

## **Charismata: Gifts, Enablements, or Ministries?**

Many ideas about “gifts of the Spirit” exist--the term itself is not in the Bible. Aspects of these gifts remain unanswered or, at best, unclear. A glance of the literature as well as reflection on experiences and observations from different churches and church bodies confirm this. From cessationist to charismatic, to seeker-sensitive, to traditional Pentecostal models, disagreements abound (even though all may make positive contributions). Barna puts it even in more stark terms:

There has been a substantial deterioration regarding people's understanding of spiritual gifts, with a five-fold increase in born again adults who are aware of gifts saying God did not give them one, and half of all born again adults listing gifts they possess which are not among the spiritual gifts listed in the Bible. Even one-quarter of all Protestant pastors listed one or more gifts that they possess which are not identified in the Bible.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, no unifying foundational model of spiritual gifts exists for reflecting upon or understanding the gifts as they occur in the New

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<sup>1</sup>“The Year's Most Intriguing Findings, From Barna Research Studies,” (December 17, 2001): Barna.org/cgi-bin/PagePressreleaseID=1038Reference=B. Accessed 1/31/02

Testament. Perhaps and unfortunately, the subtlest realization is that spiritual gifts are relegated to the periphery of the life of the church. In most cases, gifts are thought to come from the “outside,” never from “within” and commonly limited to the “supernatural”--and their expression must be sought for with great soul searching.

In this paper, I want to explore three issues in order to advance a more common understanding and application of spiritual gifts and, in the process, construct a more foundational and unifying model of the church and of ministry. I will also offer a number of implications of having worked through these issues. These three issues are: 1) overcoming an exegetical/linguistic fallacy, 2) addressing an anthropological weakness, and 3) looking clearly at biblical theology. I will work through these issues and then in the conclusion suggest a more enduring theology of the church and a more stable foundation for a theology/philosophy of ministry.

My thesis I work toward is this: The gifts of the Spirit should more appropriately be thought of as ministries that flow out of one's being part of the temple of God. This happens at salvation when one receives the regenerating Spirit. At that time, the believer must identify with Jesus and yield totally to his Lordship. Moreover, Jesus desires all to receive the

fullness of the Spirit to serve in the wide range of ministries he has for his church.

### Overcoming An Exegetical/linguistic Fallacy

First then, let us examine the claim of an exegetical/linguistic fallacy.

Recently, Kenneth Berding of Nyack College wrote:

“Spiritual gifts” have generated more discussion, both popular and scholarly, than any of us could (or want to) read. But where did we obtain our idea of what a “gift” is? Is it from exegesis of the relevant Biblical texts or from a widespread conception which has gone unchallenged for too long?”<sup>2</sup>

He continues by saying that “NT scholars [including Pentecostal and Charismatic] have not adequately appropriated [James] Barr’s concerns to distinguish between word and concept in relation to the word charisma [charisma].”<sup>3</sup> This exegetical/linguistic fallacy is the premiere issue we must face head on.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Kenneth Berding, “Confusing Word and Concept in ‘Spiritual Gifts’; Have We Forgotten James Barr’s Exhortations?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43,1 (March, 2000):37.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 37-51. See especially p. 38. Max Turner made a similar complaint but arrived at different conclusions. See Berding’s note 6

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Moises Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics*, Revised and Expanded Edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1983, 1994), 126-29. Silvia relies upon Barr in significant ways.

With this in mind, we do well to remember the relationship between words/terms and concepts. A concept is a larger semantical unit comprised of a small array of interrelated words and motifs, and both are imbedded in a particular cultural understanding. Any given concept contains much more meaning than any one word. Thus, to extrapolate a meaning from a word (a smaller semantical unit), to apply it to the concept (a larger semantical unit) to which it relates in one context, and to exclusively identify that concept by that single word is what Berding is talking about. Or to put it another way, the notion of “ability”<sup>5</sup> (or enablement) and/or “gift” has been extracted from one context of the word *charisma* and naively imposed upon every occurrence of the word *carisma* with the “concept” in mind all the while. The result? “Gifts of the Spirit” become enablements/empowerments. Further, this process has made *carisma* (*charisma*) a technical term, which in every case can be translated or understood in a technical sense as “gift.” But Berding rightly concludes that the use of this word in Paul (the word does not occur frequently in other Greek sources before the time of Paul) cannot have this technical meaning.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Paul did not infuse this word with a special theological meaning, thus making it a technical term.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The words “ability,” “enablement,” and “empowerment” should be considered rather interchangeable. See Berding, note 7.

