

## APPENDICES

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## How Do We Help Those Not Ready To Make the Act of Dedication?

IN ALL INTERVIEWS IT IS HELPFUL TO USE THE LONGER VERSION OF THE VISION (AT THE END OF THE “CALLED TO SERVE” COURSE) AS A BASIS FOR THE INTERVIEW.

Personal interviews are essential in order to discover those who are truly “one in heart and mind” with the biblical Vision which you are adopting, so that a firm foundation is laid for the ministry and mission of the church. The Minister should of course interview the leaders, but if you later have a large number of church members who have studied the Course, those interviews could be shared out with trusted key leaders who are committed to the Vision, are gentle, yet firm and discerning. It is helpful to plan the interviews immediately after Session 15, or you will be swamped at the end of the Course. Ensure there is prayer-backing for the interviews. The person being interviewed should be encouraged to regard it as a positive spiritual check-up, when they are given personal attention by the Minister or key leader.

Remember that it is essential that all those to be involved, as leaders or members, in the future ministry and mission of the church, are one in heart and mind with the biblical Vision and willing to have their gifts and ministry in the church (re)assessed in the year after the “Called to Serve” Course.

1. **The first essential for those interviewing is to be convinced that the content of the Vision is biblical** and so a legitimate challenge to Christians who are seeking to serve Jesus as Lord. This is the foundation of your approach. Ensure you are also convinced that you will never move as a church from maintenance to effective mission, if you compromise on a biblically based unity amongst all who would seek to work for God within the local Body of Christ.
2. **Ensure that your attitude is truly loving, ie. patient and kind but also prepared to be firm** about biblical truth. Jesus manifested both sides of this love.
3. **Try to identify the real problem which may be different from the apparent one.**
  - (a) It may be *fear* of not being able to live up to the Vision. This at least shows the person is taking it seriously. They should be prayerfully encouraged to realise the power of the Holy Spirit in practice. It is also important to stress that whereas a sincere, whole-hearted approach is looked for, no-one feels adequate to fulfil the Vision perfectly. We all fail but such failure should be a motive for repentance, rather than acceptance of lower standards. Stress also that the church is committed to the individual and will provide help, encouragement and ministry as required. More important, stress that God is committed to the individual to provide his strength.

- (b) It may be ***misunderstanding*** about the wording of the Vision. Some have mistakenly thought that “To be baptised in water” refers only to believer’s baptism, or even to “rebaptism”. More frequently people have thought that by referring to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as a “definite experience” we mean only an instantaneous, overpowering experience. Often it will be such. But others have had a more peaceful and gradual but equally definite experience. After all, it is definite results consistently present in a person’s life which really matter. One person thought that by the church discovering a person’s gifts we meant that the church determined which gifts a person would have! The wording about the authority of leaders etc. is carefully chosen and explained at length in the Course. There may still be genuine misunderstandings though. Some people have mistakenly thought that the Vision makes it compulsory to share important personal decisions for prayer and guidance, whereas we regard it as voluntary but advice is useful. Patient explanation will win such people. In the session on tithing it is important to stress that we just look for a willingness to aim towards giving a tithe. Only the treasurer will know what an individual is giving.
  
- (c) It may be ***unwillingness***. We have referred to those who are genuinely afraid of or who genuinely misunderstand certain aspects of the Vision. Sometimes, however, apparent fears and misunderstanding can be a cloak for unwillingness to make this commitment to Jesus as Lord. Sometimes a person may say, “I agree with it all but I can’t quite bring myself to make the act of dedication,” or they quibble about all sorts of details, but the real reason may be unwillingness to face a biblical challenge. Sadly, sometimes, apparently mature Christians of many years standing - even those with experience of full time Christian work - react against being united on a biblical basis and being ready to have their role reassessed. Sadly, many Christians have a theoretical assent to much biblical teaching. They don’t want to be disturbed out of a comfortable Christian tradition by being encouraged to face up to the challenges of real New Testament discipleship.
  
- (d) It may be an ***independent spirit***. One regular problem arises with people who have a very independent spirit. Sometimes they don’t respect the church leadership or are very selective about which leaders they will respect. They may gather factions around them as Paul describes in Rom. 16:17-18. Other times they want to dominate the church and its leadership, especially if they perceive “weakness”, in the leadership. There are other people who just want to remain independent rather than being a member of the body. Since the whole purpose of the Course is to enable the church to function powerfully as the Body of Christ, such independent souls will really not be happy with it.

One must point out that the New Testament envisages the Church as a Body with its members submitting to one another, not as a conglomeration of independent Christians. The “crunch” question is therefore normally the one on accepting the authority of the leaders, who should actually be named in the interview according to their sphere of authority, to make it specific (with the proviso that all leaders will have their gifts and ministries reviewed and will only continue in office if they make the Act of Dedication).

Where you detect such unwilling or independent attitudes they need to be gently but firmly confronted in the hope of their being changed. Until they are, though, it is vital not to compromise on the biblical Vision. For such people to be allowed into Ministry Teams would undermine the strategy, or would lead to the painful process of having to remove them later. They should be warmly invited to a General Fellowship group, rather than becoming members of a Ministry Team.

4. **Do not be intimidated by fear of division.** Division in the church is always an evil but sometimes it is the lesser of two evils, ie. when the alternative would be disobedience to the Lord. Remember that Jesus said he came to bring division, even within the family (read Luke 12:51-53). In John 6:60-66 Jesus lost most of his “congregation” because of his “hard teaching”. Such division results from disobedience to the clear teaching of God’s word, therefore, sadly, it may happen in the church as well as between Christians and non-Christians. *Churches which seek to avoid this “necessary” division at all costs will find that good Christians who are frustrated by compromise will start to leave them.* How much better it is to risk division over obedience to Christ than over compromise of his Word. However the enemy creates fear in us of large numbers leaving, when in the end it may only be a tiny minority, who react negatively to the challenge to biblical discipleship. Usually these people have been in leadership, forming a “power block” which has dominated the church and held it back from spiritual development. Their negative hold over the church will only be broken through prayer and determination of the Minister to proceed with the biblical strategy for church development. In serious cases, if a person (after being offered help) is persistently divisive or persistently involved in other unbiblical behaviour which adversely affects the Body, then the New Testament requires that steps of church discipline be taken for the sake of the Lord’s work and the welfare of the church. (Matt. 18:15-17) See Strategy Tape No. 4, “Overcoming Obstacles”. There are numerous stories of churches coming alive and being fruitful in evangelism, once the negative power block no longer holds sway. New Christians normally have no problem at all with the Vision, Course and Strategy.
5. **It may be advisable for a person to go through the “Called to Serve” Course *again*** before deciding about participating in the Service if you or they are still hesitant. This has often proved helpful, as an alternative to going straight into the General Fellowship Group. All Ministry Team members should be invited to reaffirm their dedication every year. Anyone unwilling to do so would, of course, discontinue Ministry Team membership, but would be invited to the General Fellowship Group. On the other hand some who have been previously unwilling, may take this opportunity to join Ministry Teams.



6. **How to help those whom the interviewer feels are not ready to take part in the Dedication Service.**

As the person conducting the interviews, you will sometimes be faced with the problem that the individual you are interviewing expresses a willingness, but ***you are not happy that the response is heartfelt***. Take seriously your feelings of unease. There may be something fundamentally wrong, e.g. a lack of a genuine personal relationship with the Lord (although hopefully this would have been dealt with during the Course). There could be pride or complacency resulting in a superficial response. Often if this is noticed and sensitively challenged, it can lead to repentance. Sometimes there is desire to hold on to a position of leadership. The worst case is a deliberate intention to become “a Ministry Team member” in order to create problems at the heart of the church. This is very rare. Firmness at this stage, offering people personal help and pointing them in the direction of a general group rather than Ministry Team, is vital for the benefit of the individual and the church (especially for its mission).

7. **Removal of an existing leader who does not make the Act of Dedication or refuses to study “Called to Serve”.**

If an existing leader refuses to be involved in the Course, or studies it, but is not one in heart and mind with the Vision, this is more difficult than dealing with a member. No-one can be removed from ***an elected position***, of course. However general teaching can be given on the importance of nominating folk who are committed to the Vision. Practical steps can be taken to ensure that there is no shortage of nominations of Ministry Team members, prior to an Annual Church Meeting which could otherwise lead to unfortunate last minute nominations. And never underestimate the power of prayer! We have known of a number of Church Councils, which used to be dominated by negative power block, a few years later being almost entirely composed of Ministry Team Leaders or members. If the leadership role is ***not an elected position***, then it is important for the Minister to be firm about asking a person who is unwilling to make, or would be insincere in making the act of dedication, to stand down. This is essential for all leadership roles. If the leaders are not one in heart and mind, what hope is there for members involved in the ministry of the church?

