THESIS APPROVAL

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"The Liturgical Use of Spiritual Gifts: Discerning Next Steps in Contextual Nigerian Practice."

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Date
To the Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria that is battling with the challenges that charismata pose for the growth and unity of the church.

And

To my wife Juliana and six children (Nyamsalga, Na’obaa, Bi’ordmiya, Sankinaa, Bitemya and Garpiya), who sacrificed my presence for my study in the USA.
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ABSTRACT

The use of spiritual gifts is a blessing to the Church today, especially when it functions within the liturgical forms in a worship service. Specifically, the liturgical use of spiritual gifts is a great benefit for the edification of both the mainline and the Pentecostal churches.

In Nigeria, the use of spiritual gifts is significantly contextual to the African world view. Some Nigerian theologians suggest that the compatibility of spiritual gifts to the African world view is one of the main factors that contributes to the fast growth of Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Africa. Due to its compatibility with the African world view, charismata has gradually gained acceptance into the mainline churches in Nigeria. The problem is that while the mainline churches refrain from the practice of spiritual gifts in their gatherings and thereby face the consequence, the Pentecostals engage in it in a disorderly and abusive manner. Thus, this study suggests the liturgical use of charismata in both the mainline and Pentecostal churches as a mediating approach which can minimize these ills. Creating space for the exercise of spiritual gifts within liturgy will challenge mainline churches to embrace something they have resisted, and will challenge the Pentecostal churches to discipline their use of the gifts in ways that avoid disorder. The paper offers a comparative survey of some recent theological reflection on spiritual gifts alongside Calvin’s teachings on this subject.

In this study, the introduction provides an overview of the state of the question along with a description of the methodology, scope of research, and thesis statement. Chapter one is a survey of recent theology of spiritual gifts by modern writers. Chapter two discusses the potential of the recent theology of spiritual gifts for use in Nigeria. Chapter three presents contemporary examples of the liturgical use of
spiritual gifts and sample liturgies adapting the use of spiritual gifts. The conclusion summarizes pastoral application and suggests further research questions.
INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

Yang-En Cheng states that, “Recently, the Charismatic movements had created a tremendous impact on the global churches – specially the churches in the ‘two-third worlds.”¹ A Christian scholar in World Christianity, Allan Heaton Anderson, in his book To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity,² records that at the beginning of the twentieth century, “Pentecostalism has experienced amazing growth … arguably the fastest growing religious movement in the contemporary world.”³ He also notes that this growth is “both inside and outside the old Protestant and Roman Catholic churches.”⁴ This is a true case in Africa as a whole, and Nigeria in particular. Ogbu Kalu, a Nigerian and one of the respected historians of African Christianity, in his book African Pentecostalism: An Introduction, points out that, “A charismatic wind blew through the African continent in the postindependence period that first hit the youth and women, and later overawed the resistance of the mainline churches.”⁵

This wind is still blowing in Nigeria today. Over the past sixty years in Nigeria, the Reformed, Presbyterian and other mainline churches who do not allow the use of spiritual gifts in their worship practices have faced three unavoidable challenges: 1) A loss of a great number of their members to the fast growing

³ Anderson, To the Ends of the Earth, 1.
⁴ Anderson, To the Ends of the Earth, 1.
Pentecostal and indigenous independent churches who practice the use of spiritual gifts, though not liturgically; 2) The great infiltration and acceptance of the practices of spiritual gifts into the mainline churches, to the extent that the mainline churches find it difficult to rightly adapt the use of spiritual gifts, especially the gifts of healing and spontaneous prophecy; and 3) A move towards World Christianity, which is the need for the mainline churches to work out lasting unity and coexistence among their congregations (threatened by the divided view on the use of spiritual gifts), and their relationship to the entire Body of Christ, the global Church. These three noticeable challenges pose an enormous threat to church unity, and to the growth and vitality of the mainline churches.

Spiritual gifts are very important in presenting Christianity in Africa because they adapt easily to African context. Anderson observes that, “one of the fundamental characteristics of Pentecostalism and its common denominator amid so many varieties is the practice of spiritual gifts, or ‘gifts of the Spirit’ as outlined in Paul’s letters to the Corinthians.”6 Therefore, one of the reasons Pentecostal churches attract members from the mainline churches is because they use and allow the use of spiritual gifts, which fits better in an African context based on an African concept of spirituality. The mainline churches lose their members to the Pentecostals because they do not accept the use of spiritual gifts, implying they have neglected a very important part of contextualization in Africa, African spirituality. On the other hand, the Pentecostals and the mainline churches that welcome the use of spiritual gifts are faced with the challenge of how to adopt the liturgical use of the gifts of the Spirit in their worship services. I. John Hesselink in his book, On Being Reformed: Distinctive

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6 Anderson, To the Ends of the Earth, 14.
Characteristics and Common Misunderstandings, states that “Pentecostals and charismatics revel in the freedom given by the Spirit (1 Cor. 3:17), whereas Presbyterians traditionally appeal to order (1 Cor. 14:40).” The points is that while the Pentecostal/charismatic churches revel in the freedom given by the Spirit yet could not control the use of spiritual gifts in a liturgical manner, the mainline churches in their fear of disorderliness in a worship service could not include the use of spiritual gifts in their liturgy.

As much as the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches are accused of using spiritual gifts in a disorderly ways, the mainline churches that do not accept the use of spiritual gifts, directly or indirectly, repel their members who are blessed with the gifts, and also deny their members the blessings that accompany them. The question is, “how can the spiritual gifts like the gifts of healing and spontaneous prophecy be adopted and used liturgically in a worship setting, in a way that glorifies God and edifies the Church?” Unless a solution for the liturgical use of spiritual gifts is found and adopted correctly, the unity among members, the sound doctrine and the growth of the mainline churches, particularly in the third world, are compromised. Also, lack of order in the use of spiritual gifts in worship settings among the Pentecostals and the Charismatics will continue. Moreover, the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ for the Church, “…that all of them may be one” (John 17:21 NIV), which is the goal of world Christianity, will be unrealistic.

Methodology and Contribution

This thesis is pastoral in nature, an example of practical theology. It reflects on the contributions of biblical theologians on the spiritual gifts, and discerns some of the

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practical implications of the most relevant biblical texts for the development of liturgy. By using the spiritual gifts of spontaneous prophetic utterance and the gifts of healing as a case study I will attempt to discern appropriate, biblically grounded ways of shaping the use of spiritual gifts within a worship service. To build a foundation for this work, this research paper does a comparative survey of recent theology of spiritual gifts alongside Calvin’s teachings on the same subject. It shows how the spiritual gifts of spontaneous prophetic utterance and healing could be used liturgically, demonstrating the prospect of liturgical use of spiritual gifts in a church where some members are gifted with spiritual (supernatural) gifts.

With a solution to the liturgical use of spiritual gifts, this research paper seeks to promote love, understanding, unity, equality and fairness in worship settings that are blessed with people with diverse theological and spiritual experiences. At the end it may be beneficial to church planting, church growth, church renewal, church revitalization and mission generally, even in a global sense.

Scope of Research

With this thesis I do not intend to engage the whole of pneumatology but narrow my discussion to the liturgical use of spiritual gifts. I discuss the gifts of spontaneous prophecy and healing only as a case study, to show that not only these but also other spiritual gifts can be used liturgically. I do not intend to impose the liturgical use of spiritual gifts on any worship setting but intend to provide an open dialogue for allowing freedom of the use of spiritual gifts in a liturgical setting.

Thesis Statement

The thesis claims that charismata can function liturgically, and in doing so, it is a blessing to the Church today. It provides the opportunity for gifted members to
serve God, the church to be edified, and members of the same congregation to be united in love and to grow in spiritual experience as God, through the gifts, demonstrates his presence and response in our worship of him. And, it is a contribution towards spurring Christian denominations to embrace one another in dear love, embracing world Christianity – a move Christ is using to make his Body one as his Kingdom Society in preparation for his second coming. The liturgical use of spiritual gifts is a blessing to the Church today provided it functions within the guidelines of Scripture.

Thesis outline

The introduction provides an overview of the state of the question along with a description of the methodology, scope of research, and thesis statement, where I introduce the task ahead. Chapter one is a survey of some recent theology of spiritual gifts by modern writers like: Gordon Fee, David Pytches, Luke Ndubuisi, Michael Griffiths, Sinclair B. Ferguson, Richard B. Gaffin, and other writers in comparison with John Calvin. This chapter seeks to discern appropriate criteria for discerning the wise use of charismata within liturgy. Chapter two discusses the potential of recent theology of spiritual gifts for use in Nigeria. It shows the need for faithful contextualization and that spiritual gifts fit the African context. Chapter three discusses the place of spiritual gifts in liturgy. I present contemporary examples of the liturgical use of spiritual gifts. Here I also demonstrate examples which show that spiritual gifts are liturgically realistic. I develop sample liturgies adapting the use of spiritual gifts, demonstrating how to use spiritual gifts liturgically. In the conclusion I forward the wisdom learned from the survey and suggest further research questions. And finally, in the appendix I answer some questions regarding the liturgical use of spiritual gifts.
CHAPTER 1: Survey of Recent Theology of Spiritual Gifts

Introduction

This chapter is a survey of recent theology of spiritual gifts. It offers a comparative study of recent writings on the topic of spiritual gifts in general and offers more specific reflections on the theology of the gifts of prophecy and healing. This comparative analysis creates a good context for determining criteria to discern the appropriate use of the spiritual gifts within a worship setting.

1. Definition of Spiritual Gifts

In this section some modern scholars’ definitions of spiritual gifts are discussed and compared to Calvin’s understanding of spiritual gifts. This will lead us examine the different views, and arrive at their proper biblical meaning. Defining spiritual gifts introduces us to their importance and functional need in the contemporary church, and how it may relate to liturgy.

a. David Pytches

David Pytches is a modern theologian from a mainline church who accepts and practices the use of spiritual gifts. His concept of spiritual gifts is found in his book titled, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*.¹ By the 1980s Bishop David Pytches was serving as a Vicar of St Andrew’s Church, an Anglican church in Chorleywood in England.² He practices the use of spiritual gifts in his church and desires that the whole Body of Christ discovers how to minister in power through the use of spiritual gifts. He suggests that the demonstration of spiritual gifts can become an integral part

² Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*, 7.
of regular worship and evangelism/missions. His goal in writing this book is to
demonstrate how spiritual gifts can be incorporated into the ministry of the Church.³
Pytches’ book offers insight into a recent theology of spiritual gifts that demonstrates
how to integrate the use of spiritual gifts into a worship setting.

David Pytches’ definition of spiritual gifts is based on defining the *charismata*
mentioned in 1st Corinthians 12:8-10, “The spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 are
the expression of God’s grace at work, primarily in the Church, and are transrational
manifestations of God’s power dispensed by him in ministering for the common
good.”⁴ He defines only what manifestations of the Spirit (Phanerosis) means based
on the biblical context and Greek word usage in the text.⁵ With this he narrows his
definition to a set of spiritual gifts only. Thus, he avoids the difficulty in finding a
common definition for all the spiritual gifts mentioned in the whole of the Scripture.
He himself admits that the list of spiritual gifts in the Scripture exceeds beyond the
one in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.⁶ This suggests that he could not find a common
definition for all the listed spiritual gifts found in the whole Scripture.

Though he narrows his definition to defining only a class of spiritual gifts –
*Phanerosis*, there are three things worthy of note: 1) they are “expression of God’s
grace,” – they cannot be obtained through human effort but as free gifts of God
distributed to believers; 2) they are “manifestations of God’s power,” – they are
God’s own power at work; and 3) they are distributed by God on his people and used
by him through them for the work of ministry for common good. Also, by stating that

⁴ Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*, 57.
⁵ Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*, 57, 58.
⁶ Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*, 57.
these manifestations of the Spirit (Phanerosis) are “transrational manifestations of God’s power,” he suggests that these gifts may include and transcend rational understanding and normal physical processes. This implies that the Holy Spirit who is a spiritual Being works in and through physical beings in both rational and unexplainable ways. The spiritual gifts like spontaneous prophecy and healing, which are spiritual in nature, can be manifested by the Holy Spirit liturgically.

Although Pytches defines only one class of spiritual gifts, phanerosis, “because of its congregational setting,”7 he also describes other classes of spiritual gifts based on their textual context and Greek word usage. These are: Diakoniai – ministries of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:28); Charismata – gifts of grace (Romans 12:3-8); Domata – equippers of the saints (Ephesians 4:8-14); and Miscellaneous gifts – Celibacy (1 Corinthians 7:7, 8), philanthropy (1 Corinthians 13:3), and hospitality (1 Peter 4:9).

As a result, Pytches understands all the classes of spiritual gifts to be gifts of the Spirit. They all are special endowments or works or grace of God upon or through his people for the common good of the Church (edification of the church and propagation of the Gospel).

b. Michael Griffiths

While Pytches focuses on defining the phanerosis spiritual gifts, Griffiths defines the charismata spiritual gifts. Griffiths observes that the word charisma is difficult to define because it is not a common word that can be determined from materials outside the New Testament.8 Therefore, he defines it from the context of the

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New Testament as a whole, based on its biblical meaning and usage as expressed in 17 Pauline references plus 1 Peter 4:10. He points out that, “The word *charisma* is derived from *charis* which means ‘grace.’” Therefore, according to him, “the result of grace’ *charis* is a spiritual gift *charis-ma,*” The plural is charismata. He defines the spiritual gifts “charisma” as, “a favour bestowed, a gift of grace, a gift freely and graciously given.” Based on this definition, he calls spiritual gifts “serving grace” and “congregational grace” because “God’s grace is being poured upon the congregation;” and also, to differentiate it from the other use of the word charisma for “God’s common grace.” Hence, he sees spiritual gifts, charismata, as God’s graces poured upon his congregation for service.

Accordingly, Griffiths’ definition implies that spiritual gifts are God’s power freely bestowed upon his people for work of service for the common good of the church.

c. I. John Hesselink

Hesselink, one of the excellent clarifiers and defenders of Reformed theology of John Calvin, suggests a definition of spiritual gifts. He did this when defending his argument against the misunderstanding and misjudgment by others that the Reformed/Presbyterian Christians are “hardly distinguished by the gifts and graces of the Spirit,” or “by their practical knowledge and experience of the power of the

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Spirit, especially as manifested in his extraordinary gifts.”

Though defining spiritual gifts is not the point of his argument, it provides insight to his idea of spiritual gifts, as both “gifts and graces of the Spirit,” and “extraordinary gifts.” He sees spiritual gifts as “gifts and graces,” or as he says, some call them “extraordinary gifts.” This creates a dichotomy between natural talents and the special abilities/manifestations of the Spirit’s power through his people.

d. Gordon D. Fee

Gordon D. Fee is a modern theologian who wrote extensively on pneumatology based on the New Testament. He is a Professor of New Testament at Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. In his book, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*, he does an extensive, exegetical work on Pauline pneumatology. He discusses two main points: “the crucial role of the Spirit in Pauline experience and theology… as the dynamic, experiential reality of Christian life;” and that, “the Spirit in Paul’s experience and theology was always thought of in terms of the personal presence of God.”

In order to define the word charisma from which the term “spiritual gift” is derived, Gordon D. Fee critically and exegetically analyzes its Greek word usage and meaning in the 16 passages where the word appears in the Pauline letters. This is his conclusion:

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All of this to say, then, that when χάρισμα is specifically related to the activity of the Spirit, it seems to indicate some concrete ways in which the Spirit manifests himself in the believing community, granting them ‘gracious bestowments’ to meet their various needs and thus to build them up as the eschatological people of God; whereas χάρισμα as such is a much broader term and is probably incorrectly translated ‘spiritual gift’ or ‘gift of the Spirit.’

Fee shows that charisma is the special ability the Holy Spirit grants to believers to minister to the needs of one another, which functions in the formation of the Christian community for the final consummation, to develop into the expected kingdom society of Christ.

e. John Calvin

The study of Calvin’s view and usage of the term “spiritual gifts” in his Institutes II: ii: 12-17 shows its meaning greatly broader than its scope in the New Testament. His scope of definition is the entire Bible. He uses the term “spiritual gifts” to refer to God’s supernatural abilities endowed in humans in a general sense. Calvin sees spiritual gifts differently.

First, in the headline of Institutes II. ii. 12, he calls spiritual gifts “supernatural gifts.” Later in the body of his argument he refers to them as “spiritual gifts,” with which humans “had been furnished for the hope of eternal salvation.” He calls them “all qualities belonging to the blessed life of the soul,” which are taken away from the fallen human and will be restored “through the grace of regeneration.” Here Calvin presents spiritual gifts as “all qualities” that the saved are equipped with or receive from God, which are specifically meant for those that belong to the Kingdom of God.

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19 Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, 35.

20 Calvin, Institutes, II: ii: 12.

He gives examples of these gifts as “faith, love of God, charity toward neighbor, zeal for holiness and for righteousness,” and considers them the gifts “Christ restores” in the saved during regeneration.\textsuperscript{22} Calvin indicates these qualities are special abilities restorationally bestowed upon all the saved by the Holy Spirit. This is narrower than his view that both the supernatural and natural gifts are from God.\textsuperscript{23} Though Calvin believes both the supernatural and natural gifts are given by God through his Spirit, he narrows and devotes his usage of the term “spiritual gifts” for “supernatural gifts,” also called “spiritual qualities” in this case.

While Calvin calls the spiritual gifts in 1 Cor. 12:8-10 “gifts,” the others in 1 Cor. 12:28 he calls “offices,” and comments that, “no member possesses all powers, nor does it appropriate to itself the offices of others; so God has distributed various gifts to us.”\textsuperscript{24} Calvin sees spiritual gifts as both the supernatural powers bestowed and offices assigned by the Holy Spirit upon the believers for service. This is why he also says, “believers are adorned by God with spiritual gifts … bestowed upon men through the exercise of God’s favor.”\textsuperscript{25} And he again says, “For it is the office of the Holy Spirit to put forth and exercise the power of God by conferring these gifts upon men, and distributing them among them.”\textsuperscript{26}

To Calvin all the qualities received at the regeneration of the saved – \textit{phanerosi\,s, charisma} and other special offices with which the Holy Spirit endows

\textsuperscript{22} Calvin, \textit{Institutes}, II: ii: 12.

\textsuperscript{23} Calvin, \textit{Institutes}, II: ii: 15.


\textsuperscript{25} Calvin, Comm., 1Cor 12:1.

\textsuperscript{26} Calvin, Comm., 1Cor 12:4.
believers – are all spiritual gifts because they come from the Holy Spirit to enable believers to serve God, creation and one another.

f. Summary and Conclusion

From the above definitions, we understand Pytches’ definition of spiritual gifts to be special endowments or works or graces of God upon or through his people for the common good of the Church. In the same view, Griffiths defines spiritual gifts as God’s power freely bestowed upon his people for work of service for the common good of the church. Hesselink sees spiritual gifts as “gifts and graces” or “extraordinary gifts.” Fee defines spiritual gifts as special abilities that the Holy Spirit grants to believers to minister to the needs of one another and function in the formation of the Christian community as an eschatological church. And Calvin sees spiritual gifts as God’s gracious power bestowed upon believers by the Holy Spirit to enable believers to serve God, creation and one another. Thus, they all agree on one point: that charismata are special abilities empowered by the Holy Spirit, working through or in the believer for service. This suggests that any liturgical use of the spiritual gifts should call attention to the fact that they are gifts of God and that they are for the edification of the church. Conversely, liturgical use of the spiritual gifts should resist any impression that the gifts are generated out of human effort or that they are for the benefit of the person who exercises them.

While all these theologians agree that spiritual gifts are special abilities the Holy Spirit bestows upon believers for the work of service, they express diverse views on the scope of the work of service expected in the use of spiritual gifts. All of them agree that spiritual gifts serve for the building of the church and advancement of the Gospel, but Fee and Calvin go further on this. Fee expresses that spiritual gifts, charismata, also serve for grooming the present body of Christ for the consummation
of the eschatological church. Calvin stresses that spiritual gifts not only serve a purpose for the worship of God and service of the church, but also for the service of the whole creation.

Another important point worth mentioning is Pytches’ description of spiritual gifts as “transrational manifestations of God’s power,” which suggests that the Holy Spirit manifests his spiritual power physically through physical channels, humans. The physical manifestation of spiritual gifts implies that they can function liturgically. In other words, since spiritual gifts are special endowments of the Holy Spirit at work in and through physical believers for service in the church they can function liturgically.

2. Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

As we already saw in the definitions, spiritual gifts are important for the edification of the church and propagation of the Gospel. However, one of the reasons church denominations today do not include the liturgical use of charismata in their worship services is that they lack knowledge about the purpose of charismata for the contemporary church. Consequently, the lack of knowledge of the scriptural purpose of spiritual gifts poses a threat to the wise use of the spiritual gifts in worship, both by mainline Christians who resist them and Pentecostal Christians who may not always discipline their use of these gifts. In this section, I forward some modern understandings of the purpose of spiritual gifts, suggesting that spiritual gifts can have a good liturgical purpose and be included in a liturgical worship setting.

a. David Pytches

Pytches comments that spiritual gifts are given to believers for serving others. He says they are “tools which enable the believer to effect the ministry required,” and
equip believers for service.²⁷ He expounds that spiritual gifts serve three purposes: for equipping believers for service,²⁸ for the edification of the body of Christ wherever they meet,²⁹ and for the expansion of the kingdom of God.³⁰ Pytches notes that believers are equipped, the church is blessed, and God’s Kingdom expands as the Holy Spirit empowers and works his spiritual gifts through the believers. He advises that before any believer should use the gift for the propagation of the Gospel, the believer should first of all practice the use of the gift in a church or cell group.³¹

b. Sinclair B. Ferguson


On the purpose of charismata, Ferguson states that the “gifts of the Spirit are given to equip the people of God and to enable them to set on display the glory of God, the fullness of Christ, in the temple of God (Eph. 4:12, 16). Christ thus adorns his bride, his body.”³³ He again points out that they are for “believers to serve one another in the body of Christ and … for the unity of the church in the context of its diversity.” This is why he advises that the purpose of the gifts of the Spirit is defeated

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²⁷ Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*, 59.

²⁸ Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*, 59.

²⁹ Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*, 58.

³⁰ Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*, 61.


without love and humility accompanying their practice by the gifted.\textsuperscript{34} His point is that spiritual gifts serve the purpose of glorifying God, equipping believers to minister to one another, and they are for the unity of the church.

c. Gordon D. Fee

Fee states that the Holy Spirit grants the community of believers “‘gracious bestowments’ to meet their various needs and thus to build them up as the eschatological people of God.”\textsuperscript{35} He suggests two things as the purpose of spiritual gifts: It is for meeting the needs of the believers and for grooming believers for the expected Kingdom society of God.

d. John Calvin

Calvin says, “Each ought to be so attentive in imparting his own gifts to the edification of the Church,”\textsuperscript{36} and again “for what purpose believers are adorned by God with spiritual gifts — for the edification of their brethren.”\textsuperscript{37} He again points out that God has a purpose for appointing his gifts: “he does not confer them upon us in vain, nor does he intend that they shall serve the purpose of ostentation. Hence we must inquire as to the purpose for which they are conferred.”\textsuperscript{38} His commentary on the manifestation of the Spirit in 1\textsuperscript{st} Corinthians 12:7 offers three purposes of spiritual gifts: 1) “in a passive sense,” the Spirit of God manifests himself “wherever there is prophecy, or knowledge, or any other gift;” that is, charismata express the glorious

\textsuperscript{34} Ferguson, \textit{The Holy Spirit}, 209.

\textsuperscript{35} Fee, \textit{God’s Empowering Presence}, 35.

\textsuperscript{36} Calvin, Comm. Rom 12:6.

\textsuperscript{37} Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 12:1.

\textsuperscript{38} Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 12:7.
presence of the Holy Spirit; 2) “in an active sense, because the Spirit of God, when he enriches us with any gift, unlocks his treasures, for the purpose of manifesting to us those things that would otherwise have been concealed and shut up;” and 3) in a mission, “because unbelievers do not recognize God, except by visible miracles.” In this way Calvin shows that charismata serve the purpose of attesting God’s presence, unfolding God’s mysteries to the church, and confirming the gospel before the unbelievers, in addition to the edification of the brethren/church.

e. Summary and Conclusion

These theologians generally agree about the purpose of spiritual gifts. We can understand from Fee, Ferguson and Pytches, in agreement with Calvin, that the purpose of spiritual gifts, as the Scripture teaches, includes: glorification of the Trinitarian God, equipping believers for service, edification of the body of Christ, uniting the church, meeting believers’ needs, revealing God’s mysteries, confirming the gospel preached (Kingdom expansion), and preparing believers for the consummation of the eschatological Kingdom society of God.

Though these theologians may not have exhausted the purpose of spiritual gifts, it is obvious that spiritual gifts, including prophecy and healing, are God’s wonderful blessings to the believers, the Church, and the world at large. This material is a strong testimony about the value of the spiritual gifts, motivating a desire to find prominent places such as worship in church life to use these gifts. It also suggests criteria for how the spiritual gifts should be used. Put negatively, they should never be used in ways that detract from God’s glory, in ways that harm the body of Christ, or in ways that detract from the hope believers have in the coming of Jesus’ kingdom.

39 Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 12:7.
Put positively, they should be used in ways that praise God, build up the body, and confirm the gospel.

3. Classification of Spiritual Gifts

The Scripture as a whole generally reveals two main groupings of spiritual gifts. New Testament provides more sub-groupings of spiritual gifts. Various contemporary theologians classify spiritual gifts differently, depending on their approach. Knowing different categories of spiritual gifts shows how they differ in function, thereby determining how each gift can be used, even liturgically. Therefore, in this section I present recent ways spiritual gifts have been classified which show that there are certain spiritual gifts that can be used liturgically, and that the gifts of prophecy and healing fall into this group of gifts.

a. David Pytches

Pytches asserts there are four main listings of spiritual gifts which he classifies into five headings according to their word usage and textual context. They are:

i. *Phanerosis* (1 Corinthians 12:8-10) – manifestation of the Spirit: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, discerning of spirits, kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues.


iii. *Charismata* (Romans 12:3-8) – gifts of grace: prophecy, serving, teaching, exhortation, giving, organizing, and mercy.

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40 Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*, 57, 58.

v. Miscellaneous gifts: celibacy (1 Corinthians 7:7, 8), philanthropy (1 Corinthians 13:3), and hospitality (1 Peter 4:9).

Pytches does not dwell only on this classification. He goes further and sub-categorizes the *phanerosis* class of the gifts of the Spirit into their natural categories as we can see below.  

**Category a: Gifts of revelation**

i. Word of wisdom.

ii. Word of knowledge.

iii. Discerning of spirits.

**Category b: Gifts of power**

i. Gift of faith.

ii. Gifts of healings.

iii. Working of miracle.

**Category c: Gifts of communication**

i. Gifts of prophecy.

ii. Gifts of tongues.

iii. Interpretation of tongues.

b. Gordon D. Fee

As he lists and classifies spiritual gifts, Fee observes that the mention of spiritual gifts by Paul in 1st Corinthians chapters twelve to fourteen is not intended to

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41 Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*, 57, 58.
be exhaustive.\textsuperscript{42} His classification of spiritual gifts is a bit different from that of Pytches’ shown above. He classifies them based on their function as follows:

i. Forms of service

These he lists as: “serving,” “giving” and “caring” (Romans 12:7-8); and “helpful deeds”, and “acts of guidance” (1st Corinthians 12:28). He does not call these spiritual gifts manifestations of the Spirit, rather he calls them Spirit’s activity.\textsuperscript{43}

ii. The miraculous (power gifts)

These are faith, gift of healing, and workings of miracles (1st Corinthians 12:9-10).\textsuperscript{44}

iii. Inspired utterance

From 1st Corinthians 12:8, 10 they are “the message of wisdom,” “the message of knowledge,” “prophecy,” “the discernments of S/spirits,” “tongues,” and “interpretation of tongues;” from 1st Corinthians 14:6 they are “teaching” and “revelation;” from Romans 12:8 it is “exhortation;” and “singing” from Ephesians 5:19.\textsuperscript{45}

It is clear that Fee’s classification method is quite different from Pytches’, yet they both group the gift of healing under power, and prophecy under utterance/communication.

\textsuperscript{42} Fee, \textit{God’s Empowering Presence}, 886.

\textsuperscript{43} Fee, \textit{God’s Empowering Presence}, 887.

\textsuperscript{44} Fee, \textit{God’s Empowering Presence}, 887.

\textsuperscript{45} Fee, \textit{God’s Empowering Presence}, 888.
c. Michael Griffiths

Griffiths uses a different method of classifying the spiritual gifts. He lists them according to the contexts of the texts they are found. To give a simplified grouping from his table, I hereby list them according to the descriptonal headings he used.\(^{46}\)

i. **Persons:** Apostles, prophets, teachers, pastors and evangelists (1\(^{st}\) Corinthians 12:28, 29-32; Ephesians 4:11).

ii. **Functions:** Miracles, gifts of healing, helps, administrations, tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophecy, teaching, encouraging, service, giving, act of mercy, act of leadership, knowledge, and faith (1\(^{st}\) Corinthians 12:4-11, 28, 29-32; 13:1-3; Romans 12:6-8; 1\(^{st}\) Peter 4:10-11.)

iii. **Contributions:** a revelation, a teaching, new psalms, a tongue and an interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:26).

d. Sinclair B. Ferguson

Ferguson, like the others, lists spiritual gifts, but does not group them, noting that the “eclectic grouping” of the spiritual gifts is difficult. Instead, he proffers a basic structure of the gifts: which is that “the revelatory word through apostle and prophet is foundational (Eph. 2:20), while all else is informed by and flows from this.”\(^ {47}\) That is, there are two groups of spiritual gifts: the foundational gifts, and the other gifts which emerge from it. However, this is how he lists the spiritual gifts based on their scriptural texts.\(^ {48}\)


1st Corinthians 12:8-11:

Wisdom-word, knowledge-word, faith, healing gifts, miracle-working, prophecy, distinguishing spirits, speaking in tongues, and interpreting tongues.

1st Corinthians 12:28:

Apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle-workers, healing, helps, administration, and tongues.

Romans 12:6-8:

Prophecy, service, teaching, exhorting, giving, leadership, and mercy-ministry.

Ephesians 4:11:

Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

1st Peter 4:11:

Speaking and serving.

Thus, Ferguson lists the spiritual gifts under the passages in which they are found.

e. Anthony A. Hoekema

Anthony A. Hoekema, a former professor of systematic theology at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, states that, “A distinction commonly made within the category of spiritual gifts is that of ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit.”49 His example of ordinary gifts are ones that do not necessarily involve a supernatural or miraculous element. These include prophecy (non-miraculous one/preaching), ministry, teaching, exhorting, giving, showing mercy, and ruling. The extraordinary gifts include miraculous prophecy, healing, gift of miracles, tongues.

and interpretation of tongues. Thus, he classifies spiritual gifts into ordinary and miraculous gifts.\(^{50}\)

f. John Calvin

Calvin’s approach to the classification of Spiritual gifts is quite different from other scholars. Though he does not list spiritual gifts under categories, his writings in his commentaries and *Institutes* show how he classifies spiritual gifts.

First, in the *Institutes* II. ii.12 - 17, Calvin submits that there are two types of gifts that God bestows on humans: the “supernatural gifts” and the “natural gifts.” He refers to these two divisions in his commentary on 1\(^{st}\) Corinthians 12:3 when he says, “But the gift of regeneration\(^{51}\) is one thing, and the gift of bare intelligence.” He goes on to explain their differences. He sees natural gifts as “inborn in humans nature… by nature implanted in men,” and that any talent manifested in human which “is bestowed indiscriminately upon pious and impious, it is rightly counted among natural gifts.”\(^{52}\) He considers spiritual gifts as special supernatural abilities and qualities which God “furnished” the believers with “for the hope of eternal salvation.”\(^{53}\) And that, “All things that pertain to the true knowledge of God, are the gifts of the Holy Spirit.”\(^{54}\) Thus, he separates the gifts of God bestowed upon human into two: the “supernatural gifts,” and the “natural gifts.”

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\(^{50}\) Hoekema, *What About Tongue-Speaking*, 104.

\(^{51}\) In this context, by “gift of regeneration” Calvin is referring to the spiritual gifts that the believer receives at conversion. He is not referring to conversion/regeneration itself. See *Institutes*, II: ii: 12.

\(^{52}\) Calvin, *Institutes*, II: ii: 14.

\(^{53}\) Calvin, *Institutes*, II: ii: 12.

\(^{54}\) Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 12:3.
It is very important to note that Calvin considers “natural gifts” also as gifts from God bestowed on all human through his divine Spirit. This is stated clearly when he says:

The mind of man, though fallen and perverted from its wholeness, is nevertheless clothed and ornamented with God’s excellent gifts. If we regard the Spirit of God as the sole fountain of truth, we shall neither reject the truth itself, nor despise it wherever it shall appear, unless we wish to dishonor the Spirit of God… (There are) gifts the Lord left to human nature even after it was despoiled of its true good.55

He also declares that natural gifts are the result of God “by the law of creation,” he “fills, moves, and quickens all” humans; hence, God distributes the “most excellent benefits of the divine Spirit,” to “whomever he wills, for the common good of mankind.”56 Calvin warns that, “if we neglect God’s gift freely offered in these arts (natural gifts), we ought to suffer just punishment for our sloths.”57 He strongly considers natural gifts as divine impartation from the Spirit of the Sovereign God.

Second, Calvin suggests two further divisions for supernatural gifts: spiritual qualities and spiritual edification gifts. He mentions the spiritual qualities in the Institutes II.i.i.2, and again in his commentary on 1st Corinthians 12:3, as the “the gift of regeneration.” He mentions spiritual edification gifts in his commentary on 1st Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-31 as: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, discerning of spirits, kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues, apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle-workers, healing, helps, administration.

55 Calvin, Institutes, II: ii: 15.

56 Calvin, Institutes, II: ii: 16.

57 Calvin, Institutes, II: ii: 16.
In his commentary on 1st Corinthians 12:28-31, Calvin additionally subdivides the spiritual edification gifts into two. He calls the spiritual edification gifts in 1 Cor. 12:8-10 “gifts,” and the others in 1st Corinthians 12:28 he calls “offices.” This is seen in his statement that Paul “has in the beginning of the chapter spoken of gifts: now he begins to treat of offices.” Calvin believes that gifts come before ministerial offices in order to qualify the minister for service, hence he declares, “For the Lord did not appoint ministers, without first endowing them with the requisite gifts, and qualifying them for discharging their duty… The natural order, on the other hand, is this — that gifts come before the office to be discharged.” He is emphatic here that the gifts and offices are two different spiritual gifts, though connected.

Calvin classifies spiritual gifts in three steps as illustrated below:

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59 Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 12:27, 28. Emphasis added.
g. Summary and Conclusion

These very diverse ways of organizing and speaking about the gifts suggests that there are no universally agreed upon categories of gifts. This suggests that any liturgical use of the gifts should not speak directly of one approach to categorizing the gifts as ultimate or best. It suggests that there will be different understandings in different contexts as to which gifts are extra-ordinary.

In addition, Calvin’s point about offices and gifts is suggestive for discerning the wise use of spiritual gifts in worship. Offices are the ministerial channels and vessels through which the Holy Spirit manifests his gifts. Offices – like teacher and prophets/pastor – are the vessels through whom the Holy Spirit works, and their equivalent – gifts of teaching and prophecy/preaching – are used in worship settings of the New Testament. This suggests that spiritual gifts, charismata, can function liturgically.

4. Cessation of Spiritual Gifts

One of the reasons the mainline churches do not welcome the exercise of spiritual gifts in worship is because they hold the view that spiritual gifts, charismata, like healing, tongues and prophecy, ceased with the New Testament apostles. Therefore, in order to suggest the use of spiritual gifts in a worship setting, the argument about whether these gifts have ceased or continue first has to be resolved.

Hesselink presents two sides of the debate between cessation and continuity of spiritual gifts. He identifies three of the founding fathers of the Reformed tradition; Zwingli, Calvin and Knox, as representatives of the cessationist view, noting that they “assumed that the so-called ‘extraordinary’ gifts such as prophesying, healing, and

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speaking in tongues were temporary and no longer relevant.”

He also mentions others like B.B. Warfield who promoted the idea of cessation of spiritual gifts (charismata), and Anthony Hoekema and Richard Gaffin, Jr., who still defend the cessation position. On the other side, He also identifies several prominent Reformed and Presbyterian theologians who argue for a continuationist position, including Henry Van Dusen, Lesslie Newbigin, G.C. Berkouwer, Hendrikus Berkhof, who also accept that spiritual gifts (Charismata) still occur. We shall examine two opposite positions to ascertain the reality of the continuation of spiritual gifts beyond the apostolic period. In doing so, I will discuss the historical and scriptural evidences forwarded by some scholars for the cessation and continuation of charismata.

a. Historical Evidences for Cessation

Apart from Calvin, one of the most quoted cessationists is Benjamin B. Warfield. In his book *Counterfeit Miracles*, he defends the position that miracle gifts or extraordinary gifts like gifts of healing, prophecy, and tongues have ceased with the Apostles. As the title of his book suggests, his proposition is that there are no true historical evidences to show that miraculous gifts continue beyond the apostolic period, and that the miracles recorded by the continuationists are counterfeit. To support his declaration he advances the following claims.

First, he counters all the historic evidences of the continuation of miracles. He claims they are false stories. His belief on cessation of miracle is that the historic records of miracles which continued down the post apostolic period are not real ones.

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64 Benjamin B. Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1918).
but fabrications; therefore, they are not credible historic evidences that prove the continuation of spiritual gifts.\textsuperscript{65} His point is that counterfeit miracle stories have been taken and adopted from Ebionite and Gnostic heresies by some church writers.\textsuperscript{66} Thus he says,

\begin{quote}
In these anonymous, or more usually pseudonymous, writings, there is no dearth of miraculous story, from whatever age they come. Later, these wild and miracle-laden documents were taken over into the Catholic church, usually after a certain amount of reworking by which they were cleansed to a greater or less-usually less-extent of their heresies, but not in the least bit of their apocryphal miracle-stories… It is from these apocryphal miracle-stories and from the miracles of the New Testament, that the luxuriant growth of the miraculous stories of later ecclesiastical writings draw their descent.\textsuperscript{67}

He laments that “Something new entered Christianity in these wonder-tales; something unknown of the Apostles … It brought an abundance of miracle-working with it; and, unfortunately, it brought it to stay.”\textsuperscript{68} To him, the spiritual gifts that exist in the post-Apostolic period are not credible miraculous gifts that were passed on from the Apostles; they are counterfeits.

Anthony A. Hoekema, a cessationist, agrees with Warfield’s historical approach to proving cessationism. In his book titled \textit{What About Tongues Speaking}, he forwards his historical argument against continuationists.\textsuperscript{69} His argument is that, based on historical records of the greater part of the church from 100-1900 AD, miraculous gifts no longer function in the church today. His historical argument is that

\textsuperscript{65} Warfield, \textit{Counterfeit Miracles}, 16.

\textsuperscript{66} Warfield, \textit{Counterfeit Miracles}, 17.

\textsuperscript{67} Warfield, \textit{Counterfeit Miracles}, 17-18.

\textsuperscript{68} Warfield, \textit{Counterfeit Miracles}, 20.

\textsuperscript{69} Hoekema, \textit{What About Tongue-Speaking}, 10-24.
the miraculous gifts, especially glossolalia, “occurred only occasionally during these
years,” and only in the minority groups. That is, it was “not a part of the great
tradition of historic Christianity, but an isolated phenomenon which occurred
sporadically, under unusual circumstances.”\(^\text{70}\) The weakness of this argument is that it
does not show that the miraculous gifts were completely out of existence during the
post apostolic period. It rather shows that the miraculous gifts existed throughout the
history of the church, even though it was an unpopular experience to the main historic
curch and was discredited as counterfeit. Ferguson points out that there were claims
that spiritual gifts continued from the second century to date, but he does not accept
the claims to be enough evidence for the continuity of charismata.\(^\text{71}\)

The problem with the historical claim of cessation of the spiritual gifts is that
it is an assertion which cannot prove with evidences beyond a reasonable doubt that
all the historic records on the continuation of spiritual gifts are truly false. This claim,
when tested with the scripture, may fail. Though there are counterfeits stories, biblical
history shows that God knows how to preserve his own through times of trial. For
example, when the Prophet Elijah thought he was the only true prophet and
worshipper of God left alive, and the rest extinct (1 Kings 18:22), God told him “I
reserve seven thousand in Israel--all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and
whose mouths have not kissed him.” (1 Kings 19:18, NIV). If Elijah were to write the
history without God correcting him, he would have written only what he knew and
believed, that is, that he was the only one left as a true worshipper of God. History
records sometimes leave out, suppress, neglect or record only the writer’s side of
story. Especially when there are debates, historians seem to favor the side of the


\(^{71}\) Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 221.
report they believe. For example, Judaism to this day rejects the Christianity’s version of records that Jesus is the promised Messiah as recorded in the Torah and the Prophets. Their view is based on their perspective of the promised Messiah as they understand recorded in their Scriptural records. They reject Jesus as the Messiah because they do not see any post-Old Testament evidence in Christ that agrees with their record of the expected Messiah. When history provides two opposing records of debate, it becomes a matter of choice. One may choose to accept the report that is more appealing. History does not provide enough evidence to prove that spiritual gifts ceased with the Apostles.