<sup>6</sup> See pp. 40-44 for his excellent discussion.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. pp.44-45.

Berding reaches the following conclusions. (1) The definition of ‘Spiritual gifts’ as special Spirit-given abilities/enablements to do ministry cannot hold up. (2) Discard the translation and use of “spiritual gifts” for carismata [charismata] since the term continues to propagate different and confusing viewpoints. The word with which he suggests to replace “spiritual gifts” is the “general” word “ministries.” He does not, however, wish to make this a technical term for “spiritual gifts.”

Let me add another dimension to point out how difficult this task can be. At one time, Paul uses the word “gift(s ) or some combination thereof to refer to the result, as in “to strengthen” [Rom 1:11-12], at another, to the concrete act, as in “teaching” [Rom 12:7], at another, to the one doing it, as in “the prophet” [Eph 4:11; 1 Cor 12:29], while in another, to the source, “the Spirit” [1 Cor 12:8]. This fluid use of the concept by Paul can add to a naïve interpreter’s misunderstanding of “gifts.”

A brief sampling here will suffice to explain what is being said about the complexity of handling this word *charisma* or any word, in fact. Let us look briefly at carisma [charisma] in Romans and sample its flexibility. The word carisma occurs numerous times with a variety of meanings. This is known as “semantical range.”

Romans 1:11 I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual **gift** to make you strong—

Romans 5:15 But the **gift** is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the **gift** [h` ca,rij tou/ qeou/ kai. h` **dwrea.** evn ca,riti] that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!

Romans 5:16 Again, the **gift** [to. **dwrhma**] of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the **gift** followed many trespasses and brought justification.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the **gift** of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 11:29 for God's **gifts** and his call are irrevocable.

Romans 12:6 We have different **gifts**, according to the grace given us. If a man's **gift** is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.

Here is a summary of meanings of *charisma* in Romans.

1. The whole plan of salvation
2. Eternal life
3. God's plan for Israel
4. Spiritual gifts

For the larger picture, we must also take note of "semantical field," calling to mind the practice that writers and speakers use other words (synonyms) in some contexts to refer to the same concept. In 5:15 and 16, the NIV uses the same English word to translate two related Greek words. These words are *dwrea./dwrhma*. In these two contexts, clearly these words,

translated “gift” refer to the same concept as that of charisma. Paul is simply using synonyms.

So I conclude with Berding that *charisma/charismata* is not capable of carrying the meaning that modern interpreters have given it. But we need to go further to discover the underlying foundational and unifying concept.

We do well to pay attention to a quote from Berding’s source:

[Criticizing TDNT Barr says:] But under these conditions the attempt to relate the individual word directly to the theological thought leads to the distortion of the semantic contribution by words in contexts; the value of the context comes to be seen as something contributed by the word, and then it is read into the word as its contribution where context is in fact different. Thus the word becomes overloaded with interpretative suggestion;<sup>8</sup>

### Addressing an Anthropological Weakness

The second issue I wish to discuss arises from the fact that Paul in Romans 12 assumes the foundation of these spiritual ministries to be rooted in his theology of the people of God as the new temple.<sup>9</sup> By tracing his

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<sup>8</sup> James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 233-34.

<sup>9</sup> The NT teaches that the church is the temple. From Paul I extract and explore this idea and indeed do find this to be the case. For the sake of this paper, I do not intend to display the evidence here for the entire NT.

logic in Romans 12 we discover that the trail leads back to his discussion of the sinful nature and how Jesus handles it. This discovery causes one to investigate its application in contemporary church life. The issue here bears upon Spirit/anthropological expressions. It is common to hear within non-Pentecostal and Pentecostal churches a statement like this: “When I operate in the gifts I do not do it out of my flesh—it is the Spirit that does it.”