If someone is doing a job which is not a leadership role in the church, but cannot make the act of dedication, e.g. church caretaker, it would not be so essential to take immediate steps over this. Gradually, Ministry Team rotas supersede most jobs and again, prayer is vital. The aim is for all ministry to be carried out by Ministry Team members because of the biblical principles involved. In order to achieve this, immediate action needs to be taken over anyone in leadership who would undermine or adversely affect that process. Lesser positions can be expected to be sorted out over a period of perhaps two or three years without causing unnecessary hurt. However it can be positively helpful to allow attenders or even non-Christians to do *occasional*, practical tasks for the church, as a way of encouraging folk to be involved in fellowship.

To summarise; if in an interview there are hesitations, there may be:-

1. Minor misunderstandings which can easily be clarified, or
2. Fear or insecurity, which can often be dealt with in a counselling session, or
3. A problem of sufficient importance to ask the person to take the Course again or to join a General Fellowship group rather than allowing him to become a Ministry Team Member.

**AIM:** *All leadership functions and eventually most tasks in the church should be carried out by those who have made the declaration of intent in the Service of Dedication.*

- ◆ Prayerfully set a time during which you believe God wants this to be achieved in your church, e.g. within three years of studying “Called to Serve”.

**REMEMBER:** *that true unity in the local church is brought about by the Holy Spirit, through prayer for God’s love to be released amongst leaders and members.*

Aiming towards the “Called to Serve” Vision will ensure a *biblical* foundation for unity in diversity. The Time Strategy suggests *practical* ways in which a small team, or a whole church ( or any stage in-between), may function as the united Body of Christ.

## APPENDIX 2

# Work Involved for the Minister Implementing the Strategy

Few Ministers work “office hours”. Some work a 70 hour week! As there are only a fixed number of hours in the week it is unlikely the programme will mean more in terms of actual time spent on the job. Hopefully there will be more of a sense of being strategic and aiming at definite goals. Ultimately of course, with discernment of gifts and increased delegation, it will be possible for the Minister to act in a supervisory capacity over different aspects of the life of the church and to be set free to concentrate on his main ministry (whether an Evangelist, Teacher, etc.), rather than being a “Jack of all Trades”. It may be necessary after the first year to take a fresh look at all the activities of the church, as well as the Minister’s present involvement, and ask whether they are all still in the centre of the Lord’s purpose.

The first year of the Strategy will be taken up mainly by choosing the Pilot Group, teaching the Course and setting up a system for teaching it to the whole church. The busiest time is towards the end of the first year, when personal interviews are conducted, and as soon as it is known who will be joining Ministry Teams, a strategy is worked out for the second and third years. (This involves choosing leaders and deciding on the membership of the groups etc.) After that delegation can begin in earnest.

It would be unfair not to warn you, particularly if hard-line traditional or negative attitudes feature in the congregation, that the first year may bring its battles as well as its blessings. In fact there would be cause for concern if this were not so, as the enemy is strategic and only attacks where he perceives a threat. Prayer support and constant reminder that the Strategy is an outworking of biblical principles will be essential at such times. It is also helpful to remind yourself that God wants you to deal with any civil war in the church, so that you can be effective on what should be the real battlefield:- out in the world.

If you are not particularly gifted in management ability, oversight of the development of the Strategy could seem daunting. It requires the ability to think ahead, e.g. to set up Ministry Teams; delegate pastoral work; roster practical jobs; oversee discernment of leaders’ and members’ gifts; ensure gifts are matched to roles; develop the prayer life; mobilise the Teams in evangelism.

In this case, we recommend that you appoint a right-hand person to oversee the process. This would need to be someone with a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Minister’s Guide, Strategy Tapes and Notes, with some management and prophetic ability. He or she would need to be enthusiastic about the Vision and Strategy and, of course, utterly reliable.

To help you in the first year, some may find the following guidelines on the delegation of pastoral care helpful. Certain steps can be taken immediately by those Ministers who at present do nearly all the pastoral work. In this way at least a significant part of your work-load can be shared even in the first year, prior to delegation to Ministry Teams.

# Delegation of Pastoral Care

## Introduction

These notes are designed to help you take your church through six steps to delegating pastoral care from the one to the many.

They are not intended to be exhaustive or a definitive “manual” but rather suggestions that have been found helpful.

Although elementary, we know from experience that such guidelines are of help to some Ministers who are not gifted pastorally, or who do not shine at administration or delegation!

### *Summary of Six Steps to delegating pastoral care from the one to the many.*

1. Look around your congregation for people who are or may be gifted for this type of ministry.
2. Produce some guidelines for pastoral visiting.
3. Appoint a temporary “Pastoral Secretary” and set up a visiting team or teams. Ensure the members know that this is a temporary measure.
4. Ensure that there is an adequate system for communicating pastoral needs and recording visits.
5. As the membership moves through the “Called to Serve” Course and forms new groups, delegate pastoral care and visiting to the Ministry Teams.
6. Set up a permanent system with a pastoral secretary and Ministry Teams covering set geographical areas of the “parish”.

## 1. Choose your team members

Remember that this may only be an intermediate stage until responsibility is taken over by Ministry Teams, yet it is essential to choose the right people for the team(s). Not only will they be pioneering the work and gaining experience which they can pass on to others, but they are also AMBASSADORS for the church, starting to build bridges between the church and the people you are serving. It may of course be that you are actually appointing a Specialist Pastoral Ministry Team (in which case only steps 1 - 4 apply).

## **A. Pastoral Secretary**

The Pastoral Secretary will be responsible for organising the team(s) and for arranging visits. So, as well as having the qualities of a pastoral visitor, (s)he must have administrative ability and be able to relate to the team(s).

## **B. Team Members**

It is difficult to define an “ideal” team member, but the following list is of characteristics to look for when appointing members. If they do not have all these qualities beforehand, they can be encouraged to develop them as they start the work.

- i. An ability to relate to people easily.
- ii. A listening ear. (All a lonely person might need is someone to talk to, not necessarily a lot of advice).
- iii. A sympathetic nature - to be able to understand people’s needs even if they’ve never experienced such needs themselves.
- iv. A friendly disposition - “a smiling face” can work wonders in pastoral work.
- v. Reliability in following things through.

## **2. Give Guidelines for Pastoral Visiting**

Basic Guidelines are:

- i. Be brief, especially on the first visit. Do not overtire the person you are visiting or raise expectations that cannot be realised.
- ii. Use the visit to identify the needs e.g.
  - a) Lonely: needs companionship
  - b) Housebound: needs shopping done, children collecting from school, etc.
  - c) Sick
  - d) Elderly
  - e) Bereaved
  - f) Baptism requests                      etc.
- iii. If it is likely to be an on-going situation, determine the frequency of the visits. (NB. Don’t try to do too much in the early stages. It can develop as Ministry Teams take over.)

- iv. Once the nature of the need is known, try to ensure that the person best able to deal with that type of situation follows it up.
- v. Don't make quick decisions on any help to be given until you know what the Team can deliver and you've listened to how the person feels about it.
- vi. Don't be afraid to offer to call in specialist help (Social Services, medical services etc.) if you feel they would be better equipped, but only with the person's permission.
- vii. Always offer to pray with the person you visit, but don't try to force your faith on them. Initially you are building up a relationship.

### **3. Pastoral Secretary Organizes Teams**

The **Pastoral Secretary** is the person responsible for running the pastoral care. All requests for visits should be passed to him/her and the secretary should also feed back any information from the visits to whoever needs to know (request for home communion etc.).

The secretary is also responsible for briefing teams before they go on visits and collecting any relevant feed-back when they return.

Initially it may be helpful to have one or two teams visiting during the day and other teams visiting in the evening.

Try to keep the visits to one specific morning or evening each week or fortnight so that the members can pray together before they go out. (Any members who do not have a visit can then be praying for the team members who go visiting).

If possible once a particular team (usually two people) starts a series of visits try to keep continuity by using that team until the pastoral need is resolved. We recommend that the teams are either a married couple, or two people of the same sex, or a mixed team of three. If an individual is doing pastoral visits, we recommend visiting or counselling a person of the same sex.