Second, another of Warfield’s points of defending cessation is that charismata is “one of the signs of an Apostle;” therefore, it ceased with the Apostles. He does not accept that charismata functions directly for the advancement of the church. This is why he says,

Certain of the gifts (as, for example, the gifts of tongues) are no doubt spoken of as ‘signs to those that are without.’ It is required of all of them that they be exercised for the edification of the church; and a distinction is drawn between them in value, in proportion as they were for edification. But the immediate end for which they were given is not left doubtful, and that proves to be not directly the extension of the church, but the authentication of the Apostles as messengers from God. This does not mean, of course, that only the Apostles appear in the New Testaments as working miracles, or that they alone are represented as recipients of the charismata. But it does mean that the charismata belonged, in a true sense, to the apostle, and constituted one of the signs of an Apostle.\(^{72}\)

In this quote we can see that Warfield’s claim is that charismata is not directly intended for the advancement of the Gospel. He asserts that charismata functions primarily as a sign of the Apostle. In the same vein, Heokema, from his view of 1st

\(^{72}\) Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles*, 21.
Corinthians 12:8-10, also points out that charismata were sign of the Apostles to authenticate them as true messengers from God.\(^\text{73}\) This claim falls short of what Jesus Christ himself says about the main function of the power of the Holy Spirit (which is the source of charismata) in Acts 1:8 that, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” This shows that the power of the Holy Spirit, by implication charismata, is basically for the propagation of the Gospel. Harry R. Boer, commenting on the purpose of Pentecost, identifies it as the fulfilment of the promise in Acts 1:8 and says, “The descent of the Spirit made the disciples apostles, i.e., missionaries.”\(^\text{74}\) Acts 1:8 clearly shows that the endowment of the Holy Spirit is primarily for the advancement of the Gospel: for in this context, without the need for the advancement of the Gospel, there would not have been the need for spiritual endowment in the first place, nor for the ministry of the Apostles. Therefore, charismata is first directly for the extension of the church and thereby an authentication of the Apostles as messengers from God.

Note again from the above quote that Warfield also observes that it is not, “only the Apostles (who) appear in the New Testament as working miracles, or that they alone are represented as recipients of the charismata.” This statement is true because all the believers, which include not only the Apostles but other believers as well (Acts 2), and later with other New Testament believers, received the charismata. This suggests that charismata is not a sign mainly for the authentication of the Apostles as the only messengers of God; it has other purposes as Warfield rightly indicates above, “for the edification of the church.” Therefore, Warfield’s point is not

\(^{73}\) Hoekema, *Holy Spirit Baptism*, 63.

strong enough to support that charismata is a sign only for authenticating the Apostle, and for that reason, ceased with the last of the Apostles. Rather, it strongly suggests that it may not have disappeared with the last Apostle. In the meantime, there still are the needs for the advancement of the Gospel and for the edification of the church.

Another contention of Warfield in defending cessation is that miracles belong only to the New and the Old Testament periods. As the canon of Scripture was closed, there was no need for the charismata to continue, for there is no longer need for a new revelation.\textsuperscript{75} According to him, this is because miracles “appear only when God is speaking to His people through accredited messengers, declaring His gracious purpose … when this revelation period closed, the period of miracle working had passed by also, as a mere matter of course.”\textsuperscript{76} He claims that this is possible because, “God the Holy Spirit has made it His subsequent work, not to introduce new and unneeded revelation through the world and to bring mankind into the saving knowledge of it.”\textsuperscript{77} He therefore concludes that, “The miraculous working which is but the sign of God’s revealing power, cannot be expected to continue, and in point of fact does not continue, after the revelation of which it is the accompaniment has been completed.”\textsuperscript{78} This view poses three good questions that, if properly addressed, will serve as viable evidence to supporting discontinuity of spiritual gifts with the end of the canon. The first question is, does the Scripture itself declare that spiritual gifts function only for the purpose of canonical revelation? The second question, what historical or scriptural evidence proves that the Holy Spirit is not using his charismata

\textsuperscript{75} Warfield, \textit{Counterfeit Miracles}, 26.
\textsuperscript{76} Warfield, \textit{Counterfeit Miracles}, 26.
\textsuperscript{77} Warfield, \textit{Counterfeit Miracles}, 26.
\textsuperscript{78} Warfield, \textit{Counterfeit Miracles}, 27.
through his post apostolic period servants to achieve his purpose of continuing to bring mankind into the saving knowledge of his kingdom? And third, is there no need for the role of the charismata in the edification of the post apostolic church, attestation of the Gospel still preached, and in helping the people? These questions have been addressed above and will be discussed further below.

Warfield also defends his position with the claim that the church historians who presented historical records in support of continuation of extraordinary gifts could not testify about performing miracles themselves. In other words, they were not endowed with the miraculous gifts themselves; therefore, they could not provide evidences from personal experiences that the gifts continued to the post apostolic period. In as much as personal experience can serve as evidence, in the field of debate it is limited in power. It cannot convince all who do not by themselves have their own personal experience on the matter. We can see this happening in the Pentecost story in Acts 2:13. While others praised God because they heard the disciples speaking in their languages, those that did not understand what the disciples were babbling did not believe the testimony of their fellows that, “these people are praising God.” Rather, they mocked the disciples. This shows that personal experience is more a proof to oneself than others. Personal experience can be wrong if the experience is not a genuine one, as we can also see in the story of Simon the sorcerer. Though he performed miracles, they were not from the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:9-11). Though the people believed him, his personal experience was not by the influence of the Holy Spirit. In consequence, the Scripture is the only infallible yardstick to draw conclusions from, for infallible evidences of one’s side of debate on this matter.

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Finally, Warfield’s general view that history does not provide credible evidences to support the continuation of the extraordinary gifts seems convincing but has to pass the test of the following parameters in order to be accepted as a reliable claim. These parameters are derived from his observations.

First, he himself suggests that the ancient writers needed personal experience to prove their claim of continuation of spiritual gifts. But on the other hand, he points out that the general historical view that promoted the continuity claim has lost none of its popularity with the lapse of time. He continues that, rather than less, it became more wide-spread with the passage of the eighteenth into the nineteenth century, and still remains very customary.\(^{80}\) To this, he has to provide historical evidences beyond a reasonable doubt, which prove that there is not at least a genuine personal experience, recorded or not, in this popular and general historical view.

The second parameter is based on his comments that, “There is a much greater abundance and precision of evidence, such as it is, for miracles in the fourth and the succeeding centuries, than for the preceding ones.”\(^{81}\) This suggests that there were records of miracles happening beyond the apostolic period, though he defends that these records are false. The unanswered question is: are all these miracles counterfeit? Knowing that both counterfeit and genuine miracles look alike due to their spiritual or supernatural nature, he needs to prove historically or by other credible means that all the post-Apostolic miracles are truly counterfeits. That is, he needs to show that this is not a false accusation, considering that even Christ himself was accused wrongly of performing counterfeit miracles using the power of Satan (Matthew 12:24-32).

Because the credibility of Christ’s miracle was doubted by his opponents does not

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\(^{80}\) Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles*, 8.

\(^{81}\) Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles*, 10.
make his miracles counterfeit just by outward observation. Likewise, it is possible that some of the miracles recorded in past history are genuine.

The third parameter also comes from his comment that we cannot find in the New Testament when the miracles ended. Warfield concludes: “But whence can we learn this to have been the end the miracles of the Apostolic age were intended to serve? Certainly not from the New Testament. In it not one word is ever dropped to this effect.” This suggests that since the exact time of cessation of the miracles of the apostolic age is not stated in the New Testament, we cannot prove its cessation. But the New Testament truly has information on the continuation of spiritual gifts; therefore, it is paramount and wise to test the historical argument with the Scripture.

While it is clear that history can be very helpful, it is not the best yardstick for determining the cessation or continuation of the spiritual gifts. The universal church history of the post apostolic period has two-sided reports on the continuation of spiritual gifts the records written by cessationists, and the ones written by continuationists, which do not agree. Therefore, the best parameter for determining continuation or cessation of the miraculous gifts is the Scripture.

b. Scriptural Evidences for Continuation

A close cross examination of some modern theological scholars’ understanding of key scriptural passages suggests that the scripture provides us with stronger evidence for continuation of all spiritual gifts, including the miraculous gifts (charismata) than for cessation.

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82 Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles*, 21.
1st Corinthians 13:8-13

1st Corinthians 13:8-13 is one of the passages to which both cessationists and especially continuationists refer to defend their positions. The passage reads,

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. (NIV).

Griffiths refutes the cessationists for arguing unconvincingly that certain spiritual gifts are no longer exercised today. Conversely, based on this passage, he states his position clearly, that he is perfectly convinced the gifts of the Holy Spirit will continue and will only cease at the time they will no longer be needed. He supports his assertion with the quote, “When that which is perfect has come,” and states it as one of the chief points of 1 Corinthians 13.83 He bases his argument on the view that our understanding of gifts of the Holy Spirit must be determined directly from Scripture, and not based on dogmatic assertions drawn from pragmatic experience.84 Although Griffiths sees 1st Corinthians 13 affirming the continuationists view, he has not elaborated further on the text.

Richard B. Gaffin is a cessationist whose position is that all the foundational gifts bound up with the presence of the apostolate are withdrawn from the life of the

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83 Griffiths, Grace Gifts, 8.

84 Griffiths, Grace Gifts, 8.
church because they are foundational gifts. However, Gaffin explains that the rendering of the terms “the perfect” in verse 10 and the “then” in verse 12 of 1 Corinthians 13, both “no doubt refer to the time of Christ’s return.” And he agrees with the position which concludes that this passage teaches continuation of charismata, like prophecy and tongues, until Christ’s return; because it “reads Paul too explicitly” on the subject. However, his analysis is that the passage discusses the relationship between love and the gifts, and at 13:8 this relationship “is taken up into the broader contrast between the believer’s present and future knowledge.” He continues that its primary focus is “on the temporary and fragmentary character of present knowledge,” and not on the cessation of any of the particular revelatory gifts. This suggests that any interpretation of this text which seeks to tender the cessation of charismata with the apostolic period will have to consider that Paul mentions the cessation of prophecy and tongues alongside the cessation of knowledge. The argument infers that, if Paul in this passage also refers to believers’ present temporary knowledge, it shows that the cessation Paul refers to here is at the return of Christ, since the present temporary knowledge did not cease with the apostolic period. Likewise, charismata did not cease. But he maintains that Paul’s intention in this passage is not to specify the cessation of a particular mode of revelation, so, cessation


86 Gaffin, Perspective on Pentecost, 109.

87 Gaffin, Perspective on Pentecost, 109.

88 Gaffin, Perspective on Pentecost, 111.

89 Gaffin, Perspective on Pentecost, 111.
has to be decided on the basis of other passages and considerations, concluding that cessation cannot be based only on 1st Corinthians 13:8-13.

Ferguson analyzes some modern interpretation of 1st Corinthians 13:8-12 to determine if it suggests continuation or cessation of charismata or not. He examines the two sides of interpretation scholars render on this passage. First, he notes that cessationists understood Paul’s statement in 1st Corinthians 13:10, “when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears” to refer to the completion of the canon of Scripture; with it charismata ceased. Second, he observes that the majority of modern scholars reject all forms of this interpretation by pointing out that by the term “the perfection,” Paul refers to an eschatological concept (not canonical). He also forwards another argument by some scholars that since Paul’s statement, “Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known” (1st Corinthians 13:12), and “when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears’ (1st Corinthians 13:10),” fall in parallel, therefore, it implies the continuation of charismatic gifts like prophecy and tongues. He comments that if this exegesis is correct then the teaching of the Scripture on this issue is resolved. But on the other hand, he presents two responses made on this passage among modern exegetes. First he notes that “by ‘perfection’ Paul refers not to the heavenly vision, but to an interim yet comprehensive (complete) knowledge of God made available by the totality of apostolic teaching. Otherwise not only tongues and prophecy but also the apostolic writings (and therefore the New Testament) are

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90 Gaffin, *Perspective on Pentecost*, 111.


characterized as imperfect.” Second he notes, that “this passage states no more than the general point that these gifts will cease at some future point; exactly when is not in view.” To Ferguson this opposite interpretation of this passage seems to suggest that “the New Testament does not make a specific pronouncement,” on either cessation or continuation of charismata; if so, then “the function of these gifts will determine their longevity.”

Other theologians like Gordon D. Fee affirm that the New Testament really pronounces the longevity of spiritual gifts. Fee observes that though it is not Paul’s main concern, yet in 1st Corinthians 13:8-10 he does speak to the question of cessation/continuation, not in a manner we address it today, but related to his eschatological framework and presuppositions. He says Paul’s argument in this passage is against the Corinthians’ “overspiritualized” the eschaton: that apparently the Corinthians have emphasized the “already” over the “not yet,” and they consider glossolalia as the sign of their “arrival” (cf. 14:20-22). Thus to them, he comments, “Speaking the language of angels (13:1)” shows they are at present participants of the “ultimate state of spiritual existence,” hence they “deny a future bodily resurrection (15:12).” Fee continues that Paul, as part of his argument against the Corinthians’ wrong emphasis on tongues, insists that charismata belong to the present and not to the future existence. But he also observes that what is difficult to extract from this passage is whether Paul anticipated the charismata to come to an end within his

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96 Ferguson, The Holy Spirit, 228.
97 Ferguson, The Holy Spirit, 229.
98 Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, 893.
99 Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, 893.
lifetime, or shortly afterward. And so based on the legitimacy of charismata today, he says Paul’s answer to this question is plain, that is: “Of course they will continue as long as we await the final consummation.” Thus, Fee’s position is that Paul does show in 1st Corinthians 13:8-10 that charismata will continue beyond the apostolic period.

A careful examination of Calvin’s commentary on 1st Corinthians 13:8-10 shows that he interprets this text in a continuationist way. In his comment on “Love never faileth” (verse 8) he encourages believers to prefer love over those gifts that will not last, because “There is good reason why we should eagerly desire an excellence that will never come to an end... Prophesyings have an end, tongues fail, knowledge ceases. Hence love is more excellent than they on this ground.” By the use of “we,” Calvin here is addressing the post apostolic believers to choose love over charismata. If Calvin considers charismata to have ceased with the Apostles, he would not have encouraged the post apostolic believers to choose love over charismata. The gifts he refers to here are the ones mentioned in the passage, which include: prophecy, tongues and knowledge (verse 8).

Also, in his comment on “Whether knowledge, it will be destroyed” (verse 8), Calvin says, “inasmuch as learning, knowledge of languages, and similar gifts are subservient to the necessity of this life, I do not think that there will be any of them then remaining.” Here also Calvin renders the gifts Paul refers to in this passage as being active only in this present life, referring to both apostolic and post apostolic

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100 Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 893.
102 Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 13:8. Emphases added.
103 Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 13:8
periods, showing that gifts are still needed for this life. He also talks about their cessation futuristically: “I do not think that there will be any of them then remaining.” Again, when Calvin says that Paul in this passage “proves that prophecy, and other gifts of that nature, are done away, because they are conferred upon us to help our infirmity.”104 If what he means here is that charismata (e.g. prophecy) ended with the Apostles, why then would he also say these same gifts are “conferred upon us?” He clarifies himself in the next part of the same comment by emphasizing that, “Now our imperfection will one day have an end. Hence the use even of those gifts, will, at the same time, be discontinued, for it were absurd that they should remain and be of no use. They will, therefore, perish.”105 With this, we can understand that his comment on verse 8 addresses that charismata will cease when our imperfection ceases. His comment on verse 9 elaborates his position. It reads,

> We know in part This passage is misinterpreted by most persons, as if it meant that our knowledge, and in like manner our prophecy, is not yet perfect, but that we are daily making progress in them. Paul’s meaning, however, is — that it is owing to our imperfection that we at present have knowledge and prophecy. Hence the phrase in part means — “Because we are not yet perfect.” Knowledge and prophecy, therefore, have place among us so long as that imperfection cleaves to us, to which they are helps. It is true, indeed, that we ought to make progress during our whole life, and that everything that we have is merely begun. Let us observe, however, what Paul designs to prove — that the gifts in question are but temporary. Now he proves this from the circumstance, that the advantage of them is only for a time — so long as we aim at the mark by making progress every day.106

In addition, in interpreting the statement “When that which is perfect is come,” verse 10 of the same passage, Calvin says that Paul maintains the same form of

104 Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 13:8.

105 Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 13:8.

106 Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 13:9.
expression he already used when he contrasts “perfection” with what is “in part,” that is, “Perfection… when it will arrive, will put an end to everything that aids imperfection.” Calvin believes that this perfection begins at death and “will not be completely manifested until the day of judgment.” Thus, Calvin’s discussion of cessation of charismata based on 1st Corinthians 13:8-10 is not sufficient to convince us that charismata ceased with the apostolic age, but begin to cease at death and will finally and completely cease at Christ’s return.

1st Corinthians 12:1-11

1st Corinthians 12:1-11 contains the list of charismata which have varying functions. Ferguson suggests that, “the function of these gifts will determine their longevity.” His basic argument is that charismata function as foundational gifts, and they only occurred in the foundational-laying period of the church (Apostolic period), thus they “are not designed to continue beyond” this period. If this were the only stated function of the charismata in the New Testament, then the discontinuation claim would be right. Unfortunately some scholars give other functions of charismata based on 1st Corinthians 12:1-11.

A modern theologian who presents an additional function of charismata based on 1st Corinthians 12 is Luke Ndubusi, a Nigerian scholar. In his book *Paul’s Concept of Charisma in 1 Corinthians 12*, under the sub-title 4.9.2 “Divergent Functions,” he

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107 Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 13:10.
108 Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 13:10.
says Paul enumerates the spiritual gifts to emphasize the unity of their source.\textsuperscript{111} He therefore sees the terms, “There are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit” (1\textsuperscript{st} Corinthians 12:4), and “All these gifts are the work of one and the same Spirit” (1\textsuperscript{st} Corinthians 12:11), both to refer to, “They are all but manifestations of the same power at work.”\textsuperscript{112} According to him, “God is one and therefore His Spirit is one. God is holy and therefore His Holy Spirit is closely involved in the work of sanctification (Rom. 15:16; 2 Thess. 2:13).” He concludes that, “The ethical nature of the Spirit’s activity is one of the most prominent features of Pauline pneumatology,” and he goes on to say that, “It is the gifts of the Spirit which are a Christians commendation in 2 Cor. 6:6, and that these gifts are ethical in nature is evident from the context, where they are associated with patience, kindness and love.”\textsuperscript{113} He suggests here that charismata have ethical function. If charismata have ethical function, they might not have ceased because they are still significant for guiding the ethical values of the post apostolic church.

While Calvin seems to favor continuation of spiritual gifts in his commentary on 1\textsuperscript{st} Corinthians 13:8-10, on the other hand, he seems to favor cessation of spiritual gifts. In his commentary on 1\textsuperscript{st} Corinthians 12:8 he comments,

> In the fourth Chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, (Ephesians 4:11) there is a fuller enumeration of the offices, that are required for the continued government of the Church… As to the passage before us, we must observe, that of the offices which Paul makes mention of, some are perpetual, others temporary. Those that are perpetual, are such as are necessary for the government of the Church; those that are temporary, are such as were appointed at the beginning for the


\textsuperscript{112} Ndubuisi, \textit{Paul’s Concept of Charisma in 1 Corinthians 12}, 109.

\textsuperscript{113} Ndubuisi, \textit{Paul’s Concept of Charisma in 1 Corinthians 12}, 109.
founding of the Church, and the raising up of Christ’s kingdom; and these, in a short time afterwards, ceased.\textsuperscript{114}

Here Calvin distinguishes two kinds of offices: the ones appointed at the beginning for the founding and raising of the Church which have ceased with the apostolic age, and the ones necessary for the continuing governing of the Church which still remain. Though here he is talking about offices yet it implies also to the miraculous gifts like prophecy, tongue, healing etc. His interpretation of this passage is clear; the foundational offices and gifts have ceased. In response to this, Robert Kingston Wetmore comments that “Calvin did not believe all gifts to be operative in this present age of the church, but distinguished between what he called temporary and permanent gifts and offices.”\textsuperscript{115}

What is difficult to determine from Calvin’s interpretation of this passage is that he has not listed what the foundational offices and gifts are, except the office of teaching which he puts under continuation, and the office of apostle which he puts under cessation. He expresses this concern thus, “For it is difficult to form a judgment as to gifts and offices of which the Church has been so long deprived, excepting only that there are some traces, or shadows of them still to be seen.”\textsuperscript{116} Here Calvin could not list all the offices and gifts that ceased or continue, yet the important thing he notes is that there were some traces of spiritual gifts in his contemporary time.\textsuperscript{117} With this statement he does confirm that there are offices and gifts that continue

\textsuperscript{114} Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 12:28. Emphasis added.

\textsuperscript{115} Robert Kingston Wetmore, “The Theology of Spiritual Gifts in Luther and Calvin: A Comparison” (PhD diss., Concordia Seminary, 1992), 89.

\textsuperscript{116} Calvin, Comm. 1Cor 12:28.

\textsuperscript{117} Calvin, Comm. 1Cor 12:28.
beyond the apostolic period. But he implicitly and explicitly declares that some spiritual gifts (charismata) have ceased.

In his commentary on Acts 10:44, Calvin implicitly and explicitly declares that "The gift of the tongues, and other such like things, are ceased long ago in the Church."\(^\text{118}\) That is, they ceased with the apostolic period. Also, in his commentary on Acts 8:16, he stands firm that spiritual gifts have ceased because, "the Church was beautified for a time only with these gifts."\(^\text{119}\) Hence, by judging Calvin’s cessation claim with his continuation claim, we see two opposing views. Although there are some passages which imply that Calvin thought the spiritual gifts continued, he nevertheless concluded that the dramatic form of spiritual gifts ceased.

Even though Calvin’s views are influential and highly regarded, a deep appreciation for the meaning and significance of Acts 2 leads many contemporary authors, including me, to side with a continuationist view. Chapter two of the Acts of the Apostles talks of one of the most important events in the history of the Church; the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father, was poured out on all believers of the first worship community. The Holy Spirit was not given to selected believers, but to all the believers. In this event, Peter, filled and led by the Holy Spirit, defended the believers against the accusation and misunderstanding that they were drunk. He raised his voice and said, "No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my


servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.’” (Acts 2:17, 18; NIV).

