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Spiritual Gifts

Keys to Ministry



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Meet the Principal Contributor to This Quarter's Lessons

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Having been a missionary in the Inter-American Division for twenty years, Dr. Zackrison has had extensive experience as a mission pastor, youth director, college professor, and administrator. At various times, he served as president of the Honduras Mission, Central America; president of Central American Adventist University in Costa Rica; professor of theology at Colombia Adventist University; and translator and research coordinator at the Inter-American Division headquarters in Coral Gables, Florida. Prior to coming to the General Conference, Dr. Zackrison was director of the Church Growth and Adult Sabbath School Departments of the Southern California Conference.

Dr. Zackrison and his wife, Sonia, have two sons and three daughters. As an experienced missionary, pastor, teacher, and administrator, Dr. Zackrison is eminently qualified to lead the Sabbath School program of the world church.

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Spiritual Gifts

Keys to Ministry

The New Testament presents spiritual gifts as operational tools for ministry in the church. The Holy Spirit assigns a gift or a mixture of gifts to individual Christians. Passages in Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and 1 Peter describe or allude to twenty-seven spiritual gifts. The Bible does not give a specific definition of a spiritual gift; it illustrates how these gifts function.

The set of spiritual gifts assigned an individual by the Holy Spirit constitutes the framework for that person's lifelong primary ministry in the church. The degree to which Christians put their spiritual gifts to work for the Lord depends on their commitment to discipleship and response to the Lord's call.

Spiritual gifts may or may not match natural inherited talents, abilities developed through education for a profession, or job skills developed in the workplace. Sometimes the Holy Spirit assigns gifts that match a person's personality profile and sometimes not. It all depends on what ministry the Holy Spirit wants each to do.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the spiritual gifts manifested in the early Christian church still function in today's church.

Fundamental Belief No. 16 states: "God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and endowed by the Spirit for functions recognized by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, apostolic, and teaching ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God's varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love."—*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 1995, pp. 6, 7.

These lessons consider the concept of spiritual gifts, examine each gift mentioned in the New Testament, and guide students in identifying and developing their gifts. The lessons also indicate how a local church can organize around the mixture of spiritual gifts found in its midst.

What the Bible Says About Spiritual Gifts



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 Peter 4:10, 11; Matt. 25:14-30; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Rom. 12:1-8.

MEMORY TEXT: "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Peter 4:10, NIV).

KEY THOUGHT: Spiritual gifts are given to advance the cause of God's kingdom. The Bible outlines what they are and how they work, though it does not define each gift specifically.

LAYING OUT THE GUIDELINES. A theology of spiritual gifts is outlined in the Bible, especially in the writings of Paul. A theology is a systematic exposition of what the Bible says on a certain topic, in this case the gifts of the Spirit. This theology intertwines with Jesus' great commission in Matthew 28:16-20, His plan for reaching the world. The Holy Spirit functioned between the Fall and the Cross, but not in His fullness. (See *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 37.)

After the experience at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit became the chief administrator of the church. As one church historian notes: "The early church organization was not centered in office, but in the special gifts of the Spirit."—Lars Qualben, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1942), p. 94. The New Testament does not define spiritual gifts precisely. It simply outlines how the gifts work, who had them, and how they exercised them. We will study what the New Testament says about spiritual gifts and how they fit God's organizational pattern for the Christian church.

GRACE IN ACTION (1 Peter 4:10).

What is the meaning of the phrase “Faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10, NIV; the KJV says “the manifold grace of God”)?

The word *grace* is used many ways in the Bible. Usually it refers to God’s willingness and disposition to pardon sinners and supply them with new minds and hearts as a result of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. But 1 Peter 4:10 speaks about God’s grace “in its various forms.” What does that mean? The context of the verse explains. Verse 9 mentions the gift of hospitality, and verse 11 mentions the gifts of teaching and serving. So, “administering God’s grace in its various forms” refers to the various spiritual gifts the Lord employs to do the work of the church.

This passage implies five principles regarding spiritual gifts: (1) An awareness of the urgency of the times in which we live should cause us to give priority to exercising our gifts (1 Peter 4:11); (2) We will be held accountable for using our gifts (1 Peter 4:10); (3) Gifts should be exercised with authority because of the assurance that they come from God (1 Peter 4:11); (4) The exercise of our gifts should bring honor and glory to God (1 Peter 4:11); (5) God should receive the credit for our use of gifts, whether they are designed for leadership or support (1 Peter 4:11).

In *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 2, page 245, Ellen White makes five significant points regarding the manifold grace of God: (1) “None need mourn that they cannot glorify God by talents He never gave them and for which they are not responsible”; (2) “God requires no more of them than to improve upon what they have, as stewards of His grace”; (3) “The varied trusts are proportioned to our varied capabilities”; (4) “Heaven apportions to all their work, and it should be their ambition to do this work well, according to their capabilities”; (5) “God requires that all, the weakest as well as the strongest, fulfill their appointed work.”

What is the significance of the word *faithfully* (NIV) or the phrase “as good stewards” (KJV) in 1 Peter 4:10? Compare 1 Cor. 4:2; Matt. 25:14-30.

Faithfulness to the call of God is also known as discipleship. Every spiritual gift is a resource given us by God to be used to the best of our ability and, in His strength, beyond our normal ability. We will be held accountable for the use we make of our spiritual gifts.

EQUIPPING FOR ACTION (Eph. 4:12).

Ephesians 4:11-13 gives us the guidelines for the application of certain gifts. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are specifically assigned the task of preparing God's people for service. (See Eph. 4:12, NIV.) These works of service in turn engender unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, leading to spiritual maturity, "the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (verse 13, NIV). The gifted people mentioned in this passage train others for service, who in turn are enriched and led to spiritual maturity.

Read Acts 19, the history of the development of the church in Ephesus. Notice especially the situation of the original 12 members. What happened when they received the Holy Spirit? Make a list of the subsequent events.

Ephesus was the place where Paul stayed for the longest time during his missionary journeys. Ephesus became a major Christian center. The dynamic origins of the church in Ephesus are worth careful study.

Ellen White illustrates the point in *Gospel Workers*, page 198. A man was lost in a snowstorm. He was about to give up and knew he would soon freeze to death. Suddenly he came across another person who was in a worse condition. He rubbed the person's limbs, picked him up, and carried him, since he was too weak to walk on his own. They eventually came to a place of safety. Both were saved. The first man's exertion in saving the second man had saved his own life.

How did Paul use his spiritual gifts as an evangelist, an apostle, and a teacher to train Timothy, who in turn was commissioned to train others? 2 Tim. 1:11; 2:2.

The King James Version limits Paul's teaching gift by adding the words "of the Gentiles" (2 Tim. 1:11). These words do not appear in the earliest available Greek manuscripts. Paul was enabled to teach anyone. His gifts allowed him to teach people the way of the Lord and to establish new churches based on the authority of the gospel. His gifts were an ideal combination for his circumstances.

Based on studies done on 250,000 churches across North America and Australia, a church should have at least 60 specific tasks or roles for every 100 members. How can you achieve that in your church?

THE BODY ANALOGY (Rom. 12:1, 2).

In two places, Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, Paul uses a body analogy to explain how spiritual gifts work. Though a human body is incredibly complex, all its members work together. Many functions are automatic. On the other hand, we can organize the ways we use our hands and legs.

The church is organized like a human body, the parts of which work together to accomplish a task. The church's task is the advancement of the kingdom to the glory of God.

How does Paul state this body analogy? Rom. 12:1, 2.

These are very important verses for the concept of spiritual gifts. The word *bodies* (verse 1) involves more than its common application to health and well-being. The concept here is of the composite person, body, mind, and spirit, as Paul phrases it in 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

"Living sacrifices" (Rom. 12:1, NIV) is an allusion to the Old Testament sanctuary services. "Spiritual worship" (NIV), or "reasonable service" (KJV), means, as the *New English Bible* translates it, "worship offered by mind and heart." The "new birth" transforms the mind. "Transformed" (verse 2) translates the Greek word *metamorphoo*, from which comes the English "metamorphosis," used in the world of nature to refer, for example, to the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly. The renewed mind can now (1) understand God's will; (2) understand that one's sense of self-worth is to be governed by reason and reality, not by an exaggerated concept of one's abilities; (3) understand its "measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3, NIV).

What is the meaning of the phrase "measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3)? Compare Rom. 12:6 and 1 Peter 4:10.

Notice Romans 12:4. It explains the phrase in verse 3. We usually relate "faith" in a general way to "saving faith." Here, however, Paul uses the word differently. Verse 4 relates the phrase to the spiritual gifts given to Christians by the Holy Spirit. Your "measure of faith" is your use of the gifts you have been given. The church body functions smoothly because the combined spiritual gifts of the membership, held together by the glue of love, are directed by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

How is this "body life" system working in your church? What can you and your class do to make it work better?

SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP (Romans 12).

The process of renewing the mind (verse 2) does two things: (1) it breaks the normal pattern of conformity to the "world," and (2) it enables a person to "test and approve" God's will. God's will is pictured as "good, pleasing and perfect" (Rom. 12:2, NIV).

What four ways has Satan used to twist human thinking and actions? 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Cor. 2:14; Rom. 1:24; Rev. 14:8.

When people are freed from these four satanic perversions, there are three results:

1. People's minds are unchained from the power of Satan.
2. Their spiritual eyes are enlightened.
3. The power of the gospel becomes effective in their lives.

If allowed to work according to the biblical pattern, the Holy Spirit transforms us into disciples. "Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 195.

Who is a disciple? A disciple is a person who has been born again, has joined the church, has identified his or her spiritual gifts, has accepted a role in the church compatible with those gifts, and is committed to fulfilling that role *without continual external human motivation*.

Make a list of the words in Romans 12:1-8 that indicate the spirit in which discipleship should be rendered.

The chart below shows the application of a person's "measure of faith" as outlined in Romans 12:

Gift	How Done
Prophecy	Used in proportion to faith as God bestows the gift.
Serving	Unselfish ministry to those in need.
Teaching	Imparting Bible truth to others.
Encouragement	Empathizing with and inspiring new hope to those who are hurting.
Contributing	Giving according to human need.
Leadership	Governing diligently.
Showing mercy	Lifting up the fallen—refusing to condemn.

TALENTS AND GIFTS

It is easy to confuse spiritual gifts with natural talents. All of us possess inherited talents. Christians dedicate all their talents to the Lord, but the Holy Spirit does not always choose to convert natural talents into spiritual gifts. "The talents that Christ entrusts to His church represent especially the gifts and blessings imparted by the Holy Spirit."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 327.

Whom did the Lord choose to be the chief architect and builder of the Israelite sanctuary in the desert? Why? Exod. 31:1-11. What does 1 Kings 7:13, 14 say about the man Solomon hired to do the brass work in the temple?

Notice that the builders of the desert tabernacle were specifically called by the Lord and given certain skills. These construction and artistic skills are not mentioned in the lists of spiritual gifts in the New Testament. (Compare, however, Exodus 35:30-35. What gift mentioned in the New Testament lists was also given to Bezalel and Oholiab? See Romans 12:7.)

The skills given these men were apparently a combination of natural talents, enhanced by the blessing of the Lord, and spiritual gifts such as teaching, in this case used to equip more people to work on the tabernacle.

Note which of these men's natural talents were passed on to their descendants. 1 Kings 7:13, 14.

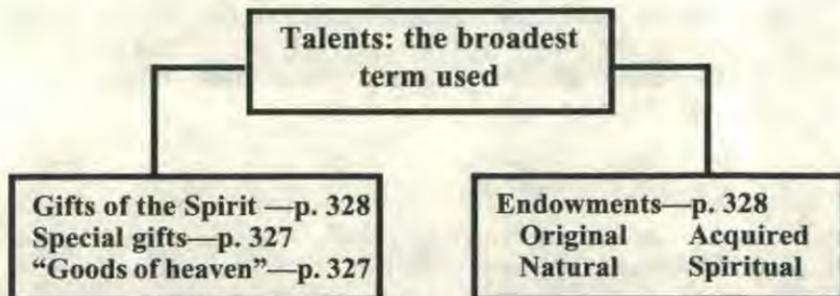
Natural talents may be converted by the Lord into spiritual gifts. But sometimes a person is assigned spiritual gifts that are entirely different from natural talents. Sometimes the two are complementary to each other. The difference is that spiritual gifts are designed to be used for the advancement of the kingdom of God, even when matched with natural talents. Natural talents alone may be used for personal gain or as the means of a person's lifework. There is no conflict between the two sets of gifts. The difference is that spiritual gifts are specifically assigned by the Holy Spirit.

As you study the lessons for this quarter, compare your natural talents with the spiritual gifts you discover you have. Are they the same? If not, are they in any way complementary? Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you as you seek to evaluate realistically your talents and spiritual gifts.

FURTHER STUDY: Look up the key texts used in this week's lesson in a number of Bible commentaries: Romans 12:1-8; Ephesians 4:12; and 1 Peter 4:10. What do you learn from these resources? Look up the names *Bezalel*, *Oholiab*, and *Huram* in a Bible dictionary.

Read "Results of Transgression," *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 61-74. Notice how people used and misused their gifts and talents.

Read "Talents," *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 325-365, and consider the following:



Huram was a skilled artisan. But natural talents, no matter how effective, can be a real problem if not consecrated to the Lord. Writing of Hiram, Ellen White remarks: "The very fibers of his being had been inwrought with principles of selfishness, which were revealed in his grasping for the highest wages. And gradually these wrong principles came to be cherished by his associates. As they labored with him day after day, and yielded to the inclination to compare his wages with their own, they began to lose sight of the holy character of their work, and to dwell upon the difference between their wages and his. Gradually they lost their spirit of self-denial, and fostered a spirit of covetousness. The result was a demand for higher wages, which was granted them."—*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 175, 176.

SUMMARY: In this week's lesson we reviewed some of the key information in the Bible about spiritual gifts. Disciples are expected to use faithfully their assigned gifts for the advancement of God's work. Paul illustrates the interrelationships of the various gifts by comparing them to the coordinated functioning of the human body. They are given for the benefit of all and serve to unify the testimony of the church. Some people are given training gifts designed to equip church members for the work of ministry. Sometimes gifts enhance natural abilities, and sometimes they are entirely different. It all depends on the endowment given by the Holy Spirit.



Helped By an Angel

Neumoel Stina

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It was Friday evening; I was finishing a Week of Prayer in a city in southern Brazil. I had preached four times a day at two different locations. Several young people had given their lives to God, but one young man seemed to resist the Holy Spirit.

Henrique and his girlfriend had come to all four meetings every day, hearing the same sermons twice each day. I prayed fervently to win Henrique to Jesus, but he never responded to the appeals.

I returned to my room on Thursday night frustrated. "God, what am I doing wrong that I cannot lead this young man to You?" I pleaded. I could not sleep, so I read my Bible and prayed for this young man.

After the evening meeting Henrique planned to drive to his parents' home 50 miles away. But along the desolate road, his car had a flat tire. He discovered that his jack was broken. No one was around to help him. Fearful, he locked himself into his car and lay down to await dawn. He tried to sleep, but could not. He kept remembering phrases from the week's sermons: "God is willing to accept you. . . Ask God once, and He will come."

For the first time in his life Henrique prayed. He got out of the car, and knelt down on the road. "God, I don't know how to pray, but if what the pastor said is true, come and help me, please." He got back into the car to wait what might happen.

Within minutes a car pulled off the road in front of him. A tall, strong man stepped out and offered his help. Henrique told him what had happened. The man changed the tire, then put his enormous hand on Henrique's shoulder and said: "Young man, I came to tell you that God loves you. . ." Henrique was startled and asked the man his name, but the man only repeated his words, "Don't forget, God loves you." Then he turned toward his car.

Henrique got into his car, wiped tears from his eyes, then looked up to wave at the man who had helped him. But no one was there. No man, no car. Henrique had not heard a car door slam or an engine start up. He drove home in awed silence.

Henrique was the first to arrive at the church on Friday evening. He ran to open the car door when I arrived, and quickly asked, "Pastor, can you baptize me?" Startled, I listened to his story.

The following year I baptized Henrique, and a short time later I married him and his girlfriend. Today they are faithful members of the church.

Neumoel Stina is a pastor in West Sao Paulo Conference, Brazil.

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The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Acts 1:1-26; 2:1, 2; 13:2-4; Ps. 68:28-35; John 16.

MEMORY TEXT: "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13, NIV).

KEY THOUGHT: The Holy Spirit is the effective agent in accomplishing the work of the church in the world.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ASSIGNED BY HEAVEN as the active agent of Christ, the Head of the church on earth. The Holy Spirit launched and energized the early church (Acts 1:8). He gave people the instantaneous ability to speak in languages not their own (Acts 2:4), turned frightened disciples into bold preachers (Acts 4:1-3), directly indicated certain people for certain missions (Acts 13:2), solved doctrinal problems (Acts 15:28), prohibited missionaries from entering certain areas (Acts 16:6), directed them to other areas (Acts 16:10), and was the power behind all kinds of miracles (Acts 19).

Adventists tend to focus on the early and latter rains. We sometimes neglect to consider the work of the Holy Spirit right now. "Just prior to His leaving His disciples for the heavenly courts, Jesus encouraged them with the promise of the Holy Spirit. This promise belongs as much to us as it did to them."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 174.

This week's lesson reviews some of the Holy Spirit's roles as they relate to the topic of spiritual gifts.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR (Acts 13:2-4).

Someone once remarked that the Holy Spirit has His home and office in the church. Though Jesus was speaking primarily to individuals, He may also have had the church in mind when He said, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and *make our home with him*" (John 14:23, NIV).

The book of Acts portrays the Holy Spirit as a presiding presence in the early church. He was in command. He directly indicated to the church what to do in many situations. This is what Paul referred to when he told Timothy: "Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you" (1 Tim. 4:14, NIV).

Have you ever sincerely felt that the Holy Spirit was leading you or calling you to a particular ministry? How did you respond? What was your assurance that your conviction was truly from the Holy Spirit?

"The same power that sustained the patriarchs, that gave Caleb and Joshua faith and courage, and that made the work of the apostolic church effective, has upheld God's faithful children in every succeeding age. . . . And today God is still using His church to make known His purpose in the earth."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 53.

How does the Holy Spirit's role as church administrator affect individual church members? John 14:17, 23; Acts 19:1-7.

Luke mentions the Holy Spirit 57 times in the book of Acts and carefully notes that every major decision of the young church was made under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The disciples waited for the Holy Spirit before beginning to preach. He fell on each new group of believers: on Jews (Acts 4:31), on Samaritans (8:17), on Gentiles (10:44), and on some of John the Baptist's disciples (19:6). The Spirit personally directed each major advance of the church. He sent Philip into the desert to meet the Ethiopian (8:29), to set apart missionaries (13:2), to guide the first major church council (15:1-8), and to help plan Paul's itineraries (13:4; 16:6).

How can church members make way for the Holy Spirit to be the administrator of the church today? What attitudes or actions might frustrate the work of the Holy Spirit?

THE HOLY SPIRIT: SOURCE OF POWER (Acts 1:8).

The Holy Spirit is the source of power for the church and its members. He is the source of spiritual power for individual Christians and the source of successful ministry by the church as a collective enterprise. The power that attended the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is the same power we need today. "The Spirit awaits our demand and reception."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 121.

Read Acts 2:2. What does the word *suddenly* communicate to you? What evidence was given that this was the fulfillment of Acts 1:8?

Jesus promised the disciples power (Acts 1:8). It arrived on the Day of Pentecost in the person of the Holy Spirit. Only with this power could a small group of people preach the gospel throughout the world. Paul wrote that the gospel is the "power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). The gospel is not an undercover operation. The gospel ought to be out on the streets, its message shouted from the housetops. The Holy Spirit is the power behind the dynamic Christian activism of those who proclaim the gospel.

Read Psalm 68:28-35. This psalm was often sung at Pentecost. List some of the ways the power of God was identified in the ancient Israelite worship services.

There are a number of Greek words for power. One is *kratos*, which may imply physical strength. Another, *exousia*, implies a ruler's authority. Jesus used this word when He said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). The word used in Acts 1:8, "You shall receive power" (NIV) is *dunamis*, a word that implies both explosive energy and the continual steady power of a dynamo. The Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures uses *dunamis* a number of times in Psalm 68:28-35. The Old Testament Israelite worshipers pleaded for God to show His power. On the Day of Pentecost it arrived in a new and dynamic way. Suddenly, the disciples were "gifted" by the Holy Spirit to do what they could not do under normal circumstances. The church today draws on that same power for personal Christian experience and to expand its mission of taking the gospel to whoever has not yet heard it.

Think back over your own life story. Describe what happened when you experienced the power of the Holy Spirit.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: TEACHER (John 16:12-15).