### **4. Ensure Adequate Communication**

In order to ensure adequate communication, ie. to avoid either duplication of visits or missing people out altogether, *written* communication is vital.

#### **A. Communication with Pastoral Secretary**

Ideally if the Minister passes a request to the Pastoral Secretary it should be on a form with an appropriate reply slip if further action is likely to be needed, e.g. baptism request, home communion, etc.

It is a good idea to state the recommended return date on the form.

The Pastoral Secretary can give the team member that slip of paper if there is information to be obtained (e.g. age of children) and make sure it is returned after the visit.



## **B. On-going Record**

A card index system (or other means) is vital to prevent duplication.

Experience has shown that it is best to file them under road name in ascending order of house numbers. It also helps to identify when houses have changed hands, otherwise you could have confusion with two or three cards for the same address, when the families have left the area.

The records are only for the use of the Pastoral Secretary, but they ***should not*** contain confidential information on people visited. This is particularly important if a computer record is kept.

Suggested information is:

- i. Name and address
- ii. Children's names and date of birth
- iii. Date of any visit and names of visitors
- iv. Type of visit if non-confidential: baptism request, bereavement, etc.
- v. For other visits the nature of the need only should be recorded, e.g. housebound, illness.

## **5. Moving on**

As the membership moves through the "Called to Serve" Course and into Ministry Teams the existing pastoral team members can pass on their experience to the groups and start to involve the members in assisting with visits.

(It may be necessary to ensure a pastoral team member is placed in each Ministry Team so that every group is covered).

## **6. Permanent System** (When Ministry Teams are functioning).

- i. Ministry Teams are formed each having its own section of the parish or area identified (by street and house numbers).
- ii. The relevant record cards are passed on to the group leader. It is their responsibility to monitor them until a group pastor is chosen after discernment of gifts.
- iii. The Pastoral Secretary or Minister still retains responsibility for passing on some visiting needs and ensuring reply slips are returned. Each Ministry Team leader should also be given a list of church members who live in the area of the Group but do not attend it. The Group pastor then takes over responsibility, in cooperation with the Pastoral Secretary, of ensuring pastoral care of group members, other church members as allocated, and contacts made through group evangelism.
- iv. Extra training should be provided where necessary.

- N.B.1 In each Ministry Team the person with the role of pastor is responsible for ensuring pastoral care is carried out, ***not*** for doing it all himself. The idea is to involve the whole group in meeting the pastoral needs in the group area.
- N.B.2 The Ministry Team pastor should ensure:
- a) that the pastoral needs of the Group members are met.
  - b) that they begin to meet the pastoral needs of other church members in their area, e.g. enquirers, people in discipleship and new “Called to Serve” groups, General Fellowship members, people who only attend on Sundays.
  - c) that they pastor non-church goers in the area as requested by the Pastoral Secretary or as contacted by the group. This can easily lead to evangelistic opportunities, which will enable the Ministry Teams to fulfil their main purpose.
- N.B.3 In order to encourage acceptance in the community of a visitor who is not an ordained minister, it might be helpful for pastoral/evangelistic visitors to be officially commissioned and to wear badges.

# Releasing the Local Church in Inspirational Gifts

## A. INTRODUCTION

### 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- a. We should be informed about them (1 Cor.12:1) and yet a great deal of ignorance still prevails today. Some Christians equate the gifts of the Spirit simply with Tongues or the “spectacular” gifts. Similarly, Christians in ignorance are afraid that the gifts of the Spirit are uncontrollable, over-emotional, bizarre or frightening.
- b. They are relevant today (1 Cor.13:8-12). The old idea that the gifts of the Spirit were only for the times of the Apostles and not for today, finds no basis in Scripture and also contradicts present experience. This passage is the only one to speak of the passing away of the gifts and makes it clear when this will be. They will pass away “when perfection comes” (v.10), when “we shall see face to face” (v.12), when we “shall know fully” (v.12). In other words, when we meet Christ either at death or at the Second Coming, then we shall no longer need the gifts. Here we do need them and an increasing number of Christians are finding them of immense benefit to the church and for witnessing to non-Christians.
- c. They should be eagerly desired (1 Cor.12:31; 14:1). The words used in both verses are “be zealous for” or “desire with great zeal.” But we should not desire them as ends in themselves. We should want them so that we can love and serve the Lord and other people more effectively. “Agape” (the Greek word for “love”) means wanting the very best for others. To be open to God giving us spiritual gifts is part of that love because they will help us supernaturally to serve other people. The command about eagerly desiring the spiritual gifts is just as strong as the command to love (1 Cor.14:1). In 1 Cor.14:26 Paul says we should come to fellowship meetings prepared and expecting to experience various gifts of the Spirit.

### 2. THE NATURE OF THE GIFTS

- a. They are free gifts.

They are not given to “super-saints” as a reward for spiritual maturity; any true Christian has the Holy Spirit in his life, and the Holy Spirit has all the gifts. So it follows

that every Christian potentially has all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. God is sovereign and he can use anyone in any of the gifts at any time. But some will be used regularly in a particular gift, others in another.

- b. They are many and varied.

### **3. THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFTS**

- a. To Glorify the Lord Jesus.

This is why the Holy Spirit came (John 16:14; 1 Cor.12:3). He aims to make us individually like Christ. But he also wants to make the church the Body of Christ in the world doing the works Jesus did and even greater works than He did (John 14:12). The gifts are nothing more nor less than Jesus Christ in the midst ministering through his Body.

- b. To Fight the Devil.

(Eph.6:10-13). If you study the nature of the gifts you will see how necessary they are to fight against the Devil's deceit (word of wisdom, knowledge, distinguishing spirits), his spreading of doubt (gift of faith), his physical, emotional, spiritual, practical attacks (gifts of healing, miracles), his discouragement (prophecy, interpretation of tongues), his hatred of praise to God (tongues). And this is only to mention nine gifts in 1 Cor.12.

- c. To Encourage the Church.

"To each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good". (1 Cor.12:7; see also v.24-26). So there is to be an "every member ministry" to build up the Church (1 Cor.14:12) providing guidance (word of wisdom, knowledge, discernment of spirits - NB: the gifts of the Spirit are not used in Scripture to provide guidance by themselves, but rather to confirm guidance), encouragement (prophecy, interpretation of tongues), wholeness and deliverance (faith, healing and miracles). The gifts in Eph.4; 1 Cor.12:28; Rom.12:6-8 have more obvious practical benefits for the church.

- d. To Evangelise the Lost.

Jesus sent out His disciples to preach the kingdom but at the same time to heal the sick and drive out demons (Luke 9:1-2, 10:9, 17-20; Matthew 10:6-8). The Lord confirms the Word with signs (Mark 16:20). Like Jesus, we are to take the whole gospel to the whole man. We need all the gifts of the Spirit for that. Non-Christians often need a prophetic word to awaken their interest, or discernment and deliverance are required because of occult connections, or healing is needed.

#### 4. HINDRANCES TO THE GIFTS

In Luke 9:37-40 we read that the disciples could not cast out an evil spirit from a boy. The rest of the chapter reveals some reasons why this was:- some hindrances in the lives of the disciples. They are:-

a. **Lack of faith** (v.41).

And so it can be with some Christians today. Instead of a child-like faith in Christ and his Word, there is a desire to work everything out before acting in obedience. “What about those who are not healed?” “Will anyone be harmed if the prayer is not answered?” Ultimately we have got to have a simple faith in Christ - the same yesterday, today and forever. This faith is released by prayerful meditation on the relevant parts of Scripture. Doubt must be repented of.

b. **Pride** (v.46).

They wanted to be well known - “the greatest”. It is possible for us to want to boost our own ego by spiritual “success” or to want to join some spiritual elite. Or, we may want to stay aloof from any elite and be proud of being humble! We may be too proud to face God’s training and humbling process before we are usable by him. We might feel we are always right and know best. The danger is that some people become “hot-line Christians”, trusting solely in private guidance and prophecy and not submitting to the confirmation and correction of the fellowship.

c. **Jealousy** (v.49).

They were jealous that someone else was being used, especially as it wasn’t one of their little group! God uses “unlikely” people and we may not like this.

d. **Envy** (v.49).