There comes to mind, then, the “uneasy relationship” that some believers “sense” between God’s presence or manifestation and their human nature. A large contribution of this “uneasiness” comes from departmentalizing the human into either two or three parts. The physical, usually either covertly or overtly, is considered sinful. In this regard, especially influential are the popular writings of Watchman Nee and/or the section on anthropology in older systematic theology books. Furthermore, it is the notion that the Spirit has to do everything (usually based on an understanding that gifts are limited in nature and are entirely “spectacular” and “supernatural”) and that human nature remains sinful or should remain out of the picture (as if that were possible). This predicament flows out of a particular anthropology that consists of the following: the Christian has two natures simultaneously—the born again part and the sinful part. A constant war rages inside every person—the old nature, still alive and in control,

strains to maintain its dominance. The Christian must do everything (or nothing) to allow the Spirit to put down the old nature so victory can be attained. But the old nature, never dead, always pressing back in resistance, springs to life and power. Thus nothing humans do can ever be acceptable. This widespread anthropology serves as the basis for common views of spiritual gifts. Support for these views comes from experience that feeds on a particular interpretation of Romans 7.

Let me begin to address the issue in this manner. In Romans 12:1-8, Paul discusses various elements about the charismata. Notably in this context, Paul includes both the words of “giving” and “ability.” Moreover while saying many other things about these “charismata/services,” he leaves out one important item--He never mentions the Spirit.<sup>10</sup>

Let us note the structure and language of this section. It is broken into two paragraphs. Verses 1-2 talk about foundational matters while 3-8 discuss appropriate ways of ministering these “gifts.”

The language of verses 1-2 is significant in that it contains “temple” words: “present” [v 1], “sacrifice” [v 1], and “worship/service” [v 1]. Other words connect to the temple as well: “bodies” for the sacrifice [v 1], “pleasing” [vv 1,2], “perfect” [v 2], and “good” [v 2]. In short, verses 1-2

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<sup>10</sup> This fact causes some problems, Fee for example.

serve as a basis for the ministries that he will list in the next set of verses.

Paul's instructions in verses 1-2 place the believer in a temple context as both living sacrifice and sacred servant. Paul avoids the word "priest," preferring the imagery of "servant." By serving in these ways, every believer worships God. This temple servant then does so by the "mercies of God" [v 1] and in such a way that his or her worship service is pleasing to God.

Through a renewed mind this believer recognizes that this ministry is just right for him/her. The meaning of the "renewed mind" is found back in chapters 6 and 8

Certain words in 12:3-8 connect these verses with the previous paragraph in 1-2. "Body" [vv 4, 5] and its related word, "members," [vv 4,5] are significant. The same temple language shows up in earlier passages in Romans 6. For example, the word, "body," shows up in vv 6 and 12, and the word, "member(s)," in v 13 (2xs), and v 19 (2xs).

This language of "body" and its "parts" in chapter 6 is interchangeable with the whole person. For instance, in verse 13, Paul says, "stop presenting your members as weapons of unrighteousness to *the* sin, but once and for all present yourselves (Gr eautouj) to God as alive from the death of sin and your members as weapons of righteousness for God." Paul envisions that the whole person, articulated as the "body" and its parts,

serves God volitionally and freely because of Christ's grace. The person is to be the obedient servant of Christ the Lord.

This freedom comes from identifying with Jesus in a thorough manner. Romans 6:1-11 informs the believer *that* he or she should do that and *how* he or she should do it. The following chart reflects Paul's instructions.

<u>Jesus</u>	<u>Believer</u>
Crucified, died	Co-crucified, co-died
Buried	Co-buried
Raised from the dead	Co-raised from the dead
Lives	Co-lives

At least three observations emerge: 1) The verbs above are “co” verbs—they have the Greek sun, meaning that the believer identifies in every respect with Jesus.<sup>11</sup> This identifying is done through faith or as Paul puts it in verse 11—“*keep on considering yourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*” 2) These verbs in 1-11, “die,” bury,” and “raise,” that speak of identifying with Jesus are in the aorist tense, meaning in this context that dying with Jesus is a once for all event. In fact, Paul even describes Jesus’

<sup>11</sup> In verse 5, the word *sumfutoi*, an agricultural term, intensifies the meaning of this union. Note the sun here as a prefix.

acts as a once for all happening in verse 10.<sup>12</sup> This is the way every believer should approach his or her life and faith in Jesus. When this happens, the believer is free from sin and able to make a decision to offer himself or herself to Christ in service. 3) The verb translated “account” or “reckon” in verse 11 is in the present tense. Paul makes the point that the Christian lives in a fixed and habitual state of believing Jesus and reckoning this new life in Christ to be in accord with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus—not on fighting sinful desires. In that first century context, the cultural perspective about the person is not introverted anyway.