Besides being church administrator and the source of power, the Holy Spirit is also the church's principal Teacher. "The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, *will teach you* all things and *will remind you* of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26, NIV). Jesus has perpetuated His earthly teaching ministry through the Spirit. (See *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 282.) This teaching office is as dynamic as was the experience of Pentecost. "God can teach you more in one moment by His Holy Spirit than you could learn from the great men of the earth."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 119.

How did Jesus outline the teaching role of the Holy Spirit? John 16:12-15. Notice the various facets of teaching and learning mentioned in these verses.

The Holy Spirit as teacher (1) brings out new insights, (2) instructs in "what is yet to come," (3) brings glory to God by helping us understand more completely, and (4) draws knowledge from God's fountain and shares it with us. The Holy Spirit illuminates our minds in two principal ways: (1) as we study the Scriptures and (2) through the gift of effective teaching given to certain church members.

What kind of teaching system did Paul advocate for passing on religious knowledge? Acts 19:9, 10 (compare 1 Tim. 4:11-13; 2 Tim. 2:1, 2).

It has been estimated that the people who regularly attended Paul's teaching sessions in Ephesus would have received the equivalent of two years of Bible-school education.

In Paul's case, how did his spiritual gifts become ministries? Acts 9:15; 19:8 (compare 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11; Titus 1:3).

Paul says that he was "appointed" to these ministries and told to use them with a specific target audience in mind, non-Jews. These ministries correspond to the spiritual gifts chosen for Paul by the Holy Spirit.

What has the Holy Spirit taught you? What do you feel you would not have learned without the aid of the Holy Spirit?

THE HOLY SPIRIT: ASSIGNER OF GIFTS (1 Cor. 12:11).

People have many ideas about how a person receives or is assigned his or her spiritual gifts. Some believe that the church decides who gets which gifts. Others feel that election to church office is the same as receiving a particular gift. Some people believe that only their pastor has spiritual gifts and that church members are supposed to listen and do whatever the pastor says. Others believe that anyone can do anything, and no one has any authority over another.

Who assigns spiritual gifts to people? 1 Cor. 12:11.

Spiritual gifts are the tools the Holy Spirit uses to do the work of the kingdom. We are all responsible for turning our gifts into ministries that will advance the work of the kingdom.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:11 carefully: "All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses" (NRSV). Fill in the following blanks:

1. The gifts are promised "according to his _____."
2. They are given for _____.

The assignment of gifts by the Holy Spirit is designed to advance the Lord's work. The church is set up as a corporate body to do the work of the kingdom by organizing the members' gifts into effective ministries. In this sense, the church has the authority of the Holy Spirit to "administer" the collective gifts of the members.

What does Paul say about the attitude that should accompany the bestowal of spiritual gifts? Rom. 12:3.

This is the key to the issue. The effective use of spiritual gifts depends on a person's Christian character. The possession of a particular gift or gifts is a measure of responsibility before God to do the work of the kingdom in a sweet, compassionate, and dynamic Christian spirit.

Think carefully about your attitude toward using your gifts in the church. Does it reflect the servant attitude of Jesus as outlined in Philippians 2:5-11? If not, how can His attitude become yours?

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND INTERCESSORY PRAYER (Matt. 7:7).

The arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was no accident. The Lord planned to unveil Him in a new way at that moment in history because the time was opportune. (See *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 38, 39.) A large number of people from all over the known world were in the city.

Without the right kind of people to witness for Christ, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit could not have occurred. The Holy Spirit *enables and equips* people to work for Christ; he doesn't usually do all the work Himself. The Holy Spirit responds to the intercessory prayers of God's people for spiritual power.

What does James say about intercessory prayer? James 1:5.

Intercessory prayer is a special kind of prayer. It requests specific things from the Lord, based on what He has promised. The Lord does not withhold what He has promised, but He does not always confer it unless we ask for it.

There are seven levels of prevailing intercessory prayer:

Level 1:	Ask	Matt. 7:7
Level 2:	Seek	Matt. 7:7
Level 3:	Knock	Matt. 7:7
Level 4:	Fast	Ps. 35:13; Mark 9:29
Level 5:	Present a specific burden	Neh. 2:2-5
Level 6:	Wrestle in Prayer	Luke 22:44; Col. 4:12; Gen. 32:22-30
Level 7:	Battle with Satan	Matt. 4:1-11

Some or all levels may be involved when praying for a specific issue. The Lord honors these prayers, and the Holy Spirit goes into action on our behalf.

What does Ecclesiastes 4:12 imply about the effectiveness of intercessory-prayer groups?

The experience of the disciples in the upper room before the Day of Pentecost is an example of intercessory prayer in action. Ellen White outlines the disciples' experience in chapter 4, entitled "Pentecost," in *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 36, 37.

Why not begin an intercessory-prayer ministry in your church? You will be amazed at the results.

FURTHER STUDY: John 14 records that Jesus told His disciples about the coming of the Holy Spirit. Read the chapter for an understanding of the Holy Spirit's role as Jesus portrayed it. Also read *The Acts of the Apostles*, chapters 1-5, to receive a more complete picture of the Holy Spirit's role in the life of the church after Jesus' ascension.

The *Index to the Writings of Ellen White* has 59 columns on the Holy Spirit. The following list indicates some of the ways the Holy Spirit is active in the church and in the lives of individual members:

1. Gives mental power (*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 306).
2. Gives healing power (*Messages to Young People*, p. 30).
3. Renews motives and affections (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 284).
4. Gives the ability to accomplish good works (*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 80).
5. Gives supernatural strength (*Gospel Workers*, p. 286).
6. Brings unity to the church (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 28, 227).
7. Gives us training that fits us for heaven (*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 273).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Notice that the decision recorded in Acts 15:28 was made by "the Holy Spirit" and "us." Now, think about the decision-making process and organizational plan used in your church. It is easy to say that the Holy Spirit is *indirectly* involved, because we may sometimes ask Him in a more-or-less routine way to bless our endeavors. On the other hand, under what circumstances will the Holy Spirit be *directly* involved as He was in Acts 15?
2. Can your Sabbath School class lead out in organizing an intercessory-prayer ministry in your church? Discuss with the class how this ministry might be initiated and carried on in your church.

SUMMARY: This week's lesson dealt with the role of the Holy Spirit as the active agent, assigned by God the Father, to be the administrator of the church on earth. For both the church body and individual Christians, He is the source of power and the primary teacher, illuminating minds, leading them to truth. He assigns spiritual gifts, both to individual members and to the church as a body. Intercessory prayer, based on claiming the promises of God, is the effective instrument the church should employ to invite the Holy Spirit to work on its behalf.



True Freedom in Jesus

Akouta Sylvestre

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I never heard about Jesus while I was growing up. Our village in the tiny country of Benin in West Africa refused to allow Christians to enter. One Christian church tried to establish a mission there once, but village leaders drove them out.

When I was 13 years old I went to visit my mother's relatives in another village. To my great surprise, I found some of my uncles and aunts listening to a young man who was speaking about Jesus. I sat down and listened with them. This was the first time I had ever heard anything about Jesus, and I was profoundly impressed.

I returned home overjoyed with what I had learned. In my zeal to share what I had learned, I went so far as to discredit voodoo, our country's major religion, saying it was powerless. Immediately someone informed my grandfather, because I was staying with him. My grandfather didn't say a word to me then, because he was preparing himself for a big voodoo ceremony, during which food was presented to our ancestors, who had supposedly been fasting for many years. On the day of the ceremony I refused to go near or touch anything associated with the feast. My grandfather ordered some men to grab me and beat me for my refusal to take part. Three days later they beat me again.

I was put out of Grandfather's house, but because of my young age, I was taken back under the condition that I would not practice Christianity. Then my aunt, my grandfather's youngest daughter, became seriously ill. They tried all the various occult remedies and ceremonies, but my aunt remained desperately sick.

In desperation the family asked some Christians to pray for her, and she recovered. Healing has great power in our minds, and my grandfather consented when my aunt wanted to become a Christian. This opened wide the door for me, as well, praise God!

I visited several Christian churches in search of one that taught the truths of the Bible. While I was searching, I discovered a Christian radio station that taught the whole Bible. I wrote to the station, called Adventist World Radio, and they helped me find the Adventist Church. At last I had found what I was looking for! Now the burden of my heart is to reach the others in my village and in my country who still suffer under the influence of evil spirits and don't understand true freedom in Jesus.

Akouta Sylvestre is a church member in Cotonou, Benin.

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Spiritual Gifts and the Church



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 Kings 10; Exod. 18:13-27; Ezekiel 1; 1 Timothy 3; Eph. 4:1-16.

MEMORY TEXT: "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:12, 13, NIV).

KEY THOUGHT: Spiritual gifts are the tools the Lord has given His church to do the work of the kingdom. When spiritual gifts are employed harmoniously, according to biblical organizational patterns, the church is able to evangelize the world effectively.

ORGANIZING THE CHURCH. The Bible presents a number of models of church organization. There are also different ways to organize the outreach of the church. In Old Testament times, Israelites seldom went out to other people as missionaries. The Lord used a "centripetal" system of soul winning. *Centripetal* means that something starts at the edges and moves to the center. Nations would observe Israel's prosperity and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people" (Deut. 4:6). The queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon is an example. (See 1 Kings 10.) The New Testament indicates that the church is now called to go out rather than wait for people to come to it. (See Acts 1:8.) "The disciples were to work earnestly for souls, giving to all the invitation of mercy. They were not to wait for the people to come to them; they were to go to the people with their message."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 28. This week we consider the place of spiritual gifts in the organizational program of the church.

ORGANIZING THE CHURCH FOR ACTION (Exod. 18:13-27).

Some congregations are beautifully organized. Seldom is anything out of place, overlooked, or unprepared. Others are so disorganized that almost everyone and everything are in a state of more or less constant bewilderment and chaos. Some find a happy medium and manage to get most things done with a minimum of confusion. Many don't really know whether they have an organizational pattern. They limp along and assume that everything will be all right. Some churches have aggressive outreach ministries, some have none.

What does the Bible have to say about church organizational patterns? How did Moses' father-in-law suggest Moses reduce his workload and delegate his authority? Exod. 18:13-27.

Israel's organizational system is one that works well in a setting that involves circles of influence spread out over large areas. Each level is responsible to the next higher level, and the communication flows from one level to the next. The Adventist system, consisting of local church, conference/mission, union, division, and General Conference, is an example of this kind of organizational pattern.

What kind of organizational pattern did Ezekiel see in vision? Ezekiel 1.

This is a different kind of organizational pattern. Here "wheels" work within wheels, move back and forth, up and down, all sustained by the power of God and managed by the Holy Spirit. "There is at work a wheel within a wheel. Apparently the complication of machinery is so intricate that man can see only a complete entanglement. But the divine hand, as seen by the prophet Ezekiel, is placed upon the wheels, and every part moves in complete harmony, each doing its specified work, yet with individual freedom of action."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1161.

This type of organizational pattern is applicable to a local church. In many ways it corresponds to the concept of spiritual gifts outlined by Paul, each doing its specified work, yet with individual freedom of action. (See Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:4-7.)

Take a look at the organizational pattern of your local church. What elements of each of the above models can you identify? How well do these organizational patterns work in your local church? conference? mission?

THE MINISTRY OF ALL BELIEVERS (1 Peter 2:9, 10).

During the Middle Ages, the clergy claimed that there should be a division between laity and clergy. The clergy enjoyed a higher status than the laity. Out of this concept and practice grew the idea that clergy are the authority in the church and that the work of the church is done by them. Members are mostly spectators who observe whatever the clergy does, and they do whatever the clergy mandates.

What does Peter say about the Christian church and its members? 1 Peter 2:9, 10 (compare Exod. 19:5, 6).

The word *laity* comes from the Latin *laicus*, which in turn comes from the Greek word *laos*, which simply means “people.” In medieval times it came to be used in contrast to “clericus,” referring to the official priesthood. A writer named Stephen of Tournai, for instance, said that there were “lower” people and “higher” people, each with a different reward in heaven. (See Gottfried Oosterwal, *Mission: Possible* [Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1972], p. 105.) But in God’s sight all church members are part of “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God” (1 Peter 2:9, NIV).

What are the spiritual characteristics of this royal priesthood? 1 Peter 2:11, 12.

Members of this royal priesthood dignify it by living lives in accordance with its precepts. They recognize the lordship of Jesus (1 Peter 2:4-8) and focus on declaring His glory (verse 9). They become “living stones” in a church built by the Master Architect, who is Himself the cornerstone sustaining the entire operation (verse 7).

Read Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:8; and Ephesians 4:12. If there is any difference at all between clergy and laity, what is it?

The ministry of all believers is often equated today with the word *discipleship*. All Christians are called to discipleship. “If we are Christians, this work will be our delight. No sooner is one converted than there is born within him a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 141.

Think about your personal role in the church. Has it been active or passive? Are you a spectator or a player?

SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND CHURCH AUTHORITY (1 Timothy 3).

In a large organization like the church, some kind of authority system is needed. Someone has to take the initiative and make decisions. Under Jethro's system, Moses had the final word (Exod. 18:26). In Ezekiel's vision of the wheels, the entire mechanism was managed by the Holy Spirit (Ezek. 1:20).

In the early Christian church, the Holy Spirit played an active and recognized role in the decision-making processes, but usually in combination with the church body. For instance, at the first council of the Christian church, James, the chairperson, announced the decision as seeming "good to the Holy Spirit *and* to us" (Acts 15:28, NIV).

Read the following texts, and outline the various leadership elements of the early church organizational system: Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:1-10; 5:17; Titus 1:6, 7.

Three Greek words are used for the leading offices in the early church: *presbuteros*, translated "elder"; *episkopos*, translated "bishop" or "overseer"; and *diakonos*, translated "deacon." *Presbuteros* was used in Jewish circles as a term of rank or office. In the Christian church, it was used for those who presided over assemblies. *Presbuteros* is used in Scripture interchangeably with *episkopos*, which is used in the sense of superintendent. *Diakonos* is used in the sense of one who serves, one who does the bidding of another.

How did someone attain any of these positions in the New Testament church? Acts 14:23; 15:22; 1 Tim. 4:14; Titus 1:5. Besides guiding these officers, how else did the Holy Spirit administer the early church? Acts 13:1-3.

There is a close connection between the assignment of spiritual gifts and the assignment of officers. Paul and Barnabas were directly called by the Holy Spirit through the prophetic office (Acts 13:1-3) and given the missionary gift, as well as other gifts. But the decision was confirmed by the church body (Acts 13:3). Timothy's experience was the same. He was called through a prophetic message, which was confirmed by the church body (1 Tim. 4:14).

Our church has followed to some extent this New Testament system. What are the differences and similarities between our system and that of the early church?

SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND THE ADVENTIST CHURCH (1 Cor. 12:1).

Many Christian denominations believe that spiritual gifts, especially those called “power gifts,” or “sign gifts,” ceased with the last of the apostles. Seventh-day Adventists do not accept this view. In fact, we are among the leading proponents of the belief that spiritual gifts still function in today’s church.

What does Joel 2:28, 29 say about spiritual gifts in the last days, especially the gift of prophecy?

J. N. Andrews, Adventist pioneer, wrote: “Those who reject the work of the Spirit of God under plea that the Scriptures are sufficient, do deny and reject all that part of the Bible which reveals the office and work of the Holy Spirit.”—*Review and Herald*, Feb. 15, 1870.

How is the gift of prophecy especially connected with the closing work of the gospel era? Rev. 12:17; 19:10.

Ellen White specifically indicated the importance of this topic for the Adventist Church: “God has put men and women in possession of precious gifts. To different ones He gives different gifts. Not all have the same strength of character or the same depth of knowledge. But each one is to use his gifts in the Master’s service, however small this gift may seem to be. The faithful steward trades wisely on the goods entrusted to him.”—*The Signs of the Times*, Feb. 24, 1904.

Read Ephesians 4. What principles of spiritual gifts and church organization are laid out in this chapter?

“There is need for a variety of gifts in the Lord’s work. Read carefully the fourth chapter of Ephesians. The entire chapter is a description of the Lord’s manner of working. . . . [Ephesians 4:11-13 quoted.] Every gift is to be acknowledged as essential to the success of the work.” —Ellen G. White, *Letter 8*, 1899, p. 6 (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 11, p. 276).

How do you feel about the manifestation of spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy, in the Seventh-day Adventist Church? How would you rate your personal “confidence level”?

SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN ACTION: PAUL AND BARNABAS (2 Tim. 1:11; Acts 9:27).

Paul and Barnabas worked together for many years. They had different gifts that complemented one another.

What were Paul's principal spiritual gifts? 2 Tim. 1:11; 2:2; Rom. 11:13; Acts 22:21. How did he describe his missionary gift? 1 Cor. 9:19-23.

The missionary gift (Acts 22:21) involves the ability to use other spiritual gifts in a multicultural context. Paul's ministry made possible the fulfillment of the mandate in Acts 1:8. Notice how the Lord used various gifts:

Person	People Group	Gifts	Texts
Peter	Palestinian Jews	Evangelist	Gal. 2:7
Peter, Stephen	Diaspora Jews	Evangelists	Acts 2; 4:31; 6
Philip	Samaritans	Evangelist, miracles	Acts 8
Paul	Gentiles	Missionary, evangelist, teacher	2 Tim. 1:11
Barnabas	Gentiles	Missionary, teacher, helps, prophecy	Acts 9:26, 27; 13:1

Trace through the biblical record of Barnabas. Notice how he is always helping someone else succeed. Acts 9:27; 13:1; 15:36-39; Gal. 2:13.

Barnabas had the gifts of prophecy and teaching (Acts 13:1), but he also had the gift of helps. He took Paul under his wing (Acts 9:27), went to Tarsus to find him, initiated him into ministry, went with him on his missionary ventures, and eventually took second place to Paul. (Notice the change in the order of names between Acts 13:2, 7 and verses 42, 43.) Barnabas supported John Mark and eventually restored him to Paul's good graces (2 Tim. 4:11).

How would you feel if the Lord gave you only the gift of helps rather than some major leadership gifts? Compare your answer with 1 Corinthians 12:14-30.

FURTHER STUDY: Review 1 Timothy 3 for an overview of early church organization. Read *The Acts of the Apostles*, chapters 3, 11, and 16, for more information on early church organizational systems and the use of spiritual gifts.

Wheels Within Wheels. “The striking feature of divine operations is the accomplishment of the greatest work that can be done in our world by very simple means. It is God’s plan that every part of His government shall depend on every other part, the whole as a wheel within a wheel, working with entire harmony. He moves upon human forces, causing His Spirit to touch invisible chords, and the vibration rings to the extremity of the universe.”—*Evangelism*, p. 93.

“Perfect order is brought out of the confusion. Every wheel works in its right place, in perfect harmony with every other part of the machinery.”—*Christian Leadership*, p. 26.

Outreach Strategies. “The disciples were to begin their work where they were. The hardest and most unpromising field was not to be passed by. So every one of Christ’s workers is to begin where he is. In our own families may be souls hungry for sympathy, starving for the bread of life. There may be children to be trained for Christ. There are heathen at our very doors. Let us do faithfully the work that is nearest. Then let our efforts be extended as far as God’s hand may lead the way. The work of many may appear to be restricted by circumstances; but wherever it is, if performed with faith and diligence it will be felt to the uttermost parts of the earth. Christ’s work when upon earth appeared to be confined to a narrow field, but multitudes from all lands heard His message. God often uses the simplest means to accomplish the greatest results. It is His plan that every part of His work shall depend on every other part, as a wheel within a wheel, all acting in harmony. The humblest worker, moved by the Holy Spirit, will touch invisible chords, whose vibrations will ring to the ends of the earth, and make melody through eternal ages.”—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, October 9, 1913.

SUMMARY: The Lord outlines various organizational systems in the Bible for use by the church. The New Testament connects these organizational systems with spiritual gifts and the call to discipleship. Every Christian is called to discipleship and effective ministry within the body of the church.



Her Name Means "Shining Everywhere"

Eugene Hsu

In the Chinese Bible Psalm 68:11 is translated, "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of *women* that published it." When the Communists took over China in the early 1950s, pastors were arrested and church schools were closed. Women stepped in to fill the needs. Zhou Hui Ying, a local church-school teacher, had lost her job, and the church had lost its pastor. So she bravely took up the work of leading the local congregation.

Because she was neither licensed nor ordained to preach, Sister Zhou was not recognized by the government as a pastor and received no pay. But she continued to work as a Bible worker, suffering indignities and material losses. Then her husband left her to rear their three children alone, on the meager gifts and support from believers..

But the Lord stood by her, and she gained strength from prayer. She nurtured her small group of faithful Adventists who met Sabbath by Sabbath in her home or theirs. She encouraged and supported them through government house searches and church closures. Fearful that her Bible and Spirit of Prophecy books would be confiscated, she wrapped them in plastic bags and buried them in her yard.