They envied this other person’s success. Some Christians think “Oh, if only I could be like X! My ministry has failed.” “If only I could speak like Y.” “If only I had Z’s confidence.” “They’re all better than me!” The danger is that this leads on to other thoughts:- “They think they’re better than me, who do they think they are - always full of themselves? But I can see many faults in them ...”

#### 5. ENCOURAGING THE GIFTS

*We will major on the general gifts of 1 Cor.12:7-10* as these are, perhaps, the more difficult to recognise and understand. The leadership gifts of Eph.4:8-11 will be clearly recognised by the church, especially after the gifts of 1 Cor.12:7-10 are understood and recognised. So will those in 1 Cor.12:28 and Romans 12:6-8. The gifts of 1 Cor.12:6-8 are vital in fellowship meetings and worship. Here then is some advice to Ministry Team or prayer cell or worship leaders on encouraging the gifts:-

a. *Preparing at Home.*

Time is wasted and spoilt at a fellowship meeting if people don't come prepared spiritually. They should be regularly having their personal prayer and Bible reading and obeying the Lord. They should also be encouraged to prepare specifically in prayer for the meeting. The Lord may give them a word to bring to the group (1 Cor.14:26).

b. *Worshipping the Lord.*

This is, after all, our priority in life. It is good to start a time of prayer and sharing with worship.

c. *Resisting the enemy.*

Satan hates the Church coming alive and using its spiritual weapons. He will try many tangible ways of spoiling the fellowship:- people absent through illness, busyness, disenchantment or indifference; a "wet blanket" over the meeting; people feeling out of sorts; strained relationships, etc. The leader must recognise this and take authority over Satan's messengers. **See James 4:7:-**

(1) "Submit yourselves ... to God"

i.e. make sure any known sin is confessed (not necessarily out loud).

Realise that submission to God means being spiritually protected.

"Claim" that protection for you and yours, through the cross.

(2) "Resist the devil"

Either use those actual biblical words (James 4:7) or if you discern a lesser spirit address him authoritatively in Jesus' name. Claim by faith that his power be broken. With authority and indignation inform him he has no right over children of God. Then, in the name of Jesus, command him to go to the place to which Jesus assigns him.

(3) "And he will flee from you"

Claim this promise.

d. *Encouraging the Shy.*

The big "sound barrier" is simply opening your mouth! Encourage shy people simply to mention a prayer topic during the prayers; or to pray a sentence prayer; not to worry about special language but to be natural. They might even read a prepared prayer. Be gentle and sensitive.

e. *Recognising the Prompting of the Spirit.*

(1) Give God your own ideas.

(2) Ask the Holy Spirit to anoint you.



- (3) Believe that what comes to you now is more likely to be from God. You will never be certain beyond any doubt - it is an act of faith. There is likely to be a mixture of the fleshly and the spiritual in a contribution, especially at first.
- (4) You may sense a prompting in your mind: dominant thoughts, words or pictures. (It could, of course, sometimes be a verse of Scripture or a song). It may be an emotional prompting in your heart encouraging you to speak out even though you may only have the first word or few words. You might find your lips or tongue "quiver". You may have an urge to do something, e.g. pray for someone (present or absent).
- (5) Pause to check it is biblical to your knowledge; ask the Lord to purify or remove it; be sensitive to whether it is the right time to share it. Don't cut across another theme which may have developed in the prayers. But don't wait too long and remember it may have a relevance which you don't appreciate. If you feel you should pray with someone present, e.g. for healing, check with the leader and the person to be prayed for first.

*f. Acting in Faith.*

Leaders should ensure that the fellowship is known to be loving and accepting so that people can make mistakes without feeling condemned. Encourage people to risk sharing - even if they think it is stupid. Deal gently with any contribution. Only if it is a serious error should it be publicly corrected - less serious errors can be corrected privately. Some slight mistakes can be safely ignored. It is better to risk making a mistake than not to contribute.

*g. Weighing the Contribution.*

Leaders should take notice of contributions. It is often right to come in immediately explaining which gift was operating; asking people to meditate on what was shared; asking for other contributions on the same theme. Otherwise someone may cut across the theme and it will lose its effect. Ensure that genuine contributions are acted on or discussed with the church leadership, if of general importance. It is good if someone in the group, during any prayer time, is ready to write down the messages given, preferably in shorthand. If they are important for the rest of the church, they should be given to the Minister in written form.

However, the spoken gifts of the Spirit don't necessarily come through us perfectly and infallibly. All contributions must be "weighed" (1 Cor.14:29) and corrected as stated in (f.) above. It is not enough for an individual to submit to God. The only safe and biblical way is to submit to the local church.

Encourage a person when what they share is from God and thank them for sharing it.

***Here are some tests of whether a contribution is from the Holy Spirit:-***

- (1) Is it scriptural?
- (2) Does it exalt Christ as Lord, divine and human?
- (3) Does the Spirit within the leaders bear witness to the spirit of the contribution?
- (4) Does it make us more conscious of God?
- (5) Does it edify, challenge or comfort?
- (6) Does it come true (if predictive)?
- (7) Is the contributor close to God, devoted to Scripture, fully in fellowship? Or, is there pride, domination and impurity?
- (8) Does the contribution increase unity and understanding between those present? Or, does it jar on the spirits of Christians present?

## **B. THE GIFTS OF 1 COR. 12.**

(Remember that these are inspirational gifts, one or more of which may be exercised by an individual on any one occasion e.g. in a church service or small group or in a pastoral or evangelistic situation. If an individual is used regularly in one gift it may become or enhance a ministry, linked to the task gifts of Romans 12 or the leadership gifts of Ephesians 4).

### **1. The Gift of the Word of Wisdom 1 Cor.12:8**

This is a supernatural revelation of the solution to a particular problem or crisis. It is God's wisdom revealed through a Christian for a particular situation which will prove to be appropriate advice to man and will glorify Christ. Do not confuse it with human wisdom which, even in Christians, can be harmful. (Read 1 Cor.1:17-2:16).

How many frustrations, mistakes and lengthy discussions would be avoided if full use were made of the word of wisdom. God intends this to be one of the main ways in which the church is guided and ordered. He gives his wisdom generously to those who ask in faith (James 1:5). It is recognisable as pure, peaceloving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere (James 3:17).

#### **a. Biblical Examples**

In 1 Kings 3:7-12 Solomon asked God, "Give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people, and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" Read the first example of his remarkable wisdom in verses 16-28, regarding the two prostitutes each claiming the same baby.

Jesus was often almost trapped by clever questioners. But the word of wisdom enabled him to frustrate their attacks. Read these examples: the trick question about Jesus' authority (Matthew 21:23-27); the loaded question about paying tribute to Caesar (Luke 20:19-26); the test question about the woman caught in adultery (John 8:3-11). Remember Jesus' ability came from the same source as ours - the Holy Spirit.

Philip was supernaturally told to go to where the Ethiopian eunuch needed spiritual advice (Acts 8:26-39). Ananias was told similarly to minister to Saul (Acts 9:10-19). Paul was informed by the Holy Spirit not to go to Asia or Bithynia but to go to Macedonia (Acts 16:6-10); was told to speak confidently at Corinth (Acts 18:9-11); and went up "by revelation" to Jerusalem (Galatians 2:2).

b. Modern Examples

Often in counselling, a Christian counsellor is initially completely lacking in wisdom to advise. Then God “out of the blue” gives relevant information - sometimes surprising the counsellor as well as the person being counselled.

## 2. The Gift of the Word of Knowledge 1 Cor.12:8

This is a supernatural revelation concerning a difficulty or need, of facts not known naturally. It is a fragment of God’s knowledge revealed through a Christian concerning a particular situation which brings blessing to man and glory to Christ.

a. Biblical Examples

God revealed to Samuel that Saul was to be the first king of Israel (1 Sam.9:15-10:9); that Saul had disobeyed God in keeping spoils of cattle (1 Sam.15:13-14); that David was to be king (1 Sam.16:12); Elisha knew supernaturally the secret plans of the Syrian army (2 Kings 6:11-12).

Jesus knew the background of the woman at the well (John 4:7-26).

The Holy Spirit revealed to Peter that three men were looking for him (word of knowledge) and what he was to do about it (word of wisdom) (Acts 10:19-20).

b. Modern Examples

- (1) Through the mind. The thought may be revealed that someone has a pain. It is a dominant thought but still requires faith. In one of our services one member thus discerned that a visitor had trouble with gallstones. She had no natural evidence or knowledge of this. The man was healed from his gallstones afterwards.
- (2) Through the imagination. Some Christians have “seen”, for example, a “black patch” over a person’s heart, indicating a need to pray for heart trouble.
- (3) Through sympathetic pain. Sometimes a Christian may suddenly feel a pain which is actually an indication that someone present has got this pain. When the other person is prayed for, the pain leaves the first person too.

c. Distinguish this Gift from clairvoyance etc.