A textual examination of Acts 2 shows evidences for the continuation of spiritual gifts. First, Acts 2:4 says, “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit…” Peter then declares this is the fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy in Joel 2:28 where God promises to pour his Spirit upon “all” his people. What does this “all” mean? Acts 2:38-39 clarifies that this “all” means all the saved (all the people of God). Peter told his listeners that when they are saved they “will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” Thus, the “all” here means all the saved from Peter’s generation to the future ones. This shows that God’s promise to pour his Spirit upon all flesh, always accompanied with his gifts, is for both the apostolic and the post apostolic believers. Calvin also notes that receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit is tied to the receiving of the Holy Spirit, when he comments on Acts 8:16: “forasmuch as the Samaritans were already united with the Spirit of adoption the excellent graces of the Spirit are heaped upon them.” In other words, since the receiving of the Holy Spirit comes with the gifts, it settles that the gifts continue beyond the apostolic period. The events in Acts 8:14-17 and Acts 10:44-48 are practical examples of continuation of the fulfilment of God’s promise in Joel 2:28, beyond the Jerusalem experience, demonstrating how God would continue to pour his Spirit, with the accompanying gifts, on all flesh. Hence, this does not in any way conclude cessation

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120 The NIV Study Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011): 1827.

121 The NIV Study Bible, 1829. Emphasis added.

of charismata, rather it concludes continuation, that it is not limited to the apostolic period.

Historically, the survey of the Acts of the Apostles shows the trend for the continuation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the Acts of the Apostles, chapter two, God fulfilled his promise (Joel 2:28) by pouring the Holy Spirit upon all the disciples, not just their leaders, accompanied with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:4 says, “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” In Acts 8:15-17, Peter and John prayed for the Samaritans and they received the Holy Spirit. In Acts 10:44-45, Gentile believers were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. And in Acts 19:6, Paul prayed for the twelve disciples in Ephesus and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. The three later events show that new converts also received the Holy Spirit with the accompanied gifts. This demonstrates God will continue to fill his people with the Holy Spirit, including future believers, not just the first disciples. Also, except for the Samaritan event, all the other events of the filling or baptism in the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles were accompanied with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, demonstrating that both usually happen at the same time.

The historical survey of Acts and textual analysis of Acts 2 above, both show that it is not enough for Calvin to decide just by the Samaritan believers’ experience of the Holy Spirit in Acts 8:14-17 and that of Cornelius in Acts 10:44-48 that the gifts ceased with the apostolic period. He needs to consider the “all” in Acts 2 which refers to future believers: both Jews and gentiles of the apostolic and post apostolic periods.

c. Conclusion

This debate shows that the argument on the continuation of all charismata may never end. As we have already discussed above, under the definition and purpose of
spiritual gifts, we can never throw away the fact that all gifts of the Spirit are still needed in the Church today because they are for the common good of the Church – for both the propagation of the Gospel and building of the Body of Christ (1st Corinthians 12:1-11). Thus, Calvin’s claim that the extraordinary gifts will cease at the deaths of the gifted, and will finally and completely cease at Christ’s return,\textsuperscript{123} seems to appeal better to the present reality of the spiritual gifts (charismata) as recorded in the Scripture.

This is why part of the counsel of the CRCNA synod of 2009, a tradition of Calvin, accepts from the report submitted by a reconstituted study committee on ‘the influence of neo-Pentecostalism on the CRC’ which reads:

Gratefully accept all the ways in which the Holy Spirit manifests his work in this movement for God’s glory, notably in demonstrating the present reality of the spiritual gifts (charismata) recorded in Scripture and of being filled with the Holy Spirit in different ways and on multiple occasions.\textsuperscript{124}

Also the CRC affirmation of faith in the booklet, \textit{Our World Belongs to God: a Contemporary Testimony},\textsuperscript{125} demonstrates the present understanding of the Christian Reformed Church concerning charismata: charismata are functional in the present-day. Part of the document states

God the Holy Spirit lavishes gifts on the church in an astonishing variety – prophecy, encouragement, healing, teaching, service, tongues, discernment – equipping each member to build up the body of Christ and to serve our neighbors.\textsuperscript{126}

\textsuperscript{123} Calvin, Comm. 1 cor. 13:10.


\textsuperscript{125} CRC, \textit{Our World Belongs to God: a Contemporary Testimony} (Grand Rapids: Faith Alive, 2008).

\textsuperscript{126} CRC, \textit{Our World Belongs to God}, 17.
This thesis, therefore, bases its approach on the possibility of the liturgical use of spiritual gifts, on the view that all charismata, including healing and prophecy, continue to this day. It is this continuationist position that is the basis for the idea that spiritual gifts can be exercised within the context of the liturgy of the church.

5. Recipients of Spiritual Gifts

If all charismata continue until Christ’s return, the question is who are the vessels through whom the Holy Spirit works the gifts? It is worthy to note that there is not much debate regarding the legitimate recipients of charismata. It also seems most theologians assert that the gifts are for all believers as God determines it. Nevertheless, the theological question needed to be answered here is: does God designate the gifts for church leaders, for individual members of the worshipping community, or even for the unsaved?

a. All Believers Receive Spiritual Gifts

First, Ndubuisi suggests that in Nigeria the Pentecostals/charismatics differentiate between supernatural gifts from natural talent: natural talents are for all humans, and spiritual gifts are mainly for all believers.¹²⁷ This view is similar to Calvin’s view in the Institutes II.i.12 where he differentiates natural talents from spiritual gifts.¹²⁸ Also, Pytches agrees that God gives the charismata, in particular, to all the believers, “God’s people.”¹²⁹ He also says, “Each believer receives at least one gift, irrespective of his (her) maturity or responsibility in the church.”¹³⁰ Even a new

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¹²⁷ Ndubuisi, Paul’s Concept of Charisma in 1 Corinthians 12, 109.
¹²⁸ Calvin, Institutes, II: ii: 12.
¹²⁹ Pytches, Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church, 58.
¹³⁰ Pytches, Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church, 59.
convert who is yet to have or have little responsibility in the church or group receives at least a gift (*phanerosis*).

Warfield, on the other hand, gives a slightly different opinion by suggesting that the charismata are particularly for the Apostles. He says, “This does not mean, of course, that only the Apostles appear in the New Testament as working miracles, or that they alone are represented as recipients of the charismata. But it does mean that the charismata belonged, in a true sense, to the apostle, and constituted one of the signs of an Apostle.”\(^1\) While Warfield sees charismata as one of the signs basically for the New Testament Apostle, Calvin and Pytches seem to proffer an opposite opinion.

According to 1\(^{st}\) Corinthians 12:7, Pytches contends that each individual believer is given at least a manifestation of the Spirit (*phanerosis*).\(^2\) According to him, by “faithful exercise of the gift” it may develop into a ministry gift (*diakoniai*).\(^3\) For example, the gift of healing may develop into a healing ministry, and the gift of prophecy may develop into prophetic ministry. Though this view seems like Calvin’s, Calvin does not conclude that by exercise gifts may develop into ministry. Calvin’s view is that before the Lord appoints ministers, He first endows them with the requisite gifts, qualifying them for performing their duties. Calvin considers this as the natural order, which is that “gifts come before the office to be discharged.”\(^4\) Thus, Calvin’s idea is that God pours his gifts generally on all the believers, which then qualifies some of them for ministerial offices.

\(^1\) Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles*, 21.

\(^2\) Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles*, 60.

\(^3\) Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles*, 60.

\(^4\) Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 12:27, 28.
Thus, there is general consensus that spiritual gifts are given both to those who hold offices within the church, but also to all believers, as God’s Spirit freely chooses. This suggests that when the spiritual gifts are used in a liturgical context, congregations, under the leadership of their elders, should work to discern who is gifted, and shape opportunities for them to exercise these gifts.

b. The source of charismata is God

It is also important to clarify the source of charismata, especially in light of those who claim that all charismata since Apostolic times are counterfeit. As earlier stated, Warfield thinks that the post apostolic charismata are counterfeit. Also, Rowland S. Ward agrees with Warfield that charismata ended with the apostolic period, consequently, all other modern extraordinary gifts are counterfeits. He says, “The whole host of modern phenomena, ecclesiastical marvels and healings, whether or not we can offer an explanation of them, on this basis are automatically not of God.”136 This assumption is part of the reason behind the doubt whether the present day charismata are actually from God, but this does not represent the view of all Christian scholars.

The Scripture clearly state the source in passages like 1st Corinthians 12:1-6, 11 and 28. In line with this, Pytches states that, “The gifts do not come in an academic setting; they are not a cerebral exercise. They are not discovered through research, but given sovereignly by God’s grace.”137 Pytches clearly affirms that God is the direct and only source for spiritual gifts, and they cannot be obtained via training or mental

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135 Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles*, 16.


137 Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*, 59.
capacity or other means. Calvin carries the same insight in his commentary on 1st Corinthians 12:1: “God is the author of those gifts...” and continues that it is a proof “from their own experience, that those things in which they gloried, are bestowed upon men through the exercise of God’s favor.”\textsuperscript{138} Again, in his commentary on 1st Corinthians 12:8 he insists that, “Believers,... are endowed with different gifts, but let every one acknowledge, that he is indebted for whatever he has to the Spirit of God, for he pours forth his gifts as the sun scatters his rays in every direction.”\textsuperscript{139} Calvin’s language shows that he is referring to gifts in the post apostolic day church. The point is that despite the fact that there are counterfeit miracles today, yet there are charismata that come from God in this modern time.

c. Conclusion

The lists of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 28; Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:8-14; 1st Corinthians 7:7, 8; 1st Corinthians 13:3; and 1st Peter 4:9 do not indicate or imply that exercising a spiritual gift will develop it into a ministerial gift. In fact all these passages suggest God shares his spiritual gifts to each believer as he wills, regardless of which one comes first. Nevertheless, God may choose to develop a gift into a ministerial gift because he has the power to do so.

The overarching point is that God distributes spiritual gifts to individual members of the church, regardless whether one is a lay person or a minister; but on all for the common good of the church (1st Corinthians 12:7). This is seen in the lives of the new converts in Acts 10:44-48 and 19:6. They received the Holy Spirit and manifested some spiritual gifts instantly, tongues and prophecy included. This

\textsuperscript{138} Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 12:1.

\textsuperscript{139} Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 12:8.
confirms that in a church or worship setting not only the leader may manifest spiritual
gifts but the congregation as well. Adopting the use of charismata in the liturgy of the
church creates a context in which all of those who are gifted by the Spirit can exercise
their gifts, under the leadership and discernment of the elders of the church. This
approach both welcomes, but also disciplines the use of spiritual gifts, avoiding
misuse of the gifts and unnecessary confusion.

6. Prophecy and Healing Gifts

Some challenging miraculous gifts used in worship which are abused or rejected are the gifts of supernatural prophecy and healing. Gaffin points out that our contemporary controversy over spiritual gifts predominantly centers on the gifts of tongues, prophecy and healing. For this reason, this section of this paper narrows its discussion to prophecy and healing gifts, as a case study of spiritual gifts that can be adopted liturgically. Though these supernatural gifts have the potential of guiding and ministering to individual needs and also edifying the community of believers as a whole, there are questions about their importance and liturgical adaptability. This section addresses 1) their concepts, 2) their importance in the contemporary church, and 3) the question for their liturgical adaptability.

a. The Gift of Prophecy

In the Pauline listing of spiritual gifts, some Bible scholars say that Paul mentions the gift of prophecy in 1st Corinthians 12:8-10 and Romans 12:3-8; while in 1st Corinthians 12:28, and Ephesians 4:8-14, he mentions the person and ministry of prophets. This is because both were practically functional among the New Testament believers and in their worship gatherings. But in 1st Corinthians 14, he addresses the

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140 Gaffin, *Perspective on Pentecost*, 55.
proper use and function of both the ministry of the prophet and the gift of prophecy in
the Corinthian worship setting. Using these passages and many other passages from
the Scripture generally, some Christian scholars define and describe to explain the
concept of the gifts of prophecy and prophets. They also explain the function of
prophecy. I thus examine some of them as follows.

i. Definition and Description: Prophecy as Inspired Message from God

Griffiths observes that New Testament prophecy is (predictive) foretelling
described only three times in Acts of the Apostles, but it is described as forth-telling
in three passages of the New Testament (Acts 15:32; 1st Corinthians 14:3; and 31).141
He concludes that the New Testament prophecy is “inspired preaching and
teaching.”142 His adapted definition describes prophecy as, “the gift by which God
keeps his church up-to-date, able to understand and live in the changing world.”143
This suggests that the gift of prophecy is God’s means of transformational change
even in the present day. This view is in harmony with Calvin’s commentary on 1st
Corinthians 12:28 that, “the Prophets here spoken of are those who make known the
will of God, by applying with dexterity and skill prophecies, threatenings, promises,
and the whole doctrine of Scripture, to the present use of the Church.”144 Thus,
prophecy here is presented as preaching.

Elaborating further on this, Calvin explains prophecy as “the singular (unique)
and choice (special) endowment of unfolding the secret will of God, so that a Prophet

141 Griffiths, Grace Gifts, 30.
142 Griffiths, Grace Gifts, 37.
143 Griffiths, Grace Gifts, 31.
144 Calvin, Comm. 1Cor 12:28.
is a messenger, as it were, between God and man.”

Cheng observes that Calvin refers to prophecy as an insightful proclamation, which is forth-telling. Calvin reaffirms his position clearly in his commentary on Romans 12:6, that contemporary prophecy is not prediction, not foretelling, but “prophecy at this day in the Christian Church is hardly anything else than the right understanding of the Scripture, and the peculiar faculty of explaining it, inasmuch as all the ancient prophecies and all the oracles of God have been completed in Christ and in his gospel.” Thus, Calvin believes that the prediction/revelatory prophecy ended with the close of the canon of Scripture, and on the other hand, preaching/teaching is the present day prophecy. But some modern theologians like Pytches and Ndubuisi hold a different view from that of Calvin. They understand the present day prophecy as both foretelling and forth-telling that is fully functional beyond the apostolic period.

Ndubuisi is one of the modern theologians that believes that spontaneous prophecy did not cease. From 1 Corinthians 12-14, he describes both prophecy and tongues as “forms of inspired speech … given by the Spirit.” This refers to vocalization; that prophecy is God’s message that is spoken out as one is led by God’s Spirit. He again summarizes Pauline’s description of prophecy as “spontaneous, edifies, encourages, consoles, convicts, intelligible utterance, inspired directly by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 14:3, 24-25, 31).” Thus, his main point is that prophecy is a

145 Calvin, Comm. 1Cor. 12:10.
148 Pytches, Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church, 79.
149 Ndubuisi, Paul’s Concept of Charisma in 1 Corinthians 12, 240 – 241.
150 Ndubuisi, Paul’s Concept of Charisma in 1 Corinthians 12, 166.
spontaneous utterance inspired directly by the Holy Spirit, not by human thought or manipulation.

In another form, Gaffin expounds the description of prophecy further, based on the vocabulary of the New Testament, as “a revelatory gift; … the inspired, nonderivative word of God.”\textsuperscript{151} He asserts that, although prophecy has the function of interpreting “an already existing inspired text or oral tradition,” yet it is primarily a receiving and communication of God’s word in its primary and original sense (In other words, it is nonderivative).\textsuperscript{152} One difference worthy of note is that while Calvin considers teaching/preaching as prophecy, Gaffin, based on his survey of the New Testament, could not find in the New Testament where teaching/preaching is prophecy. Rather, he considers both of them to refer to proclamations. Therefore, he describes their fundamental difference in this way:

“Non-prophetic proclamation is based on a text; it receives its legitimation as (proper) interpretation of the inscripturated Word of God or, as the case may be, at the time the New Testament was being written, authoritative, apostolic oral tradition. Prophetic proclamation, in contrast, is Spirit-worked speech of such a quality that its authority resides just in that inspired origin. A basic difference between prophecy and preaching is that the prophet has no text. The prophet reveals the Word of God, the preacher expounds that Word.”\textsuperscript{153}

Gaffin shows that the New Testament clearly shows the difference between the two proclamations: the miraculous proclamation called prophecy, and normal proclamation called preaching. To him, prophecy is a revelatory gift, not preaching.

Pytches, on the other hand, gives a summary and simplified definition of prophecy from 1 Corinthians 12: 10; 14:1 as follows:

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\item \textsuperscript{151} Gaffin, \textit{Perspective on Pentecost}, 59.
\item \textsuperscript{152} Gaffin, \textit{Perspective on Pentecost}, 59.
\item \textsuperscript{153} Gaffin, \textit{Perspective on Pentecost}, 72.
\end{itemize}
The special ability that God gives to members of the Body of Christ to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to his gathered people, a group among them or any one of his people individually, through a divinely anointed utterance.\footnote{Pytches, \textit{Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church}, 79.}

In another form, Fee describes Paul’s view of prophecy as “‘speech’ consisted of spontaneous, intelligible messages, orally delivered in the gathered assembly, intended for the edification or encouragement of the people,”\footnote{Fee, \textit{God’s Empowering Presence}, 891.} a description which he develops on the basis of 1\textsuperscript{st} Corinthians 14: 29-32.

From the descriptions of prophecies stated above we can see that they vary in their interpretations of what prophecy is. The major disagreement that concerns this thesis is about the instantaneous/miraculous prophecy where a believer receives a revelation directly from the Holy Spirit, about the past, present or predictive. Calvin and Griffiths agree on the views that the present day prophecy is “inspired preaching and teaching,” and that revelation or predictive prophecy ended with the close of the canon. If this position is true then there is no need for this thesis since preaching and teaching are already part of the worship services of all the churches, and without a problem. But since other modern scholars hold that instantaneous/miraculous prophecy is functional in the church today, and because this is also the view of many believers who worship even in the mainline churches today, therefore this thesis is an important topic to explore. Since all agree that prophecy is an inspired message from God that is expressed through the speech of one person to a receptive audience, it seems fitting to create space in liturgy for prophecy, whether it is viewed as a typical proclamation of the gospel or an atypical outpouring of Spirit-given insight. For both are essentially a liturgical phenomenon.
ii. Not all are Prophets

To answer the question regarding who should prophesy, Ndubuisi notes that in 1 Cor. 12:29, Paul makes clear that not all are prophets. He also observes, “At least this much can be established from 1 Cor. 12-14. Paul did not distinguish rigidly between the gift of prophetic utterance and the prophets, either as bearers of the gift of prophecy in the community at large or as those who held a recognized office.” It is a normative in the Scripture that the bearer of prophecy is the prophet, thus Gaffin describes the prophets as “those who exercise the gift frequently or with some regularity,” citing examples from Acts 21:10; 1 Cor. 12:28; but again points out that “the gift itself can function temporarily in others on particular occasions,” referring to Acts 19:6 to 21:9; 1 Cor. 11:4ff. This suggests that every Christian is a potential prophet, though there are designated prophets. Calvin says “a Prophet is a messenger, as it were, between God and man.” Therefore, if God fellowships with his people liturgically through some of his human messengers, for example preachers and singers, then he can equally speak to his people liturgically through his prophet or by any person he chooses.

iii. The nature and form of prophecy

Ndubuisi points that Paul recognizes the Holy Spirit as the source of true prophecy (1st Corinthians 12: 8-11), which explains the nature of prophecy as being

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156 Ndubuisi, Paul’s Concept of Charisma in 1 Corinthians 12, 167.
157 Ndubuisi, Paul’s Concept of Charisma in 1 Corinthians 12, 167.
158 Gaffin, Perspective on Pentecost, 59.
159 Calvin, Comm. 1Cor. 12:10.
160 Ndubuisi, Paul’s Concept of Charisma in 1 Corinthians 12, 241.
supernatural because the Holy Spirit is supernatural. Another author shows that prophecy throughout the whole Scripture is supernatural.¹⁶¹

Concerning the channel or form of prophecy, it is clear that prophecy has no specific form or channel by which it must manifest. Fee says Pauline prophecy is spontaneous in nature, as seen in the Pauline statement, “‘revelation’ comes to another while one person is still ‘prophesying’” (1st Corinthians 14: 29-32).¹⁶² Victor Budgen shows other possible channels of prophecy through visions, direct words from God, or trance.¹⁶³ Pytches explains further that prophecy may come through meditating on scripture, visions (Acts 18:9), dreams (Matthew 2:13), trances (Acts 22:17), impressions (a word or picture), audible voice or angelic visitation.¹⁶⁴ This variety of forms may well extend beyond liturgical expression, but it also includes experiences which could occur in a liturgical context, where the congregation prays for the gift of prophecy, eagerly awaits the possibility that the Holy Spirit may choose to grace the community with the gift of prophecy, and then works to discern whether the prophecy is genuine.

iv. The importance of prophecy in the contemporary church

While Fee says that prophecy has the goal of “building up of the people of God so as to come to maturity in Christ (Eph. 4:11-16),”¹⁶⁵ Griffiths says that it is for “encouragement and teaching for edification.”¹⁶⁶ Ndubuisi also says prophecy is

¹⁶² Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, 891.
¹⁶⁴ Pytches, Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church, 81.
¹⁶⁵ Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, 891.
important for edifying the congregation of believers (1 Cor. 14), and also has effect for turning unbelievers to the Lord (1 Cor. 14:22-25). Pytches elaborates more on the importance of prophecy by listing its purpose as follows. He says prophecy:

- Brings glory to Jesus Christ (Revelation 19:10c).
- Builds up, encourages or warns and consoles (1st Corinthians 14:3).
- Serves as a sign for unbelievers to convince them (1st Corinthians 14:24, 25).
- It is not the equivalent of Scripture but serves as a particular word for a particular congregation at a time through a particular person. And,
- It foretells.