When the government finally reopened churches, Sister Zhou was not permitted to conduct religious services openly unless she agreed to allow Sundaykeeping ministers to speak every other week. This she refused to do, and it was many years before the Chinese government withdrew their accusations against her.

For the past 13 years Sister Zhou has served as Bible worker for her church. Under her leadership the church has grown from a handful to 200 in 1986, and to more than 1,000 today.

Today, at 82 years of age, Sister Zhou continues to serve full time as senior pastor of her church, one of the largest and strongest Adventist congregations in China. Under her guidance the church provides leadership training for lay workers and literature work throughout China. Truly she lives up to her name, which means, "Shining Everywhere."

Eugene Hsu is president of the East Asia Association, headquartered in Hong Kong. Zhou Hui Ying (left).

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Spiritual Gifts From Pentecost to the Present



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Joel 2:28-32; 1 Cor. 1:6, 7; 1 Thess. 5:19-21; Matt. 24:24.

MEMORY TEXT: "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions" (Joel 2:28, NIV).

KEY THOUGHT: From its inception, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has accepted the view that spiritual gifts are functional in any age. Since 1980, we have included in *Fundamental Belief, No. 16*, all the spiritual gifts as applicable to the life of the church today.

ARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS STILL FUNCTIONAL? Many churches believe in the authenticity of gifts such as helps, intercessory prayer, etc., but not in the so-called "sign" or "power" gifts such as prophecy, healing, and speaking in tongues. This view is called cessationism.

On the other hand, churches and groups that form part of the contemporary charismatic movement take the position that sign gifts are not only valid, but particularly important in today's world.

Seventh-day Adventists have always believed that all spiritual gifts are functional in any age, that the gift of prophecy is particularly relevant to the remnant church, and that other sign or power gifts will be notably manifested during the latter rain. But Adventists question the application of some "gifts" in contemporary denominations, especially speaking in tongues and faith healing.

This week we trace the history of spiritual gifts from the early church to our day and outline why Seventh-day Adventists believe spiritual gifts are still functional.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS THEN AND NOW (Joel 2:28-32).

There is a school of thought called cessationism that holds that the gifts of the Spirit, particularly the gifts of tongues, healing, and prophecy, were special endowments given to people only during New Testament times. The claim is that once the canon of Scripture closed, spiritual gifts were no longer needed. Adventists have never accepted that view. Our understanding is based on the chronology indicated by the phrase "And afterward" in Joel 2:28 (NIV) and the phrase "when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears" in 1 Corinthians 13:10 (NIV).

Analyze the way Peter applied Joel 2:28-32 on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:14-21. To whom did he apply the prophecy? Acts 2:39.

The Hebrew for "afterward" in Joel 2:28 is a common expression referring to some time in the future. The Greek of Acts 2:17 uses the word *eschatos* in the phrase "in the last days." *Eschatos* means "last in time or space." The English word *eschatology* (study of last things) is derived from this word. The early Christians saw their day as "the last days," because Jesus had told them to proclaim the gospel worldwide and then He would return (Acts 1:6-8). So Peter applied the prophecy to his day. But Peter's era was not the *final* "last days."

What did Paul mean in 1 Corinthians 13:10 by his words "when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears"? See 1 Cor. 15:50-55.

Notice Paul's series of contrasts in 1 Corinthians 13:

Now	Then
Prophecies	Will cease
Tongues	Will be stilled
Knowledge	Will pass away
We know in part	Shall know fully

When is "then"? The word *perfect* (1 Cor. 13:10) is the Greek word *teleios*, which means "complete when it gets to the end." On this earth, we never attain *total* "completeness." When Jesus comes, the saved are re-created.

Since all spiritual gifts are still valid, why don't we hear more about them in our church?

THE PERMANENCE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS (1 Cor. 1:6, 7).

Spiritual gifts are an integral part of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, the span of time between Pentecost and the second coming. Focusing particularly on the gift of prophecy, A. G. Daniells wrote: "When sin had broken direct communion between heaven and earth, God gave the prophetic gift to men, vouchsafing it to His church, and that gift has never been permanently withdrawn since its bestowal." —A. G. Daniells, *The Abiding Gift of Prophecy* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1936), p. 11. That excellent summary applies equally to all gifts of the Spirit.

How does 1 Corinthians 1:6, 7 confirm the position that spiritual gifts are valid and active in the church today? What other evidence is there that spiritual gifts, including the "sign" gifts, are still active today? Eph. 4:7-13; Rev. 12:17.

Study the following spiritual gifts, marking ones you think you might have.

Romans 12	1 Cor. 12	Eph. 4	Alluded to
	(Not mentioned elsewhere)		
Prophecy	Wisdom	Apostle	Celibacy (1 Cor. 7:7)
Teaching	Knowledge	Evangelist	Voluntary poverty (1 Cor. 13:3)
Service	Faith	Pastor	Martyrdom (1 Cor. 13:3)
Giving	Healing		Hospitality (1 Peter 4:9)
Leadership	Miracles		Exorcism (Acts 8:5-8)
Mercy	Discerning of spirits		Intercessory Prayer (Acts 12:12)
Exhortation\ encouragement	Tongues		Missionary (Rom. 11:13)
	Interpretation of tongues		
	Helps		
	Administration		

Pinpoint times in your life and work in the church when spiritual gifts enhanced whatever you were doing.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN CHURCH HISTORY (2 Peter 1:19-21).

Historical records show that throughout its history the Christian church recognized spiritual gifts as a continuing, legitimate operation of the Holy Spirit. Today's lesson will trace some instances of the appearance of spiritual gifts. See Friday's lesson for more details.

As power passed into the hands of a church hierarchy, eventually resulting in the formation of the papal system, the official church tended to identify spiritual gifts with schismatic movements.

The Early Christian Centuries. At least two early church-related documents, *The Didache* and *The Shepherd of Hermes*, mention ongoing spiritual gifts. Both documents use almost the same words as does Paul in listing the various gifts. Justin Martyr, who lived some 60 years after the death of John, the last of the apostles, says: "The prophetic gifts . . . remain with us, even to the present time."—Quoted in Ronald Kydd, *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984), p. 27.

Third and Fourth Centuries. A group called the Montanists claimed to have the sign gifts in their midst. Other writers of the time, even those opposed to Montanism, do not seem to regard the appearance of these spiritual gifts as either inconsistent or impious.

The Middle Ages. The appearance during this time of protesting groups such as the Waldenses and Huguenots brought a renewed manifestation of spiritual gifts. According to A. G. Daniells, a contemporary observer said of a group in southeastern France: "They were all people without malice, in whom I perceived nothing that I could suspect of being their invention."—Quoted in A. G. Daniells, *The Abiding Gift of Prophecy*, p. 227.

Adventists are familiar with the gift of prophecy in our church, and Ellen White affirms the continuance of other spiritual gifts: "But the gifts of the Spirit are promised to every believer according to his need for the Lord's work. *The promise is just as strong and trustworthy now as in the days of the apostles.* 'These signs shall follow them that believe.' This is the privilege of God's children, and faith should lay hold on all that it is possible to have as an indorsement of faith."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 823. Italics supplied.

Suppose we agree that the Bible teaches that all believers have spiritual gifts for ministry. How can you explain why churches through the centuries did not include this truth in their central teaching? (See Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, chapter 3.)

SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND THE LATTER RAIN (Zech. 10:1).

During the latter rain, spectacular gifts of the Spirit will again be manifested. "The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 611.

Joel describes the latter rain in Joel 2:23, 27-32. Peter applied this prophecy to Pentecost, the former rain. How do we know it also applies to the latter rain? Zech. 10:1; Hosea 6:3; Rev. 18:1.

"Near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest 'in the time of the latter rain.' In response, 'the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain.' 'He will cause to come down . . . the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain.' Zechariah 10:1; Joel 2:23."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 55.

What kind of power and manifestations of spiritual gifts can we expect during the latter rain? Mark 16:15-20.

Ellen White cites this passage and describes what will happen during the latter rain. "Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 612.

"I saw the latter rain was coming as the midnight cry [The Millerite Movement], and with ten times the power."—Ellen G. White, *Spalding and Magan Collection*, p. 4.

The latter rain is the last gospel invitation before the close of probation. It is the ultimate, premillennial call to accept the Lord's complete system of truth. The Lord will again empower large numbers of disciples with the sign gifts as evidence of His power.

Praying for the latter rain to fall is serious business. What commitments are involved in praying for the latter rain?

IDENTIFYING COUNTERFEIT GIFTS (1 Thess. 5:19-21).

Whenever something true appears, Satan supplies a counterfeit. Spiritual gifts are no exception. For instance, divine healing is all too easy to falsify. Speaking in tongues is a perennial problem for many churches. Outbreaks of self-proclaimed prophets and apostles cause incredible difficulties in many church communions.

What did Paul say about authenticating spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy? 1 Thess. 5:19-21. What did Jesus say about counterfeit signs and wonders? Matt. 24:24.

There have been periodic outbreaks of Pentecostal-type movements in Adventist history. An interesting one was the case of a Mr. and Mrs. Mackin. Visiting Ellen White in 1908, Mr. & Mrs. Mackin related how they sang in the Spirit, spoke in tongues (in their case unlearned foreign languages), and cast out demons. Mrs. Mackin also felt she had the gift of prophecy. Ellen White's response came through a vision. The Mackins were cautioned that their type of experience usually brought the cause of God into disrepute. "The Holy Spirit works," Ellen White told them, "in a manner that commends itself to the good judgement of the people."—*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 371.

What is the relationship of spiritual gifts to the authority of the Bible? Isa. 8:20; 1 Cor. 14:32, 37 (compare 1 Cor. 15:1, 2; 2 Tim. 1:11-14).

Spiritual gifts are always governed by the revealed Word of God and must be exercised only within the boundaries set by the Bible. One problem with the contemporary charismatic movement is that people's subjective experiences often replace the Bible as final authority in their lives. J. N. Andrews put it well: "The Bible expressly teaches that the existence of these gifts is as necessary to the church of Christ, as the different members are necessary to the well-being of the body. While, therefore, the Bible recognizes the gifts of the Spirit, these are not given to supersede the Bible, nor yet to fill the same place as the Bible."—*Review and Herald*, Feb. 15, 1870.

Have you ever been involved in a religious experience that seemed true at first but turned out to be counterfeit? How did you come to the conclusion that it was counterfeit?

FURTHER STUDY: For more information on deceptive teachings and counterfeits, see *Selected Messages*, book 2, sections I and II. For specific information on Pentecostal-type movements within Adventism, see *Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 31-39, and George R. Knight, *From 1888 to Apostasy* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1987), pp. 167-171. For information on the continuing validity of spiritual gifts, see A. G. Daniells, *The Abiding Gift of Prophecy* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn.), 1936. Daniells traces prophecy and other spiritual gifts through the Bible and history into the twentieth century.

The fact that some individuals abused spiritual gifts does not mean that the gifts themselves or faithful believers practicing them were at fault. Referring to the rise of the Advent movement in later centuries, Ellen White records: "In every generation God has sent His servants to rebuke sin, both in the world and in the church. . . . Many reformers, in entering upon their work, determined to exercise great prudence in attacking the sins of the church and the nation. They hoped, by the example of a pure Christian life, to lead the people back to the doctrines of the Bible. *But the Spirit of God came upon them as it came upon Elijah*, moving him to rebuke the sins of a wicked king and an apostate people; they could not refrain from preaching the plain utterances of the Bible—doctrines which they had been reluctant to present. . . . The words which the Lord gave them they uttered, fearless of consequences, and the people were compelled to hear the warning." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 606.

The latter rain. For more information, see *The Great Controversy*, pp. 611, 612.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Compile a list of evidences that spiritual gifts are still valid today. How does this support the Adventist emphasis on the gift of prophecy?
2. How do you account for the fact that it was not until 1980 that all spiritual gifts were included in one of our fundamental-belief statements?
3. How does the inclusion of all spiritual gifts in our church's belief system affect our concept of ministry and the priesthood of all believers?

SUMMARY: This lesson traces the functioning of spiritual gifts throughout the centuries. There is strong biblical and historical evidence that the gifts mentioned in the Bible are still valid today. Spiritual gifts can be counterfeited. We must take care to follow the Bible's guidance to ensure that the gifts are exercised correctly.



The Datu's Dream

Norma Lachica

Datu ("Chief") Mangol was the illiterate but respected chief of a little village in the Philippines. He believed in the gods of the mountains, the rocks, the trees, the sun, the harvest; but he did not believe in the God of the universe. He would laugh at his three wives when he caught them praying, and often tried to pry their eyes open in an attempt to stop their prayers.

One night Datu Mangol had a dream. He saw a narrow path with boiling water on one side and fire on the other. He heard a voice instructing him to walk on the narrow path. Frightened, he hesitated, but the voice urged him to walk in faith, for the God of the universe would keep him from falling. Still frightened, Datu Mangol decided to go home and prepare for his journey, but the voice compelled him to begin his journey at once.

He began to walk, and soon found himself standing on a crossroad, where roads stretched out in every direction. On one road he could see a church. The voice asked him which road he should take, and Datu Mangol said, "The road to the church." The voice assured him that was the way God wanted him to go.

In Datu Mangol's society dreams have great significance. Datu Mangol studied his dream carefully to determine the meaning. He decided that God wanted him to attend church.

A few days later word came that a baptism was scheduled in a town several hours away. Datu resolved to attend the baptism. He hiked for three hours to the nearest town, and then joined other believers for the six-hour jeepney ride to the place where the baptism was to be held. He asked for baptism and enrolled in an adult literacy class being offered by student missionaries, so that one day he could read the Bible for himself. In the meantime he studies the Bible with church members in his village.

Pray for student and volunteer missionaries in the Philippines as they seek to lead others out of spiritual darkness to the Light of the world.



Datu Mangol (left). Norma Lachica works at Mountain View College in southern Philippines.

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Love: The Universal Gift



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 Corinthians 13; Gal. 5:22, 23; 2 Peter 1:3-11.

MEMORY TEXT: "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13, NKJV).

KEY THOUGHT: Spiritual gifts are tools provided by the Holy Spirit to do the work of the kingdom. But they are effective only within the framework of a united church in which love is manifested.

THE FRAMEWORK OF LOVE. A church member who was not reelected to church office, even though he had done a good job, had the locks on the doors to the church changed and refused to unlock them until he was reelected. In office, this brother apparently used his spiritual gifts effectively. But something was lacking.

Paul discusses spiritual gifts in the context of the right kind of Christian personality and attitude. "Follow the way of love," he writes, "and eagerly desire spiritual gifts" (1 Cor. 14:1, NIV).

Spiritual gifts are given for two purposes: to do the work of the church and to do it within a framework of unity. Love is a power that is essential to unity.

Love produces individual and corporate Christian personalities. Its overall characteristics are outlined in 1 Corinthians 13, Galatians 5:22, 23, and 2 Peter 1:3-11. When you enter a church you can tell whether love exists. When love is present, spiritual gifts become effective tools for managing the church and propelling its outreach.

WHAT IS LOVE ALL ABOUT? (1 Corinthians 13).

Love may be one of the most misunderstood and misused words in any language. It is supposed to be a universal language, but it has so many meanings that people may be confused by it. You may say you love to eat, love to go on picnics, love your dog, and in the same breath say you love your husband or wife. Is loving God the same as loving to go on a picnic? How about loving the people in your church? On the other hand, in spite of all this abstractness, when love happens, you know it.

The kind of love we are talking about in this lesson, called *agape* in Greek, originates in the character of God Himself (1 John 4:8). It is the epitome of Christian character (1 John 4:16) and the highest attainment of the Christian lifestyle (1 Cor. 13:13).

How does Paul emphasize the importance of love in the Christian church setting? 1 Cor. 13:1-3. What does John say about the importance of love? 1 John 3:11-24.

“Pure, sanctified love, expressed by Christ’s lifework, is as sacred perfume. Like an opened bottle of perfume, it fills the whole house with fragrance. Eloquence, an extended knowledge of the truth, outward devotion, rare talents, if mingled with sacred, humble love, will become as fragrant as the opened box of ointment. But gifts alone, ability alone, the choicest endowments alone, cannot take the place of love. . . . [1 Cor. 13:1-3 quoted].”—Ellen G. White *Comments, SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1137.

List the characteristics of love outlined in 1 Corinthians 13. What makes love a superior gift?

“[1 Cor. 13:4, 5 quoted.] Troubles exist between brethren in the church because they fail to understand what constitutes true Christian charity, brotherly affection, and Christlike love. Self-love and self-esteem lead professed Christians to measure themselves by themselves. They take for granted that all their surmisings and suspicions of others are correct. But it is because of suspicions and judging of one another that there is discord, strife, and an unhealthy condition of the church.”—Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 11, p. 261.

Consider the quotation above. This experience is more common than we would like to admit. What is the problem? How can this kind of situation be remedied?

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT (Gal. 5:22, 23).

Acceptance of the call to discipleship initiates the development of a Christian personality. One of the key Scripture passages outlining the elements involved in this kind of personality is Paul's list of the Spirit's fruit in Galatians 5:22, 23. Galatians 5 discusses the meaning of freedom in Christ as opposed to the oppression engendered by legalism. To ensure that there is no misunderstanding, Paul builds his case on a framework of love: "You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Gal. 5:13, 14, NIV).

What does Paul say regarding the way Christians should live once they have left the old life of sin? Gal. 5:16, 17.

"The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

Fill in the chart below based on Galatians 5:22, 23, NIV. Try to develop a practical situation in which each of these characteristics might be evident.

Characteristic	Restate in your own words	How would you apply it in everyday life?
Love		
Joy		
Peace		
Patience		
Kindness		
Goodness		
Faithfulness		
Gentleness		
Self-control		

Notice that the singular word *fruit* is used in Galatians 5:22. The point is that all these characteristics should be apparent in a Christian's life all the time.

Take a serious look at your own life. How do you rate on a "spiritual-fruit-development scale"?

PETER'S LADDER (2 Peter 1:3-11).

Peter presents another set of criteria for developing and measuring a Christian personality. Most of his criteria match Paul's list in Galatians 5. But because Peter builds his list around the words "add to," it is sometimes called "Peter's ladder."

Fill in the following chart. Look for similarities and differences in the two lists.

Peter's list	Paul's list	Restate in your own words	Application in everyday life
Faith	Faithfulness		
Goodness	Goodness		
Knowledge			
Self-control	Self-control		
Perseverance	Patience		
Godliness	Gentleness		
Brotherly kindness	Kindness		
Love	Love		
	Peace		
	Joy		

According to Peter, what will be the effect of developing these traits of character? 2 Peter 1:8. What happens if one does not develop them? 2 Peter 1:9.

There is a connection here with spiritual gifts. Peter points out that developing these traits of character makes one's ministry effective and productive. That is achieved by using our spiritual gifts (1 Peter 4:10).

What does it mean to make one's "calling and election sure"? 2 Peter 1:10.

"If we are Christ's, our title to the heavenly inheritance is without a flaw, and in harmony with the provisions of the covenant of grace. Through grace we shall be able to make our calling and election sure, putting on the excellency of Christ in spirit and character."—Ellen G. White, *The Messenger*, May 10, 1893.

Take a moment to ask yourself about your own calling and election.

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE (Rom. 12:1-5).

Attitude counts a great deal in the work of the church. Each individual member of a group has his or her own personality, attitudes, and agenda. We are not in heaven yet, and the pull of the societies and cultures in which we live is strong. The pull of innate selfishness is even stronger. The golden rule (Luke 6:31) does not shine as brightly as it should.

Yet the life of the church is built around ethical standards based as much on attitude as on actual overt actions. Finding ways to be unified while recognizing individual differences in members of the group is one of the Holy Spirit's purposes in assigning spiritual gifts.

How did Jesus state the essence of God's law? Matt. 22:37-40.

"Like the first is the second commandment, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' Mark 12:31. The law of love calls for the devotion of body, mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow men. And this service, while making us a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to ourselves. Unselfishness underlies all true development. Through unselfish service we receive the highest culture of every faculty."—*Counsels to Teachers*, p. 32.

How does Paul state the attitudes within which spiritual gifts function efficiently? Rom. 12:1-5, 9-21. Where did Paul get this information, and what does it have to do with spiritual gifts?

In these verses Paul combines his analogy of the human body with Peter's concept of a "measure of faith." He states that a renewed mind can override "the pattern of this world" and can understand God's will. This process, however, demands "sober judgment."

There is no hierarchy of value attached to spiritual gifts. They are all of equal importance. Other than the overarching value placed on love, all other gifts are equally important for the accomplishment of the work of the kingdom. This perspective places all people on the same level and focuses them on accomplishing the will of God.

A church member once remarked, "This church will have the right attitude when the day comes that everyone agrees with me!" Sound familiar? How would you react to such a remark? Why?

SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND CHURCH UNITY (1 Corinthians 12; Eph. 2:11-22; 4:3).