However, chapter 7 provides a different view according to some. These believe that Paul says that the “normal” Christian life is in constant warfare and that, according to 7:7-24, sin is still the master. But how can this be? Has Paul not just said in clear terms that the believer is free from sin’s dominion? Yes—but what is this in chapter 7?

Let us follow Paul’s argument more closely to see what his conclusions were. Our immediate trail begins in chapter 5 where Paul wrote that grace delivers the believer from the death of the law. Grace came and took away the condemnation that the law brought. But Paul knew that the

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<sup>12</sup> A close examination of the verbs in these 11 verses is quite revealing. A couple of verbs are in the perfect tense while one (live) is in the future and another (believe) is in present tense—all of which emphasize that the life of the believer is one of ongoing faith and freedom in Christ.

Jew,<sup>13</sup> ensconced in law, would come back with this retort: “The law keeps down sin, is this the reason, Paul, you want to do away with law--because sin can all the more abound and thus allow grace to abound all the more?” So Paul in rhetorical fashion responds to the Jewish questioner in 6:1. “No! God forbid--That is what dying to sin means. One can no longer live under its dominance by obeying its desires.” Then in chapter 6, Paul continues his diatribe about freedom from sin in Christ.

So, chapter 7 continues his argument that is still in the mind of his Jewish dialogue partner; except now, his thinking has progressed to a new point about the law. What is the good of the law—what is its nature and how does it work? The larger answer of Romans 7 is that, though it is holy, it is thoroughly weak and unable to remove sin’s control from one’s nature. Sin is so ingrained in human nature that it takes Jesus to remove it. To attempt to live under the law and meet God’s demands is impossible. No one can please God in this way. Sinful human nature dominates human volition. In Romans 7, Paul argues<sup>14</sup> that the mind can know what is right but that it is unable to follow through on the will’s decision. That is slavery and law cannot break it.

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<sup>13</sup> Note Paul’s rhetoric. He is using diatribe wherein he objects to an imaginary Jewish person for the sake of his argument.

<sup>14</sup> Using diatribe, he drives home the point graphically through incorporating hyperbole and by erecting a straw person, in this case, himself.

Paul in answering his Jewish questioner also addresses his anthropology. This common anthropology assumes that every person has two desires, one good and one bad. This is called the doctrine of the two *yetzers*.<sup>15</sup> The rabbis believed that God made both good and evil impulses/desires in people and believed that both, being necessary, were kept in balance by keeping the law. The presence of the Greek for the *yetzers* in 6:12: “desires” (Gr *epiquimiai*) suggests that the Jewish doctrine of the *yetzer* is in view here.<sup>16</sup> Paul believes that sin is more powerful than just an impulse to be controlled by observing and habitualizing the law and that it is impossible to master sin through keeping the law. Law does not keep down sin, discipline it, or do away with it—grace does—when its recipient identifies with Jesus and submits to him. “Jesus did what the law could not do because the law depended on sinful human nature to keep its demands” [Romans 8:1-3].

Now comes another link—chapter 8 connects with chapters 6 and 7 through the common use of the “body” metaphors and the emphasis upon the freedom of the Spirit. (See verses 10,11, and 13.) In chapter 8, the believer is firmly connected to Jesus and has the “mindset of the Spirit.” “According to the flesh and according to the Spirit” in Romans 8:1-11 are

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<sup>15</sup> For a good overview of this doctrine, see Solomon Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (New York: Schocken, 1961), chps. 15-16.

<sup>16</sup> This Greek word can also be translated “lust, passion.” It can be either positive or negative.

not two aspects of the same individual. They speak of two different people—one unregenerate, the other regenerate. To have one's mind set on the Spirit is to be a son of God and to be led by the Spirit.

Now it is time to return to Romans 12. Romans 12:1 is resumptive—Paul returns to this earlier argument about which he last spoke in chapter 8 before turning aside to address the Israel question in chapters 9—11. In 12:1, Paul says that the basis for this temple ministry flows out of and by the “mercies of God.” According to Paul, the one who has escaped the law, identified with Jesus, and accepted his Lordship is now spiritual. The one who has the Spirit living in her is a daughter of God. This is why Paul does not mention the Spirit in chapter 12—he has just spent much time discussing the role of the Spirit in the life of the believer. In Romans 12, Paul assumes that believers are the temple of the Spirit, the place of God's dwelling.