Each of these criteria, clearly derived from scripture, provide the basis from which a congregation, under the authority of its elders, can discern what is a genuine prophecy, and gift of the Holy Spirit.

v. The question for the adaptability of prophecy in liturgy

Gaffin notes that prophetic “gifts (are) operative in the church at Corinth” (1st Corinthians 14) and other New Testament churches (e.g. Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Rome). Fee also holds the same view. He observes that from all of the charismata, prophecy is the most mentioned. He then lists some of the passages prophecy has specially mentioned: 1st Thessalonians 5:20; 1st Corinthians 11:4-5; 12:10-14:40; Romans 12:6; Ephesians 2:20; 3:5; 4:11; 1st Timothy 1:18; 4:14. To him, this implies the widest range of occurrences of prophecy in the Pauline churches, which shows that the gift of prophecy was used in the worship services of the New

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168 Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *Perspective on Pentecost*, 55.
Testament churches. Each of these contexts suggests the validity of prophecy as something which can be manifest in worship today.

b. The Gift of Healings

In contrast to the gift of prophecy, Calvin tersely states that the gifts of healing do not need explanation, assuming that everyone knows what it is.170 David E. Holwerda comments that the brusque statement of Calvin reflects the degree to which Calvin’s background, “scientism,” influenced his reading of the Bible.171 While Calvin’s stand is still clear, may I suggest that healing is primarily to be cured from any kind of sickness, but the “gifts of healings” may not be any kind of healing method. Thus, it needs to be explained.

Another reason that prompted the need for explaining charismata of healing is the disagreement about its practice among churches. Ndubuisi observes that Nigerian charismatics cite various Old Testament texts like Exodus 15:26; 23:25; Psalms 103:3; Isaiah 53:4-5, and appeal more to the ministry of Jesus, the practices of the Apostles and the instruction in James 5:14-16 to support their healing doctrines.172 But he also points out that Pentecostals have differing understandings about healing amongst themselves.173 Conversely, Ward states that the “So-called ‘faith healing’ involves a misunderstanding of the Scriptures and leads to serious errors.”174 These demonstrate the need to explain the gift of healing, and also because it is a

170 Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 12:9
172 Ndubuisi, Paul’s Concept of Charisma in 1 Corinthians 12, 242.
173 Ndubuisi, Paul’s Concept of Charisma in 1 Corinthians 12, 243.
174 Ward, Spiritual Gifts in the Apostolic Church, 49.
phenomenon that is so practiced among the charismatics and attracts members from non-charismatic churches, while being rejected by the non-charismatic churches.

i. Definition

Wagner defines the gift of healing as, “the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to cure illness and restore health apart from the use of natural means.”\textsuperscript{175} This shows that healing by natural means is not part of a supernatural healing method referred to as gifts of healings. It also shows that it is a gift bestowed upon some selected believers, and not on all. In the same vein, Pytches comments that, “These gifts are channeled through human agents for the supernatural healing of diseases and infirmities to the glory of God.”\textsuperscript{176} Thus both Wagner and Pytches agree on the view that the gifts of healing are supernatural, not natural, and also that some selected Christians serve as the vessels of the gifts of healing.

ii. Description

Ndubuisi describes charismata of healings as “God’s gracious healing activity” in the same venue as that of the messianic healings.\textsuperscript{177} Ndubuisi also observes that it is significant to note the plural usage of the term, “gifts of healings,” that this may indicate two things. One, that “the gifts of healing is sovereignly bestowed upon some believers commensurate with the illnesses present, either in number or kind. Two, these gifts are meant for service for the good of the


\textsuperscript{176} Pytches, \textit{Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church}, 117.

\textsuperscript{177} Ndubuisi, \textit{Paul’s Concept of Charisma in 1 Corinthians} 12, 164.
Therefore, it is not for demonstration of power, and also not for the elevation of an individual as a singular healer for all illnesses, he points out. Fee writes that “gifts of healings” refer to the expectations of Jesus, Paul and the rest of the early church, that God would heal people’s physical bodies. He adds that the nature of the language usage of “gifts of healings” appear twice in 1st Corinthians 12, in verses 28 and 30. He continues that this language may probably reflect two things: one, the use of χάρισμα here suggests that the gift of healing is given to the person God uses to heal others, not to the healed person; and two, that the plural χαρίσματα suggests that each occurrence is a ‘gift’ on its own, not a permanent ‘gift.’ This suggests that the gifts of healings may manifest in different forms any time they reoccur. For example, if it appears as the power to heal cancer, it may appear another time as the power to heal a different sickness.

iii. Types of Healing

Wagner states that the plural sense of the gifts of healings mentioned in 1st Corinthians 12:28 seems to imply that there are varieties of healing gifts, matching different types of illnesses. He observes that, apart from being used to cure bodily sicknesses, the gifts can also be used to cure emotional, mental and spiritual illnesses. Therefore, “To restrict the gift of healing just to physical diseases is not proper.”

Ndubuisi agrees that there are four basic kinds of sicknesses that need to be cured:

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178 Ndubuisi, *Paul’s Concept of Charisma in 1 Corinthians 12*, 164.
179 Ndubuisi, *Paul’s Concept of Charisma in 1 Corinthians 12*, 164.
183 Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*, 239.
sickness of spirit caused by personal sin, emotional sickness, physical sickness, and
demonic oppression caused by evil spirits.\footnote{Ndubuisi, \textit{Paul’s Concept of Charisma in 1 Corinthians} \textit{12}, 243.}

iv. Methods of Healing

Wagner points out that though God uses modern medical means of healing, which are natural methods as natural talents in the doctors, nevertheless, this should not be confused with the gifts of healing.\footnote{Wagner, \textit{Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow}, 238.} According to him, even Christian doctors are using natural talents, not the gifts of healing.\footnote{Wagner, \textit{Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow}, 238.} Griffiths has the same opinion with Wagner.\footnote{Griffiths, \textit{Grace Gifts}, 48.} These writers infer that there are two methods by which the Scripture tells us that God uses to heal the sick. These are the natural and the supernatural ways of healing.

v. The importance of the Gifts of healing in the contemporary church

Ndubuisi points out that the charismata of healings “are meant for service for the good of the community… not designed to be a demonstration of power.”\footnote{Ndubuisi, \textit{Paul’s Concept of Charisma in 1 Corinthians} \textit{12}, 164.} This implies that the sick members of the Christian community also partake in the blessing of the gifts of cure to their sickness. Wagner notes that a key factor contributing to the fast growth of the Pentecostal movement in Latin America is faith healing.\footnote{Wagner, \textit{Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow}, 240.} He infers that gift of healing is importantly a means for church growth. Pytches on the
other hand lists seven purposes of healing which also reflect the importance of the gifts of healing. He said they are intended:

- “To contribute towards the process of wholeness in the individual.
- To alleviate physical suffering through a cure or the abatement of symptoms.
- To cleanse the soul.
- To release the emotions.
- To edify those believers made aware of the Holy Spirit.
- To be a sign in an unbelieving world of the kingdom which has come with Christ. And,
- To bring glory to God.”

Calvin summarizes that, “The gifts of healing and of miracles, therefore, serve to manifest the goodness of God, but this last, his severity for the destruction of Satan.”

The gift of healing is importantly a blessing to the sick and assigned to the unbeliever.

vi. The question for their liturgical adaptability

Pytches expresses that James 5:14 expresses a sacramental ministry of healing exercised by church leaders, elders and priests. He also points out that in 1st Corinthians 12, the gifts of healing are bestowed upon the body of Christ, “the gathering of the church members – when they minister to each other and to visitors in

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190 Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*, 118 – 119.

191 Calvin, Comm. 1Cor. 12:10. Emphasis added.

192 Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*, 118.
their company *in the Church.*

Based on these two scriptural passages, he demonstrates that the gifts of healing are also appropriate for use in a worship setting.

vii. Conclusion

What is worthy to note about the gifts of healing from these theologians is that they all explain it as the supernatural power of God working through his chosen vessel to cure any kind of illness. It is the demonstration of the love and power of God to save and keep. It is one of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the gathering of believers. This suggests that the gifts of healing can work liturgically for blessing a church congregation.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter, contemporary writers differ on the issue of cessation yet unanimously agree that every believer is endowed with at least a spiritual gift which generally serves for the edification and unification of the Body of Christ. They also show that spiritual gifts were exercised in the worship gatherings of the believers in the New Testament churches. These perspectives suggest that public worship services are one venue in which the spiritual gifts can be exercised prayerfully. Along the way they also suggest several criteria to guide the church in its prayerful use of the spiritual gifts: acknowledge that they are gifts of the Spirit, exercise them in ways that build up the body, seek to discern the genuineness of the gifts through the authority of the elders, be ready to embrace the gifts exercised by any member, and celebrate the ways that the gifts unify the body, and convict those who are not yet believers.

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193 Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church,* 118. Emphasis added.
CHAPTER 2: Potential of the Recent Theology of Spiritual Gifts for Use in Nigeria

This chapter presents the potential of the recent theology of spiritual gifts for use in Nigeria. It compares them to Calvin and to the Ministry Context of Nigerian Christianity. It shows the challenges facing both Pentecostal and mainline churches and proffers solutions to the challenges based on the wisdom learned from the previous chapter.

1. Compare to John Calvin’s view

Although Calvin was discussed alongside the contemporary theologians in chapter 1, I find it helpful in this chapter also to compare some of his important insights to these modern writers. Comparing modern writers to Calvin is necessary because he is the father of the Reformed/Presbyterian churches in Nigeria which inter-relate with the Pentecostals and charismatics. Calvin is held in high regard, and seen as an authoritative source of insight. This comparison will also help us clarify some important considerations for developing a way of receiving charismata in a liturgical context.

Contemporary writers differ on the issue of cessation yet unanimously agree that every believer is endowed with at least a spiritual gift which generally serves for the edification and unification of the body of Christ. Calvin likewise advises Christians to strive for the use of the gift each one is endowed with, “and not keep back the gifts of God in the way of enjoying every one his own, apart from the others,”¹ since they are meant for edification of the whole Christian community.

¹ Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 12:4.
Calvin also believes that the gifts serve for the purpose of uniting the church and says, “Though the members of the body are various, and have different functions, they are, nevertheless, linked together in such a manner that they coalesce in one. We, accordingly, who are members of Christ, although we are endowed with various gifts, ought, notwithstanding, to have an eye to that connection which we have in Christ.”\footnote{Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 12:12.}

With this he encourages diversity in unity.

Calvin further states clearly that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not given to us without a purpose, nor were they given to us for show. He made this comment when commenting on Paul’s statement that, “the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man for the common good.”\footnote{Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 12:7.} He said Paul points out that “the purpose for which God has appointed his gifts” on us, is not for vain use, nor for showiness, but that the Church may benefit afterward.\footnote{Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 12:7.} He adds that the gifts manifest the presence of the Spirit of God in Christian gatherings, reveal to us what God’ wants us to know, and witness to the unbelievers the reality of the gospel.\footnote{Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 12:7.} Based on this view, Calvin shows that spiritual gifts are not for showiness to manifest God’s presence and glory among his people and to the world.

Again when commenting on Paul’s comment in Romans 12:16, Calvin encourages that each person use his office or gift effectively, not for the person’s selfish gain, but for the benefit of others.\footnote{John Calvin, Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans, Translated by Rev. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans y, 1948): Rom 12:16.} Hence, including the use of charismata in worship liturgy assures that it is used for the benefit of all and for God’s glory.
because liturgy reaches out to all the gathered congregation drawing their attention to God as they worship. While Calvin ministered in a very different context, and while his understandings of the details of the gifts of prophecy and healing may vary from some contemporary understanding, each of these insights from Calvin provides scriptural wisdom for guiding the church today.

2. Comparison to Ministry Context of Nigerian Christianity

In the introductory part of this thesis, we were introduced to the present state of Nigerian Christianity. We saw that the charismatic wind is still blowing in Nigerian churches and beyond the resistance of the mainline churches, suggesting that charismata has influence in both the charismatic and non-charismatic churches in Nigeria. Here, I elaborate further.

In Nigeria, the Reformed, Presbyterian and other mainline churches, who do not allow the use of spiritual gifts in their worship practices, have faced three unavoidable challenges. First, they have faced the challenge of the loss of a great number of their members to the fast growing Pentecostal and indigenous independent churches who practice the use of spiritual gifts. Second, the challenge of great infiltration and acceptance of the practices of spiritual gifts into the mainline churches, to the extent that the mainline churches find it difficult how to rightly adapt the use of spiritual gifts, especially the gifts of healing and spontaneous prophecy. And third, they face a challenge of a move towards World Christianity, the need for the mainline churches to work out lasting unity and coexistence among their congregations (threatened by the divided view on the use of spiritual gifts), and their relationship to the entire body of Christ, the global Church. These three noticeable challenges arose from three main factors: the mainline churches 1) were planted in African environment in a manner not consistent nor relevant to Nigerians, that is, not
in the context of the African world view; 2) they hold to the view of cessation of charismata; and 3) they are careful of being victims of counterfeit miracles or syncretism. On the one hand, the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are comfortable with these facts. These factors are discussed below to give us a vivid understanding of the present context of Christianity in Nigeria.

a. Contextualization of Nigerian Christianity

Osadolor Imasogie, a notable Nigerian theologian, in his article, “The Influence of African Traditional Religious Ideas of Worship on the Christian Worship Practices in Nigeria”\(^7\) describes the situation of the nature of African Christian worship. He argues that “African understanding of worship as expressed in African Traditional Religion has influenced the Christian form of worship and practices in Nigeria and, understandably, in other parts of Africa as well.”\(^8\) He maintains that this is true because “man’s self-expression of his experiences is coloured by his self-understanding, symbols, language, thought-pattern and forms through which he expresses them, be they physical or spiritual.”\(^9\) With this he infers that the understanding and practices of African Christianity are influenced by the “subterranean African Traditional Religious consciousness.”\(^10\) Thus, he gives the two sides of the spiritual situations arising from this influence; he says,

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The influence of African Traditional Religious concepts of worship on Christian worship … may be considered to have both positive and negative effects. On the positive side is the salutary emphasis on the pervading reality of spiritual presence both within and outside the sanctuary and the consequent inevitability of encounter with that presence. The mainline Christian churches must take note of this. The negative angle of the influence is the tremendous magical power with which the ritual objects are inadvertently imbued in the process of equipping worshippers for encounter with the pervasive spiritual presence.11

Here, while he refutes the use of magical power by the clergy and the lay within or outside the Christian community, he calls the attention of the mainline churches to the permeating reality of spiritual presence and its resulting obvious encounter, both within and outside the African Christian community. His point is that Christianity in Africa gains more acceptability when the African world view is considered. The mainline church must be very cautious about the influence of a Western worldview in shaping their view of ministry, a worldview which often denies the possibility of supernatural activity of God and questions our capacity to perceive the presence of spiritual forces and powers.

Matthews A. Ojo, another Nigerian scholar, foresees this as well. He perceives contextualization as one of the main factors why the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements are growing fast in Nigeria. This is what he says:

The emergence of the charismatic movements in Nigeria in the 1970s is a remarkable religious phenomenon. Their rapid growth and success could be attributed to many factors, but the central factor which clearly emerges is that the movements have been presented in a manner acceptable and relevant to Nigerians, and they have been adapted to the situation in Nigeria. The continuous growth of the movements into the

1980s suggests that they are acting as responses to certain areas of need in Christian commitment in Nigeria.12

One of the main needs of a typical African Christian is the desire for God’s spiritual presence and His manifestations in Christian worship services and all spheres of life. To Africans this shows that God is the most powerful Deity worthy of worship who can care for their spiritual and physical needs in both natural and miraculous ways.

Thus, Imasogie’s clarion call to the mainline churches to take the African world view into consideration as they plant churches, explains the theological and practical Christian situation in Nigeria: which is, the use of spiritual gifts in the Nigerian churches. The Charismatic and Pentecostal churches do not have the problem with this phenomenon as the mainline churches do.

b. Repel versus Embrace Action of the Mainline Churches

Since the mainline churches were indoctrinated by their pioneers that spiritual gifts have ceased with the apostolic period, they reject the exercise of these gifts. This resistance rose a great battle and disunity among Nigerian churches. I can still remember the Pentecostals called (still call) the mainline churches dead churches, while the mainline churches accused the Pentecostals of being satanic. Though the mainline churches in Nigeria posed opposition against the penetration of the use of spiritual gifts, they find themselves fighting against the world view in which they are planted. Therefore, it is difficult for the mainline churches to resist this reality forever. In the same view, Kalu presents the situation of the mainline churches in Nigeria. He states that during the post-independence period, the charismatic movement spread

through the African continent, influenced first the youth and the women, “and later
overawed the resistance of the mainline churches.”\textsuperscript{13} Thus gradually, the phenomenon
of the spiritual gifts naturally found its way into the mainline churches. This reveals
the situation of the mainline churches in Nigeria today.

c. The Abuse of the Use of Spiritual Gifts Among Pentecostals

While the mainline churches are battling with the challenges the charismatic
wind poses, on the other side, the Charismatic and Pentecostal churches are also faced
with the challenge of the abuse of the use of spiritual gifts in their gatherings.
Oluwafemi Olayiwola Adeyemi, also a Nigerian theologian, discussed this in his
article, “Speaking in Tongue in the Charismatic Movement and Its Implications for
Contemporary Nigerian Christian.”\textsuperscript{14} His position is that they misuse the gifts of
tongue in their worship settings.

Accordingly, the situation of the use of spiritual gifts in the Nigerian worship
services include their rejection or misguided use. And consequently, the liturgical use
of spiritual gifts is lacking in both the Pentecostal/Charismatic and mainline churches.
As a result of the rejection or misguided use of spiritual gifts among Nigerian
churches, Nigerian Christianity is confronted with both pastoral and theological
challenges and opportunities.

\textsuperscript{13} Kalu, \textit{African Pentecostalism}, xi.

\textsuperscript{14} Oluwafemi Olayiwola Adeyemi, “Speaking in tongues in the charismatic movement and its
implications for contemporary Nigerian Christians,” \textit{Ogbomoso Journal Of Theology} 13, no. 2 (January
3. Pastoral Challenges and Opportunities in Contemporary Nigeria

a. Pastoral Challenges in Nigerian Christianity

   i. Combating Rejection of Charismata

   The debate on the cessation of spiritual gifts in chapter two shows that some theologians like Warfield and others claim that spiritual gifts have ceased with the apostles. This view has much influence on the mainline churches in Nigeria since they are the descendants of these reformed theologians. Thus, they too reject that charismata still function today.

   Since the mainline churches reject the use of charismata in their meetings, their pastors face the difficulty of meeting the spiritual needs of their members who believe that God still works supernaturally today. Needs like exorcism, healing from sickness, special miracles, and spiritual discernment or vision, or prophecy, or special revelation that directly addresses their situations. Therefore some of the members often visit the churches and pastors who can meet these needs. The challenge here is that since the mainline pastor could not meet the needs of his members supernaturally, he is considered as a dead pastor or false, or ungifted. For this reason, the pastor has to work harder to prove he/she is an instrument in God’s hand, blessed with different gifts. I sometimes see how some of us, the pastors of the Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria (CRC-N), struggle harder to retain our members. Some do so by preaching and teaching against counterfeit miracles; others invite gifted pastors in challenging areas like healing and exorcism to minister to their congregations; others try praying for the congregation to receive the miracles they need.

   But the wisdom we learn for solving this problem lies with the view that charismata continues to this day, and that each believer is endowed with at least a gift,
just as some theologians like Fee, Pytches and others proffer, as we saw earlier in our research. Therefore the mainline churches need to consider this view seriously.

ii. Combating Loss of Members

Another challenge is that when some members go out to other churches for prayer, they end up leaving their current churches, thus, the pastor has to work harder to retain his members. In other cases, the mainline churches drive away their members who identify with charismata or baptism of the Holy Spirit. This was an issue in CRC-N in the 1970s and 1980s when some youth experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit and started speaking in tongues, healing and engaging in exorcism. The church drove them away. Some of them joined other churches, while others started their ministry.