- (1) It must specifically glorify Christ, not man.
- (2) It must be really useful information (not just of curiosity value).
- (3) It must bring encouragement, not fear.
- (4) It must be displayed by someone who has renounced any clairvoyance, etc.
- (5) It must produce an inner certainty and approval in other mature Christians.



### 3. The Gift of Faith

This is a supernatural ability to go beyond general and saving faith, and to believe that the “impossible” has happened. It is distinguished from the gifts of healing and miracles in that the operation of faith is not immediately or even generally observable, whereas healing and miracles are clearly observable. Heb.11:1 says, “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”

There is, of course, saving and general faith which every Christian has. We need saving faith to receive eternal life. John 5:24 says that if we believe, we have eternal life now, not just after death. We need general faith to trust God for our day to day needs. This faith can grow. It is usually mixed with uncertainty and hesitancy.

But the gift of faith is distinct from saving and general faith. It is a special absolute faith which comes suddenly and completely with an obvious and powerful anointing by the Holy Spirit. It seems to come to certain Christians at times of great crisis or opportunity for service. The gift will only be given at times, temporarily to meet specific circumstances. “For one brief, mighty moment, the absolute confidence that God has in his own Word is granted to the anointed servant of God; in that moment he is invincible, master of the situation, sharer of the divine sovereignty.” (Linford). The gift is, therefore, an extraordinary magnification of ordinary faith called forth by special circumstances.

#### a. Biblical Examples

One great aspect of the gift of faith is AUTHORITY. It enables the believer in God’s Name to take command of a situation calling on the host of heaven to help. Elisha was surrounded by enemy forces but could assure his servant, “Don’t be afraid ... those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” (2 Kings 6:16). Elisha could “see” a heavenly army protecting him. God also gave the gift of faith with consequent angelic protection to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the furnace (Dan.3:25); Daniel in the lion’s den (Dan.6:22); Peter and John’s supernatural release from prison (Acts 5:19); Peter’s escape (Acts 12:1-11); Paul’s confidence that no-one would die in the shipwreck (Acts 27:22-23). Also, Elijah was able to assure the widow of Zarephath that her containers of meal and oil would not fail during the three year drought (1 Kings 17:14). He himself received the faith to know God would provide food and drink supernaturally (1 Kings 17:3-4,9). This gift also enables an authoritative blessing to be pronounced. So Isaac and Jacob invoked effective blessings on their children (Hebrews 11:20-21); Elijah proclaimed that there would be no rain in Israel for years “except at my word” (1 Kings 17:1). After the contest with the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18) he “heard” the “sound of heavy rain” long before the slightest cloud appeared (v.41). So the gift of faith was used to bring the drought to an end.

#### b. Modern Examples

Such authority as comes with the gift of faith gives a person that positive and peaceful assurance which persists even in unlikely circumstances. Gritting your teeth and forcing yourself to “believe” what you’re not convinced of is nothing to do with the gift of faith. “Genuine scriptural faith is not our ability to “count it done” but the deep consciousness divinely imparted to the heart of man that it is done.” (Price).

It is important that Christians know of the availability of this gift of faith to meet a time of crisis or other special circumstances, and that they seek it as necessary. It can be quite a small thing. The Evangelist Don Double tells of how he and his team on the way to a ministry engagement found their van locked with the keys in the ignition. They could not open the door, try as they might. They prayed, and Don received the gift of faith and the thought, "Go and open the door." He went and simply opened the door! But the door was still locked because he had to take the keys from the ignition and unlock the lock - after he'd opened it!

#### **4. The Gifts of Healing**

These are supernatural abilities to bring Christ's healing and deliverance to those who lack mental, emotional or physical wholeness, or are in spiritual bondage.

We need to be discerning about the source of healing. There is demonic healing through spiritualist mediums or other occult means. This "works" physically but brings spiritual bondages and problems, fears, etc. It is strongly condemned in Scripture and must be rejected totally. Those who have been involved in such things, should seek a mature Christian to pray for them to be set free, and then ask for prayer for healing in Jesus' name.

Then there are "natural" healing gifts. These are best renounced as they can so easily lead on to occult involvement, pride, and people being honoured instead of God. However if someone has the right attitude of humility, it could be that in some instances the Lord would transform a "natural" healing gift to be used in the church for his glory.

How to Minister Healing.

- a. Ensure that your motives are proper. Are you wanting to bring honour to Christ or yourself?
- b. It can be important that you have received healing (as necessary) yourself, especially if you are praying for inner, emotional healing. It is little use praying for another person's hurts, anxieties and "hang-ups" if you still have the same problems.
- c. Build up your faith through meditating on Scripture. Your faith must be firmly grounded in the biblical teaching on healing. Let the Lord use you in small ways first - before ministering to people with very deep needs of healing.
- d. Ask for discernment from the Holy Spirit as to whether the healing needed is purely physical, or whether inner healing or setting free from emotional bondage to another person (e.g. dominant parents) or deliverance from occult oppression is required. Physical problems may be the symptoms of these inner or deeper needs - anyone in deep need should be referred to counsellors.
- e. Prepare the person for healing by leading him to:-
  - (1) Confess any known sin and receive forgiveness as he thinks of the cross.
  - (2) Pray for faith.
  - (3) Meditate on the relevant promises of God in the Bible.
  - (4) Look to Jesus who loves him enough to die for him (not to look to you, or himself or his needs).

- f. Pray for him. You might gently lay your hands on his head whilst you pray. Where anointing is used (which is normally by the elders), have some pure olive oil in a small bottle. Put some oil on your thumb and sign the person's forehead with the cross in oil in the name of the Lord. Have a tissue ready to wipe the oil afterwards.

Be open to the other gifts of the Spirit which may well come for the benefit of the sufferer during the prayer.

Be specific about the part of the body you are praying for, asking the Lord to heal, e.g. nerves, muscles, organs.

James 5:15 says that "the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well." It is in God's hands how he answers prayer. I have never known anyone fail to benefit from healing prayer in some significant way.

- g. Don't neglect other aspects of healing: visiting, listening, touch, helping, caring and medical means. Remember surgery and medicine don't heal; they release healing which is already in the body. It is still divine healing! Some people seek divine healing because they are afraid of doctors! It is good to pray before going to the doctor and to "say grace" before taking medicine.
- h. Encourage the person to thank God. Some answers to prayer are "tortoise" answers - coming gradually (possibly with more prayer). But the person even then can be encouraged to affirm God's promises and to thank God for the truth of them. Here are some relevant passages: Exodus 15:26 (last phrase); Psalm 103:1-3; 107:20; Luke 1:37; Matt. 4:23; Hebrews 13:8 and Mark 16:15-18. Encourage him to give thanks that God has heard the prayer, that God is the healer, but to reject negative thoughts in the name of Jesus.

The person should also observe the rules of health, and not discontinue medicine until certain of healing.

## **5. The Gift of Working of Miracles**

This is a supernatural ability to bring God's power to bear on an "impossible" situation.

Some people dismiss miracles because they regard them as violations of natural law. But they are not like that. Rather they are an operation of a higher law. An aircraft in flight is not violating the law of gravity but a higher law neutralises gravity - namely, the law of aerodynamics. So "natural law" is simply a term meaning the way God normally works in nature. He can bring a different, higher law to bear if necessary. "But if they occur they will be comparatively rare, else the beneficent general uniformity of nature will be broken up, and the confidence of men in the order of the world impaired" (W.N.Clarke). Hence, there have been special times in history when regular and obvious miracles have been called for - the time of Moses, of Elijah and Elisha, of Jesus and the early church. The time approaching the return of Christ will be another such period of miracles, so we should expect to see more in the future.



The working of miracles is not the same as healing. In miracles power is emphasised - in healing life and wholeness are emphasised. The restoring of a bodily organ is healing. The creation of a new organ is probably a working of miracles. Casting out demons is a working of miracles (emphasising power) as would be raising the dead. Healing emphasises the love of God, miracles the power of God.

Nor is the working of miracles the same as the gift of faith. The working of miracles is an active use of the power of God. The gift of faith is a more passive but authoritative calling for the power of God to operate. The gift of faith is one that calls into operation the power of God on one's behalf. The working of miracles is the power of God operating through the individual.