Unity is a much abused and misunderstood word. To some people, unity means “everyone agrees with me.” To others, it means that everyone will believe and behave exactly the same way, a perspective called uniformity. To yet others, it means that even if we don’t agree on everything, we still get along and learn to live with one another as fellow travelers on the road to heaven. Many evidences of disunity in the church don’t have to do with doctrinal differences; they involve differences over procedures and personal likes and dislikes. It is precisely in this realm of procedure, ways of doing things, that spiritual gifts apply.

Trace through Paul’s concept of “one Spirit” in 1 Corinthians 12. What pattern emerges? What does he mean by “bond of peace” in Ephesians 4:3? The Greek word for *unity* really means “agreement.”

Ellen White puts it this way: “What kind of unity is spoken of in these words? [John 17:20-23]—Unity in diversity. Our minds do not all run in the same channel, and we have not all been given the same work. God has given to every man his work according to his several ability. There are different kinds of work to be done, and workers of varied capabilities are needed.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1148.

Unity also has to do with how various groups of people get along. What does Paul say on this subject in Ephesians 2:11-22?

There are all kinds of implications here. In early church times, many Jews considered non-Jews unworthy of salvation. Greeks believed they “sprang from the earth,” and everyone else on earth was a “barbarian.” People who have common blood lines and cultures often tend to classify themselves as superior to everyone else.

On the other hand, God is no respecter of persons, nor does He show favoritism (Acts 10:34, 35). The Holy Spirit assigns gifts for service to all born-again believers, regardless of their background, ethnicity, or former lifestyle (Acts 10:44-46).

Assume for a minute that there is a debate in your church board about how to do a certain thing. Everyone has a different idea. What would constitute a unified decision? How would you know when one is reached? What is the role of the Holy Spirit in producing such a unified decision? What is the role of each board member?

FURTHER STUDY: Read John 17. Go through the chapter and outline the way Jesus used the concept of unity. This is the prayer in which Jesus turns over His mission to His disciples and, by extension, to us. The New International Version translates verse 23: "I in them and you in me. May they be brought to *complete unity* to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." The Greek word for "unity" here is simply the word for the numeral 1. Because of the gospel's power, diverse personalities function together as if they were the numeral 1. The unity is seen in the common denominators of purpose, dedication, and discipleship. Paul calls it glorifying God with one heart and mouth (Rom. 15:5, 6).

The *Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White* has 46 columns of references to the word *love* and seven columns on the word *unity*. This should be enough information for all of us to understand the concepts. The common denominator as she sees it is as follows: "Through the diversity of the gifts and governments that He [Jesus] has placed in the church, they will all come to the unity of the faith."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 29.

For some practical examples of how love and unity work in the church, see Jerry Cook and Stanley C. Baldwin, *Love, Acceptance and Forgiveness* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1979).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Is it possible to devise ways of measuring the extent to which the fruit of the Spirit is manifest in your church?
2. Select a number of the "one another" statements in the New Testament, and discuss them with your class. To what extent are these statements being applied in your church? See lesson 13 for more information and a chart of these statements.
3. Is the unity of which Jesus, Paul, and Ellen White talk really possible? What would it take for your church to achieve it?

SUMMARY: Love is the glue that holds together the organizational system of the church. It is the bond that allows diverse gifts to function in unity. This kind of Christian love is highly visible to nonchurch people and is specifically looked for when they become interested in the church.



Jesus in Her Heart, Part 1

Eric Monnier

Eight-year-old Margarita was eager to attend the Vacation Bible School at the local Adventist church. Her friend had invited her and told her about the fun she would have singing songs, learning Bible verses, and making crafts. Although her parents were not religious, they thought it would be good for her to have something special to do during vacation, so they gave her permission to attend the program.

Margarita loved Vacation Bible School, and the teachers loved her. Eagerly she learned the songs and memorized the Bible verses. And she especially enjoyed making the crafts. Although Margarita had never had religious training at home, she absorbed everything the teachers presented during the week-long program.

At the closing program, the pastor spoke to the children and their parents about God's love. He invited the people to give their hearts to Jesus. Those children who wanted to give their heart to Jesus signified their decision by putting a little felt heart on a felt picture of Jesus. Solemnly Margarita walked to the front of the church holding her felt heart. But instead of placing the heart on the picture of Jesus, she carefully lifted the felt figure of Jesus and placed her little heart underneath, where Jesus' heart would be.

After the program Margarita's teacher asked her why she had placed her heart under Jesus rather than beside Him. Margarita answered simply, "I want to put my heart *into* the heart of Jesus. I want Jesus to live in my heart forever and make me a different girl."

Margarita told her parents about her decision to follow Jesus. She was so excited. Her parents smiled at her decision, but they not think too much about it because they did not attend church. But Margarita kept talking about it. "Do you know that I will be a different girl from now on?" she told them. Margarita told her parents that her VBS teacher had invited her to come to Sabbath School, on Saturday, and Margarita's parents said she could come.

On Sabbath morning Margarita's teacher looked for the girl, but no one had seen her. She was not at Sabbath School.

(continued next week)

Eric Monnier is president of the Bolivian Union in South America. At the time he wrote this story he was president of the Maranhao Mission in northern Brazil.

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Support Gifts



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Gen. 18:1-15; Judges 19:16-21; Matt. 25:34-40; 2 Corinthians 9.

MEMORY TEXT: "When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles" (Acts 9:26, 27, NIV).

KEY THOUGHT: The support gifts are the most numerous in the church and essential for the continual growth of the body of Christ.

Special Note: Lessons 6-10 outline specific spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts are dynamic, designed to be used. The Bible doesn't give precise definitions. The definitions are simply guidelines to help you understand how specific gifts function.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBING TAKES TEAMWORK. Mountaineers, tied to one another with ropes, depend on teamwork and on equipment. Without their equipment, mountaineers will never make any progress or conquer any icy cliffs.

The Holy Spirit has placed spiritual gifts in the church that are unspectacular and "quiet." These gifts, the ropes and ties of the church, are needed to accomplish long-term effective ministry. In most churches, up to 90 percent of the members have gifts that fall into this category.

Unfortunately, these gifts are underutilized most of the time. How can your church better utilize the gifts of its "silent majority?"

THE CHURCH AND MINISTRY (Eph. 4:11-13).

Support gifts are mostly relational. They help build relationships that cement the church body together as brothers and sisters in the Lord. Church members, whether new or old, need to be nurtured. For a church's ministry to be well-rounded, it must include both evangelism and nurture as integral parts of the entire program.

How does the apostle Paul envision the exercise of spiritual gifts by church members? Eph. 4:11-13.

The support gifts are the underpinnings of what is called the iceberg principle of church growth. The outstanding characteristic of an iceberg is that most of it is under the surface and not visible. The same goes for the church. The relationships under the surface make visible programs either successful or unsuccessful. The key words in Ephesians 4:11-13 are "to prepare God's people for works of service" (NIV). The Greek word translated "preparing" actually means "equipping." So the ministry of the church must be designed in such a way that it allows for the equipping and mobilization of the membership in ministry.

It is suggested that churches with an adequate relationship system will have the following ratios in place:

Ratio	Explanation
New-friends ratio = 1/7	Each new member should have a minimum of seven new friends in the church within the first six months.
Love/Care ratio = 7/10	Seven of every ten members should be intentionally expressing love for those around them.
Member-contact ratio = 1/30	Each church member not involved in a group or task should be contacted at least once a month by another member, intentionally showing Christian love and concern.
Prayer ratio = 1/30	Each member should have the assurance that someone in the church is praying specifically for his or her special needs at least once a month.

How would you classify the relationship system in your church? What can you do to improve it?

GIFTS OF HELPS AND MERCY (Acts 9:25-27).

The gifts of helps and mercy are among the most commonly identified. These are foundational gifts that support the relationship system of the church congregation.

Definition: The gift of helps is the special ability that God gives to some members of the body of Christ to a greater degree than to others to invest the talents they have in the life and ministry of other members of the body. The person helped is enabled to increase the effectiveness of his or her spiritual gifts.

People with this gift usually have unselfish natures and like to do things, even menial tasks, that help others. They have a willingness to do little jobs without seeking any credit, just for the joy of doing the job and knowing they are helping someone. They often take on tasks that ultimately allow the leadership gifts in the church to be enhanced.

In the New Testament, Barnabas is a primary example of someone with this gift. Fill in the chart below that outlines Barnabas' gift in action.

Text	The gift in action
Acts 9:25-27	
Acts 11:24-26	
Acts 15:37-39	

Definition: The gift of mercy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ, more than to others, to feel genuine empathy and compassion for individuals, both Christian and non-Christian, who suffer distressing physical, mental, or emotional problems. Those with this gift translate their compassion into deeds cheerfully done that reflect Christ's love and alleviate the suffering.

Jesus outlined the characteristics of those with this gift (Matt. 25:34-40). Notice that the people addressed in this text didn't even realize that they had helped so many or that the Lord had taken note of their actions.

If no one in your congregation is exercising this gift, does it mean there is no need for this ministry? Or is it more likely that members have not identified their giftedness and/or the need? How could such a situation be remedied?

THE GIFT OF EXHORTATION OR ENCOURAGEMENT (Acts 4:36).

This is a person-centered gift, one of the few directly commanded in the Bible for use by Christians (Heb. 3:13). The KJV reads "Exhort one another daily"; the NIV uses "Encourage one another daily."

Definition: The gift of exhortation is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to a greater degree than to others to minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement, and counsel.

Outline how Barnabas, besides having the gift of helps, also exercised the gift of exhortation or encouragement. Acts 4:36; 9:27; 14:23; 15:37-39.

Barnabas' name means "Son of Encouragement" (Acts 4:36). If it were not for Barnabas' encouragement, we might be missing almost half of the New Testament, 13 letters by Paul, and the Gospel of Mark. People who have this gift exhibit the following characteristics:

- They frequently advise others about various things.
- People take their counsel seriously because they feel helped.
- People like to be around them because their uncomplicated attitude, demeanor, and down-to-earth counsel cheer them up.
- People learn from them how to apply Christian principles to real-life situations.
- They enjoy sharing their personal testimony with people because God uses it to encourage and help others.

Do you have the gift of exhortation or encouragement?

- | | | |
|-----|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Yes | No | Do people often tell you that what you said to them was a real help and comfort? |
| Yes | No | Do you desire to counsel effectively the perplexed, the guilty, or the addicted? |
| Yes | No | Do you find that you seem to be easy to talk to and people engage you in heart-to-heart talks? |
| Yes | No | Do you find yourself speaking words of encouragement to those who are troubled, discouraged, and not sure of themselves? |
| Yes | No | Do you often correct someone's views with solid scriptural counsel and find that people take your counsel? |

Can you relate an experience where the exercise of this gift brought you personal blessing?

THE GIFT OF GIVING (Luke 6:38).

All Christians are expected to be faithful to the Lord with tithes and offerings, and to do so cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7). Some Christians, however, receive a special gift from the Lord enabling them to give extraordinary amounts of financial help to the Lord's work.

Definition: The gift of giving is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to a greater degree than to others to contribute their material resources to the work of the Lord with liberality and cheerfulness.

Read Luke 6:38. How did Jesus describe God's promise regarding giving?

This is a promise from the Lord, but it is also a description of the attitude of a person with the gift of giving. Ellen White remarks: "Give what you can now, and as you co-operate with Christ, your hand will open to impart still more. And God will refill your hand, that the treasure of truth may be taken to many souls. He will give to you that you may give to others."—*Review and Herald*, Dec. 10, 1901. This happens to people with this gift.

List some examples in the early church of people with this gift.

Text	Example
Acts 4:34-37	
2 Cor. 8:1-5	
Phil. 4:15-18	

How the gift of giving benefits the Lord's work. According to the New Testament, the financial means returned to the Lord's work by those who have this gift are used (1) to meet the needs of believers within the local church itself (Gal. 6:10; 1 John 3:17; 1 Tim. 5:3-5); (2) to meet the needs of believers in other local churches (2 Cor. 8:1-6; Rom. 15:25, 26); (3) to meet the needs of those using their gifts of leadership in full-time ministry for the Lord (Phil. 4:10-19; 1 Cor. 9:1-14; 1 Tim. 5:17, 18); and (4) to meet the needs of nonbelievers (Gal. 6:10).

Is the gift of giving necessary only because some people aren't faithful with tithes and offerings? Explain your answer.

THE GIFTS OF HOSPITALITY AND SERVICE (1 Peter 4:9).

Of all the support gifts, these two may be the most pivotal. People with these gifts know how to make other people feel comfortable, accepted, and wanted. They are the ones willing to take people home for a meal and find ways to make them feel part of the family. People with the gift of hospitality ought to make up the core of greeters or receptionists you have at the door of your church on Sabbath morning.

Definition: The gift of hospitality is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to a greater degree than to others of providing open arms, open homes, and a warm welcome for those in need of friendship, acceptance, food, and lodging.

What does the Bible say about hospitality? Fill in the chart.

Text	What the Bible says
1 Peter 4:9	
Matt. 25:35	
Heb. 13:2	
3 John 5-8	

The Greek word for hospitality, *philoxenia*, means “expressing love to a visitor or stranger.”

Definition: The gift of service is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to a greater degree than to others of identifying unmet needs. The person who has this gift makes use of available resources to meet those needs and to help accomplish the desired goals.

The gift of service, or “ministering,” is expressed in the KJV by the word *diakonia*, a Greek word from which is derived the English word *deacon*. This Greek word is used in the New Testament to refer to the ministration of those who show Christian affection through help and caring.

What tasks could be assigned to someone in your congregation with the gift of service to facilitate nurture and/or support?

FURTHER STUDY: Study James 2:1-7.

Who Walks in Your Church Door? There are four general categories of guests who walk in your church door. Each of these groups has its own set of expectations, fears, hang-ups, and preconceived ideas.

1. Unchurched people who for one reason or another visit your church.
2. Adventists who attend occasionally.
3. People brought to church by friends, relatives, and acquaintances.
4. Adventists from out of town or from other Adventist churches.

If you were organizing a greeter or receptionist committee for your church, how would you use the gifts we have studied in this week's lesson?

Additional information on the gift of giving. People with this gift intuitively recognize the material needs of others. They don't have a "me first" attitude, but rather a God-given ability to obtain significant financial resources, a large portion of which is then passed on to the Lord's work. They also have a conviction that whatever they have belongs to the Lord. They consider themselves stewards of His goods and channels for using them for the benefit of others.

Additional information on the gift of service. The *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* outlines the office of deacon and deaconess as being compatible with the gift of service. In practice, unfortunately, this office is often synonymous with taking care of the church building and taking up offerings on Sabbath morning.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. **Analyze the programs in your church to see whether they are actually supported by a relationship system. How can you improve the situation?**
2. **Stand at the church entrance some Sabbath and watch the greeter/receptionist system in action. What improvements would you make? Why?**

SUMMARY: The effective functioning of support gifts is all-important to the life and ministry of the church. As the most common gifts, they are the underpinning of the relationship program of the church congregation. When these gifts are not functioning, the church becomes deficient in its very lifeblood, and the apostasy rate increases dramatically.



Jesus in Her Heart, Part 2

Eric Monnier

Although her parents were not religious, they decided to allow Margarita to attend the neighborhood Vacation Bible School at the Adventist church. She loved the stories and songs about Jesus, and the memory verses. At the closing program she gave her heart to Jesus, and promised to come to Sabbath School on Sabbath. But she did not come.

The following Monday the minister received a request to visit a family whose name he did not recognize. He went to the address he was given and knocked at the door. He introduced himself to the man who answered the door, and was invited in. The man explained, "You do not know us, but our daughter Margarita attended your Vacation Bible School. Perhaps you met her."

Immediately the pastor remembered the little girl who had shown such a deep interest in spiritual things during the VBS programs. "She is a lovely girl," the pastor said. But he noticed that the parents remained solemn. "Is something wrong with Margarita?" the pastor asked.

Margarita's father took a deep breath, then told the pastor, "Our daughter was so excited when she told us she had given her heart to Jesus. She told us, 'Do you know that I will be a different girl from now on?'"

"And she *was* different. Sometimes Margarita was lazy, as all children are, but this past week she was so helpful and happy, we couldn't believe the change in her. We decided to celebrate with an outing at the beach.

"We had a good time swimming and playing on the beach. But when it was time to go home, Margarita was nowhere around. A man said he saw her going toward the water several minutes earlier. We ran to the water's edge to look for her, but could not find her. The tide was going out. People began searching for her, calling for her, but she did not answer. When we found her, it was too late. Margarita had drowned."

The girl's father paused, then he said, "Margarita was so happy since she gave her heart to Jesus. Now we want to know her Jesus as she knew Him."

Margarita's parents and older brother began attending Sabbath School and church and studied the Bible. In time the entire family was baptized, all because a little girl put her heart into the heart of Jesus.

Eric Monnier is president of the Bolivian Union in South America.

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Help the East Uganda Field

The East Uganda Field is a new addition to the Eastern Africa Division. The local government has given them land, but funds are needed to build:

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In faith, believers there have started building a church. Our offerings can help them complete it and begin their other projects.

**Your 13th Sabbath
Offering Makes a
Difference!**



The devil must be in the family

room this Friday night because
you're tempted to call the superintendent and say,



"I don't have a Sabbath School program planned for tomorrow and *I don't care*.

Our family is transferring to the Cloverdale Church, where we won't take *any* responsibilities.

We'll just sit in the pew and let someone else sweat out the special feature and special music and worry that the piano player won't show up."

Then you stop to wonder who could take your place. There was a reason the nominating committee asked *you*. ♦ ♦ ♦ They say you have something special to offer. ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ You have a creative flair that had been missing in Sabbath School for some time. ♦ ♦ And last week—it makes you smile to think about it—

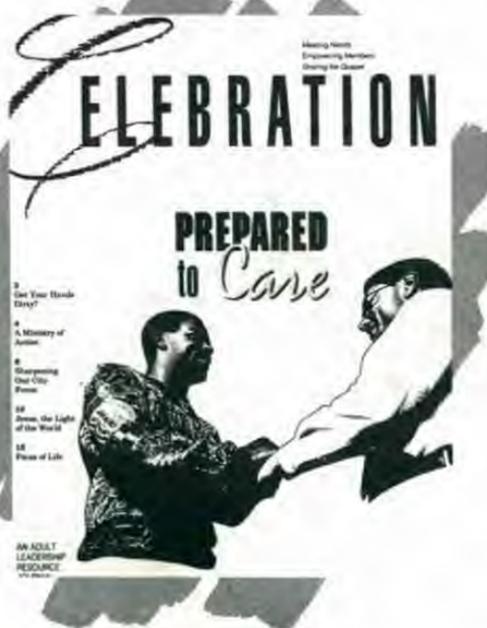
Sister Russo actually gave you a little compliment after the morning program. So you sigh and apologize to the Lord for your poor attitude and try to remember where you put the *Celebration* magazine.

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Teaching Gifts



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Deut. 11:18-22; 1 Tim. 4:9-11; 2 Tim. 2:2; Proverbs 28; 1 Peter 5:1-3.

MEMORY TEXT: "These things command and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:11, 12, NKJV).

KEY THOUGHT: Teaching gifts are used to instruct people in the teachings of the Bible, confirm them in the faith and beliefs of the church, and instruct new believers in the fundamentals of the faith.

TEACHING IS ONE OF THE KEY FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH. It builds faith and practice in individual lives and in the corporate life of a church congregation. The Bible tells us that Jesus spent much of His time teaching. Paul's advice to Timothy is still relevant today: "Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Tim. 4:13-16, NIV).

Related to the gift of teaching are the gifts of knowledge and wisdom. Often these gifts are integral functions of the gift of pastoring.

THE TEACHING FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH (Titus 2:1).

The local church is responsible for ongoing religious education for church members and new converts.

What does the Bible say about the teaching ministry of the church? Deut. 11:18-22; 1 Tim. 4:9-11; 2 Tim. 2:2.

Text	Teaching topic, method, or style
Ezra 7:25	
Psalms 25	Look for the word <i>teach</i> in this psalm.
Rom. 15:4	
1 Tim. 1:3	
1 Tim 4:11	
Titus 2:1	
Heb. 5:12	

“There are those who want more definite light than they receive from hearing the sermons. Some need a longer time than do others to understand the points presented. If the truth presented could be made a little plainer, they would see it and take hold of it, and it would be like a nail fastened in a sure place.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 407.

What does the Bible say about Jesus as a teacher? Matt. 22:16; Mark 10:1; John 6:63.

“Of the ninety times the Lord was addressed, as recorded in the Gospels, sixty times He was called ‘Rabbi.’ Furthermore, the thought of the speaker in at least part of the thirty remaining cases was directed toward Jesus as a teacher, for the Greek word *didaskalos*, which refers to ‘one who teaches concerning the things of God, and the duties of man,’ is translated sometimes ‘teacher’ and sometimes ‘master.’”—C. B. Eavey, *Principles of Teaching for Christian Teachers* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1940), pp. 24, 25.