We learned that one of the purposes of spiritual gifts is that they serve for the expansion of the kingdom of God. Pytches and Calvin in particular advanced this view. Therefore the Nigerian churches that lose their members due to rejection of the function of the charismata, need to revisit their stand on this for the greater good of the church.

iii. Combating Doctrinal Confusion

Another challenge is that the pastor faces a greater task of re-teaching his members who return with a different doctrinal view from that of the church, and are bent to imposing it upon the entire community. For example, some members of our denomination, Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria, who were influenced by some supernatural revelation from other churches returned with the teaching that God says wearing of earrings and hair palming/hair attachment and facial decoration, etc., are sinful.
If any church allows the use of charismata, this may make it less likely that its members will leave their church for another or come back with a false teaching. Though this is not the only reason some members move out of the church, yet it is worth considering.

iv. Combating Disunity

In another situation, some members of the church in the mainline churches are blessed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In this case, sometimes the church is divided in the view about spiritual gifts. Here, the pastor faces the challenge of whom with to side or not. Or if the pastor does not take sides, he faces the challenge of uniting the two factions. It is not a simple task to control a divided congregation, thus the pastor has to prepare sound biblical teachings on the unity of the church. We saw previously in this paper that Calvin views that since both the natural and the supernatural gifts are from God, for this reason no one should be disdained for his/her gifts. Approaching the issue with this sense promotes unity in the body of Christ.

v. Combating Counterfeits

We learned from Warfield that in church history, there were incidences of counterfeit miracles. Though not all miracles are counterfeits, it is obvious that some of these miracles are counterfeits. This is one of the challenges Pentecostal and Charismatic churches face though all Nigerian churches need to be watchful about it.

First, they have to combat falsehood. This is a great challenge to the Pentecostal pastors since some of the pastors and some of their members are allegedly accused of faking the gifts they are not endowed with. For example, Adeyemi testifies that he was forced to speak in tongues, and so he faked it to avoid the pressure, but to
them they accepted he was filled with the Holy Spirit.\(^\text{15}\) Thus, pastors are saddled with the responsibility of making sure they are sincere and their members are faithful in all the course of Christ’s kingdom.

Secondly, though Christianity has spiritual power, it is not an African Traditional Religion. Therefore the big task before the Nigerian pastors is to make sure they do not practice or encourage the use of magical power in the disguise of spiritual gifts. This is an enormous challenge since some of the worship and power practices in Nigerian Christianity are questionable. Imasogie points out that there is a negative influence of the African religion on African Christianity, which is, “the tremendous magical power with which the ritual objects are inadvertently imbued in the process of equipping worshippers for encounter with the pervasive spiritual presence.”\(^\text{16}\) He implies that some African churches are into syncretism, though may be not intentionally. The enormous challenge is that it is very difficult either by scientific or any other natural means to be able to differentiate the real miracle from the counterfeit, if both are claimed to be performed in the Name of Christ.

Nevertheless, with the true spiritual gifts of discernment and faithful study of the Bible, this can be achieved by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The duty of discerning and refuting the practice of satanic power in the church lies upon the shoulder of the faithful pastors. Thus, church members need to know the biblical differences between counterfeit miracles from the real ones. They also need to know the danger involved in the practice of magical power. The careful work of defining the spiritual gifts, and noticing all the biblical parameters for the gifts (see chapter 1 above), can assist the


pastors and elders of the church to make wise choices as they discern true from false gifts.

Thirdly, the abuse of the use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is another challenge. I have witnessed some church programs organized by Charismatic/Pentecostal churches where anointing oil, handkerchiefs, and holy water are blessed and sold to the people as items that possess God’s power for miracles. I have heard from several people that some Christians demand payment from their clients before they pray for them for a miracle. The surprising thing is that many Christians, the mainline church members in particular, go to such meetings for miracles. They pay to be prayed for or buy those items. This abuse of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is so rampant in Nigeria that the church must cry out. But from what we have seen about the purpose of charismata, it is for God’s glory and not for personal gain nor to “serve the purpose of ostentation,”17 as Calvin simply puts.

b. Pastoral opportunities

In our survey of the modern theology of some modern theologians and Calvin, we understood that the Holy Spirit endows each believer with at least a spiritual gift for the edification of the church. This is an opportunity for pastoral activities.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit and the African world view together open pastoral opportunities for the churches in Nigeria. First, this is an opportunity for developing a worship setting that embraces all members equally, by promoting coexistence among members for the benefit of all. Second, it is an opportunity for teaching members about the purpose of spiritual gifts so that each will use his/her gift for the edification of the church and not for selfish purposes. Third, it also provides an opportunity for

17 Calvin, Comm. 1 Cor. 12:7.
each of the gifted members of the church to use their gifts where it properly fits. Forth, this is also an opportunity for developing a liturgy that adopts the use of spiritual gifts; doing so shows that the church cares for all her members. Thus, the Nigerian church will remain blessed, and the unbeliever won over into God’s kingdom.

4. Theological Challenges and Opportunities in Contemporary Nigeria

Previously Kalu points out that the mainline churches in Nigeria could not resist the fast spread of Pentecostalism and its influence on the members of the mainline churches. That is, the manifestation of spiritual gifts among the Pentecostals adapts easily to the African context, which, has helped their fast spread and influence on the mainline churches. Because Africans believe in the existence of the spirits and their influence on daily life activities, they are more open to understanding and accepting the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. This is a theological opportunity.

Matthews A. Ojo, commenting on the factor influencing the fast growth of charismatic movement, observes that contextualization is the major key. He puts forward that, “The central notion of African theology is that Christianity should take account of African life and thought.” Imasogie is of the same opinion. He says “contextualization of one’s faith in Christ is an inevitable phenomenon without which one’s faith will be rootless in one’s existential cultural soil.”

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19 Ojo, “The contextual significance of the charismatic movements in independent Nigeria,” 175.

Therefore, Nigerian Christianity is faced with the task of developing a biblically rooted theology that takes account of African life and thought, especially on African world view on spiritual experience. While this is a theological opportunity, the challenge is how to carry out this task faithfully without being a victim of syncretism. Imasogie observes that, “There is a very thin line between contextualization and syncretism. The process that leads to either of these is often carried out unconsciously.”21 This shows how uneasy is the task of developing a theology in a context where the world view and life are directly guided by a traditional religion. Nonetheless, despite the fact that syncretism is the main challenge, contextualization is the opportunity.

The grand opportunity presented by this study is, however, the development of the theology of liturgical use of spiritual gifts because this will help in contextualizing Christianity where spirituality is the anchor of their world view. This would help control the risk of falling into syncretism.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen some of the challenges facing Nigerian Christianity. Also, we have addressed these solutions from the wisdom learned in the previous chapters. We have seen that the main difficulty facing Nigerian Christianity is the need to adopt the liturgical use of spiritual gifts by both the mainline and the charismatic, Pentecostal churches, so as to curtail its misuse and dissention in their congregations.

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CHAPTER 3: Liturgical Use of Spiritual Gifts

The major task of this thesis is to suggest fitting ways in which churches can create space for the exercise of spiritual gifts within their worship liturgy, in order to promote unity and love among congregations and churches, church growth, and the proper use of charismata, all for the building of the body of Christ. Therefore, I devote this chapter to discussing specifically the liturgical use of spiritual gifts. In this chapter, I briefly describe the perspective of theologians on the liturgical use of charismata, take note of some examples of how the charismata have functioned in worship, and present both existing and newly developed liturgies which create space for the spiritual gifts.

1. Defining Liturgy

I begin by presenting two definitions of liturgy as follows.

The Westminster Dictionary of Worship defines liturgy thus,

In the singular the word ‘liturgy’ denotes an act of worship, more specifically the eucharist. Derived from the Greek leitourgia, it was used in Hellenistic Greek of an act of public service. In the NT it is employed of an act of service or ministry (e.g. Phil. 2.30). In time it was confined in Christian usage to the idea of service to God and finally, since worship was regarded as the supreme service to God, it was applied to the eucharist. Consequently to study liturgies is to examine the forms which the eucharistic rite has taken throughout the centuries.1

The Baker’s Dictionary of Theology gives its definition of liturgy as follows,

The Greek word leitour gia meant originally a public or state duty. In the LXX it is applied particularly to the services of the temple in Jerusalem. As used in the NT it often bears the meaning of priestly

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service (e.g., Luke 1:23; Phil. 2:17; Heb. 8:6). In ecclesiastical usage, the word is employed (1) in a general sense with reference to any of the prescribed services and offices of the church’s worship; (2) in a specific sense with reference to the formularies used at the celebration of the Holy Communion, the eucharistic office being commonly referred to as the liturgy.²

These definitions suggest that liturgy is a public, corporate action, designed to strengthen the corporate body, organized for the purpose of enabling the action of the people. These criteria are very similar to several of the points developed in chapter 1 above. This suggests a natural fittingness between liturgy and the spiritual gifts. If so, then liturgy is a wise and wonderful way the church can maintain a proper operation of the spiritual gifts today.

2. Affirmation of the Place of Spiritual Gifts in Worship by Both Gordon Fee and David Pytches

a. Charismata and Worship by Fee

In discussing the nature of worship in the Pauline churches, Fee states that as Paul’s correctives in 1st Corinthians 14 show clearly, several of the charismata belong to the context of corporate worship, especially those involving speech directed towards the community such as prophecy, teaching, knowledge, and revelation.³ He says worship in the Pauline churches, by nature, is both free and spontaneous, expressed in a variety of ways with everyone participating (1 Cor. 14: 26), but in an orderly manner and the steps of the peaceful God.⁴ He further develops his view by saying view that, “spontaneity does not mean lack of order; it means ‘peace’ and

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³ Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, 884.
⁴ Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, 884.
‘decency and order’ – (which is) also the work of the Spirit.”⁵ This infers that spontaneous gifts can function liturgically “, provided that they are exercised thoughtfully, intentionally, and in an ordered way.

Concerning the direction of communication in worship, he points out that worship activities like prayer are directed Godward (1 Cor. 14:2, 15), while Spirit inspired speeches like prophecy are directed human-ward for the edification of the Church (1 Cor. 14:3, 16) and the conversion of outsiders (1 Cor. 14:24-25).⁶ Spiritual gifts are a way of God responding or reaching out to his people and the unsaved.

Another noteworthy point Fee makes about charismata and worship is about gender participation in the use of charismata in public worship. He observes that apparently both men and women shared equally in the praying and prophesying (1 Cor. 11:4-5). He sees this as the fulfilment of Moses prayer that, “I wish that all the Lord’s people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!” (Num. 11:28 NIV). His defense is that Paul, in 1st Corinthians 11:5-6, is not refuting women from praying and prophesying in public worship but objecting to their doing so in appearance similar to men.⁷ Thus, women too can participate in the liturgical use of spiritual gifts.

Thus, Fee demonstrates that charismata function as God to human-ward activity in worship. The role of charismata in worship is significantly a means by which God fellowships with his people when they gather for worship, without segregation.

⁵ Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, 885.
⁶ Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, 885.
⁷ Fee, God’s Empowering Presence, 885.
b. Spiritual Gifts in Liturgy by Pytches

As a pastor of a mainline church, Pytches strongly believes that charismata can be included within a liturgical structure. Based on this, he advances his defense as well as the danger of liturgy, as follows.

These are reasons Pytches offers for the importance of liturgy. 8

- Liturgy is *scriptural*, e.g. the Lord’s Prayer.
- Liturgy is *traditional*. It has retained many choice expressions from the Old Testament through the ages.
- Liturgy is *educational*. Its frequent use is mentally formative and also beneficially instructive with the imbedded doctrines within the liturgical text.
- Liturgy *ensures that the essentials* of worship like repentance, confession, creed, prayer etc., are not overlooked.
- Liturgy is *a legitimate mode* of worship expression when made alive by the Spirit. It brings in a dimension to worship which extempore worship cannot do. (Though he suggests that extempore worship should not be excluded).
- Liturgy is *almost inevitable* because even some Pentecostal churches adapt part of it like call and response.
- Liturgy is *a commonly accepted understanding* and a means of expression.

Liturgy is important not only to the mainline churches, but also to the Pentecostals and Charismatics.

Based on the observation of Paul in 2\textsuperscript{nd} Corinthians 3:6 that, “The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life,” Pytches advises against the danger of liturgy. He says that, “To keep worship alive, liturgy must never be allowed to stagnate – it must flow. It

\footnote{Pytches, *Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church*, 262.}
must not become stifling, but be constantly adjusting to the wind of the Spirit.”

Thus, this addresses the fear by some that if spiritual gifts are used liturgically, they may be watered down and diminish in their efficacy.

3. Examples of Charismata in Worship

a. Example of People Who Received Prophetic Messages in a Worship Service, and of churches that included liturgy of healing in their worship

There are individuals within the church who testify that the Holy Spirit speaks to or gives them messages to share with others. Chad Vandervalk, a Contributing Editor of the periodical kerux, in the article, “The gift of prophecy” tells of his two encounters with the gift of prophecy. First, when he personally was praying during a worship service, he received an inspired insight that led to his studying at Calvin Theological Seminary. And second, a woman communicated to him a message she received from the Holy Spirit about him. She received it before he started his sermon but waited and told him after the service, indicating that there are some people who are prophetically inspired during a worship service, and when allowed and encouraged, they can be of great blessings to the entire congregation. These personal testimonies, which could also be gathered by additional interview research with Christian in many cultural context, provide additional evidence that the liturgical use of spiritual gifts can be a God-glorifying experience for the congregation. These personal experiences must always to be tested against the kinds of biblical insights described above. Over time, a greater of these accounts, especially in published

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9 Pytches, Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church, 262.

sources which can be analyzed and described, will build up the body and provide additional wisdom for churches in many cultures.

C. Peter Wagner tells of the St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Philadelphia which began a “Sacramental healing” service in 1942. He said it was started by Alfred Price who developed it both theologically and experientially. The second church Peter mentions is the Wesley Methodist Church of Hamilton, Bermuda, where pastor Ross Baily prepared a printed liturgy which the congregation goes through during their healing service once a month.\(^\text{11}\)

b. John van de Laar’s Healing Liturgy\(^\text{12}\)

The question for church leaders is how to proceed in designing an approach to welcoming the liturgical gifts intentionally and with proper regard for order. John van de Laar has developed a sacramental healing liturgy which exhibits how, liturgically, some churches in the Western world have already been ministering to their sick ones during their Holy Communion services, showing liturgical use of spiritual gifts is very practicable in a worship setting. The following is Laar’s healing liturgy:

A COMMUNION LITURGY FOR A HEALING SERVICE

Call to Worship and Praise

This is a place of safety, this is a time of comfort. Here and now the God who made the universe waits to embrace us; here and now we come to feel God’s healing touch again.

With all that we are; parts that are whole, and parts that are broken; parts that are well, and parts that are sick, parts that are joyful and parts that are in pain; With all that we are, we

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\(^{12}\) John van de Laar, “A Communion Liturgy for a Healing Service” ([www.sacredise.com/files/liturgies/general/healcom.pdf](http://www.sacredise.com/files/liturgies/general/healcom.pdf)). NOTE: (This liturgy is © John van de Laar. It may not be sold, distributed, published or used for gain in any way without the prior written permission of the writer). John van de Laar is a Methodist minister, musician, speaker and writer. He holds a Master's Degree in Theology from UNISA (Source: Amazon.com). (Accessed April 10, 2014).
come to worship You, O God, For You are gracious, merciful and kind, And we long to find our rest in You.

HYMN

Confession

Let us open our lives to God's searching gaze;

Dear God of Mercy and Compassion, We acknowledge that we are not all that we would like to be; We carry wounds and regrets, some of which are of our own design, and some of which we have received from others. We acknowledge our failings, our bitternesses and our hatreds, And ask You to heal us.

Silence as each one makes confession.

Of all our sin,

Forgive us, O God

In all our weakness,

Strengthen us, O God.

From all our diseases,

Heal us, O God. Amen.

Statement of Faith

We believe in God, The Creator of all that we see, and all that we do not see.

We believe in Jesus Christ, God become flesh; in death the Forgiver of sinners, in rising the Healer of the broken.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, God within us; Comforter, Strengthened and Friend.

HYMN

Scripture Reading

Message

HYMN

Requests
Come to us again, O God. Fill our prayers with power, and our hearts with faith. We pray for every place in our world where the wounds of war have left their mark.

**In Your mercy, heal us O God.**

We pray for every scar of hatred that remains in our nation.

**In Your mercy, heal us O God.**

We pray for every person who is sick in body, mind or spirit.

**In Your mercy, heal us O God.**

We pray for all who work for the healing of our world.

**In Your mercy, heal us O God.**

*Silent personal requests are offered.*

**Let Your healing flow among us and within us. For Christ's sake. Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Communion

Jesus came to seek the lost; to heal the sick, free the captive and restore the broken. We give thanks for His unfailing love.

**Lord God, who makes all things new We thank You for coming to us, becoming one of us, carrying our shame and our pain, and opening the way to life. We lift up our hearts to honour You, and to give You thanks.**

As part of His work of healing, Jesus left us this sacrament, to remind us of His love, to invite us into His grace, and to extend to us His renewal. So, we remember: at His last meal with His friends before He died, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and then shared it saying,

**This is my body broken; eat it and remember Me**

After they had eaten, He took wine, blessed it and shared it saying,

**This is my blood shed; drink it and remember Me.**

And so we eat and drink with thanks, and we remember the sacrifice of Jesus which makes us whole. Amen.

*The leader and those who are assisting receive the bread and wine. Then the people come forward to receive.*
Those who desire healing prayer may kneel at the rail, while others return to their seats.

Thanksgiving

We thank You, God, that You have fed us with Your life, embraced us with Your love, touched us with Your healing and filled us with Your Spirit. Amen.

HYMN

Benediction

Touched by Your grace,

We take Your grace to the world.

Healed by Your love,

We take Your love to the world.

Renewed by Your Spirit,

We go in the Spirit's power to be agents of Your healing. Amen

This liturgy is noteworthy for some reasons. Its language highlights the importance of healing. It intentionally creates a place for the spontaneous exercise of spiritual gifts. It shows how God cares. It connects healing to the Jesus’ saving act on the cross. It demonstrates human dependence on God for his healing grace. It includes the healing of all forms of illness. Its language shows God’s supernatural intervention. And it focuses on the gifts as an act of God-glorifying worship. Van de Laar’s approach suggests that the gifts can function even inside a fairly formal approach to worship, the kind of worship that is more typical of a mainline church.


In the above we saw that spiritual gifts are adapted in the liturgy of some worship services. Here, I proceed to develop some samples of liturgies adapting the gifts of healing and prophecy. I also develop some liturgical healing prayers, as samples, that can be included into the liturgy of a worship service. For my context in
the Reformed Church of Nigeria, I will begin with Reformed liturgies. This approach draws on the strength of traditional Reformed liturgy, and also reduces the possibility of criticism that charismata are being in embraced as a way of diminishing the Reformed character of the church’s liturgy.

a. Two Examples of Liturgies Without Charismata

EXAMPLE 1: Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria Order of Service.

This example is adopted from the Reformed order of service of the Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria as an example of a worship service of a church planter by a Western mainline church. Seen below, this order of service does not have a place for the use of charismata like healing or prophecy.13

1) Choristers hymn (Salutation)
2) Kneeling for silent prayer (Meditation) Pastors/Elders only
3) Call to worship (Reading of any of these: Psalms 95:6; 84:10; 113:12; 96:6, 9; 100:4; 34:31; 46:10; etc.)
4) Congregational hymn (Standing)
5) Apostles’ Creed (Standing)
6) Opening Benediction (Minister only)
7) Songs from sub-groups (Choir, band etc.)
8) The Ten Commandments (standing)
9) Reading a text depicting remorse (optional)
10) Announcement and greeting from the minister
11) Pastoral prayer (to be rounded off with the Lord’s prayer)
12) Offering songs

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13 CRCN Shepherd’s Hand Book (NOTE: there are no publication details): 112.
13) Offering prayer

14) Congregational hymn (standing)

15) Sermon

16) Prayer

17) Congregational hymn, benediction and doxology “Praise God from whom…”

Depending on the worship center, the elements of the liturgy like pastoral prayer and the Apostle Creed are said by heart, but other liturgical texts are read by the service leader. One possibility for the liturgical use of the gifts would be to simply insert a time for their expression following the prayer after the sermon, just before the final congregational song. However, a stronger approach might come from an even more intentional approach, based on an adaptation of a liturgy from a congregational like Woodlawn CRC.

EXAMPLE 2: Woodlawn CRC Standard Liturgy.

This second example is adopted from a Reformed liturgy of Woodlawn CRC and is unmodified here, to show how it is originally. I choose to use Woodlawn CRC liturgy as a sample because it represents a very good Reformed/Presbyterian worship service that has a more detailed printed liturgy. From this original sample, I will modify and develop other samples where I will include a liturgical healing prayer or a liturgical prophecy.14

God Gathers Us Together

Prelude: What Wondrous Love Is This (Red 164)15

Gathering Hymn: What Wondrous Love Is This (Red 164:1-2)

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15 “Red” refers to the red-colored hymnal “Lift Up Your Hearts” (Faith Alive, 2013).
Please remain seated during this hymn and the cross processional.

Cross Processional

Call to Worship
The grace and peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.

We seek your face, O Lord, for you are our light and our salvation,

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, and you will find rest for your souls.

Teach us your ways, O Lord, so that we may walk in your paths and glorify your name now and always.

Hymn of Praise: “Christ, the Life of All the Living” Red 137

Threshold Prayer

Words of Welcome

God Forgives and Renews

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession:

Good and gracious God, we come to you as busy and distracted people. We feel we have so much to do. We are distracted by the devices we own. We avoid silence. We avoid stillness. We avoid you. In the silent stillness of this moment, O Lord, quiet our souls, and forgive our distracted ways we pray, in Jesus name.

Time of silent confession

Concluded with singing: “O Christ, the Lamb of God” Red 630.

Assurance of Forgiveness: John 3:15-16 spoken by the minister and concluded with

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.