The word miracle (Mark 9:39) emphasises the idea of power. But other words are used: "signs" (John 20:30) speaks of the revealing of secret truth; "wonders" (Acts 2:22) stresses the idea of surprise and amazement.

Miracles may authenticate the preaching of the Word (Mark 16:20; Acts 2:22) or provide for care and protection of believers (Feeding of 5,000 Matt.14:13-21) (Mark 16:17-18, preservation from poisoning). Also, a miracle may defeat Satan or opponents of God (Matt.8:16; Luke 11:20). So the plagues in Egypt (Exodus 10:16-17); and Elymas being struck blind (Acts 13:11) were miracles of judgment. There are many instances on record today, of Communist customs officers, with normal sight, prevented temporarily from seeing, as Bibles were smuggled into China or elsewhere.

Christians should covet this gift along with the others. It is important to realise that a miracle may be a very small, private personal matter - but nevertheless important to the individual. It may be the miraculous provision of money or food.

## **6. The Gift of Prophecy**

### **a. What is Prophecy?**

- (1) It is not the same as teaching (prophecy and teaching are distinguished in Acts 13:1 and Eph.4:11), although it may be delivered in sermon form.

It is the gift of conveying a specific vision of God's will for the present and plans for the future, so that God's people are challenged, encouraged or comforted (1Cor. 14:3). It is God speaking through a human channel to a particular situation. The message is a temporary one and is therefore not on a par with Scripture which has general and permanent relevance. (See 1 Cor.14:3-5, 12, 24-25, 29-33).

- (2) It is intended to build up the church - it may be a strong call to repentance but its effect should be positive not depressing. A second purpose is to encourage the church - revealing what is wrong and how to put it right. Then it is to comfort or console the church. There is no evidence of the gift of prophecy being deliberately resorted to for guidance in the New Testament. The gift is meant to confirm guidance, not to give it in itself.
- (3) The gift is completely under the control of the speaker in terms of when and how he speaks. But the thoughts and at least the gist of the words are given by God.

- (4) It may happen “incidentally” through a sermon, talk, testimony, article or prayer, but it is not to be confused with any of those things. The Lord may give songs or mental pictures which are a form of prophecy.

b. Who may Prophecy?

God spoke through Balaam’s ass in the Old Testament, so there’s hope for all of us! Anyone may prophesy (Acts 2:16-18; 1 Cor.14:5, 31;) but not everyone has the Ministry of a Prophet which is a regular leading ministry recognised by the church.

1 Cor.14:29-33 teaches that after two or three have prophesied, others should weigh what is said, i.e. testing it to see it is correct and from the Lord, and seeking to appreciate its full significance. Various people may have the same thoughts come to them simultaneously, and the Lord may build up a “jig saw” message where various people contribute complementary pieces to one overall picture and message. In this case, one speaker should give way to the next when the latter receives a revelation.

c. In what form does a Prophecy come?

It may come to mind as a mental picture for which we should seek to give the meaning, or a theme or a sentence or a lengthy prophecy. It is always an act of faith to speak out a message. We should prophesy according to our faith (Romans 12:6). That means it may be short to begin with or not necessarily of vital importance. There is no need for old-fashioned language and don’t worry if it is not word perfect.

Be sensitive as to when to speak out - that it is the relevant time. But don’t delay too long. A prophecy can be used by God to transform a meeting. Speak out with love in your heart or keep quiet! Also, there is no need to say “Thus saith the Lord”, which can almost sound like you are emotionally blackmailing everyone to accept it as genuine. Rather say, “I believe the Lord is saying...” or similar words. This is helpful also, when the hearers are not familiar with the gift of prophecy.

Few would object if the speaker says, “I think God is saying this to us ...” But experience teaches that a prophecy loses some effect if it is not conveyed in the first person singular, i.e. quote the Lord, don’t just describe what he is saying.

d. Handling Prophetic Revelation.

True prophecy is the twin of intercession. We pray in depth and the Lord replies through scripture and prophecy. Then we return to intercession to ask the Lord to fulfil what he has revealed through those means. So, as he intended, the church is built on the foundation of prayer and hearing the Lord. Only in this way is the Lord free to build his church through us in his way.

Prophecies may be recorded in church or other gatherings either through a microphone suspended above the congregation or in shorthand. The messages are transcribed and given to the elders, who take appropriate action: calling the church to prayer (if God says he will do something, that is a signal for us to pray it into being); teaching about the subject highlighted in the prophecies; or implementing practical decisions and action. Frequently the message may be published in a weekly newsletter.

When a prophetic word is shared in a service the leader often quickly steps in to ensure the congregation pauses to take the message in. That way the impact is not lost by some unrelated item following too soon. The leader may ask for further related words but does not allow too much to be shared for the congregation to assimilate at one time.

None of us is infallible and a pure gift of the Spirit may be slightly marred by being conveyed through a sinful human being. But it is vital that “prophecy” is checked (1 Cor. 14:29) and that leaders are not emotionally blackmailed into accepting what they are not happy about. There are various simple ways to test the authenticity of any word brought to the meeting:

- (1) Is it scriptural? A mature leader should be able to make this test instantaneously.
- (2) Does it “strengthen”, “encourage”, “comfort”, even if it is a strong call to repentance (1 Cor. 14:3)?
- (3) Does it produce an “inner assent” in the spirits of the leadership? Sometimes a “prophecy” produces a “check” or an unease in our spirits. This reaction should not be rationalised or ignored. It may, of course, be possible at times to check verbally with a colleague.
- (4) Is the person giving the message Christ-like? This does not of course mean he or she must be perfect. But is the person in a right relationship with the Lord and with the congregation? Are they properly submitted to their local church and its leadership? Is their attitude loving even though the message may be a rebuke from the Lord? Or is there a harsh, judgmental spirit? If the message is a hobby-horse of the speaker or is what the congregation want to hear then we are right to be wary and to check it more carefully. Does it exalt the Lord?
- (5) If predictive, does the prophecy come true? This may seem an unnecessary check. But I have known Christians try to rationalise their predictive “prophecy” when it does not come true. We must be scrupulously honest in this matter. However, this check may not apply if the prophecy is conditional on repentance.

What happens if we are sure the message is not genuine? Normally it will be fleshly rather than demonic. Only if it were very serious or clearly demonic would a public contradiction be called for. Even then it can be done with a gentle firmness, and the person seen privately. Much more often the leader can step in quickly using a comment, a reading or a song to direct things gently back on course. It may be necessary to have a private word after the service with a person who persistently gets it wrong. But we must allow people to risk making mistakes without being rejected. They will otherwise never learn to prophesy (or do anything else). The occasional mistake doesn’t make someone a false prophet, so long as he accepts loving correction when it is necessary.

Remember that at various times in history Renewal Movements have sought to reinstate prophecy. Christians have often erred by regarding it as too authoritative on the one extreme, or by despising it and so quenching the Spirit (1 Thess.5:20) on the other.

## 7. The Gift of Tongues

This gift has, in the past, been made rather controversial, but it is a genuine gift of the Holy Spirit which is still available today as 1 Cor.13:8-12 shows. It is the supernatural ability to praise God in a language never learned; an earthly or a heavenly language.

Satan has stirred up many barriers against the gift to prevent people being blessed by it.

### a. Some Barriers to Tongues

- (1) Fear. If tongues is a gift of the Holy Spirit we need not be afraid of it. Rather we should gladly accept it. Fear is, of course, sometimes the reaction of people to God's supernatural manifestations, as recorded in Scripture, e.g. Jonah 1:16; Acts 5:11; 10:4. Fear, therefore, is not in itself an indication that something is wrong. We are naturally afraid of the unknown.

One main fear is of getting "carried away" - babbling off in "tongues of ecstasy" as the New English Bible puts it. This is a wrong translation in that Tongues - however blissful - is not ecstatic in the sense of uncontrolled or out of touch with reality. "The spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets." (1 Cor.14:32-33). It is clear from 1 Cor.14:27-28 that the gift is in the control of the speaker as to when and how he speaks, but not as to the words he says. Sometimes the gift is so calm and "deliberate" it creates doubts in the speaker!