What teaching ministry is your church fulfilling?

THE GIFT OF TEACHING (Acts 19:8-10).

This gift is vital to the success of the church. Outside the brief study time allotted to the Sabbath School lesson, teaching is used very little in many churches. *Admonition* is utilized far too much, when teaching ought to be the framework for the church's training program.

Definition: The gift of teaching is the special ability that God gives to some members of the body of Christ more than to others to communicate information, attitudes, and skills relevant to the health and ministry of the body and its members in such a way that others will learn.

What does the New Testament have to say about teaching? Acts 19:8-10; 1 Tim. 3:1, 2; 4:11-14; 2 Tim. 2:1, 2.

There are different kinds of teaching. Some teachers are good with children, others with adults. Some people are good at one-to-one teaching, while others do better in large-group settings. The point is that it is the same gift, and the teachers in the church ought to be those with this gift. All too often, people asked to teach are simply those who are willing to accept the job, whether they have the gift or not. (See Friday's lesson.)

People with this gift have the following characteristics:

1. The teacher himself or herself will have an intense desire to understand truth and excel in the ability to explain it to others.
2. Others will consistently understand truth as a result of their teaching.
3. People with this gift are not satisfied with unclear or obscure meanings.
4. People grow spiritually as a result of the work of these gifted teachers.

Exercising the gift of teaching is serious business. Because of their extended sphere of influence, teachers are held highly responsible for the exercise of their gift. "Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly" (James 3:1, NIV). "If anyone thinks he is capable of teaching in the Sabbath school or in the day school the science of education, he needs first to learn the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, that he may teach this the highest of all sciences."—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 89.

THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE (Matt. 13:11).

The gift of knowledge concerns the discovery of truth. Some people have been given the ability to dig deep and accumulate a fund of knowledge about the Scriptures and the way of salvation that is invaluable to the work of the church.

Definition: The gift of knowledge is the special ability that God gives to some members of the body of Christ more than to others of discovering, accumulating, analyzing, and clarifying information and ideas that are pertinent to the spiritual growth of the church and the well-being of the body.

What does the Bible say about general religious knowledge all Christians should have? Matt. 13:11; 2 Cor. 2:14 (compare Eph. 4:13; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:18).

Contrast this with the *gift* of knowledge given to some members of the church.

Text	The gift of knowledge
Luke 1:1-4	
Acts 18:24, 25	
Rom. 15:14	
2 Cor. 11:6	

Paul had this gift. Notice how he explains it in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16. It is through this gift that Paul was able to reorganize the facts he had learned previous to his conversion so that they fit the pattern of God-given wisdom.

This gift can be easily counterfeited. And Paul says, "knowledge puffs up" (1 Cor. 8:1, NIV).

How can those "puffed up" by knowledge create problems? 1 Cor. 8:11; Luke 11:52 (compare Rom. 1:28; 10:2).

How does a person with this gift receive knowledge? Is the gift the ability to study? Do only scholars receive it? Is it some kind of "sixth sense" some people have to distinguish truth from error? Explain your answer. "Unless our knowledge is a stepping-stone to the accomplishment of the highest purposes, it is worthless."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 541.

THE GIFT OF WISDOM (Ecc. 12:11).

Wisdom is the ability to use knowledge in a practical way. When the Bible says that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 9:10), it means that understanding what God reveals about Himself will lead to practical applications in everyday life.

Contrast Ecclesiastes 12:11 with Proverbs 9:10. What connection do you see between the gifts of knowledge and wisdom in these verses?

Definition: The gift of wisdom is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ more than to others to know the mind of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to have insight into how knowledge may best be applied to specific needs arising in the body of Christ.

“Those who have the gift of wisdom know how to get to the heart of a problem quickly. They have practical minds and are problem solvers. They have little difficulty in making decisions because they can foresee with a fairly high degree of accuracy what the outcome of the decisions will be. When those with the gift of wisdom speak, other members of the Body recognize that truth has been spoken and the right course of action recommended. Formal learning is not at all a prerequisite. Long hours of digging out new facts may not appeal at all to those who have the gift of wisdom.”—C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1994), pp. 192, 193; revised edition.

How does the Bible describe the gifts of the men who built the tabernacle in the wilderness? Exod. 31:1-6.

Not all wisdom is intellectual. In the case of Bezalel and others, the gifts were very practical. The gift of knowledge to understand the intricacies of the artistry necessary to build the tabernacle was combined with the gift of wisdom to know how to make the entire plan function effectively.

How would you compare the reliability of counsel from someone who has the gift of wisdom with the reliability of a recommendation of your church board? What are the implications of your response?

THE GIFT OF PASTORING OR SHEPHERDING (1 Peter 5:1-3).

Our word *pastor* derives originally from the Greek word *poimen*, which means “shepherd.” This definition reflects the concept of the ministry of all believers and assumes a distinction between the *office* of pastor and the *gift* of pastoring.

Definition: The gift of pastoring or shepherding is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to a greater degree than to others of assuming a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers.

The gift of pastoring is a bit more complex than some gifts, because we tend to see the gift of pastoring and the office of pastor as synonymous.

Study the definition above, and then read 1 Peter 5:1-3. What do these verses say about the gift of pastoring, or shepherding?

It is rather startling to realize that your pastor may not have the *gift* of pastoring, or shepherding, yet be able to do a fine job in the *office* of pastor of your church! It is also rather startling to realize that some members in your congregation probably *do* have the gift of pastoring, and should be assigned the task of looking after the spiritual welfare of the members, even though they do not fill the *office* of pastor.

Ellen White illustrates the point: “The *duties of a pastor* are often shamelessly neglected because *the minister* lacks strength to sacrifice his personal inclinations for seclusion and study. The pastor should visit from house to house among his flock, teaching, conversing, and praying with each family, and looking out for the welfare of their souls. Those who have manifested a desire to become acquainted with the principles of our faith should not be neglected, but thoroughly instructed in the truth.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 337. Italics supplied.

The reference is to ministers, apparently with the gift of knowledge, who, while improving that gift, neglect the duties of the pastoral *office*.

Is there any evidence that church members with the gift of shepherding are presently ministering in your congregation? If so, in what ways? If not, why?

FURTHER STUDY: For insight into a concise philosophy of Bible study and teaching, read "Bible Teaching and Study" in *Education*, pp. 185-192.

Do you have the gift of teaching?

- | | | |
|-----|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Yes | No | Do you enjoy teaching the Bible and find that people learn from your teaching? |
| Yes | No | Do you enjoy spending considerable time learning Bible truth so that you can communicate it to others? |
| Yes | No | Do you usually organize biblical information in a careful and systematic way so that listeners clearly understand it? |
| Yes | No | Have you read the Bible through a number of times? |
| Yes | No | Given a choice, do you prefer biblical passages that are rich in doctrine? |

Do you have the gift of pastoring? The gift of pastoring is almost always combined with another gift or gifts. For instance, there are pastor-teachers, pastor-evangelists, and pastor-counselors, just to name a few gift combinations.

- | | | |
|-----|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Yes | No | Do you enjoy spending time nurturing and caring for others? |
| Yes | No | Have you been instrumental in helping some people return to the church? |
| Yes | No | Can you affirm that your Christian example has influenced a group of Christians? |
| Yes | No | Are you considered by people in your church to be a spiritual leader? |
| Yes | No | Do you tend to provide guidance for the whole person—relationally, emotionally, spiritually, and theologically? |

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Could a Christian with the spiritual gift of teaching ever be a failure as a Bible class teacher? Why?
2. What purposes do the spiritual gifts of knowledge and wisdom serve?

SUMMARY: Through teaching gifts, most biblical knowledge is transmitted to the body of Christ. The gifts of knowledge and wisdom accompany the gift of teaching. A person or a team of people with this combination of gifts is invaluable to the church. The gift of pastoring, or shepherding, should not be confused with the office of pastor. Many people in a congregation may have the pastoral gift.



A Dream and a Harvest

Sahara de Almería

The highlands that lie along the borders of Venezuela, Guyana, and Brazil are called la Gran Sabana ("the Great Savannah"). Its mountains, colorful prairies, and famous Angel Falls--the highest waterfall in the world--draw tourists from all over the world. In the midst of this natural beauty towers Mount Roraima, a name familiar to many Adventists, not because of its beauty, but because of what happened there.

Many years ago an Indian chief named Auka (or Awaka) had a vision in which an angel taught him the laws of health and principles of living. The angel told the chief to watch for a "white man with a black book." Chief Auka taught his people what the angel had told him. Together Chief Auka and his people waited for the promised white man with the black book.

In 1910 Adventist Missionary O. E. Davis, stationed in Guyana, was impressed to travel into the interior and teach the people about Christ. After months of grueling travel, he arrived at the village of Paraitepuy, on the border of Guyana and Venezuela.

When the Indians saw Davis, they cried out, "The white man with the black book!" Pastor Davis was surprised by this unexpected welcome, and immediately began teaching the people about Christ. His work was cut short when he died of malaria, but his mission lived on. The villagers buried their beloved teacher at the foot of Mount Roraima, and continued to live according to the principles he had taught them, and singing the songs they had learned.

When missionaries arrived in this area years later, they found villagers who worshiped on the Sabbath, kept no pigs, and sang familiar songs! The people wanted to be known as the Davis Indians, to honor the man who had taught them about Jesus.

The work in this area has continued to thrive over the years. On Sabbath 3,000 Davis Indian Adventists gather in 12 churches and 20 groups to worship. Nearly half of these members are under age 16. With missionary zeal they take the three angels' messages from town to town, and from house to house in their different dialects and in Spanish and English, as well.

The Davis Indians have not forgotten their heritage. They love the Lord and are eager to go home to heaven, where they can show Pastor Davis the fruits of his labors.

Sahara de Almería is Sabbath School coordinator in the East Venezuela Mission.

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Leadership and Administrative Gifts



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Matt. 20:20-28; Phil. 2:4-11; Rom. 12:1-3; Acts 6:1-7.

MEMORY TEXT: "Whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:27, 28, NKJV).

KEY THOUGHT: Leadership or administrative gifts deal with the management and supervision of the church. A person with such gifts will be in the forefront of church administration.

WHAT IS A LEADER? From a biblical perspective, a leader is a person with a God-given capacity and responsibility to influence a specific group of God's people so that group can fulfill God's purposes for them. There are four significant points in this definition: (1) The leader is gifted, either through natural talents or special gifts given by the Holy Spirit. Because of that giftedness, the leader can influence the group in a significant manner. (2) Leaders must feel a God-given sense of responsibility. They must feel accountable for those whom they influence. (3) Leadership is directed toward a particular group or a particular task. (4) The leader must be convinced of what the Lord's will is for the group.

"The people will know intuitively whether or not the . . . [leader] loves them. It is a feeling produced by the Holy Spirit Himself within the church."—C. Peter Wagner, *Leading Your Church to Growth* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1984), p. 115.

SERVANT-LEADERSHIP (Matt. 20:20-28).

The Bible advocates a leadership philosophy called “servant-leadership.” Servant-leadership produces in people a feeling of respect and love for leaders because they are doing God’s will and obviously have the best interests of their followers at heart.

How did Jesus explain servant-leadership to His disciples? Matt. 20:20-28?

First, the mother of John and Peter asks Jesus for leadership positions for her sons. Jesus immediately asks whether they are willing to take responsibility for these positions. Though they say Yes, Jesus lets them know that they have no real idea what they are asking for or what the future holds. Then He makes the statement, “Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant” (Matt. 20:27). This is the core concept of servant-leadership.

Read Romans 12:1-3. What is the “measure of faith” spoken of in verse 3? What does Paul mean by the words, “Think of yourself with sober judgment” (Rom. 12:3, NIV)?

The key Greek word for “servant” is *doulos*, which also means “slave.” A true Christian leader is a voluntary “slave” to Jesus and to those whom he or she wishes to serve. (See Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor 9:19.) This perspective on leadership produces an attitude of servanthood on the part of the leader. The key concepts of servant leadership are:

Text	Principle
John 13:35	“All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another” (NIV).
Mark 9:33-35	It is serving, not commanding.
Rom. 12:3	It is being respectful, not looking down on others.
1 Peter 5:3	It is being exemplary, not domineering.
Rom. 12:10	It is being equal, not superior.
Eph. 5:21	It is being submissive, not coercive.

Think about some leaders you have known and your own leadership efforts. How do they and you match the principles presented in this lesson?

THE GIFT OF LEADERSHIP (1 Tim. 5:17).

The gift of leadership is one of the tools the Holy Spirit uses to advance the kingdom and inspire people to do great things for the Lord.

Definition: The gift of leadership is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ more than to others to set goals in accordance with God's purposes for the future and to communicate these goals to others in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together for the glory of God.

Fill in the following chart, and study the Bible verses that pertain to the gift of leadership.

Text	Principle of Leadership
1 Tim. 5:17	
Acts 7:10	
Acts 15:13-21	
Rom. 12:8	
Heb. 13:17	
Luke 9:1	

Those with the gift of leadership are to make plans and set goals for the advancement of the kingdom.

Do you have the gift of leadership? Answering the following questions will give you a general idea:

- Yes No Do people seem to listen and agree when you speak with them?
 Yes No Do people tend to believe in you and follow your leadership?
 Yes No Do people accept the goals you suggest?
 Yes No Do you often end up as the leader of groups you join?
 Yes No Do things go smoothly when you are in charge?

Read Romans 12:3 again. Why is Paul so insistent on this point? See 3 John 9, 10.

Some people seek leadership positions because they want to be in charge, and some people refuse to accept leadership positions because they want to be humble saints. Are either of these reasons valid? If not, why not?

THE GIFT OF APOSTLESHIP (Acts 9:15, 16).

The Greek word *apostle* means "someone who is sent." Apostleship was a special designation for the original 12 followers called by Jesus, plus Paul, who was also directly called to be an apostle (Acts 9:15, 16).

Study of Paul's ministry gives us further insights on apostleship. He claimed the same authority of the "super-apostles" (2 Cor. 12:11, NIV), based on divine revelation (2 Cor. 12:1; 1 Cor 9:1) and "signs, wonders and miracles" (2 Cor. 12:12, NIV). Paul also went into unentered territory and started new churches. He claimed spiritual authority because he was the founder of those churches. (See 2 Cor. 11:16-28.) He was, nevertheless, very careful how he used his authority. (See 1 Cor. 9:12; 2 Cor. 10:13-16.)

The gift of apostleship in the contemporary church is probably best defined in terms of frontline pioneers who go into new areas, plant churches, and care for regional groups of churches when they are initially organized. In this sense, the gift is related to the gift of missionary.

Study the following passages and analyze Paul's position on the gift of apostleship. What was his attitude? How did he use this gift? How did he *not* use this gift?

Text	Comments
1 Corinthians 9	
2 Corinthians 10	

Those with this gift often exhibit:

1. a strong sense of God's call to establish new work.
2. a forceful personality that trusts God to do what is necessary to establish the authority of His work.
3. multiple gifts.
4. a sense of what God wants to do and the courage to cooperate with Him.

"The conversion of sinners and their sanctification through the truth is the strongest proof a minister can have that God has called him to the ministry. *The evidence of his apostleship is written upon the hearts of those converted, and is witnessed to by their renewed lives.* Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. A minister is greatly strengthened by these seals of his ministry.

"Today the ministers of Christ should have the same witness as that which the Corinthian church bore to Paul's labors."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 328. (Italics supplied.)

THE GIFT OF ADMINISTRATION (1 Cor. 12:28).

The King James Version calls this the gift of governments, but that sounds more like the gift of leadership we have already studied. The Greek word used for the gift of administration is different from the one used for leadership. People with the gift of administration are planners and goal-setters. They are the ones who can organize a program or project and make it work.

Definition: The gift of administration is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to understand clearly immediate and long-range goals and to devise and execute effective plans for the accomplishment of those goals.

The Greek word translated "administration," *kubernesis* (1 Cor. 12:28), is actually the term for a ship's captain, the one who guides the ship to its destination. Today, the same word is applied to airline pilots in Greece.

What happened when a ship's captain made a wrong administrative decision? Acts 27:11, 15, 41.

Note examples of the gift of administration in action:

Text	How was the gift used?
Acts 6:1-7	
Luke 14:28-30	
Titus 1:5	

Do you have the gift of administration? Answer the following questions that will help you decide whether you have this gift:

- Yes No Do people recognize your ability to organize ideas, people, and activities?
- Yes No Is it easy for you to make plans and set goals and organize ways and means of accomplishing them?
- Yes No Do you tend to organize unorganized activities almost automatically?
- Yes No Are you usually able to get people to do things without a lot of persuasion or pressure?
- Yes No Do you enjoy being assigned a task and then carrying it out in an organized way?

Can you share an experience where this gift has been a specific blessing to the church to which you belong.

THE GIFT OF FAITH (1 Cor. 12:9).

All Christians are admonished to have faith in God (Mark 11:22). We are also told that we are saved through faith that is in itself a gift from God (Eph. 2:5, 8, 9). Beyond this, however, there is another kind of faith that is a direct gift of God to certain Christians.

Definition: The gift of faith is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to a greater degree than others to discern and accept with extraordinary confidence the will and purposes of God for His work.

This kind of faith looks to the future rather than to the past. People with this gift can see what God will do, even when the task seems impossible to accomplish. They are the inventors and promoters of plans, programs, and projects that would never become reality if this gift were not present.

How did Abraham exemplify this kind of faith? Rom. 4:18-21; Heb. 11:8-10.

Some characteristics of people who have this gift are:

1. An unusual desire to accept God's promises at face value and claim them until God fulfills them, just as He says He will.
2. The recurring experience of sensing that God is going to do something unusual, even though most around you do not have this kind of assurance.
3. An attitude of expectation that in various crises God will act.

Study the following statement. How does it reflect the function of the gift of faith?

"The success attending Nehemiah's efforts shows what prayer, faith, and wise, energetic action will accomplish. *Living faith will prompt to energetic action.* The spirit manifested by the leader will be, to a great extent, reflected by the people. If the leaders professing to believe the solemn, important truths that are to test the world at this time, manifest no ardent zeal to prepare a people to stand in the day of God, we must expect the church to be careless, indolent, and pleasure-loving."
—*Christian Service*, p. 177. (Italics supplied.)

FURTHER STUDY: For more information on leadership styles and administrative and organizational plans, look up the following texts: Exod. 18:13-27; Ezra 10:16, 17; Neh. 13:23-25. Notice that Ezra took three months to make a decision because the circumstances called for careful analysis. Nehemiah, on the other hand, took direct action (to say the least).

For additional information on the gift of faith, read Hebrews 11, and identify the people listed there who had the gift of faith.

See also *Steps to Christ*, "Faith and Acceptance," pp. 49-55. This chapter outlines a faith that all Christians should have. But notice that those with the specific gift of faith have this attitude, plus an extra measure of ability to put it into action. See also chapter 1 of the book *Education*, "Source and Aim of True Education," for an outline of the dynamics of human development as envisioned by the Lord.

Ellen White on servant-leadership: "The thoughts must be trained. Gird up the loins of the mind that it shall work in the right direction and after the order of well-formed plans; then every step is one in advance, and no effort or time is lost in following vague ideas and random plans. We must consider the aim and object of life, and ever keep worthy purposes in view. Every day the thoughts should be trained and kept to the point as the compass to the pole. Everyone should have his aims and purposes, and then make every thought and action of that character to accomplish that which he purposes. The thoughts must be controlled. There must be a fixedness of purpose to carry out that which you shall undertake."—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 656.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Think of someone you know who has the gift of administration. How does this gift aid the church family? What would your group be without this person? Give some specific examples.
2. What is the difference between the faith that all believers have and the gift of faith? Describe a situation in which you have seen this gift in action.

SUMMARY: Servant-leadership is a gift designed by God and exemplified in the Bible. The gifts of leadership, administration, and faith make servant-leadership effective. These are the gifts that, in many ways, are the engine that drives the machinery of the church as she seeks to take the message of the kingdom to the world.

Miracle in Glasov

James Zachary

"What are those Americans doing to you?" the middle-aged Russian man asked his wife as she returned from an evangelistic meeting in Glasov, Russia. "What drug are they giving you? You have changed so much I hardly recognize you!" The man was suspicious of the dramatic change in his wife's countenance.

For several years the man's wife, Kima, had been a manager in a factory and a loyal member of the Communist party, with all of its privileges. Her high salary provided many comforts her countrymen could only dream of.

But the fall of Communism brought an abrupt end to Kima's privileged lifestyle. She lost her job and could not find another. She became depressed and lost all hope for the future. She turned to alcohol and tobacco to ease her pain. Each day she seemed to sink lower into a pit of despondency. She began to consider suicide.

Then a young woman invited her to attend some meetings called the "New Way of Life." Kima was an atheist; she had no time for American Christianity, and the Bible had no place in her plans. But what else was there? She doubted it would help, but finally she agreed to go just to see. God had other plans for her.