Affirmation of Faith: Rules for Living

The Lord Almighty says, you shall have no other gods before me.
For it is written, “Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.”

You shall not make for yourself an idol.

God is Spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

Do not swear at all. Let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No.’

Remember to keep the Sabbath day holy.

The Sabbath was for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

Honor your father and your mother.

Everyone must submit to those in authority. And yet everyone must submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

You shall not murder.

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

You shall not commit adultery.

Anyone who looks at another lustfully has already committed adultery in their heart.

You shall not steal.

Do not store up treasures on earth where moth and rust consume, but store up treasures in heaven. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you.

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

The eye is the lamp of the body. If the way we look at others is healthy, our whole body will be full of light.

Happy are those who delight in the way of the Lord. They are like trees planted by streams of water yielding their fruit.

A good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. We are known by our fruit.

Hymn of response: “Trees” Blue page 2

Tree of Wisdom, fruitful green, flourishing beside the stream,
Spread your knowledge day and night; make your law my true delight.

Fashion me, O Lord, to be strong and splendid as a tree.

Tree of justice ever blessed; shade me with your righteousness.

Teach me now to live your ways, and my lips shall sing your praise.

Fashion me, O Lord, to be ever-branching as a tree.

Tree of plenty, feed my soul; nurture me, and make whole. Give strength, cast fear aside; Let me in your love abide. Fashion me, O Lord, to be firmly planted as a tree.

Anthem “We Have Been Told” D. Haas
Pastoral Prayer ----------

God Speaks To Us

For the Children -------------------
Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Reading: Luke 10:38-42. ------
This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon: “Dining with Martha and Mary” Pastor Michael Abma

Prayer

We Go Rejoicing in Thanks and Peace

Hymn of Response: “Beneath the Cross of Jesus” Red 167

Offering: offertory: “Beneath the Cross of Jesus” Red 167 D. Cherwien

Parting Hymn: Red 264:7

Lift high the cross
The love of Christ proclaim
Till all the world adore his sacred name.

Set up your throne, that earth’s despair may cease beneath the shadow of its healing peace.

Lift high the cross
The love of Christ proclaim
Till all the world adore his sacred name.

Parting Blessing
b. Woodlawn CRC’s Liturgy, Adapted to Welcome Charismata

i. Sample Healing Liturgies

The following are the samples of Healing Liturgies I developed, demonstrating how charismata of healing can function liturgically.

SAMPLE 1:

I modified Woodlawn CRC’s Liturgy to include a liturgical healing prayer within the Pastoral Prayer section. I placed it in a box to be noticed easily. I inserted the liturgical healing prayer in the position of the pastoral prayer because pastoral prayer is a prayer of intercession for the people, equally so is healing prayer. But it can be placed in any part of the service where it is most suitable for the day and occasion; e.g. immediately after the sermon or at the end of the service before parting. In this sample, only the pastor prays for the sick. The Bible passages used for healing prayer in this sample are just a few from many other passages that hold God healing promises. I use Psalms here because “the biblical Psalms are meant not only to be studied and preached, but to be read, sung, and prayed,” as John D. Witvliet rightly stated.¹⁶ The sample healing liturgy is as follows:

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE
God Gathers Us Together

Prelude: What Wondrous Love Is This (Red 164)

Gathering Hymn: What Wondrous Love Is This (Red 164:1-2)

Please remain seated during this hymn and the cross processional.

Cross Processional

Call to Worship

The grace and peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.

We seek your face, O Lord, for you are our light and our salvation,

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, and you will find rest for your souls.

Teach us your ways, O Lord, so that we may walk in your paths and glorify your name now and always.

Hymn of Praise: “Christ, the Life Of All the Living” Red 137

Threshold Prayer

Words of Welcome

God Forgives and Renews

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession:

Good and gracious God, we come to you as busy and distracted people. We feel we have so much to do. We are distracted by the devices we own. We avoid silence. We avoid stillness. We avoid you. In the silent stillness of this moment, O Lord, quiet our souls, and forgive our distracted ways we pray, in Jesus name.

Time of silent confession

Concluded with singing: “O Christ, the Lamb of God” Red 630.

Assurance of Forgiveness: John 3:15-16 spoken by the minister and concluded with

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Hymn of Dedication: “As Moses Raised the Serpent Up” Red 674:1-3

Affirmation of Faith: Rules for Living

The Lord Almighty says, you shall have no other gods before me.
For it is written, “Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.”

You shall not make for yourself an idol.

God is Spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

Do not swear at all. Let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No.’

Remember to keep the Sabbath day holy.

The Sabbath was for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

Honor your father and your mother.

Everyone must submit to those in authority. And yet everyone must submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

You shall not murder.

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

You shall not commit adultery.

Anyone who looks at another lustfully has already committed adultery in their heart.

You shall not steal.

Do not store up treasures on earth where moth and rust consume, but store up treasures in heaven. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you.

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

The eye is the lamp of the body. If the way we look at others is healthy, our whole body will be full of light.

Happy are those who delight in the way of the Lord. They are like trees planted by streams of water yielding their fruit.

A good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. We are known by our fruit.

Hymn of response: “Trees” Blue page 2

Tree of Wisdom, fruitful green, flourishing beside the stream,
Spread your knowledge day and night; make your law my true delight.

Fashion me, O Lord, to be strong and splendid as a tree.

Tree of justice ever bless; shade me with your righteousness.

Teach me now to live your ways, and my lips shall sing your praise.

Fashion me, O Lord, to be ever-branching as a tree.

Tree of plenty, feed my soul; nurture me, and make whole.

Give strength, cast fear aside; Let me in your love abide.

Fashion me, O Lord, to be firmly planted as a tree.

Anthem “We Have Been Told” D. Haas

Pastoral Prayer: By the Pastor

Pastor calls all that are sick to come to alter for prayer. Or asks them to stand or indicate in their seats.

Pastor pray:

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits; Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases; Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion.” (Psalm 103:2-4).

Father you declare in your Word that you are the LORD, who heals us (Exodus 15:26). And you promise if we worship you, you “will take away sickness from among” us (Exodus 23:25).

I here today present your sick children before you, that they may partake in your divine healing. Father out of your loving kindness and love, send your healing power and grant each one standing here today healing from their afflictions.

I therefore, as your servant and instrument of blessing O Lord, declare to this brothers and sisters here, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth” the Healer, be healed and be healthy.

Congregation and the sick ones will respond:

I receive my healing and “bless the LORD, with all my soul, And forget none of His benefits; Who pardons all my iniquities, Who heals all my diseases; Who redeems my life from the pit, Who crowns me with lovingkindness and compassion.” (Psalm 103:2-4, paraphrased).

God Speaks To Us
For the Children ---------------------

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Reading: Luke 10:38-42. ------

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Sermon:

Prayer:

**We Go Rejoicing in Thanks and Peace**

Hymn of Response: “Beneath the Cross of Jesus” Red 167

Offering: offertory: “Beneath the Cross of Jesus” Red 167, D. Cherwien

Parting Hymn: Red 264:7

Lift high the cross
The love of Christ proclaim
Till all the world adore his sacred name.

Set up your throne, that earth’s despair may cease beneath
the shadow of its healing peace.

Lift high the cross
The love of Christ proclaim
Till all the world adore his sacred name.

Parting Blessing

We Share the Blessing

Postlude

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**SAMPLE 2:**

I modified the Woodlawn CRC’s Liturgy to adapt a liturgical healing prayer towards the end of the worship service. I placed it in a box to be noticed easily. It can be placed in any part of the service most suitable for the day and occasion. In this sample all elders and the pastors join their faith to pray for the sick. This demonstrates the instruction in James 5:14. The sample is as follows:

**SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE**

God Gathers Us Together
Prelude: What Wondrous Love Is This (Red 164)

Gathering Hymn: What Wondrous Love Is This (Red 164:1-2)

Please remain seated during this hymn and the cross processional.

Cross Processional

Call to Worship

The grace and peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.

We seek your face, O Lord, for you are our light and our salvation,

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, and you will find rest for your souls.

Teach us your ways, O Lord, so that we may walk in your paths and glorify your name now and always.

Hymn of Praise: “Christ, the Life Of All the Living” Red 137

Threshold Prayer

Words of Welcome

God Forgives and Renews

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession:

Good and gracious God, we come to you as busy and distracted people. We feel we have so much to do. We are distracted by the devices we own. We avoid silence. We avoid stillness. We avoid you. In the silent stillness of this moment, O Lord, quiet our souls, and forgive our distracted ways we pray, in Jesus name.

Time of silent confession

Concluded with singing: “O Christ, the Lamb of God” Red 630.

Assurance of Forgiveness: John 3:15-16 spoken by the minister and concluded with

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Hymn of Dedication: “As Moses Raised the Serpent Up” Red 674:1-3
Affirmation of Faith: Rules for Living

The Lord Almighty says, you shall have no other gods before me.

For it is written, “Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.”

You shall not make for yourself an idol.

God is Spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

Do not swear at all. Let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No.’

Remember to keep the Sabbath day holy.

The Sabbath was for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

Honor your father and your mother.

Everyone must submit to those in authority. And yet everyone must submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

You shall not murder.

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

You shall not commit adultery.

Anyone who looks at another lustfully has already committed adultery in their heart.

You shall not steal.

Do not store up treasures on earth where moth and rust consume, but store up treasures in heaven. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you.

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

The eye is the lamp of the body. If the way we look at others is healthy, our whole body will be full of light.

Happy are those who delight in the way of the Lord. They are like trees planted by streams of water yielding their fruit.

A good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. We are known by our fruit.
Hymn of response: “Trees” Blue page 2

Tree of Wisdom, fruitful green, flourishing beside the stream,

Spread your knowledge day and night; make your law my true delight.

Fashion me, O Lord, to be strong and splendid as a tree.

Tree of justice ever bless; shade me with your righteousness.

Teach me now to live your ways, and my lips shall sing your praise.

Fashion me, O Lord, to be ever-branching as a tree.

Tree of plenty, feed my soul; nurture me, and make whole.

Give strength, cast fear aside; Let me in your love abide.

Fashion me, O Lord, to be firmly planted as a tree.

Anthem “We Have Been Told” D. Haas

Pastoral Prayer: By the Pastor

Pastor calls all that are sick to come to alter for prayer. Or asks them to stand or indicate in their seats.

God Speaks To Us

For the Children ---------------

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Reading: Luke 10:38-42. ------

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon:

Prayer:

We Go Rejoicing in Thanks and Peace

Hymn of Response: “Beneath the Cross of Jesus” Red 167

Offering: offfertory: “Beneath the Cross of Jesus” Red 167, D. Cherwien

Parting Hymn: Red 264:7

Lift high the cross

The love of Christ proclaim

Till all the world adore his sacred name.
Set up your throne, that earth’s despair may cease beneath the shadow of its healing peace.

Lift high the cross
The love of Christ proclaim
Till all the world adore his sacred name.

Prayer for the sick
All the elders join the pastor on altar to pray for the sick.¹⁷
The sick are asked to indicate or come to the altar for prayer.

Pastor prays:

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits;
Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases;
Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion.” (Psalm 103:2-4)

Father you declare in your Word that you are the LORD, who heals us (Exodus 15:26). And you promise if we worship you, you “will take away sickness from among” us (Exodus 23:25).

We here today present your sick children before you, that they may partake in your divine healing. Father out of your loving kindness and love, send your healing power and grant each one standing here today healing from their afflictions.

We therefore, as your servants and instruments of blessings, O Lord, pray on behalf of these brothers and sisters here that let them receive their healings and stay healthy as the Holy Spirit ministers to them.

Church Elders say: **Father heal your people we pray.**

Congregation and the sick ones will respond:

**I receive my healing and “bless the LORD, with all my soul, And forget none of His benefits; Who pardons all my iniquities, Who heals all my diseases; Who redeems my life from the pit, Who crowns me with lovingkindness and compassion.” (Psalm 103:2-4, paraphrased).**

Parting Blessing
We Share the Blessing

¹⁷ Depending on the initiative of the church leaders, the elders may stand with the pastor and stretch their hands towards the sick ones as the pastor or one of the elders reads out the prayer and the people respond. They may decide to talk to the sick ones and place their hands on the sick. Or other ways.
Postlude

ii. Some Criteria for the Liturgical Use of Spiritual Gifts of Healing

These sample liturgies are designed to be simple, intentional ways of creating space for the exercise of the spiritual gifts in ways that fit with criteria that have emerged throughout this thesis project. The following is a further elaboration of these criteria.

- Plan the liturgy based on scriptural healing promises

  Healing prayer can be liturgically read or spontaneously prayed. None of these is wrong since both are directed to the Chief Healer, God. But a liturgical prayer is usually written. It is good to write it together with the response so that the sick and the congregation can join their faith with the prayer leader as they participate. There are many healing prayers in the scripture from which to choose. Praying the Bible is part of claiming God’s promises. But note that God has the power to answer immediately or later or never. We depend solely on His grace.

- Fix the healing prayer wherever most appropriate for that service

  As the order of services differ due to various circumstances, so also the liturgy is modified. There is no Scriptural rule to where the healing prayer should be placed. But because the pastoral prayer is an intercessory prayer, likewise the healing prayer, it can be fixed on the pastoral prayer position.

- Leading the prayer: the pastor, elders or gifted member (James 5:13-16)

  It is the responsibility of the pastor as the leading elder to lead the prayer. But his elders can be invited to join faith with the pastor to pray for the people as James 5: 14 states, “Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.”
(NIV). If a member of the congregation is specially endowed with the gifts of healing, he can be assigned by the pastor to pray for the sick. Usually people come before God with expectations so it is good to be prayed for. The prayer can be by laying of hands, or anointing the person with oil (James 5:14), or by stretching of hand towards the sick. The sick may be invited to the altar or may remain in their seats but indicate by standing or raising their hands (just to know who are being prayed for).

- All should share their love by praying for the sick as the prayer is being led. Sometimes it is very good for the pastor to write the liturgy in way that the whole congregation can lead the prayer by praying the call, and the sick person responds. This demonstrates the congregation cares for the sick. The Bible asks us to pray for one another for healing; “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” (James 5:16).

- Be sensitive in the spirit
The prayer leader should be sensitive in the spirit while praying because the Holy Spirit may whisper some insight about what to do on or for the sick. The Scripture says, “But it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God's deep secrets.” (1 Corinthians 2:10, NIV).

- Have faith
The Bible encourages us to have faith as we want answers from God (James 1:1ff). James encourages that, “Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land
for three and a half years.” (James 5:17, NIV). Though we are humans God can answer our prayers.

- The content of the healing prayer should be theologically sound

It is a biblical fact that God may answer prayers instantly or later or never, thus when composing a liturgical healing prayer this fact should be reflected. Also, when praying it should be led in way that encourages the sick to expect healing from God instantly or later or that God may choose to withhold the healing for a specific purpose, as is seen in the stories of Job and the man born blind (John 9:1-3). Another thing worthy of note is that the prayer should not be made in way that it discourages natural healing methods; Paul encouraged Timothy to drink some medicine, wine, for the sake of his stomach and frequent illness (1 Timothy 5:23).

- The prayer should be for all illnesses/sicknesses

The prayer should reflect concern for all sicknesses: for spiritual, mental/psychological and bodily health. Our Master Jesus did the same; “Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.” (Matthew 9:35, NIV).

- The healing prayer can be specific

It is very good that sometimes the prayer should be specific. For example, if it is exorcism let be that alone. A lot of healing prayers in the Scripture are very specific; Jesus healed the blind man (Luke 18:35ff). Note that if the Holy Spirit is leading one to pray a specific healing prayer he provides the grace to achieving that.
iii. Sample Healing Prayers

In addition to the sample liturgy described above, I provide these sample prayers which reflect the criteria I have described.

Healing prayer 1: For the Sick (102): Adapted from the *Book of Common Worship*\(^\text{18}\)

O God, the strength of the weak and the comfort of sufferers, mercifully hear our prayers and grant to your servant N.,(Mention the name/s) the help of your power, that his/her sickness may be turned into health and our sorrow into joy; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Healing prayer 2: For Healing (104): Adapted from the *Book of Common Worship*\(^\text{19}\)

Mighty and merciful God, you sent Jesus Christ to heal the broken lives.

We praise you that today you send healing in doctors and nurses, and bless us with technology in medicine.

We claim your promises of wholeness as we pray for those who are ill in body or mind, who long for your healing touch.

Make the weak strong, the sick healthy, the broken hearted whole, and confirm those who serve them as agents of your love.

Then all shall be renewed in vigor to point to the risen Christ, who conquered death that we might live eternally. Amen.

Healing prayer 3: (Developed by me)

Pastor prays:


\(^{19}\) *Book of Common Worship*, 831.
Sovereign Lord our Forgiver and Healer. You promised your people in Exodus 15:26 that if they obeyed you, you would not discipline them with sickness. Our sins are so numerous before you that we cannot hide them. We confess them all to you for your mercy and forgiveness in the name of your Son Jesus Christ.

We also know, from the stories of your servant Job and the man born blind (John 9:1-3), that sickness may not be the result of our sins but either as a torment from Satan because we belong to you, or may be as a means to serve your purpose. We pray for your mercy and that you glorify your name in our situation. As your servant ordained for the service of your people, therefore on your behalf, I declare that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

Father you also declare you are the LORD who heals your people (Exodus 15:26). You have the power to both heal through the use of medicines and supernaturally. Therefore, we ask that by your Holy Spirit, send your dramatic power of healing upon this loving congregation, to heal all kinds of sicknesses/illnesses tormenting your people presently.

Brothers and sisters, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth” may the Lord heal you of all sicknesses, infirmities, and may he also deliver you from all forms of demonic oppressions tormenting you.

*Congregation and the sick ones will respond:*

**From the Sovereign Lord, I receive my healing and deliverance from all satanic torments, in the Name of Jesus. Amen!**

Healing prayer 4: (Developed by me)

Pastor encourages the people:

People of God we today stand upon the work of Christ done upon the cross for our salvation, that, “Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.”

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20 It is common in African world view that some illnesses are punishments from the gods, therefore they have similar understanding on Exodus 15:26 that God has the power and may punish one’s sins with sickness. Beware that they do not believe that all sicknesses are results of sins. Calvin holds a similar view that sickness may be a result of sin. In his commentary on Exodus 15:26 he says, “The sum of it is, that if the Israelites were tractable and, obedient to God, He on the other hand would be kind and bountiful to them. And it is an implied rebuke, that they might know whatever troubles they experienced, to be brought upon them by their sins… And truly whatsoever diseases afflict the human race, we may see in them, as in so many mirrors, our own miseries, that we may perceive that there is no health in us, except in so far as God spares us.” [John Calvin, *Institutes*](http://www.ccel.org/index/author/Calvin). This same understanding is seen in Deut. 28:15, 21, 22, and 27. NOTE: This prayer is designed to seek healing from God, should in case the sickness might have resulted from sin, so that by confession of sin healing form God occur. It does not hold that all sicknesses are punishments.

21 This statement is a quote from Peter’s prayer on the cripple in Acts 3:6. In Nigeria it is sometimes used to show that the prayer is not directed to any anti – Christ but to the real Jesus the Messiah.
But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:4-5). Christ’s power through his Holy Spirit is also available to supernaturally heal our illnesses.

Let us therefore present our hearts’ desires as we pray together and expect our healings from him:

Jesus I stand upon your word that says by your wounds I am healed, and I receive my healing from your throne, both spiritual healings and healings from all my illnesses. Save me from the hands of the evil ones. I thank you for healing me miraculously.

Amen!

iv. Sample Prophetic Liturgy

In addition to the preceding resources about healing, consider additional resources specifically designed to welcome the use of prophetic gifts. The following is a sample of a Prophetic Liturgy I developed demonstrating how charismata of prophecy can function liturgically.

SAMPLE: Woodlawn CRC’s Liturgy, Demonstrating liturgical use of prophetic gifts.

I modified this sample by adding a sample liturgical prophecy guide. I placed it in a box to be easily noticed in this sample. I inserted the sample liturgical prophecy at the end to provide enough time for the people to receive prophecies from God. The Spirit of God may choose to speak through his vessel at any point of the service, but since the vessel can keep the message for later, it can be kept to be said towards the end of the service. Note that this is not a rule; therefore, it can be placed in any part of the service most suitable for the manifestation. The sample is as follows:

WORSHIP SERVICE
God Gathers Us Together
Prelude: What Wondrous Love Is This (Red 164)
Gathering Hymn: What Wondrous Love Is This (Red 164:1-2)
Please remain seated during this hymn and the cross processional.

Cross Processional

Call to Worship

The grace and peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.

We seek your face, O Lord, for you are our light and our salvation,

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, and you will find rest for your souls.

Teach us your ways, O Lord, so that we may walk in your paths and glorify your name now and always.

Hymn of Praise: “Christ, the Life Of All the Living” Red 137

Threshold Prayer

Words of Welcome

God Forgives and Renews

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession:

Good and gracious God, we come to you as busy and distracted people. We feel we have so much to do. We are distracted by the devices we own. We avoid silence. We avoid stillness. We avoid you. In the silent stillness of this moment, O Lord, quiet our souls, and forgive our distracted ways we pray, in Jesus name.

Time of silent confession

Concluded with singing: “O Christ, the Lamb of God” Red 630.