Paul's theology of the new temple shows up prominently in his understanding of the charismata. Since the Jewish temple ceases to have the significance it once did for Jesus and his followers, what in Paul's theology replaced it? Believers in community have replaced it because God now lives in his people—no longer in large stones cut from quarries and piled high with human accomplishment. This, then, means, according to him, that *members* of that community not only supplant the spatial aspect of temple; it

takes the place of all its related services and functionaries. The people themselves become sacrifices but, now, living sacrifices that also function in a priestly way.<sup>17</sup> Though the concept of “priest” and “priesthood” occurs in the New Testament, its role has changed significantly. The function, then, of believers is that of temple servants or ministers. The most common word (but not the only) for the believer is the word “servant” or “minister” (*diakonos*).

This explains, then, why Paul emphasizes the “body” and its parts. “Ministry” is not some far off mystical thing performed by some super spiritual person in a certain state of mind out of the flesh. The whole person, including the human expression in the body, is the dwelling place of God and the vessel of service. To note how deeply this was imbedded in Paul’s

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<sup>17</sup> **D. *hierouas* in the NT.** As distinct from the chief priests and high priest, the priests play only a minor role in the NT. Jesus, while not hostile to the priestly ministry, does not call himself or his disciples priests, and shows more of a prophetic spirit.

1. Jesus accepts the role of the priest when he tells cleansed lepers to show themselves to the priest (Mt. 8:4 etc.) and offer the prescribed gift.  
 2. In Mt. 12:4ff. he defends his healing on the sabbath on the twofold ground that in an emergency David breached priestly law and that the priests themselves break the sabbath. Scripture itself justifies these breaches, and there is now something present that is greater than either temple or priesthood. Kittel, Gerhard, and Friedrich, Gerhard, Editors, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 1985. Also cf. *hierateuma*.  
 4. In 1 Pet. 2:5, 9 salvation and dignity are transferred to the community, which, based on Christ as the living stone, is built up into a spiritual temple for a consecrated priestly ministry. The community is a priesthood because it offers spiritual sacrifices. As a priestly company it is immediate to God, but there is no priestly caste, for the whole people is a priestly fellowship. It is royal inasmuch as it belongs to the King, serves him, and shares his glory in a ministry of witness (v. 9). Ibid.

theology, we appeal to 1 Cor 6:12-20 where he emphasizes the importance of the body because it is the temple of the Spirit and it is important that the believer submit to God through it and minister to God in that manner.<sup>18</sup>

The mind is also important. Paul refers often to it in these chapters we have discussed. In reference to it he uses such words as “ignorance,” “know,” or some such word frequently [cf. 6:3,6,9,11,16; 7:1]. Paul assumes their ignorance of what he is saying and writes to *inform* them of their place in and service for Christ.

The most fundamental way to understand the “gifts” or “ministries” is through this major and fundamental reality—the temple. This means that at salvation every believer becomes a member of God’s temple, being the habitation of God’s Spirit. At conversion, then, every believer becomes a

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<sup>18</sup> See below for Irenaeus’s view, emphasizing the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. Book 5 Chapter VI. —God Will Bestow Salvation Upon the Whole Nature of Man, Consisting of Body and Soul in Close Union, Since the Word Took It Upon Him, and Adorned with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, of Whom Our Bodies Are, and are Termed, the Temples.

1.....In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God, whom also the apostle terms “spiritual,” *they being spiritual because they partake of the Spirit, and not because their flesh has been stripped off and taken away, and because they have become purely spiritual. For if any one take away the substance of flesh, that is, of the handiwork [of God, and understand that which is purely spiritual, such then would not be a spiritual man but would be the spirit of a man, or the Spirit of God. But when the spirit here blended with the soul is united to [God’s] handiwork, the man is rendered spiritual and perfect because of the outpouring of the Spirit, and this is he who was made in the image and likeness of God.* 18

minister and takes on responsibilities relative to his/her maturity. Every new convert should immediately know about this and begin to look for opportunities to bless and serve.