"At the meetings I was amazed. The people were so friendly," Kima testified. "I listened to their prayers, and the Bible touched my heart." Kima purchased some books following the meeting. As she read one book about Jesus, she checked every reference in the Bible she had received. "I felt strangely warmed as I read. I could not put the books down. I spent eight hours in study."

Now Kima is a new person. "I love the Bible. I think I have been born all over to a new life," she says. "If these meetings had been delayed one week, I would have been dead. I had lost all interest in living any longer. I had made plans to end my life. Thank you for coming to Glasov."

Kima is attending one of four house churches in Glasov, and is preparing for baptism. She has requested materials so she can help her friends conquer alcoholism. "I no longer yearn for a high position and a large salary. I would be happy to be a street sweeper, as long as I can know Jesus and have His joy in my heart."



Kima (left) found a new life. James Zachary is global evangelism coordinator for the Quiet Hour.

Outreach Gifts



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Matt 28:16-20; 24:14; Acts 1:8; 8:1-40.

MEMORY TEXT: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NKJV).

KEY THOUGHT: Outreach is the primary job of the church. The gifts that fall into this category are those that facilitate winning souls.

THE WORD *EVANGELISM* comes from the Greek word *euaggelizein*, which is a combination of two words, *eu*, meaning "good," and *aggellein*, meaning "to carry news," or "to proclaim something." The word *gospel*, a direct derivative of these Greek words, means "the good news." "Good news" is used 132 times in the New Testament.

Some form of the word *euaggelizein*, meaning "to evangelize," is used 55 times in the New Testament, mostly by Luke and Paul. Luke uses it as a synonym for the proclamation of the good news, and Paul uses it to explain the mission of Jesus.

The word for an evangelist, *euaggelistes*, means "a preacher of good news"; it occurs only three times. In the three instances of its use, Philip (Acts 21:8) and Timothy (2 Tim. 4:5) are called *euaggelistes*, and it is mentioned as a specific spiritual gift in Ephesians 4:11.

The outreach gifts of the Spirit empower evangelism.

EVANGELISM: THE LIFEBLOOD OF THE CHURCH (Matt. 28: 18-20).

"The very life of the church depends upon her faithfulness in fulfilling the Lord's commission."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 825.

Look up the four versions of the great commission in your Bible. What do these versions communicate to you? Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:14-20; Luke 24:44-49; John 20:19-23.

Evangelism is a term that takes in the entire procedure of presenting the good news to nonbelievers and integrating them into the church. Evangelism is an application of the great commission.

Read again Matthew 24:14, 28:16-20, and Acts 1:8. How is the subject of these verses related to evangelism?

"The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

To evangelize is to (1) receive the Holy Spirit; (2) go into all the world; (3) witness about Jesus; (4) proclaim the good news; (5) make disciples; (6) baptize new converts; (7) train people to win converts.

It is suggested that churches with an adequate evangelism program will have the following ratios in place:

Ratio	Explanation
Nonmember-guests-in-the-congregation ratio = 5/100	At least 5 of every 100 persons attending on Sabbath morning should be guests from the church's ministry area.
Members'-soul-winning-network ratio = 1/2	One of every 2 active members should identify their network of nonmember friends, relatives, work associates.
First-time-visitor-retention ratio = 1/4	One of 4 first-time visitors from the church's ministry area should become active members within a year.
Second/third-time-visitor ratio = 3/4	Three of 4 second-, third-, and fourth-time visitors should be active within a year.

GIFTS OF TONGUES AND INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES (Mark 16:17).

These are two of the most controversial gifts, mostly because of the way they are used in Pentecostal circles and the Charismatic movement. They are considered outreach gifts in this series of lessons, based on Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 14:22: "Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers" (NIV).

Fill in the following chart on the gift of tongues:

Text	What does it say about tongues?
Mark 16:17	
Acts 2:4-11	
Acts 10:46	
1 Cor. 12:10, 28	
1 Corinthians 14	
1 Cor. 12:10; 14:5, 39	

No one knows exactly what situation Paul was facing in 1 Corinthians 14. In general, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has assumed that the gift of tongues refers to the ability to learn and use a language or languages not one's own, often in a miraculous way as on the Day of Pentecost. Most illustrations of speaking in tongues in Adventist mission literature underline this belief.

Ellen White makes it clear that this is the meaning in Acts 2: "[The Holy Spirit] was an emblem of the gift then bestowed on the disciples, which enabled them to speak with fluency languages with which they had heretofore been unacquainted. The appearance of fire signified the fervent zeal with which the apostles would labor and the power that would attend their work."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 39.

On the other hand: "Fanaticism, false excitement, false talking in tongues, and noisy exercises have been considered gifts which God has placed in the church. Some have been deceived here."—*Last Day Events*, p. 159.

Reversing the Tower of Babel. At the Tower of Babel, God confused people's language so that sin would be confined to small pockets of people. At Pentecost, He reversed the process and caused large numbers of people to hear the gospel. That is why tongues can be classified as an outreach gift.

The gift of interpretation of tongues is more than translation from one language to another. In many ways, it is the functional equivalent of the gift of prophecy. It is the ability to pass on a divinely inspired message in the vernacular so that people can understand.

THE GIFT OF EVANGELISM (2 Tim. 4:5).

The gift of evangelism is unique. People with this gift can lead people to decisions for the faith in ways that are almost impossible for others. The Lord gives them words to speak and places them in situations where they find receptive people.

Definition: The gift of evangelism is the special ability that God gives to some members of the body of Christ to a greater degree than to others of sharing the gospel with unbelievers in such a way that men and women become Jesus' disciples and responsible members of the body of Christ.

Study carefully the following examples of people with the gift of evangelism. How does this gift work? 2 Tim. 4:5; Acts 8:26-40.

People with this gift are out on the front lines looking for converts. They are the people who like to knock on doors, engage people in conversations on buses and airplanes, visit people in their homes to give them Bible studies, and ask direct questions about people's willingness to accept the Lord.

Do all Christians have the special gift of evangelism? 1 Cor. 12:14-20.

The obvious answer is No. There are two issues involved here. Worldwide studies show that usually no more than 5-10 percent of a church's active membership will have the spiritual gift of evangelism. Why is this the case? First of all, because the gift of evangelism is a specialized gift. Evangelism in this sense does not mean only public meetings. It involves many outreach methods like those mentioned above. Second, not having the gift of evangelism does not mean sitting back and doing no outreach at all. A basic principle of Christian life is this: *Not all Christians are evangelists, but all Christians are witnesses.* All Christians are responsible for witnessing, telling friends, relatives, and work associates the gospel story and presenting a personal testimony. But those having the gift develop skills in opening conversations, encouraging decisions, doing "the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4:5) with finesse and dexterity.

Do you have the gift of evangelism? Ask yourself whether you have the specialized abilities of an evangelist.

THE GIFT OF DISCERNMENT (1 Cor. 12:10).

The gift of discernment is classified as an outreach gift because it is part of the process of telling right from wrong in the presentation of the gospel. This gift is also called "the ability to distinguish between spirits" (1 Cor. 12:10, NIV). Others call it the gift of insight.

Definition: The gift of discerning of spirits is the special ability God gives to some members of the body of Christ more than to others of knowing with assurance whether certain behaviors or ideas purported to be of God are in reality divine, human, or satanic.

How did Peter use this gift in his ministry?

Experience	The gift in action
Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1-10	
Simon the Sorcerer, Acts 8:14-25	

1 John 4:1 clearly indicates that "spirits" have to be tested. In some ways, this could be classified as a sign or power gift; the "spirits" discerned are often satanic.

How does Hebrews 5:11-14 clarify the use of this gift?

This is not a common gift. It must be used judiciously and with courage. Many people who have it are fearful of using it, because the consequences can be turbulent. In 1 Corinthians 14:29, discussing the issue of orderliness in worship services, Paul counsels: "Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said" (NIV). The words "weigh carefully," or "let the other judge" (KJV), translate the Greek word that means "make a distinction," "differentiate," "judge correctly." The exercise of discernment is needed.

Some characteristics of those who have this gift are (1) a keen ability to recognize inconsistencies; (2) the tendency to spot what is wrong with an idea or teaching and to suggest how to fix it; (3) a deep conviction not easily put to rest when they know people are being given half-truths, misapplied truths, or false teachings.

Assume that someone introduces into your church what purports to be new or advanced biblical understanding. How might your congregation use the gift of discernment in its midst to ascertain the validity of the person's teaching?

THE GIFT OF MISSIONARY (Rom. 1:5).

The gift of missionary refers to the ability to work cross-culturally. Not everyone can do this, nor are all called to do so.

Definition: The gift of missionary is the special ability that God gives to some members of the body of Christ to exercise whatever other spiritual gifts they have in a second culture.

There are different types of evangelism and outreach, usually classified according to the target group the evangelizers wish to reach. Their aim may be (1) the internal spiritual and numerical growth of the existing congregation; (2) bringing new converts from the community into the existing congregation; (3) planting new churches; (4) reaching out to different ethnic, language, or cultural groups.

People with the gift of missionary may work in any of these ways, though most often they function at point 4. Often they serve outside their country of origin.

How did Paul outline his combination of gifts, including the gift of missionary? Rom. 1:5; 15:16; Gal. 2:7, 8; 1 Tim. 2:7.

Study carefully Peter's experience with Cornelius in Acts 10 and 11:1-18. Notice his reaction when he arrived at Cornelius' house (Acts 10:27-29). What did he have to explain to the other disciples? Did Peter have the gift of missionary? Gal. 2:7-14.

"This vision conveyed to Peter both reproof and instruction. It revealed to him the purpose of God—that by the death of Christ the Gentiles should be made fellow heirs with the Jews to the blessings of salvation. As yet none of the disciples had preached the gospel to the Gentiles. In their minds the middle wall of partition, broken down by the death of Christ, still existed, and their labors had been confined to the Jews, for they had looked upon the Gentiles as excluded from the blessings of the gospel. Now the Lord was seeking to teach Peter the world-wide extent of the divine plan."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 135.

What circumstances have or have not led your congregation to take an interest in cross-cultural ministry? How would you go about starting this kind of ministry?

FURTHER STUDY: For additional information on the church's outreach, study Luke 24:45-49. See *The Acts of the Apostles*, chapters 1-3, and *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 86. Two books will help you learn how to use your gift of evangelism in witnessing for Christ: Mark Finley, *Persuasion: How to Help People Decide for Jesus* (Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1994) and Philip G. Samaan, *Christ's Way of Reaching People* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1990). For an interesting record of evangelism in the time of the apostles, see Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1970).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Ellen White makes the statement: "Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 195. How does this statement correlate with the gift of missionary?
2. Does "evangelism" mean only public meetings, or are there other methods that those with the gift of evangelism can utilize?
3. In many parts of the world it is common to resort to legal action to solve problems. Under what circumstances would it be appropriate to have someone with the gift of discernment attempt to resolve a difference between church members? What might be the dangers in using this procedure?

SUMMARY: Outreach gifts are the lifeblood of the church. No church can long survive if it is not winning new converts. Soul winning is the Lord's mandate for the church. Utilizing the outreach gifts in a congregation makes soul winning efficient and productive.



Prayers Answered in Mongolia, Part 1

Scott Christiansen

"Oh, yes, we know ADRA," the important Mongolian government official nodded and frowned. "They bring criminals into our country!" My mouth fell open in shock and amazement.

In 1993 a storm of charges and suspicion broke over ADRA and the tiny Adventist congregation in Mongolia. A young man from the United States had attended the Adventist church and even volunteered on a church program to help the street children in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia's capital city. Later we learned that the man was wanted by police in the United States on a variety of charges; and Mongolia was cooperating with the U. S. in arresting him. The event was big news in Mongolia, and the story became exaggerated and twisted with each retelling. Unfortunately, ADRA and the Adventist believers were caught up in the negative publicity.

Adventist Christians in Mongolia and around the world prayed fervently that God would overrule in the crisis, and bring honor to His name. And He did.

The president of Mongolia called a meeting to consider the situation of children in Mongolia. I had been invited to the meeting, but my name had been dropped from the guest list. Only quick action by friends got me into the president's meeting. Throughout the meeting I prayed for an opportunity to introduce ADRA and to give an accurate description of the good work we were doing.

As the meeting was coming to a close, the president said, "Before we close, are there any comments?" Then, pointing at me, he said, "How about you, young man. Stand up and introduce yourself."

After the meeting, in answer to prayer, the tide began to turn. When the ADRA team went to the country's only retirement home to distribute food, warm blankets, and clothing to the 130 elderly men and women there, we found a television news team covering the event. They produced a ten-minute report of ADRA that aired immediately before a speech by the Mongolian president on the occasion of the Mongolian New Year, which, in that country, is traditionally the time to honor the elderly.

Our hearts rejoiced that God was working out our public-relations problems. But it was a comment made some time later that showed us how completely God was answering our prayers.

(continued next week)

Scott Christiansen has been the director of ADRA/Mongolia since 1994.

For Current Newsbreak, Call 1-800-648-5824.

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Sign or Power Gifts



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Acts 8:9-25; 13:4-12; 14:3; 19:11-20.

MEMORY TEXT: "It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me. How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation" (Daniel 4:2, 3, NIV).

KEY THOUGHT: Sign or power gifts are miracles, direct revelations from God, or actions by believers so startling they call the attention of nonbelievers to the Christian faith. These gifts are usually not as common as other gifts. For instance, the Bible names only 50 or 60 prophets. When these gifts appear, there are nearly always dramatic actions and reactions by the people involved.

"**THE HOLY GHOST REPAIR SERVICE, INC.**" That was the title of the tract handed out by a person on the street corner. It claimed that the Holy Spirit was waiting to "repair" people through astounding miracles. Our first reaction to such an approach is usually one of caution. But the Bible recounts that signs and wonders are real.

We often downplay miracles, signs, and wonders because we are concerned that they will be confused with their counterfeits. But, our missionary literature is filled with stories of the miraculous. It seems we are willing to acknowledge these signs and wonders *as long as they happen at a physical distance*. Ask yourself whether and how you can legitimately experience these signs and wonders.

SIGNS AND WONDERS (Mark 16:15-20).

In the Bible, signs and wonders fall into three categories. First, the phrase is applied repeatedly to the miracles witnessed in Egypt at the time of the Exodus. Second, personal testimonies are related by individuals who had astonishing experiences with God's power. Third, in the early church, signs and wonders provided direct testimony to unbelievers that Christianity is the true religion.

After the New Testament period, signs and wonders became less common. Ellen White tells us they will become common again during the latter rain, though not as prominent as in Christ's day. (See *Selected Messages*, book 2, chapter 5.)

What does Mark's version of the great commission say about signs and wonders in the experience of the disciples? Mark 16:15-20.

In the Bible, signs and wonders appear particularly at times of crisis or when they have some prophetic significance.

Historical Period	Signs and Wonders
Moses and Joshua	The Exodus and the conquest of Canaan
Elijah and Elisha	Revival and rescue from apostasy
Jesus and the apostles	Most notable period of miracles, signs, and wonders
Latter rain	Revival of highly visible signs and wonders

How did Peter connect signs and wonders with the messiahship of Jesus? Acts 2:22.

Signs and wonders are evidence to unbelievers, and to doubting believers, that God is indeed working in a certain circumstance or occasion. The Lord may choose to use them at any time for that purpose.

John Calvin wrote: "Paul calls them *signs*, because they are not empty shows, but are appointed for the instruction of mankind; *wonders*, because they ought, by their novelty, to arouse men and strike them with astonishment; and *mighty deeds*, because they are more signal tokens of divine power than what we behold in the ordinary course of nature."—Quoted in R. V. G. Tasker, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1958), p. 180.

THE GIFT OF PROPHECY (1 Thess. 5:19-21).

Definition: The gift of prophecy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to receive and communicate an immediate message from God to His people through a divinely appointed utterance.

The gift of prophecy figures prominently in the Bible. There are two general kinds of prophecy, called "classical" and "predictive." Classical prophecy deals with the contemporary situation. The writings of Isaiah and Jeremiah are examples. These men received some messages that were primarily directed to the people of their own time, and other messages that contained predictive elements. Daniel and Revelation contain much predictive prophecy.

The gift of prophecy may function long-term or short-term. As in the case of Ellen White, a person may receive a lifelong call to prophetic ministry. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit may choose to assign the gift of prophecy temporarily, often to resolve a difficult issue that needs clear intervention by the Lord. Notice two special people at Jesus' dedication. Simeon, a priest who had long prayed to live to see the Messiah, was "moved by the Spirit" and gave a short prophecy about Jesus' life (Luke 2:25-35). Anna, a long-term prophetess, gave no prophecy of the future, but she witnessed diligently to all who would listen (Luke 2:36-38). Simeon, a short-term prophet, gave a predictive message.

How do false prophets figure into the prophetic picture? 1 John 4:1; 1 Thess. 5:19-21.

False prophets bring true prophets into disrepute. Truly spiritually gifted people often fall victim to people who invent their own so-called giftedness. On the other hand, we can't be so overly cautious that we neglect the clear indications of the Bible about the validity of the gift of prophecy. (Read again 1 Thess. 5:19-21.)

"The light of prophecy still burns for the guidance of souls, saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it.' It shines on the pathway of the just to commend, and on the way of the unjust to lead to repentance and conversion."—*My Life Today*, p. 42.

In a certain church, a member claimed to have prophetic visions at 5:00 a.m. every day. She spent most of her time visiting parishioners and undoing everything the church leadership did, based on her supposed gift of prophecy. How would you and your church handle a situation like this?

GIFTS OF MIRACLES AND HEALING (1 Cor. 12:9, 10).

In terms of highly visible divine interventions, these are two of the more spectacular gifts of the Spirit. We are all familiar with the practice of these gifts in the early Christian church. We are also familiar with experiences related in missionary literature. How about ourselves, close to home? When was the last time you and your family experienced a miracle, such as a divine healing?

Definition: The gift of miracles is 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 perform powerful acts that are perceived by observers to have altered the ordinary course of nature.

Miracles come in all sizes and shapes. Assuming that the miracle is not a deception, the key principle is that *God is the author of all true miracles*. He uses people to perform miracles according to a need He knows about, not according to our perceptions.

Definition: The gift of healing is 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 illnesses and restore health apart from the use of natural means.

There are people with this gift who pray for the sick according to the instructions in James 5:13-20, and people are healed. Some people pray for miracles, as did Elijah, and miracles happen. Yet Elijah was "a man just like us" (James 5:17, NIV). He was spiritually gifted by God to accomplish a task for the advancement of the kingdom.

How does Satan again try to counterfeit true gifts, especially during the loud cry and the latter rain? Rev. 13:13; 16:13, 14.

"Satan, surrounded by evil angels, and claiming to be God, will work miracles of all kinds to deceive, if possible, the very elect. God's people will not find their safety in working miracles, for Satan would counterfeit any miracle that might be worked. God's tried and tested people will find their power in the sign spoken of in Exodus 31:12-18. They are to take their stand on the living Word—'It is written.' This is the only foundation upon which they can stand securely. Those who have broken their covenant with God will in that day be without hope and without God in the world."—*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 55.

GIFTS OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE (Acts 16:16-18).

Spiritual warfare is a modern phrase for an old battle. Adventists usually call it the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Often the battle lines become closely drawn, and the forces of good and evil are embroiled in tangible battle. A classic example is Elijah's experience on Mount Carmel. Other examples are Jesus' confrontation with a legion of demons (Mark 5:1-20) and Paul's confrontation with Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:4-12).

Definition: The gift of deliverance (or exorcism) is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ more than to others of casting out demons and evil spirits.

This gift is alluded to, but is not directly mentioned in any list in the New Testament. (See Matt. 12:22-32; Luke 10:17-20; Acts 8:5-8.)

How did Paul react to the declarations of a young girl in Philippi? Why did he react this way? Acts 16:16-18.

The gift of deliverance or exorcism has been abused and misused in such spectacular ways that it is often hard to tell the true from the counterfeit. But in spite of these counterfeits there are times when Christians are called upon to do open battle with the forces of evil.

Definition: The gift of intercession is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to pray for extended periods of time on a regular basis and see frequent answers to their prayers, to a degree much greater than that which is expected of the average Christian.

This gift is also alluded to, though not directly mentioned, in the New Testament. (See James 5:14-16; 1 Tim. 2:1, 2; Col. 4:12, 13.) Prayer for others results in answers that although not always recognizable, are nonetheless dramatic and effective.

Have you ever been involved in a situation in which these gifts were utilized? Have you ever been involved in a situation in which special things happened, but you weren't too sure about their validity? How can you be prepared to tell the true from the false if ever you should find yourself in such a situation?

GIFTS OF MARTYRDOM, VOLUNTARY POVERTY, AND CELIBACY (1 Cor. 13:3).