Assurance of Forgiveness: John 3:15-16 spoken by the minister and concluded with

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Hymn of Dedication: “As Moses Raised the Serpent Up” Red 674:1-3

Affirmation of Faith: Rules for Living

The Lord Almighty says, you shall have no other gods before me.
For it is written, “Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.”

You shall not make for yourself an idol.

God is Spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

Do not swear at all. Let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No.’

Remember to keep the Sabbath day holy.

The Sabbath was for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

Honor your father and your mother.

Everyone must submit to those in authority. And yet everyone must submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

You shall not murder.

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

You shall not commit adultery.

Anyone who looks at another lustfully has already committed adultery in their heart.

You shall not steal.

Do not store up treasures on earth where moth and rust consume, but store up treasures in heaven. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you.

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

The eye is the lamp of the body. If the way we look at others is healthy, our whole body will be full of light.

Happy are those who delight in the way of the Lord. They are like trees planted by streams of water yielding their fruit.

A good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. We are known by our fruit.

Hymn of response: “Trees” Blue page 2

Tree of Wisdom, fruitful green, flourishing beside the stream,
Spread your knowledge day and night; make your law my true delight.

Fashion me, O Lord, to be strong and splendid as a tree.

Tree of justice ever bless; shade me with your righteousness.

Teach me now to live your ways, and my lips shall sing your praise.

Fashion me, O Lord, to be ever-branching as a tree.

Tree of plenty, feed my soul; nurture me, and make whole.

Give strength, cast fear aside; Let me in your love abide.

Fashion me, O Lord, to be firmly planted as a tree.

Anthem “We Have Been Told” D. Haas

Pastoral Prayer: By the Pastor

Pastor calls all that are sick to come to alter for prayer. Or asks them to stand or indicate in their seats.

God Speaks To Us

For the Children --------------------

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Reading: Luke 10:38-42. ------

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon:

Prayer:

We Go Rejoicing in Thanks and Peace

Hymn of Response: “Beneath the Cross of Jesus” Red 167

Offering: offertory: “Beneath the Cross of Jesus” Red 167 D. Cherwien

Parting Hymn: Red 264:7

Lift high the cross

The love of Christ proclaim

Till all the world adore his sacred name.

Set up your throne, that earth’s despair may cease beneath the shadow of its healing peace.
Lift high the cross
The love of Christ proclaim
Till all the world adore his sacred name.

Special Revelation
The pastor asks the congregation for any who has received a revelation from God and is willing to share, to come and share.22

**Pastor introduces the prophecy for the day:**

The Bible tells us of “revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,” (Revelation 1:1).

Today likewise God still speaks to us by his Spirit through any vessel he chooses to use, to reassure of his covenant fellowship with us. And to guide us in the path of his revealed word, the Bible. Also to communicate to us in a special way.

The following brothers/sisters have received special revelation for the edification of God’s people, and are willing to tell us. Let us listen in silence and in meditation as they speak.

Person 1…
Person 2…
Person 3…

Pastor concludes. Brethren, as we have heard from our brothers my power of the Holy Spirit, may we be blessed.

Congregation answer: Amen!

Parting Blessing
We Share the Blessing
Postlude

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22 Note: Prophecy may be received with the week not necessarily on Sunday service. These can be told the pastor before time so that he can insert it liturgically to be read by who received it or by the pastor on the person’s behalf. Another observation is that if the prophecy is meant for the public, it can be said in the church. But if it is for an individual it is best to be told the individual personally.
v. Some Criteria for the Liturgical Use of Spiritual Gifts of Prophecy

This liturgy, like the preceding liturgy for healing, was designed to follow the criteria described in chapters 1 and 2. While not exhaustive, these criteria help congregations intentionally follow biblical wisdom as they envision worship practices. The following criteria are especially pertinent to prophecy:

- The liturgy can be planned and fixed in any position appropriate. The invitation word should be carefully selected from the Scripture to introduce the prophecies that would be said, and prepare the heart of the people to receive God’s revelation.

- The pastor should read the invitation liturgy. He can also assign an elder to do so. But only those that received revelations should be called upon to say it.

- Some prophecies may be received within the week. They should be told to the pastor beforehand so he can include them in the liturgy. However, the prophecies that are received during the service can be said during the service when the pastor gives the opportunity.

- Concerning spontaneous prophecy during the worship service. If the kind of prophecy received is the one that the vessel cannot control, a moment of silence can be created to allow the Holy Spirit to speak. But since most prophecies can be controlled, the vessels should control it and wait until the time designated for prophecy.

- Some liturgies may be designed to allow a moment of silence for the Holy Spirit to minister. The silent period may begin with general prayer where all are led to pray then followed by the silent moment. Sometimes it may begin with singing.
• Prophecy is not any kind of insight or thought; therefore the person should make sure that he/she truly received a revelation and that it is not his thought, before sharing.

• The channel should know that prophecy is not for self-gain nor for display, therefore, all glory should return to God.

c. The Values for the Liturgical Use of Spiritual Gifts

These values come from the definitions and the purpose of spiritual gifts we discussed previously. They are not exhaustive. They are very important requirements for the development, adaptation and exercise of liturgical use of spiritual gifts. They are that:

• The church gets edified and strengthened.
• The believers are equipped for the work of service.
• God is glorified.
• They encourage unity among believers.
• Through the gifts, God meets the needs of the believers.
• God uses the gifts to ready the believers for the expected kingdom society.
• Through the gifts, God manifests Himself to his people, as the sovereign, caring and loving God.
• They unveil the mystery of God.
• Unbelievers are drawn to recognize God.

d. Conclusion

It is clear then in this chapter that it is feasible to use spiritual gifts in any worship service. This chapter also demonstrates that the use of the spiritual gifts in liturgy requires great care and intentionality. It requires attention to each facet of biblical wisdom about their proper function. This careful approach both welcome the
gifts, but also disciplines them. It promotes their proper use, but also avoids their misguided use.

5. Caution about the Use of Charismata

Though charismata can function liturgically in worship settings care needs to be taken concerning their use to curtail their abuse.

On this, Ferguson makes two important comments about the practice of spiritual gifts. First, he points out that the ministry of the word given to God’s people is central to the exercise of any gift of the Spirit, because, “The Spirit who gives the word uses it to equip the people of God to employ the specific gifts they have individually received (Eph. 4:11-16).” Therefore he warns that to lose sight of this understanding is to lose the balance of Scripture, and that this is significant for the life of the church. Secondly, he cautions that it is only when the gifts are exercised in love that the body up builds itself; due to the emphasis which the New Testament places on the role of love in the exercise of gifts (implicit in Rom. 12:3-8, more explicit in 1 Pet. 4:16, and the governing principle in 1 Cor. 13:1ff. as well as in Eph. 4:16). His point is that the Scripture and love are the criteria for the exercise of spiritual gifts. This suggests that the elders who supervise worship in a given congregation should always be asking about how the gifts are grounded both in scripture and in love.

Specifically on healing, other authors advise that care should be taken when exercising the gifts of healing, since some sicknesses may be God’s plan for the moment. Relatively, referring to Job’s sickness and Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” (2nd Corinthians 12:7-9), Wagner cautions that, “No one fully understands God’s position

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on sickness and health.” Why? Because he acknowledges from these examples that sometimes God permits sickness as part of his total plan. Griffiths similarly submits that, “in New Testament times, our sovereign God has equal right to decree either health or ill-health for his children.” This simply implies that in praying for the sick, healing should not be forced, and God should be allowed to work the healing for his glory.

John Calvin expresses similar concerns. He advises that the Spirit of God distributes spiritual gifts “among us, in order that we may all contribute to the common advantage.” The CRCNA, I believe, gives us the summary of how Calvin would have contextualized or adopted the use of spiritual gifts in our contemporary time. The following is the position of the CRCNA on the use of spiritual gifts in the Reformed setting, which also reflects caution.

The whole church and every member must live in close fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ so that believers’ lives, individually and communally, may always show the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Christ, through his Spirit, sovereignly distributes his gifts to the body of

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25 Wagner, Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow, 239.
26 Wagner, Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow, 239.
27 Griffiths, Grace Gifts, 48.
28 Calvin, Comm. 1Cor. 12:11.
29 History: Because of the influence of neo-Pentecostalism on the CRC and its officebearers and especially in response to two overtures in 1971 and the denial of candidacy to a seminarian in 1970, Synod 1971 appointed a committee to study the teachings and practices associated with this movement in the light of biblical teaching on the Holy Spirit. Synod 1973 adopted several statements that are summarized in the position stated above. At the same time that synod acknowledged a painful lack of assurance of salvation and a lack of overt displays of joy and power among the members of the CRC, it also firmly rejected some teachings and practices of the neo-Pentecostal movement, including the second blessing of baptism by the Holy Spirit. Synod 1974 adopted guidelines for officebearers in regard to this subject.

In response to an overture regarding Third Wave Pentecostalism, Synod 2004 appointed a committee to study this issue. The committee reported to Synod 2007, and synod sent the report back for revision. A reconstituted study committee reported to Synod 2009, and synod adopted the counsel outlined above.

http://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/position-statements/pentecostalism.
believers when and where he wills, and he empowers the members of the church in every age with whatever gifts he judges necessary for the building up of his body. Individual congregations should provide within their communal fellowship for the free exercise of all genuine gifts of the Spirit so long as all things are done for edification and in good order, and churches should provide full opportunity for kingdom service in ministries appropriate to the gifts received by their members.

Churches should be alert to errors and excesses involved in the exercise of claimed “charismatic” gifts, such as tongue speaking, faith healing, and exorcism. Churches should accept in love and patience those members who claim to have been baptized with the Holy Spirit as a “second blessing” distinct from and received after conversion and should deal firmly with them in a pastoral way to correct them in their belief. According to biblical teaching, a believer receives baptism in or with the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion.

Persons involved in neo-Pentecostalism are urged to remember that all believers have received the Holy Spirit and that all religious experience is to be judged by God’s written Word, through which the church must discern the leading of the Spirit. Further, gifts of the Spirit must be confirmed by the presence of the fruit of the Spirit and must be used for the good of the whole body of Christ.

Church members who believe the “second blessing” teaching are disqualified from holding office, but not everyone who claims to have certain charismatic experiences is by that fact alone disqualified. The Spirit-filled church must judge what gifts of the Spirit may or should be employed in the exercise of the offices.

After considering lengthy study reports on Third Wave Pentecostalism in 2007 and 2009, Synod 2009 adopted the following counsel to churches:

a. Gratefully accept all the ways in which the Holy Spirit manifests his work in this movement for God’s glory, notably in demonstrating the present reality of the spiritual gifts (charismata) recorded in Scripture and of being filled with the Holy Spirit in different ways and on multiple occasions.

b. Beware of any tendency to make dramatic emotional or miraculous experiences the center of the Christian life, to underplay the foundational value of the fruit of the Spirit in sanctification, to restrict the things of the Spirit to charismatic phenomena, or to minimize the positive way God uses suffering for our good.
c. Acknowledge the gift of prophecy today, subject to the overriding authority of Scripture and the discernment of the Christian body.

d. Beware of any claim to prophecy that goes beyond Scripture, that does not respect the authority of the church leadership, or that fosters dissension rather than loving edification.

e. Be fervent in prayer and expect God to do great things as a result. Think of prayer as a dialogue, not a monologue, and be attentive to what God is saying as you pray.

f. Accept with gratitude that God continues to give physical and emotional healing in response to prayer, both through his gift of medical science, and through medically inexplicable ways. At the same time, accept that when God, in his sovereignty, does not heal, he manifests his love in and through suffering and death. Such present healing points us to the complete healing Christ accomplished and will bring to fullness at his return.

g. Beware of misuses associated with healing ministries, since they detract from God’s glory and hold potential for doing great damage. Avoid healing techniques that fail to recognize the multifaceted nature of the brokenness and the context of specific suffering.

h. Acknowledge the reality of the believer’s warfare against his or her sinful nature, temptations of the world, and demonic powers. With discernment and caution, be willing to engage in scripturally sound deliverance ministry against demonic powers in the authority and name of Jesus Christ.

i. Affirm that the apostolic office, which belongs to the foundational period of the church, gave rise to the canonical writings of the New Testament. Reject all claims of contemporary leaders to this apostolic office.

These statements offer several criteria for the liturgical use of gifts, which also serve as cautions.
CONCLUSION

This study claims that charismata can function liturgically, and that doing so can be a blessing to the Church today. It provides the opportunity for the gifted members to serve God, the church to be edified, and members of same congregation be united in love and grow numerically and in spiritual experience as God through the gifts, demonstrates his presence and response in our worship of him.

This approach is based on the following foundational insights. First, the gifts of the Holy Spirit did not cease. They continue today. They are not an endowment only for an individual. They are for all believers. They are not for self-glory or promotion of an individual, ministry, or denomination. They are for the edification of the Body of Christ and the propagation of Christ’s kingdom. They are for the unity of the church.

Second, due to the African worldview, the exercise of spiritual gifts appeals and adapts to African context naturally. Thus, the churches that exercise spiritual gifts gain more acceptance to the Africans, but syncretism must be avoided in the use of charismata.

Third, both the mainline churches and the charismatic/Pentecostals can liturgically adopt the use of spiritual gifts in their worship services, so as to curtail their misuse and dissention among their congregations, and promote unity and love among the body of Christ, and also grow.

Further

Although this study improves our understanding of spiritual gifts related to liturgy, it does not cover the challenges that arise when congregations with different doctrinal views worship together. Therefore it would be helpful to engage a further study that investigates the possibility of inter-doctrinal or inter-theological worship
where congregations with divergent doctrinal positions, including positions about the
gifts of the Spirit, worship together.

Other further research is needed to explore the difference between
prophesying in tongues and praying/singing in tongues. Which of these can function
liturgically? Also there is the need to further biblical parameters by which the church
can differentiate between counterfeits from genuine charismata.
APPENDIX: Answers to Some Common Questions about Liturgical Use of Spiritual Gifts

In summary, these are answers to some questions some may want to know about the liturgical use of spiritual gifts. These answers provide a succinct summary of several of themes of this thesis project.”

1. Why Do We Need To Use Our Gifts Liturgically Over Spontaneously?
   - To allow room for order. Liturgy is well organized, and so it helps control worship events or activities systematically, thereby creating room for each happening without conflict. For example, it allows different gifts to be used one at a time, thus making provision and also easier for each to share. Paul advises orderliness in church in 1st Corinthians 14:26:
     “What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.”(NIV)
   - To create room for others to be heard as well. For example, if two or more persons spontaneously receive revelations and speak out at the same time, the louder voice may overwhelm the weaker. The weaker can also be heard if orderliness is observed. Paul says in 1st Corinthians 14:31, “For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged.”(NIV).
   - To help the congregation follow the message well. The congregation may be confused and not understand when two or more prophecies or gifts function at the same time. Paul says it should be done in a way that the worshippers “may be instructed and encouraged.”

2. What are the advantages of using gifts liturgically?
   - It helps the church accept those endowed with spiritual gifts since their gifts are included in the liturgy.
• It encourages orderliness in the use by making sure that everything is done sequentially and with maturity.

• It meets the needs of individuals worshipping in the church. Some worshippers may have healing needs or other miracles. Through the use of the gifts liturgically, God may meet these people’s various needs.

• It encourages unity in the church. The adaptation of the use of spiritual gifts in liturgy embraces both sides of the divided congregation by allowing both to participate together in worship, and learn to accept each other, even if that happens subconsciously.

3. How can we liturgically use our gifts?

• We can use our spiritual gifts liturgically by including them in the church liturgy. When we know that our spiritual gifts have a place in the worship liturgy, our hearts will be prepared for it, and through some practice, we will get used to their functioning liturgically.

• We can use our spiritual gifts liturgically by submitting to the leadership of the church. The Holy Spirit through his divine wisdom guides the church leadership to prepare worship liturgies. Obeying their instructions can help the gifts of the gifted work out liturgically.

4. What should the church do when during preaching a member receives a spontaneous prophecy that he/she cannot control.

There are three possible ways to achieve this.

• Members should be encouraged to learn how to control themselves to wait.

    It should be noted that Paul states clearly that, “The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets.” (1 Cor. 14:32, NIV). Therefore the
prophet can hold the revelation until the appointed time set aside in the liturgy for the sharing.

But if the prophecy comes with a “force” that it is the Holy Spirit himself completely controlling the prophet at the moment to speak; like in the case of The Seventy Elders of Moses with two other men (Numbers 11:25-29), and King Saul with the procession of prophets (1 Samuel 10:5, 6, 10; 11:6). Then, any of these two possible measures can be taken:

- The preacher should pause for the person to speak. Paul advises that, “And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop.” (1 Cor. 14:30). Thus, the preacher as a forth telling prophet can stop for the spontaneous prophecy.
- The other option is the deacons or ushers should take the person to a quiet room and write down the message to be read later in the church.

5. Overall Message to Mainline Churches

Liturgical use of charismata is significantly important for both the spiritual and numerical growth of the church, thus the mainline churches need to:

- Meet their members’ needs.

Members of all Christian denominations, especially in African nations, need physical healings, mental and psychological healings, deliverance from influences and demonic manipulations, protection from witchcraft and sorcery, etc. They also need spiritual direction etc. The solutions to these needs also lie in the use of spiritual gifts. Hence, the use of spiritual gifts is a great blessing to meeting congregational needs supernaturally. Therefore, the mainline churches need to exercise the use of charismata to meet these needs of their
members, especially because it seems that some of these needs have no rational solutions.

- Embrace those who evidently are blessed with charismata in their congregation.
  
  For so doing encourages unity and love. Paul in 1st Corinthians 12:12ff advises that, as different parts of the body of Christ, we need to accept each other to build up one another.

- Accept positive change.
  
  Changes that are biblical build up the church, even when they are challenging to embrace. Since charismata are soundly biblical, their inclusion in the liturgy of the mainline churches is not against God’s instructions/commandments. This is a significant change that glorifies God.

- Maintain doctrinal identity but not to the detriment of positive change.
  
  Doctrinal identity is what makes each denomination unique. This is why it is extremely important for a denomination to be very careful in accepting new teachings. They need to evaluate carefully new teachings with the Bible, so as to be able to determine which ones they can accept or reject; just as the Berean Jews “examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.” (Acts 17:11, NIV). Eventually, the Jews in Berea humbly accepted Paul’s new teaching after confirming it was true. Their Jews’ identity did not stop them from accepting the positive change they confirmed was true. Similarly, mainline churches may well discover that embracing spiritual gifts helps them to recognize their own doctrinal heritage more clearly, helping them to embrace a view of God who acts in history, and graces his people with gifts that build up the body.
• Be part of the global church.

    Jesus Christ prayed that God the Father should keep his followers one (John 17:20-21). The true picture of the body of Christ is greatly beyond the local congregations or denominations. These days there is a movement and a clarion call from theologians across denominations, regions and races, for a world Christianity, a Christianity that embraces all, despite doctrinal differences, where each learns from one another to build up the global body of Christ. Based on this, the liturgical use of charismata by the mainline churches serves as a means to integrate some aspects of biblical charismatism, thus promoting unity and love in the global church.

6. Overall Message to Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches.

• Learn from the mainline churches.

    The Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches need to learn to control the use of charismata by using the gifts liturgically, in order to avoid its misuse and unneeded proliferation. Using the gifts liturgically is a promising change and does no harm to the church; rather it glorifies God.

• Avoid any tolerance for false or counterfeit use of the gifts

    Charismata are real and given by the Holy Spirit, therefore, they should not be practiced in a false way. The Pentecostal/Charismatic churches need to refute staunchly the faking of spiritual gifts by their congregation. The Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, faked it and were seriously attacked by the evil spirit they were casting out (Acts 19:15, 16). For that reason, they should teach and encourage their congregations to pray for the real charismata and not lie about gifts they are not endowed with.
• Avoid syncretism.

  Contextualization is not a license for syncretism. Demonic practices and or sorcery should not be borrowed into Christian worship nor practiced by Christians, because it is Satanism. We need to learn from Simon the sorcerer. He practiced sorcery, but after his conversion, dropped it for God’s true power (Acts 8:9-14ff). Other groups, at their conversion, burnt their sorcery items (Acts 19:19). Hence, traditional practices that are demonic must be avoided at all cost.

• The gifts of God are not for sale.

  The Pentecostal/Charismatic churches need to discontinue from the practice of a new kind of sale of indulgence: the sale of miracles via selling of miracle oils, handkerchiefs, and other materials they claim they have blessed with prayer to perform miracles. Or the practice of asking people to pay consultation or a certain fee to be prayed for. These practices are unbiblical and sinful. Christ’s instruction about this is simple: “As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.” (Matthew 10:7, 8, NIV). The gifts of God are for stewardship and are not for sale.

• The charismata are not for self-glorification but for service to others.

  They need to discontinue from using the gifts of God for promoting their pastors of denominations. God has not bestowed the charismata to promote an individual but to serve others in humility and love. True charismata are not for denominational promotion either. Rather, they are for
the building of Christ is body, the Church (1 Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 4:11-13).

- Striving for unity in the body of Christ.

  The Pentecostal/Charismatic churches need not disdain the mainline churches for not practicing the use of spiritual gifts as they do. The Bible says, “So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” (Romans 12:5).
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