When Jesus cleanses a person through atonement and regeneration of the Spirit, and when the believer identifies with Jesus' new resurrection life and submits all of himself to Jesus as Lord, no uneasy tension between the redeemed person and his/her whole being and God's presence should exist. The law is gone—no condemnation now exists. This wonderful relationship and union channel the Spirit to work through the whole person, using the person's redeemed wholeness while at the same time assisting and empowering him.

One other important element must be addressed. We now focus on it.

### Looking Clearly at Biblical Theology

This section is important in light of our previous material and in light of what appears in various and popular settings. Some classical Pentecostals in their various expressions come close to being "Spirit-monists." By placing exclusive emphasis on the Spirit, though, perhaps, not intentionally, they can be shortsighted in their lack of giving Jesus his rightful role in worship and service matters. This suggestion is supported by the fact that

any notion suggesting that the gifts are not anchored in Spirit-baptism is rejected. My contention is that all Spirit operations are to be connected with Jesus and his work. In other words, pneumatology should be Christ-centered and soteriologically based. This is especially so regarding spiritual ministries. The New Testament hinges upon one major event---the inauguration of the eschatological age of salvation and Jesus' role in it---contained in John the Baptist's preaching and particularly in his statement: "I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."<sup>19</sup>

In slightly varying forms, this statement occurs only six times in the NT: four times in the Gospels and two in Acts. This statement contrasts the substance of his baptism and that of Jesus. He notes that Jesus' baptism is far superior because he will baptize with the Holy Spirit. All agree that the new age will be inaugurated by the finished work of Jesus and the resultant coming of the Spirit.

John the Baptist's identity follows Isaiah's description of the forerunner of the Messiah. In Isaiah 40, where the forerunner is foretold, the prophet unfolds the terms of the new salvation event of Israel in language of the first Exodus event. This new salvation event is the new or the second

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<sup>19</sup> NIV, Mark 1:8.

exodus. Yahweh himself, i.e., his Messiah, will bring this new salvation.

What will be significantly different, along with a new kind of atonement, is the gift of the Spirit. This theme echoes in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Joel.

So, it is the Messiah who will take front and center. The giving of the Spirit is part of his activity. John's Gospel in particular fleshes this out. In chapters 14 and 16, it is clear that Jesus must go away—otherwise the Spirit cannot come. This leads to the conclusion that the total work of the Spirit is Jesus and salvation centered. It is the Father who will give the Spirit--but only through Jesus. When the Spirit comes, he comes in all of his fullness.

Therefore, anytime the Spirit appears, Jesus is there as Lord.

## Conclusion

In conclusion let me draw together a few of the common themes. As the old adage goes, bad exegesis begets poor theology, and bad theology begets bad practice. Word studies are important, but not the most important thing in exegesis. When they are done, they must be done properly.

Further, word studies do not a theology make. It takes a close examination of the writer's heart-carpet via the book(s) he wrote--to see how themes are sewn together and how they weave a wonderful revelatory tapestry. But even then, some awareness of salvation history is important.

We have suggested that the idea of temple stands deeply rooted in biblical revelation. Its roots reach deeply into Old Testament living traditions but profoundly and eternally they extend heavenward, changed through the coming of Jesus, the incarnate Son of God who has now “tabernacled” among people. God in his eternal plan has desired and affected through his Son a place where he can share his wonderful love in most intimate ways. This high point in God’s plan is his dwelling among people he has redeemed by his grace.

I suggest that “temple” is the most enduring concept for this reality in the whole of scripture. Some other words are metaphors, noting something about this larger reality. For instance, “the body” is a metaphor that Paul uses to talk about the way members of the temple work together, each contributing unique and special ministries to the whole.<sup>20</sup> The “church” (the Greek word is “assembly”) emphasizes a gathering of God’s believers and itself suggests something like the place of God’s dwelling (cf. the Hebrew *Qahal*). Pentecostals, then with their emphasis on the imminence of God, should have a head start on other believers. “Presence” and “manifestation” are closely connected—and have always loomed largely (and should) in Pentecostal theology and experience.

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<sup>20</sup> As is also “building.”

