Michael. I Believe in the Holy Spirit. Grand Rapids, Mi.: Wm. B. Eerdmanns, 1975.

A general book on the Holy Spirit. His discussion on the gifts focuses on the Neo-Pentecostal movement. The treatments deal only with the nine gifts of I Co. 12, and are too brief to be of much help. Excellent sections on the relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Hoover, David, and Roger Leenerts. Enlightened With His Gifts. St. Louis: Lutheran Growth, 1979.

A Bible study with heavy emphasis on the nature of the Church as the Body of Christ. Individual treatments of the gifts, though brief, are quite helpful for their Scriptural basis and findings. Dependent on Wagner for definitions. Numerous typographical and data errors detract from the text.

Jensen, Richard. Touched by the Spirit. Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Publishing House, 1975.

A Lutheran who is trying to make sense of his gift of tongues. His integration of Lutheran doctrine with the gifts is done creatively and with valid concerns. His experiences add a personal touch to this otherwise doctrinal treatment of the Neo-Pentecostal movement.

Kinghorn, Kenneth. Gifts of the Spirit. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1976.

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Kittel, Gerhard, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. 10 vols. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, Mi.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964.

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This is a bunch of stories about good and bad experiences of the gifts, mostly the latter. Heavy emphasis on demonology. Not too helpful.

MacGorman, J. W.. The Gifts of the Spirit. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1974.

The focus of this study is I Co. 12-14. It is well done and takes into account many exegetical findings. Format is verse-by-verse exposition, treating the various aspects of the gifts as they appear. This book is helpful for checking on a particular verse in I Co. 12-14.

McRae, William. The Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts. Grand Rapids, Mi.: Zondervan, 1976.

For the view that many of the gifts have ceased, this is the book to read. It is brief, but presents the case in

a straightforward way. It is easy to understand yet still scholarly. Two very helpful sections are on the distribution of and distinction between gifts. He has individual treatments on the various gifts.

Sanders, J. Oswald. The Holy Spirit and His Gifts. Grand Rapids, Mi.: Zondervan, 1970 (Revised ed.).

First issued in 1940, this book is a more general treatment of the work of the Holy Spirit. It is too brief on the descriptions of the individual gifts to be of much assistance, but it is helpful for the doctrines involved in the Spirit's work. Various quotes from other authors add to the quality of the book, which, on the whole, is quite good.

Seyer, Herman. The Stewardship of Spiritual Gifts. Madison, Wi.: Fleetwood Art Studios, 1974.

A Lutheran responding to the Neo-Pentecostal movement. While it doesn't treat spiritual gifts in particular, many of the doctrines and evaluations of Neo-Pentecostalism do apply to the topic of gifts. Major emphasis is on the correct estimate and application of the gifts, hence the word "stewardship" is the title.

Stedman, Ray. Body Life. Glendale, Ca.; Regal Books, 1972.

Mentioned frequently by other authors, this book shows how valuable spiritual gifts can be to the life of the Church through the success of Peninsula Bible Church. Exciting reading at times but more personal than scholarly. Some doctrinal problems, especially with fellowship. It does open the eyes of non-Pentecostal churches to the potential of spiritual gifts.

Stott, John R. W.. Baptism and Fullness. Downers Grove, Il.: Intervarsity Press, 1978 (Revised ed.).

For baptism, fullness, and fruit of the Spirit, this little book is exceptional. His treatments on the gifts, though lacking individual discussions of each gift, is equally well done. The various doctrines surrounding spiritual gifts find expression simply but persuasively. Highly recommended as a supplement to any of the introductory books on the subject.

Stuenkel, Walter. A Lutheran Approach to Biblical Picture of Spiritual Gifts.

An unpublished paper by a Lutheran which integrates well the material principle of Lutheranism with the spiritual gifts. He includes a history, a study of the work of the Holy Spirit, a study of Jn. 14-16, statements by the Lutheran Confessions on the Spirit, and an exegetical treatment of the four key passages. All sections have helpful conclusions.

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Wagner, C. Peter. Your Church Can Grow. Glendale, Ca.: Regal Books, 1976.

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Wagner, C. Peter. Your Spiritual Gift Can Help Your Church Grow. Glendale, Ca.: Regal Books, 1974.

Wagner deals with 27 gifts, all from a Church Growth perspective. Thus the book combines scholarly research with immediate application to the Church's outreach ministry. To fully understand the potential of spiritual gifts in the growth of a church, this book is a must.

Wunderlich, Lorenz. The Half-Known God. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963.

A very fine general presentation on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. While no mention of spiritual gifts is present, it is good reading for the all-encompassing relationship between the Spirit and the believer.

Yohn, Rick. Discover Your Spiritual Gift and Use It. Wheaton, Il.: Tyndale, 1974.

Another good introductory book. It is very practical and written in a warm style. He includes the gifts of music and craftsmanship. There is an excellent presentation on the gifts of healings. Individual gifts are treated as they fit into the discussion.