Another fear is of receiving a false gift. It is true that one should not just open oneself to any influence. It is also unhealthy to go on striving to speak in tongues. But if we come to the Lord in penitence and asking for his protection, then he will not give us anything false. Jesus taught this clearly in Luke 11:11-13. Satan loves to encourage stories about people speaking in tongues and actually blaspheming God. Have you noticed how these stories are always at least second-hand?

The real answer to fear is to allow the Lord to convince us of what the Bible teaches on the subject. Then, if we obey, we need have no fear.

- (2) Doubt. Almost everyone doubts their "tongue" at some time. It "sounds funny" and "made up". But remember it is always an act of faith, so doubt is always possible. Also, there are many thousands of human languages, some of which are described as "a series of animal grunts!" The language may seem repetitive - but then so does any foreign language. Also, repetition can be meaningful. For example, Psalm 136 is very repetitive.
- (3) Pride. We tend to be too sophisticated and intellectual. Maybe we have little sense of awe and mystery. Yet Jesus says we are to become like children. One of the biggest values of tongues is that it cuts across this intellectualism, rationalism and pride. It makes us child-like. One expert pointed out that the speech centre in the brain is very dominant. So for the Holy Spirit to control this speech centre is very important.

## **b. The Nature of Tongues**

- (1) Prayer to God. The gift of tongues is addressed to God (1 Cor.14:2). In Acts 2:11 the crowd heard the disciples not talking to them about God, but praising God for his wonderful deeds. It is primarily a private praise language which expresses worship very deeply when known words seem inadequate (cf Rom.8:26-27). It can be sung when the Lord gives the music too. The gift can, however, take the form of deep intercession or confession. Many Christians have used it to pray for someone when they have not known what to pray. With interpretation it can be used very effectively in public, conveying God's message and inspiring a sense of his presence.
- (2) Not understood by the speaker and (normally) the hearers. This is clear from 1 Cor.14:2, 13-14. There are exceptions - the day of Pentecost was one. A missionary in Mindanao told of a tribal woman who couldn't even speak Spanish, let alone English, praying in tongues in English, using words like "diadems" and "pearls of praise". A missionary visiting Jean Darnall's church heard an American praying in tongues for the tribe she worked with, using the language of that tribe. A public message in tongues should always be interpreted.

## **c. The Value of Tongues**

- (1) Private Use.
  - ◆ It is the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit doesn't give useless, unnecessary gifts!
  - ◆ It is valued by St. Paul. He says we are earnestly to desire it (with the other gifts) (1 Cor.14:1): "I would like every one of you to speak in tongues" (1 Cor.14:5); "I speak in tongues more than all of you" (1 Cor.14:18). Yet in 1 Cor.12:30 he implies that not all will speak in tongues. Is he contradicting himself? No. It is clear in 1 Cor.14:18-19 that he is distinguishing between a private gift of tongues and a public gift in church. Not everyone will speak in tongues publicly. But the private gift will be very widespread. Some would say that the gift is available to all who seek it. (See 1 Cor.14:5, 18, 23).
  - ◆ It "edifies" one's spirit, as 1 Cor.14:4 teaches. The speaker doesn't understand with his mind but he is spiritually built up and strengthened by speaking in tongues. That is why Satan tries to prevent people from receiving the gift or stop them from using it. I remember once speaking in tongues whilst driving alone one night. As I spoke, I had a very deep and moving mental image of the cross with its shame and sadness.
- (2) Public Use.
  - ◆ See Section A.5. on "Recognising the Prompting of the Spirit".
  - ◆ You may find the language seems different from your private "tongue".



- ◆ Concentrate on the Lord as you speak, and stop as soon as you sense the Holy Spirit is no longer prompting you.

**d. Encouraging a Person to Speak in Tongues** (For private use)

- (1) A person must be convinced the Bible teaches the gift is available today.
- (2) Any barriers in them (fear, doubt, pride) must be removed through meditation on Scripture, prayer and advice. Seeking tongues as a spiritual status symbol is also wrong.
- (3) Pray together, claiming God's promises in the matter.
- (4) Encourage them to praise God out loud (God won't open their mouth!) and you can praise aloud at the same time - maybe in tongues. This is not to contrive anything, but simply to lessen any tension and to get the person to speak so God can give the words. Some people have found it helpful even to stop speaking in English and to say a sound or a word like "Abba". This again is not contriving, but is an act of dedicating one's (physical) tongue and speech to God and combating the strong intellectual urge to be in control of one's words. It would, however, be unhealthy to persist in this for any length of time. Some have found that "strange" words come to mind - in which case they should speak them out.
- (5) If the person definitely speaks in tongues (it may only be a word or two at first and not necessarily fluent or exciting) encourage them. And warn them they may - like most people - have doubts later.
- (6) If after some time a person does not receive the gift, check if there are any barriers. If not, encourage them to leave the matter with the Lord. He is sovereign and will release the gift if and when he sees best. People can be obviously filled with the Spirit without speaking in tongues (although it has proved the breakthrough for some).

## **8. The Gift of Interpretation of Tongues**

**a. What is Interpretation?**

- (1) It is the supernatural ability to interpret a public message in tongues. It is an interpretation, not a translation, and so may be longer than the message in tongues.
- (2) It is a gift, not a natural understanding of tongues.
- (3) It may come to the individual in the same ways as prophecy (see section on Prophecy).
- (4) Tongues and interpretation often involves two people showing the interdependence within the Body of Christ. Tongues also can draw attention vividly



to God's presence and make people aware he is going to speak to them.

- (5) Christians disagree over whether the interpretation is addressed to God or to man. The N.T. seems to suggest the former. Certainly experience teaches that interpretation can be a very inspiring ascription of worship, which has a profound effect on the hearers.

b. Who should Interpret?

- (1) There should always be an interpretation after a public message in tongues (except when the congregation or group "sings in the Spirit", i.e. in tongues). Sometimes an individual may sing the message in tongues and the interpretation may be sung too. In both cases the music is given by the Holy Spirit.
- (2) The person who speaks in tongues can be the one to interpret (1 Cor.14:13).
- (3) Various people may receive the interpretation but only one is to speak it out. Some have claimed that in the early church there was one "official" interpreter, but this seems rather unlikely.
- (4) 1 Cor.14:27-28 is difficult. Some think it means there should be a maximum of three messages in tongues with interpretation in any one meeting. Others think it means only three messages immediately following one another at any particular time in the meeting. Maybe the former is more likely.

c. How to encourage the Gift of Interpretation of Tongues.

- (1) The leader should ask for a pause to seek the interpretation after anyone has spoken in tongues publicly. He should encourage people to recognise the prompting of the Spirit and to obey it.
- (2) If there is no interpretation it may be the "tongue" was not in the Spirit, but it may be someone has not recognised or had the courage to speak out the interpretation. Ideally the leader should in that case seek God for the interpretation.
- (3) Sometimes someone comes in with an apparent interpretation. This may not be genuine, in which case the leader should ask if others have anything to share. Or it may be a genuine prophecy but not the interpretation. The leader (and others) should recognise this and still seek the interpretation.
- (4) Anyone speaking in tongues excessively or regularly out of the Spirit, should be dealt with gently but firmly.

## 9. The Gift of "Discernment of Spirits" 1 Cor. 12:10

This is a supernatural ability to discern the source of supernatural manifestations. It is not a critical spirit. Rather it includes the ability to distinguish what is from the Holy Spirit, what from the human spirit and what from demonic sources.

a. Biblical Examples

In 2 Kings 6:17 Elisha's servant was enabled to discern the presence of the angelic army of heaven surrounding him in protection. In Acts 8:23 Paul perceived that Simon's human spirit was full of bitterness and captive to sin. Paul discerned that the slave girl in Acts 16:16-19 had a demonic spirit of divination, even though she was saying the right things. Peter discerned that Satan had filled the heart of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11 - this was a combination of a bad human spirit and demonic influence.

b. Modern Examples

As stated above, the gift may be divided into three aspects:-

(1) Discernment of the Holy Spirit.

This is a "witness" of the Spirit with our human spirits that the Holy Spirit is at work (cf Rom.8:16). This often takes the form of an "inner lift" of joy, peace and love. It is possible to recognise that a stranger is a Christian by this discernment.

However, more logical tests should also be applied: Is a contribution biblical? Does it proclaim Jesus as Lord (1 Cor.12:3)? Does it centre on the physical death of Christ (1 John 4:2)?

(2) Discernment of the Human Spirit.