This conception of the Church means that the gifts of the Spirit (now better called spiritual ministries) should flow out of that reality. A theology of ministry, rooted in this foundation, then, should likewise be stable. The only difference should be in the way one's wholeness is redeemed and in one's personal, social, historical, and geographical contexts. Partly by this, I mean that, as society changes, the minister would change ministry to relate God's grace to changing environments and issues.

What are the implications for this new model, if one wants to call it this? (1) The most important one I begin with is this: It seems that everyone has to have categories of gifts/ministries. I suggest two. The first and most basic one is "existential." I use this word because it describes the most basic nature of gifts—that of service/ministry. As believers live their lives for Jesus, they come into contact everyday and many times a day with opportunities to serve others for him. This is the basic meaning of "existential." What ever confronts a Christian and wherever he is, he should respond. Everyone should be this kind of servant of Jesus. If a need arises in the body and no particular person is designated to do it—serve in that capacity until someone is. This is the true meaning of servant leadership. All members should always live in the existential realm for this

kind of service and its accompanying attitude provides a godly foundation for the second category of ministry that I now suggest.

The second one is the “primary role category,” which has in mind such ministries as pastor, prophet, and prophecy. This grouping considers every person to have something(s) he/she is best at doing and takes greater pleasure in doing.

(2) The second implication focuses on elitism. Since all members of the temple are equal, each member has the same status. “Status” and function should not be confused, even in different structural models of church. Ministries involve different functions but all ministers have the same status. This theology of the church and ministry excludes any notion of elitism. Men and women stand shoulder to shoulder in ministry; saved felons, former drug addicts, prostitutes, wealthy “cultured” people, saved divorcees, all stand shoulder to shoulder in the temple and, consequently, in ministry.<sup>21</sup>

In fact, this is what Jesus did when he shifted the reality of the temple. City temples, like Jerusalem’s and Roman temples, all fostered a certain “chain” of oppression and elitism. Rules, rituals, ceremonies, and social customs maintained the status quo that kept the aristocrats wealthy and in

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<sup>21</sup> Paul noted as much in 1 Cor 6:11: “Some of you used to do those things. But your sins were washed away. You were made holy. You were made right with God. All of that was done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” [NIRV]

power. For example, the Pharisees would not even walk on the same side of the road with a country farmer, lest he become unclean and he too be rendered a sinner. But Jesus came to remove the walls of gender, ethnic distinction, and social class, the walls that separate. He removed oppression and marginalization. In light of this implication, the “clergy/laity” language and system need to be scrutinized.

Earl Creps, AGTS director of the D.Min program, this year has traveled to a number of district retreats, conducting surveys. At every place the number one issue by far is how to motivate the laity. Could this great problem be symptomatic of an inadequate view of the church and spiritual ministries? Do folk in the pew consider themselves part of the temple and its ministry and own the responsibility of the “church?” Do they need empowering by realizing they are as much a part of things as anyone else? Do “professionals” need to embrace a different stance and treat the laity different?

(3) The third implication pertains to spiritual gift assessment. Not long ago, there appeared in a bulletin of a large church (not in Missouri) announcing a class on how to discover one’s personal gifting. Further, in the participant’s guide that Willow Creek Resources use to teach sessions on the gifts, there are 133 questions directing the person towards discovering his or

her giftedness. All of these questions begin with “I.” While many of the questions in the assessment section and the characteristics in the spiritual gifts matching section do focus on ministry to the church body, the questions still concentrate on the individuality of the person.<sup>22</sup> This brings up a matter of differing cultures and, consequently, differing applications and understanding. In contrast to our modern, Western approach to the conception of the church and its ministry where gifts lie within the individual, Jesus focuses on the community. Gifts/ministries are determined by community needs—not by individual inward desires or abilities. If one chooses to use these kinds of tests, one should redirect their focus lest they propagate pride and selfishness.

Let me now return to my thesis. The gifts of the Spirit should more appropriately be thought of as ministries that flow out of one’s being part of the temple of God. This happens at salvation when one receives the regenerating Spirit. At that moment, the believer must identify with Jesus and yield totally to his Lordship. However, Jesus urges all to be filled with the Holy Spirit so all may enter into the fullness of his ministry. By serving God, those members of his temple, and his world in diversity with a goal towards unity, together we can win this world for Jesus.

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<sup>22</sup> Bruce Bugbee, Don Cousins, and Bill Hybels, *Network: The Right People...In the Right Places...For the Right Reasons* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994).