These three gifts are included with the power or sign gifts because they are readily apparent and highly visible. They are definite signs to nonbelievers that a Christian presence is in their midst.

What do the following verses say about each of these gifts?

Text and Gift	Description
Martyrdom	
1 Cor. 13:3; Acts 7:60	
Voluntary Poverty	
1 Cor. 13:3	
Celibacy	
1 Cor. 7:7; Matt. 19:12	

Definition: The gift of martyrdom is the special ability that God gives to some members of the body of Christ to undergo suffering for the faith, even to death, while consistently displaying a joyous and victorious attitude that brings glory to God.

Definition: The gift of voluntary poverty is the special ability that God gives to some members of the body of Christ to renounce material comfort and luxury and adopt a personal lifestyle equivalent to those living at the poverty level in a given society in order to serve God more effectively.

Ellen White remarks about Nicodemus: “[Nicodemus] used his wealth in helping to sustain the church at Jerusalem and in advancing the work of the gospel. . . . He became poor in this world’s goods; yet he faltered not in the defense of his faith.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 105.

Definition: The gift of celibacy is the special ability that God gives to some members of the body of Christ to remain single and enjoy it; to be unmarried and not suffer undue sexual temptations.

Paul was himself an example of this gift. Being unmarried is not necessarily the same as having this gift. Those who have this gift remain single because they feel they can serve the Lord better that way.

FURTHER STUDY: For more information on devil possession and the gift of exorcism, read in context Matthew 8:32; 9:33; 15:28; 17:18; Acts 5:16. See, also, the *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 575-578, and *The Great Controversy*, chapter 31. There have been outbreaks of so-called "deliverance ministries" in the Adventist Church that have gone far beyond the bounds of biblical guidelines. For more information, you can obtain a number of documents from the General Conference Biblical Research Institute on this subject.

For further information on modern-day martyrs, see James and Marti Hefley, *By Their Blood: Christian Martyrs of the 20th Century* (Milford, Mich.: Mott Media, 1979).

A word of warning: The kinds of confrontation with the forces of evil experienced through signs and wonders are not for everyone. Satan is no one to fool with. Ellen White, writing to Moses Hull, an early Adventist evangelist who later became a spiritist, remarks: "You have parleyed with Satan, and reasoned with him, and tarried upon forbidden ground, and have exercised your mind in things which were too great for you, and by indulging in doubts and unbelief have attracted evil angels around you, and driven from you the pure and holy angels of God. . . . You went to battle with Satan and his host without an armor, and have been grievously wounded, and are insensible to your wound."— *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 428, 429.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you suppose we hear more about signs, wonders, and miracles in nontechnological societies?
2. Does God intend Christians to exercise such gifts in areas where there is ready access to advanced medical knowledge?

SUMMARY: Sign or power gifts are those that demonstrate the power of God in highly visible, often spectacular ways. The gift of prophecy is also included in this category. These gifts are still as valid as any other gift, but they are less common. The Lord usually uses them to solve extraordinary problems.



Prayers Answered in Mongolia, Part 2

Scott Christiansen

Some bad press had hampered ADRA's work in Mongolia, and cast doubt upon the church, as well. Then some unexpected television news coverage of ADRA assisting the elderly in the retirement home helped repair the image of the church and ADRA in Mongolia.

Meanwhile, ADRA was busy working on several other projects: supplying nutrition supplement bars to children and nursing mothers, providing desperately needed supplies to a region in which the only hospital had collapsed into a pile of bricks and twisted metal, and caring for nomadic mothers who had no clinic in which to give birth. Garden projects were introduced to help poor women provide for their families; and a low-cost, highly insulated housing design was introduced to the country. Several of these projects received media attention. But the government still had doubts about ADRA.

Then ADRA was asked to help provide desperately needed laundry facilities for the country's only infant orphanage. The orphanage housed 130 infants and toddlers but had no adequate laundry facilities. Most laundry was washed by hand in tepid water, then hung over stair railings and steam radiators to dry. But the building often was so cold during Mongolia's bitter winters that the laundry never fully dried. Babies often were dressed in inadequately laundered, damp clothes.

ADRA surveyed the situation and agreed to provide an institutional-size washer, water extractor, and dryer large enough to meet the needs of the orphanage plus take in laundry from hotels that would generate income for other improvements. The facilities required a new laundry room, and ADRA added new linen to the list.

Top government officials were invited to the inauguration ceremony for the new laundry facilities, and as a sign of ADRA's acceptance in the country, they all agreed to attend. The wife of the U. S. ambassador to Mongolia, who had worked as a volunteer at the orphanage for two years, called the laundry equipment a "dream come true." And the wife of the Mongolian president accepted ADRA's donation on behalf of the people of Mongolia. At the end of her speech she said with a smile, "Oh, yes, we know ADRA, and we are happy they are here."

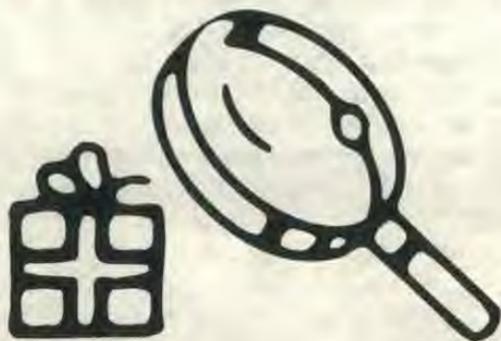
Scott Christiansen has been the director of ADRA/Mongolia since 1994.

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How to Discover and Verify Your Spiritual Gifts



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Matt. 25:14-30; Eph. 4:12-16; 1 Cor. 12:12-31.

MEMORY TEXT: "The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. . . . His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'" (Matthew 25:20, 21, NIV).

KEY THOUGHT: Those who receive spiritual gifts must learn to use them efficiently. Spiritual gifts must be developed. They are not assigned to a person with all the skills already in place.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS MUST BE POLISHED AND PERFECTED. While going to college, a young man worked in a factory that produced bushings for all kinds of machinery. One of the operations called for grinding and polishing the bushings by hand. Bushings of this type are small. One slip, and you grind your finger instead of the bushing. The young man walked around with bandaged fingers for some time until he got the knack of polishing bushings and leaving his fingers intact. Since he was paid by the piece, the more bushings he polished, the more money he made. He worked hard at developing the necessary skills to increase his output.

Spiritual gifts involve skills that the Lord designs for us to use in the advancement of the kingdom. It takes work, study, and experience to polish and perfect the skills that accompany your gift or gifts.

**IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS—
PART 1 (Eph. 4:12-16).**

Spiritual gifts are identified and verified using a four-stage procedure:

1. Take an inventory or test indicating your most obvious gifts. (See Friday's lesson for some ideas of where to get such a test.)
2. Have the church body verify your findings.
3. Through intercessory prayer, ask the Lord to confirm your gifts (James 1:5).
4. Use your gifts in ministry.

Do spiritual gifts need to be developed? Eph. 4:12-16.

Spiritual gifts are not assigned as "adults." The ability to use the gift goes with the assignment, but it is our responsibility to become proficient in the use of our gifts. Once we know what our gifts are, we need to develop them into effective ministries.

Developing a Spiritual Gift—a Case Study. Assume you have been given the gift of teaching. How can you develop that gift? Study the following chart, and note the procedure used to develop a gift. Then make a similar chart for a gift you know you have, and make a plan for developing that gift.

Step	Procedure	Follow-up Suggestions
1	Develop a clear understanding of the basic principles of biblical interpretation.	Master the skill of biblical interpretation.
2	Develop a system of Bible study that will continually increase your knowledge.	Take time to master the Scriptures. Have a Bible-reading plan.
3	Make it a priority to apply the truth you learn to your own life.	Recognize that truth is both for you and for those you teach.
4	Master principles of communication.	Master a book like Gregory's <i>Seven Laws of Teaching</i> .
5	Set up a continuing-education program for yourself. Teaching is a lifelong ministry.	Read books, study, attend seminars, take the time to prepare well.

**IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS—
PART 2.**

Looking at your own inward convictions. Your experience in the Christian life and your service to the church have already taught you some things about spiritual gifts. You may not have thought of it in the same way we have studied in this quarterly, but you may already be exercising your gifts. Fill out the following inward-conviction questionnaire.

1. I have a growing conviction and restlessness in my heart that tells me I ought to be doing the following in the church:
 - a. I should become involved in _____
 - b. I know about a special need that I could fill. (Describe that need.)
 - c. Which of the spiritual gifts best relate to this conviction I have?
2. I am certain that God has called me to a specific ministry. (Describe that ministry.)
3. What gifts are necessary for that ministry? Do I feel I have them?
4. Do I truly feel that God could develop that gift in me? Is it important for the church that He do so?
5. Am I willing to carry out that ministry consistently with conviction and expertise?
6. Of all the Christians I know, the ministry of which two has impressed me most?
 - a. What gifts do these two persons have?
 - b. Are those the same gifts I feel I have, and could I accomplish a ministry similar to theirs?

Basic principles to keep in mind:

1. A restless, growing conviction is often the first sign that God is endowing you with a combination of gifts necessary to meet a need in the church.
2. A specific call by the Lord to a ministry will inevitably be accompanied by the gifts that will make that ministry effective, provided a person's motivation and attitude follow biblical guidelines and principles.

IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS— PART 3.

Sunday's lesson contained a short case study of how to develop the gift of teaching and an example of how to develop any spiritual gift. Today we look at another case study, using the gift of evangelism as an example.

Though evangelism often refers to public meetings, the gift of evangelism really means that a person has the ability to lead people to decisions for the Lord. Evangelists win converts.

Types of Evangelism. There are many types of evangelism. Some types are witnessing approaches in which all Christians can and should participate. Other types require the specific gift of evangelism. The farther down you move on the chart below, the more you need the gift of evangelism to accomplish the objective. Notice how other gifts may cooperate with the gift of evangelism at certain points.

Type of Evangelism	Cognate Gift(s)	Church Involvement
Prayer	Intercessory prayer	All Christians can witness at these stages.
Friendship	Exhortation/encouragement	
Confrontation	Discernment of spirits	The gift of evangelism is essential here.
Public	Faith	
Confirmation	Teaching, pastoring, hospitality	Entire church membership involved.

If you have this gift, you can follow a four-step plan:

1. Know the essentials of the gospel. Study Bible doctrines and the evangelistic accounts in the book of Acts.
2. Learn friendship evangelism. Take a friendship-evangelism seminar, and apply the principles.
3. Observe someone with this gift. Seek assistance from people with related gifts. Read books on the subject.
4. Try out your new skills. Practice and continue studying.

VERIFYING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS (Acts 13:1-3).

Spiritual gifts are verified in two ways: first, by confirmation by the church body, and, second, by the Lord as believers engage in intercessory prayer.

Who affirmed Paul and Barnabas in their gifts and ministry? Acts 13:1-3. Who affirmed Timothy? 1 Tim. 4:11-14.

Use the following chart as a guideline for when and how you might want to use different parts of the form and questions below.

Step	If . . .	Then . . .
1	If you haven't belonged to your church very long, and no one really knows you well . . .	begin using your gifts as well as you can, and become part of the active membership.
2	If your experience is mostly in ministry not directly related to a local church . . .	talk with people in that ministry, and ask them for confirmation.
3	If the church you attend doesn't understand much about spiritual gifts and you want to avoid undue controversy . . .	use your gifts as best you can, and trust that the Lord will send you outside confirmation in His own way and time.
4	If you feel you have one or more of the sign or power gifts . . .	meet with your pastor or elder, and set up a system for evaluating your giftedness.

Spiritual-Gifts Confirmation. Have a number of people evaluate you, using the following form:

(For the evaluator): Use your knowledge of this person's ministry in the church to provide the following information:

1. Name any gift that you are definitely *certain* this person has.
2. Name any gift you think might be a *potential* undeveloped gift this person may have.
3. Name any gift you feel this person has that he or she is using *fruitfully*.

Explain why you credited the person with these gifts.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS CAN BE ABUSED (Matt. 25:14-30).

Spiritual gifts are assigned by the Holy Spirit to advance the kingdom. Possession of a particular gift does not make anyone superior to anyone else, nor is it a measure of holiness or dedication.

Read the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. Who became the “worthless servant” (NIV), and why? How does Paul pinpoint the underlying problem of abuse of spiritual gifts? Rom. 12:3.

Notice that the only person Jesus condemned in this parable was the one who did not use any gift. He made no distinction between the person with five talents and the person with two. There are two primary ways in which spiritual gifts are often abused.

Gift Projection—“Why don’t you do what I do?” Gift projection assumes that everyone else ought to have the same gift I have. Gift projection is often indulged by people with the gifts of knowledge, faith, evangelism, and discernment of spirits.

People with the gift of knowledge are tempted to say, “But everyone knows . . .” Those with the gift of faith tend to declare, “Where’s *your* faith . . .” Those with the gift of evangelism often assume that people without this gift “don’t work” for the Lord. People with the gift of discernment tend to say, “but can’t you see . . .”

Gift Exaltation—“My gift is better than yours!” Gift exaltation is an attitude, often unconscious, that a certain gift is a spiritual status symbol. Those without it are given the impression that they are second-class citizens of the kingdom.

People who have some of the power or sign gifts, or highly goal-oriented gifts like evangelism, often project this attitude, even though they may not mean to do so consciously. There are large segments of the Christian community, for instance, who sincerely believe that unless one speaks in tongues, he or she is not “affirmed” by the Lord and is not yet a true citizen of the kingdom. People with the gift of evangelism often assume that all Christians are evangelists, and if they don’t do that job, then they are letting the Lord down.

What does Paul specifically say about these attitudes? Rom. 12:1-8; 1 Cor. 12:12-26.

FURTHER STUDY: The Seventh-day Adventist Church produces an excellent series of study materials on spiritual gifts authored by Dr. Roy Naden, entitled *Your Spiritual Gifts: Making the Great Discovery* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Instructional Product Development, 1989). The set includes videos, an instruction book, and a spiritual-gifts inventory.

A spiritual-gifts inventory called *Finding Your Spiritual Gifts: Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire* is available from many ABC's and conference offices. The same questionnaire is found in C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*, revised edition (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1994).

Read "Talents," *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 325-365, for more information on the parable of the talents. Look for the principles that are to direct our use of talents.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you had an experience with someone who indulges in gift projection? Relate the experience. What did you do to resolve the situation? Discuss how you can personally avoid such problems.
2. Have you had any experience with someone who indulges in gift exaltation? Relate the experience. What did you do to resolve the situation? Discuss how you can personally avoid such problems.

SUMMARY: Spiritual gifts need to be identified and developed. This is done through a four-stage process. This lesson has described the process and provided some case studies as examples.



From Death to New Life

J. Lynn Martell

Carolyn put the telephone receiver back on the hook. Her mother's words still rang in her ear: Her father had been struggling with cancer and emphysema, but he was losing the battle. Could she come right away?

Although Carolyn had been reared in a Christian home, both she and her family had strayed from their faith. Now, when death seemed imminent, she did not know what to say to give her father hope—or to shore up her own faith. Realizing that she did not know God as she should, she spent time fasting and praying, asking God for spiritual restoration to enable her to comfort and help her father.

God came near to her, giving her the assurance of His love and acceptance. With new hope she traveled to the island of Hawaii, where her parents lived. She spent an entire night reading the Bible to her father and talking to him about salvation. He renewed his faith in Christ and accepted Jesus as his Saviour just before he died.

After the funeral Carolyn returned home and continued to nurture her new relationship with God. She began searching for a church that would meet her spiritual needs. She attended several churches, but was not satisfied with any of them.

One day her husband, Taeleipu (Ipu, for short), a post-office worker, noticed a brochure for the Discoveries in Prophecy seminars as he sorted mail. As a child he had known some Adventists in his homeland of Samoa. Although he also had a Christian background, he no longer attended church. But he knew his wife was searching, and brought one of the brochures home for her. When she lost it, he found another one in the trash at work. This time he suggested that she attend. He even offered to care for the children so she could go.

Carolyn began attending the meetings. After each meeting she shared what she had learned with her husband. He listened and willingly accepted each truth.

When Ipu needed surgery, members of the Adventist church visited him in the hospital. Their caring attitude deeply impressed him. Ipu decided that the Adventist faith must be real, and decided to attend church and be baptized. Today Ipu and Carolyn rejoice in their new walk with God, forged in the face of death.

J. Lynn Martell is president of the Hawaii Conference.

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Converting Spiritual Gifts Into Ministries



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Rom. 12:1-3; 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 6:12.

MEMORY TEXT: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1, NKJV).

KEY THOUGHT: The Lord assigns spiritual gifts to every newborn Christian. One or more of these gifts will be permanent, lifelong ministries that will be the primary focus of a person's discipleship.

ONCE SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE IDENTIFIED, THE NEXT STEP IS TO DEVELOP THEM INTO MINISTRIES. This is done through study, attendance at training sessions and seminars, and through use and practice. The Lord expects Christians to "professionalize" their ministries and develop them to the best of their ability.

Because you have received a personal calling from the Lord, it is up to you to put your ministry into practice on a regular basis. Throughout your lifetime, your principal roles in the church should be compatible with your spiritual gifts. There may be times when the needs of the kingdom require you to perform a role or function that is outside your regular ministry or not directly related to your particular gifts, but this will be a temporary situation. Most of the time, you will function within the context of your primary spiritual gifts.

One caution! The Lord calls you to a ministry for *His glory*—not your own! Spiritual gifts are given for the advancement of the kingdom. (See Gal. 5:22, 23.)

DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL GIFTS INTO MINISTRIES (2 Cor. 5:18, 19).

God's purpose in assigning spiritual gifts to church members is to enable them to minister to others. (See 1 Tim. 4:14-16; 2 Tim. 2:15; Eph. 4:15, 16.) Unselfish use of our gifts brings blessing and salvation to others. Study the following chart. It will give you an idea of the kinds of ministry that might develop out of each gift.

Gift	Possible Activity
Teaching	Teacher in Sabbath School, small groups, Bible studies, seminars.
Service	Deacon, deaconess, visitation, etc.
Knowledge and wisdom	Resource person for ministry groups, teaching activities, seminars, etc.
Exhortation	Peer counseling, retreats, youth ministry, support groups.
Discernment	Bible-study groups, Sabbath School class leader, counseling.
Faith	Ministry groups that need encouragement and long-range planning.
Giving	Regular and special-needs giving.
Apostleship	Church planting, planning new ministries, serving in previously unentered areas, fulfilling a divinely given leadership role.
Pastoring	Visitation, area spiritual coordinator, small-group chaplain, etc.
Evangelism	Door-to-door ministries, apprenticeship programs, public meetings, seminars.
Mercy	Hospital visitation, community service, prison ministries.
Hospitality	Receptionist/greeter ministry, small-group activities, community service.
Administration	Organizing activities, chairing and managing groups.
Missionary	Any activity across ethnic or cultural boundaries.
Intercessory Prayer	Intercessory-prayer ministries, small-group prayer leader.
Helps	Church maintenance, deacons, church-office personnel, ministry in groups.
Leadership	Elder, deacon, committee chairperson.

DESIGNING A MINISTRY

The first step in designing a ministry is to decide what roles or ministries in the already existing church structure fit your gifts. The second step is to determine what ministries need to be added to the existing ones so that your gifts can be used adequately.

List your three primary spiritual gifts: (If you haven't taken a spiritual-gifts inventory, do the best you can.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Fit your gifts into one or more of the following three categories:

1. Gifts dealing with **outreach and evangelism**, resulting in the numerical growth of the church.

Evangelism	Tongues
Miracles	Interpretation of tongues
Healing	Voluntary poverty
Mercy	Deliverance (exorcism)

2. Gifts dealing with the **spiritual maturity** of the church. These are gifts fostering spiritual growth, providing discipleship training, and membership support.

Prophecy	Exhortation or encouragement
Teaching	Discernment of spirits
Pastor	Faith
Knowledge	Intercessory prayer
Wisdom	Hospitality

3. Gifts dealing with the **administrative functions** of the church, such as financial management, maintenance of physical facilities, and membership support.

Leadership	Administration
Helps	Service
Giving	

What roles, offices, or positions in the regular church structure fit your gifts? So that your gifts are used adequately, what ministries could be started in your church?

STUDY AND KNOWLEDGE (2 Tim. 2:15).

Spiritual gifts, as we have seen, do not develop themselves. As you convert your gifts into ministries, you may have to do considerable study to gain the knowledge necessary to carry out effectively your ministry or ministries.

What does the Bible say about well-thought-out, well-organized ministries?

2 Tim. 2:15 _____

Eccl. 9:10 _____

Rom. 12:11 _____

Heb. 6:12 _____

“It is not a virtue for men or women to excuse slow bungling at work of any character. The slow habits must be overcome. The man who is slow, and does his work at a disadvantage, is an unprofitable workman. . . . Dullness and ignorance are no virtue. . . . ‘Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.’ ‘Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.’ ”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 316.