Some manifestations apparently coming from the Holy Spirit are really only from the human spirit. They may be "harmless" - although they can waste time and devalue the idea of spiritual gifts. There will be no "witness" in the hearts of Spirit-filled believers as mentioned in (1) above. There may be a sense of "inner restlessness" when a manifestation purporting to be from the Holy Spirit is really from the human spirit.

But beware cynicism and suspicion. The fact that a manifestation is not word-perfect or perfectly delivered does not mean it is inaccurate. Also it can be a mixture of the Holy Spirit and the human spirit.

(3) Discernment of Evil Spirits.

Sometimes there can be very obvious evidences such as bizarre behaviour or someone speaking in a voice other than their own, etc. These can be evidences of demon-possession and require expert, authoritative ministry. But there are lesser manifestations. A Christian cannot be demon possessed in his spirit, which is where the Holy Spirit dwells, but he may be heavily oppressed in other areas. Oppression may take the form of spiritual deadness, e.g. a "wet blanket" over a quiet time or a meeting, a feeling of confusion and frustration which leads to a "sinking feeling" in one's stomach. Similarly, we may discern the presence of demonic evil in the sense of heaviness, unrest, deadness, coldness and even nausea. Because of persistent sin a Christian may be in bondage to certain habits, e.g. gossip, slander, judgmentalism, resentment, irritability, self-justification, unhealthy guilt feelings, depression and condemnation over one's failings, doubt, fear, even irrational fear.

We must not become obsessed with finding demons everywhere. This almost glorifies the Devil. And there is a danger of blaming demons for what is purely human sin, falling to temptation. Repentance or inner healing are sometimes all that is required.

However, demons are intelligent beings (Matt.8:31) - they believe in God and tremble (James 2:19). They can enter and re-enter human bodies (Matt.12:43-45) and manifest superhuman strength (Mark 5:1-4). They can speak through people (Mark 5:9-12) and can cause sickness (Luke 13:11). They can give counterfeit spiritual gifts (1 Cor.12:3; 1 John 4:1-6; 1 Tim.4:1).

There seem to be either different ranks of demons (see Ephesians 6:12) or different areas of demonic authority. One distinction made is of (a) Satan. (b) Principalities and principedoms (see Dan.10:12 - 11:1 Possibly to do with power over countries). (c) Powers and authorities. (Possibly power over areas of community life.) (d) Then hosts of evil demons. We must be very careful not to “come against” Satan but only use the language of James 4:7 (“Resist the devil”). As for (b) and (c) (the higher ranks), there should be careful preparation and we should know exactly what we are doing in submission to Scripture. Take note of what happened to the sons of Sceva in Acts 19:13-16. Normally the elders of the church would discern after fasting and prayer whether it was the right time to bind a demonic power over a church, and only if God's people are willing to “possess the land” i.e. welcome Jesus as Lord. (Exodus 23:30). It is highly dubious as to whether we could ever cast out a demonic force from a geographical area where the majority are non-Christians.

As for (d), some experienced people believe it is important to discern the name of the demon (which may afflict an individual, a family or a small group e.g. a prayer group), but it seems unwise normally to spend a long time on this.

Deliverance of an individual should always be carried out by two people ministering together. Some say it is a ministry for men, even if the team is mixed. There should always be someone of the same sex as the person being ministered to.

The act of deliverance involves the following steps (please also read the Time Ministries Occult Check List `for further information):-

1. Confession and renunciation of all known sin by all concerned. The person being helped should repent and renounce his sins out loud. (Give him a list if necessary). Fasting may also be required.
2. Ask God's protection through the cross for each person involved and for their families.
3. Command the spirit (directly in the second person singular) not to harm anyone and bind it (Matt.12:22-29) so it will be helpless. (Incidentally, it may be good to explain to the person you are ministering to that you will pray very aggressively but that you are not speaking to them!).
4. Command it to come out in Jesus' Name:
  - ♦ remind it of the cross where Christ shed his blood
  - ♦ quote Scripture such as James 4:7
  - ♦ there is authority in the name of Jesus but don't use it superstitiously as a magic word
  - ♦ don't tell the spirit where to go - tell it to go where Jesus sends it.

5. Pray for God's blessing or healing for the person so that the Holy Spirit will fill him. Expect the Lord to give you a prophetic word for him.
6. Pray to cut the person free from any unhealthy dependence on yourself.
7. Arrange follow-up as necessary.

## **C. DRAWING OUT GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT FROM A CONGREGATION**

1. Ensure that at some stage, e.g in introducing a worship song, you "warn" people that you will be expecting them to contribute in the spoken gifts of the Spirit, so that they can be asking God to use them.
2. Make sure that you have asked God to use you and be prepared for the possibility of starting off the time of sharing, particularly if there is a long pause. However, this may not always be necessary or right - your contribution may fit better elsewhere, or not at all.
3. Always repeat a contribution, preferably over the microphone. If you cannot hear it yourself, normally you can ask the person to share it again, then you repeat it. But if it is obvious that the person is extremely shy, or in the case of, say, a child, it might be better to ask the adult or leader nearest to them to repeat it. The only exception to your repeating it should be if it is obvious to you that the contribution is "out of the Spirit". In this case, say something like "has anyone else anything to share". If in an extreme case, there is a demonic manifestation or something very misleading is said, then the service leader should step in. In most cases it is sufficient to correct the contribution gently in private, later.
4. It is very important therefore that you have paper and pen and are writing down as much as possible of what is said. There is nothing worse than to "repeat" it back, getting it wrong or only half a message. At the very least repeat an accurate summary. In the case of a biblical reading, try to repeat it. If you can't, then get the person reading out the passage to tell you chapter and verse. If a very long message is delivered and you really can't keep up with it, then remind folk that they can get the tape (or transcript of the shorthand). Any message of significance for the church, as opposed to an individual, should normally appear in the church newsletter, or be acted on in some way.
5. If at all possible, specify what you think the gift is and say something like:

"That was a word of knowledge, in other words God has revealed something which we did not know humanly, but only you will know if it refers to you."

"That was a word of wisdom, in which God is giving advice to someone/the church through one of our members."

“That was a gift of prophecy, through which God was speaking to all of us/some people here giving a word of challenge/encouragement (etc.).”

“That was a message in tongues, ie. a language given by God which helps to draw us closer to God, but now we need to ask him for the interpretation.”

“That was the interpretation, which gives the sense and gist of the message in tongues.”

(Sometimes someone rushes in after a tongue with something which is not the interpretation. You should thank them for their contribution, but say that it may not have been the interpretation and we still need to wait on God for it.)

6. If you get several words of knowledge, pause for a while. (You could even ask people to raise their hand and put it down again whilst everyone is bowed in prayer, if they think one of the words was for them. If you do this after a group of words of knowledge, no-one feels exposed). Ask God to accomplish things in people's lives to fulfil the words, then say something like: “Does anyone feel they have got a word of prophecy or wisdom or a gift in tongues?”
  7. If you are getting a lot of generalised comments or just Scripture verses, one after the other, then encourage people to be more specific in what they share, expecting an actual gift of the Spirit, rather than just a helpful comment. Try and draw out as many of the five spoken gifts as possible, e.g. “We have had two prophetic words and three words of knowledge. Does anyone feel they have a gift in tongues or a word of wisdom?”
  8. Always allow time for meditation after a particularly significant word of prophecy or several words of knowledge, but say that is what you are doing. Never allow awkward silences. Don't allow too much sharing.
  9. Someone may get a partial message, e.g. a picture, but it is not clear what it means. Encourage people to ask God for the meaning, especially the person who had the picture. At the same time be asking God to give you the meaning if no-one has it. That way it becomes a complete gift of the Spirit. Explain to the congregation that we mean a mental image, as some won't know what a “picture” is.
  10. It may well be, that an overall theme emerges. If so, this needs to be drawn out, usually by the ministry leader, but it does not always happen.
  11. Pray a concluding prayer, encouraging people to expect God to do things in their lives as a result of the gifts. Offer prayer for healing during or after the service.
  12. Finally - don't panic! Even if you feel it inside, don't show it! We are all beginners in this and we all make mistakes. Just let us encourage each other to be adventurous for God.
- N.B. If there is to be a time of ministry at the end of the service, encourage people who feel the need for further help to come forward. In addition to responding to the gifts of the Spirit, including the words of knowledge, there may be those with other needs of physical, emotional and spiritual healing who want help. Expect God to release gifts in those praying for others, e.g. healing and discernment. Make sure an invitation to respond to the gospel is included by the service leader.