How did Paul prepare himself for his new ministry when the Lord called him as a missionary to the Gentiles? Gal. 1:11-18. What did Paul especially want when in prison in Rome? 2 Tim. 4:13. How did Luke prepare himself to write the books of Luke and Acts? Luke 1:1-4.

All ministries take study, planning, and organization. In the space below, write down some resources you know you will need for your chosen ministry. Which resources are already available? Which do you need to find and obtain?

Make a list of books you should read that discuss your ministry and a list of seminars or training sessions you should attend. Where can you find these resources?

COOPERATIVE VENTURES (1 Cor. 12:12-27).

Individual spiritual gifts rarely function as isolated entities. They are designed to function in conjunction with other gifts. That is why the Holy Spirit assigns various gifts to people and to church congregations. As you develop your gift-based ministry, you will need to develop cooperative ventures with other people.

**What did Paul say about the unifying purpose of spiritual gifts?
1 Cor. 12:12-27.**

We have read this text many times during the quarter. It is so important because it is the key to the effectiveness of church organization based on spiritual gifts. These verses, along with Romans 12:1-5, outline what church unity means. It does not mean uniformity. It means that each person does his or her task or ministry in the right spirit and for the right reasons. When planning is done, it is done with an eye to God's glory. This spirit avoids all kinds of personality conflicts and discussion of peripheral issues that have little or nothing to do with the advancement of the kingdom.

Use the following chart for finding and enlisting the cooperative ventures you need for your ministry.

Skills Needed	Gifts or Help Needed
People skills	What people skills will you need to carry out this ministry?
Training	What kind of training will the people who work with you need, and where can they receive it?
Support groups	What kinds of support groups do you need to help make your ministry a success? Find some people who will counterbalance your temperament.
Resource support	What kind of resource support do you need? For instance, if you don't like to study and do research, find someone else to do this part of the ministry. You may also need to find someone who can give financial support to your ministry.

PLAN OF ACTION

This is your operational plan. You need to meet somewhere, have a schedule, and get your ministry started. You also need to learn how to recruit and use volunteers to help you in your ministry, if it is a cooperative venture.

Base of operations: Where will your base of operations be? Your home, the church, etc? Will you need to rent a building or office. Where will you meet?

Building a schedule: How often will you meet? Does everyone helping you have to be there all the time? Who will help you organize this schedule?

How will you go about starting your ministry? With whom do you need to talk? What authorizations will you need?

Developing a time line for your ministry. It usually takes about three months to plan and organize a new ministry. If you try to do it faster, something will be left out, and the project will probably fail. Don't be impatient. Do it once, and do it right.

On the following chart, write down what you expect to accomplish during each of the time periods:

Three months _____

One year _____

Long range _____

Using volunteers _____

Volunteers in today's societies require five things:

1. Clearly defined tasks with definite limits.
2. Short terms in office.
3. Plenty of human resources to employ in attaining the goal.
4. Simple, direct feedback about how the volunteers are doing.
5. Lots of affirmation.

FURTHER STUDY: Seminars and training sessions on spiritual gifts are often given by your mission or conference departments. Attend as many of these as you can. They will be helpful. Check with your local Adventist Book Center to see what materials they carry.

Read the book of Acts in the Bible and *The Acts of the Apostles* by Ellen White. Do a study on the spiritual gifts of the people mentioned and how they used these gifts in ministry. Notice how it is possible to identify with some accuracy the gifts of some of the people mentioned less often. Ascertain how these people used these gifts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss the five elements that today's volunteers look for. Is that true in your church? How can you organize ways of getting more people to participate?
2. Is the following statement true or false? "If people were really dedicated to the Lord, we wouldn't have any problem getting people to volunteer." Explain your answer.
3. Someone said, "I shouldn't have to do any of this. That's why we have a pastor. That's his job. He should get all the volunteers and get the church working." True or false? Discuss your answer.

SUMMARY: The Holy Spirit's purpose in assigning spiritual gifts is that a person's primary gifts become the framework for lifelong ministry. There are many types of activities that fit gifts, but planning and organization are essential for the success of a ministry. It is each person's responsibility to learn how to carry out his or her ministry effectively and proficiently. Part of that training includes learning how to motivate people and use resources. Cooperative ventures with other people are important.



Light in the Darkness

Edwin Eisele

I n S i d e S t o r y

Satan may be the defeated foe, but he does not give up easily, especially in countries where he has held sway for centuries.

The country of Togo, in West Africa, is known as the center of voodoo worship in the world. People who discard their fetishes and voodoo charms in order to worship Jesus Christ often do so at great personal expense.

When Yaovi (Yah-OO-vee), a former voodoo priest, accepted Jesus Christ last year, he and his family asked Pastor David to help him destroy his voodoo charms and fetishes that had been the center of his life. He and his wife and a handful of Adventists gathered in a field where Yaovi placed his idols and fetishes. The pastor prayed, then they lit the pile.

The fire drew a crowd of more than 50 curious villagers who stopped to investigate the fire. Some older folks became angry when they learned that Yaovi was destroying his fetishes. They threatened to harm him if he continued.

Yaovi tried to reason with the people. He explained that these were just pieces of wood and stone, and he was destroying them because he had accepted Jesus Christ as the Lord of his life. But his word only made the crowd angrier.

Someone threw a stone at Yaovi. Another cried out, "Let's burn the pastor's motorcycle! He's the one responsible for this!" The crows surged forward and began throwing stones and beating on Pastor David and Yaovi. But Yaovi's wife defended him, the crowd backed away, allowing the pastor and former voodoo priest to escape. Yaovi and his wife fled to the home of another Christian, who notified the police. The police arrived at Yaovi's home and found the mob had tied up his entire family and were beating them. Had the police not come, the family would have been killed.

Yaovi was not discouraged. He thanked God that he had been called upon to suffer for Jesus. And Pastor David reaffirmed his intention to return to minister in the village. "I have dedicated my life to bring the light of the gospel to those in darkness. We must build a church in this stronghold of Satan and voodoo worship."



Edwin Eisele is Sabbath School director of the Sahel Union in West Africa.

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Using Your Spiritual Gifts in Your Church



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Gal. 5:22, 23; 1 Cor. 12:7; John 13:34; Rom. 14:13, 19; Gal. 5:13, 14.

MEMORY TEXT: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:22, 23, NIV).

KEY THOUGHT: Each member and each congregation have a combination of gifts that determine the ministries a congregation can efficiently carry out. The organization of a congregation should take into account its mixture of gifts.

FITNESS TO SERVE. Seventh-day Adventist churches are usually organized around officers (elders, deacons, deaconesses, clerks, and treasurers) and departments (Sabbath School, Adventist Youth, etc.). Usually the annual nominating committee fills the list of positions given in the *Church Manual*.

According to the *Church Manual*, the nominating committee has a twofold purpose: (1) to give careful study to the needs of the church and (2) to make *careful inquiry into the fitness of members to serve*.

Often "fitness to serve" is overlooked or ignored by nominating committees. Too often, "fitness to serve" is restricted to a person's availability, seniority, or social standing. "Fitness to serve" means that the nominating committee must decide regarding an individual's spiritual maturity. The committee must assure the church that a nominee's life shows no visible signs of unbecoming conduct. "Fitness to serve" should include the identifiable spiritual giftedness of those appointed.

ONE ANOTHER (John 13:34).

The Greek word translated "one another" is used 76 times in the New Testament. The uses of this word give a picture of what could be called the corporate Christian personality of a local church.

Look up the following texts. Each represents a "one another" statement in the category on the chart.

Category	Texts	Comments
Interrelationships	John 13:34	
Negative commands	Rom. 14:13	
Mutual edification	Rom. 14:19	
Mutual service	Gal. 5:13, 14	

These categories represent an interdependent ministry in which members develop Christian characters and personalities for the benefit of all (Gal. 5:22). This ministry includes the use of spiritual gifts.

Notice how spiritual gifts are related to the overall corporate personality and function of a church congregation (1 Cor. 12:7; 13). Notice also how reciprocal living and spiritual gifts complement each other:

Spiritual Gift	Corporate Personality
Teaching	"Teach . . . one another" (Col. 3:16, NIV).
Exhortation/ encouragement	"Encourage one another" (1 Thess. 5:11, NIV).
Faith	"Pray for each other" (James 5:16, NIV).
Prophecy	"Mutual edification" (Rom. 14:19, NIV).
Helping	"Serve one another in love" (Gal. 5:13, 14, NIV).

"One another" commands in the Bible: Without giving all the references, we can list some of these commands. Inspired writers urge us to love one another, receive one another, greet one another, care for one another, be patient with one another, make things right with one another, and forgive one another. What unity would prevail in the church if these injunctions were followed! There would be no cruel judging of other people's characters. There would be no unkind criticism or envy of others. There would be mutual respect between races, sexes, social and economic classes. In fact, the church would be a foretaste of heaven. "The characteristics most needful to be cherished by God's commandment-keeping people are patience and long-suffering, peace and love"—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 398.

IDENTIFYING YOUR CHURCH'S COMBINATION OF GIFTS

Once individual members identify their gifts and ministries, a church congregation can categorize its primary and secondary combinations of gifts by ranking the gifts of the members. A church can then develop programs and projects that utilize the giftedness of its members.

This corporate giftedness may change as members come and go. An annual evaluation of giftedness as part of the nominating committee process will indicate the changes that have taken place. Once a congregation has been surveyed for spiritual giftedness, all you need is a yearly update of new and/or formerly nonparticipating members to keep your corporate-giftedness information up to date.

Are there any combinations of gifts that are essential for the efficient functioning of the church?

There are four sets of gifts that are always needed and will, almost always, appear in the church. If one of these sets of gifts is missing, the church must pray earnestly that the Lord will provide it, either by calling someone within the church, or sending someone with that gift to the church.

- Set one: gifts of evangelism
- Set two: gifts of leadership and administration
- Set three: gifts of pastoring and hospitality
- Set four: gifts of teaching

Tasks and spiritual gifts. When Paul outlined a philosophy of ministry built around spiritual gifts, there were no church buildings to maintain, no zoning laws with which to struggle, no building codes or fire inspections, no denominational organizations, no income-tax laws or medical plans, no monthly treasurer's reports. There were few of the multitudinous church tasks that keep congregations busy today. Spiritual gifts were focused on ministry, primarily church planting and growth.

Sometimes a person may have a mixture of gifts that includes secondary gifts that fit certain church tasks but do not form part of that person's primary ministry choice. The Lord will amplify these secondary gifts for the good of the kingdom and confirm and bless abundantly the person's ministry. But this should be a temporary situation until someone with a more appropriate mixture of gifts appears on the scene. A Christian spirit enables an individual to accept the fact that others are more qualified by their gifts to perform certain functions. Humility bows to the Lord's leading.

**ORGANIZING YOUR CHURCH AROUND SPIRITUAL GIFTS
(Matt. 28:16-20).**

Today's lesson outlines a way of organizing your church personnel and program using spiritual gifts.

The system described in this lesson is built around four sets of general frameworks for ministry:

1. the soul-winning mandate of the great commission (Matt. 28:16-20).
2. the administration of the church itself.
3. the needs of the congregation.
4. the needs of the community served by the church.

Because any or all of these may change periodically, the system is never static. Because the system is needs-based and administered through spiritual giftedness, it is always active and sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. A system of this type cannot become static unless it is forced into an artificial mold.

Stage 1: Form a *Prayer and Planning Commission*. This commission will seek, through prayer, the will and blessing of the Lord in discovering and meeting the needs of the church and the community. The Lord will reveal the spiritual gifts of the members and the plan for ministries that will employ those gifts for the church and the community.

Stage 2: The *Prayer and Planning Commission* is divided into three task forces. Each task force has a specific job description and a time line within which to work. Once the task forces have finished compiling their information, the Prayer and Planning Commission will present a report to the nominating committee.

Task force 1: The needs of the church. This task force will use a questionnaire to survey the congregation regarding the needs of the church itself.

Task force 2: Spiritual gifts of the community. This task force will survey the community and update demographic data.

Task force 3: Spiritual gifts of the church. This task force will update information on the spiritual giftedness of the congregation.

How could this system be implemented in your church? Discuss this in your class.

PUTTING SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO WORK: A CASE STUDY.

Read the following story, and fill in the blanks at the end. Discuss the story and your answers with your class. See Friday's lesson for answers.

A small group of about 15 people from the same church meets together once a week. The group shares needs, experiences, and concerns. They have a good relationship, and the meetings are productive and helpful. They spend time in Bible study and prayer. Here is a sample of the conversations that take place:

Mary: "Pete, when you explain things as you did about those puzzling verses, I really see what they mean and what God is saying. I like the way you related those verses to the whole book we were studying."

John: "Mary, that was a beautiful experience you shared. I don't see how you can work in that soup kitchen in the inner-city area and love those people the way you do. But I admire you and can see how the Lord works through you."

Pete: "John, when you shared how God met your needs through that passage in 2 Corinthians, I can't tell you how encouraging it was to me. I'm experiencing a problem like that, and God used you to help me face it."

Martha: "I believe God wants the kind of warm, vital fellowship we have to spread through our whole church. I have a growing conviction that God is going to do some spectacular things in our church. I have this deep conviction that a year from now this church is really going to take off. I can just see how John 17 will be a reality in our church."

Jerry: "I made another friend at work this week. I shared my experience with him, and he wants to take Bible studies. Just think, it might not be long before he joins us in this group, and maybe the church. I can hardly wait!"

If these conversations are typical, you can probably assume that

Mary has the gift of _____

John has the gift of _____

Pete has the gift of _____

Martha has the gift of _____

Jerry has the gift of _____

Can you relate experiences in which you have become aware of people's spiritual gifts? How can your church help individuals use their gifts effectively?

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

For an entire quarter now, we have been learning about spiritual gifts. How much have you learned? Take the following short test. Discuss your answers with the other members of your class. See Friday's lesson for the answers.

How much do you know about spiritual gifts?

1. T F Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift.
2. T F Unbelievers also have spiritual gifts.
3. T F Most Christians have all the gifts mentioned in the New Testament.
4. T F We are free to choose the gift we want.
5. T F There is one particular spiritual gift that all Christians have.
6. T F Believers will give an account to the Lord of the way in which they use their gift(s).
7. T F Spiritual gifts indicate God's call and purpose for a believer's life.
8. T F All the gifts are specifically listed in Scripture.
9. T F Gifts used without love can also accomplish God's intended purposes.
10. T F A non-Christian personality can nullify the effectiveness of spiritual gifts.

Match the gifts with the Scripture passages that describe them. Put the number of the gift in front of the passage. (See Friday's lesson for the answers.)

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Evangelism | 8. Interpretation of tongues | 14. Giving |
| 2. Healing | 9. Miracles | 15. Knowledge |
| 3. Teaching | 10. Helps | 16. Discernment |
| 4. Exhortation | 11. Prophecy | 17. Not clear which gift |
| 5. Administration | 12. Faith | 18. Wisdom |
| 6. Apostleship | 13. Mercy | 19. Pastoring |

_____ a. Rom. 12:8

_____ e. Acts 18:26

_____ b. Titus 3:2

_____ f. 1 John 4:1

_____ c. 1 Cor. 14:3

_____ g. Acts 9:36

_____ d. Acts 8:12

_____ h. Eph. 4:11

Further Study: Answers to the case study in Wednesday's lesson: Mary has the gift of mercy; John has the gift of exhortation or encouragement; Pete has the gift of teaching; Martha has the gift of faith; Jerry has the gift of evangelism.

Answers to the quiz in Thursday's lesson: (1) T; (2) F; (3) F; (4) F; (5) F; (6) T; (7) T; (8) F; (9) F; (10) T.

Answers to the matching questions in Thursday's lesson: (a) 14; (b) 5; (c) 11; (d) 1; (e) 3; (f) 16; (g) 13.

The following resource will be especially helpful for using spiritual gifts in your church:

Monte Sahlin, Velino Salazar, and James W. Zackrison, *How To Set Up and Run an Evangelization/Discipleship Cycle in Your Church* (available through the NAD Distribution Center in Lincoln, Nebraska).

Discussion Questions:

1. Is it proper for you personally to take the initiative in informing your church leadership about what your spiritual gifts are and the ministry you would like to carry out?
2. In your church nominating committee, how is information processed?
3. Describe ways in which the spiritual-gifts concept can be applied in your church.

To the best of your ability, complete this personal commitment regarding your future ministry: "I plan to use my spiritual gifts effectively in the church by . . ."

SUMMARY: Spiritual gifts are the tools the Holy Spirit provides believers to facilitate the work of the kingdom. We are all responsible to the Lord for how we employ those tools. The church progresses numerically and spiritually when spiritual gifts are exercised properly.



Just One Book

Luis Humberto Orjuela

While literature evangelists Luis García and Roylan López were canvassing in the East Venezuela town of San Félix, they met a young teacher named Yuraima (Yu-RI-mah) Cabrera. Even though she was of another faith, she bought a large selection of books. When the men delivered the books, they gave her a copy of *The Great Controversy*.

The following week the two workers met Yuraima on the street. She told them, "I have read *The Great Controversy*. It had a great impact on me. I have been looking for you ever since." The book had convinced her of the Sabbath truth, and she wanted to know more about Seventh-day Adventists. The two men made arrangements to visit her that night.

After praying fervently, the men went to her home and studied with her for several hours. She was eager to learn how to keep the Sabbath. She told them that she had loaned the book to her sister Arelis, who was reading it. She urged the men to visit her, as well.

A few days later the men visited Arelis (Ah-RAY-lees) Cabrera and her daughter. The mother and daughter told them that they had visited many churches, trying to satisfy their spiritual needs, but had not found the right one. As the men studied with these two women, they gladly accepted the Sabbath truth and began attending the Adventist church.

A few weeks later the men visited Mrs. Cabrera's mother. The older woman told the colporteurs that for years she had been listening to the Voice of Hope (Voice of Prophecy) radio program and said that she would attend no other church than the one sponsoring that program. She was overjoyed when the men told her that they represented that church.

The chain of conversions continued. Yuraima introduced them to a friend who works in the University of Guyana who was reading *The Great Controversy*.

A few months after the men had first met the sisters, they were invited to a baptism--of Yuraima, Arelis, Arelis' daughter, and her friend. Today, Yuraima's son and two of her brothers have also joined the church, and another sister is receiving Bible studies. Only eternity will reveal the results of reading just one book.

Luis Humberto Orjuela is publishing director of the East Venezuela Mission.

For Current Newsbreak, Call 1-800-648-5824.

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Lessons for Second Quarter, 1997

The second quarter Sabbath School lessons, entitled *God Is Love*, direct us in the study of 1, 2, and 3 John.

Lesson 1: The Word of Life.

READ FOR THIS WEEKS' STUDY: 1 John 1:1-4.

MEMORY TEXT: 1 John 1:1.

KEY THOUGHT: Jesus, the Word of life, became one with us so that we could know God, believe in Him, and be saved for eternal life.

OUTLINE:

- The Ever-Existing Word of Life (1 John 1:1).
- Touching God (1 John 1:1).
- The Material Witness (1 John 1:2).
- Proclaiming Fellowship—With God! (1 John 1:3).
- Completing Joy (1 John 1:4).

Lesson 2: Light Against the Darkness.

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 John 1:5-10.

MEMORY TEXT: 1 John 1:5.

KEY THOUGHT: God is the source of light and truth, and His true followers cannot be part of darkness and error.

OUTLINE:

- Light and No Darkness (1 John 1:5).
- Living in Both Light and Darkness? (1 John 1:6, 7).
- Living Without Sinning—Is This Deception? (1 John 1:8).
- How God Deals With Our Sinfulness (1 John 1:9).
- Making God a Liar (1 John 1:10).

Lessons in Braille

The regular adult Sabbath School lessons are available free each month in Braille and 16 2/3 rpm records to blind and physically handicapped persons who cannot read normal ink print. This includes individuals who because of arthritis, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, accident, old age, and so forth, cannot hold or focus on normal ink-print publications. Contact the Christian Record Services, Box 6097, Lincoln, NE 68506.

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Paper, 128 pages. US\$8.99/Cdn\$12.99.



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Unions	Churches	Membership	Population
East African	1,512	350,173	37,200,000
Ethiopian	356	93,765	55,805,520
Malawi	732	158,547	9,500,000
Tanzania	711	154,115	29,800,000
Uganda	440	85,002	19,800,240
Zambesi	446	204,443	11,200,000
Zambia	1,030	218,921	9,100,000
Eritrea Mission Field	3	450	3,528,500
North Botswana Field	21	7,633	753,200
South Botswana Field	18	5,888	646,800
Totals June 30, 1994	5,269	1,278,937	177,334,260

Mission Projects:

1. Better Living Center, including a dental clinic, home economics training center, language institute, in conjunction with Eritrea Mission Field office.
2. Evangelism/Better Living Center and clinic in newly formed Eastern Uganda Field.



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