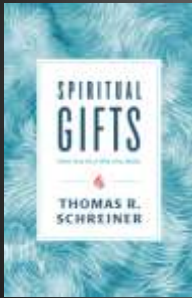


Ministries of the Church



- All church ministry requires divine enablement in the form of the spiritual gifts.
 - You need to understand this before you understand ministries. It comes from the Holy Spirit.
- Purpose and Nature of the Spiritual Gifts.
 - The primary purpose for spiritual gifts is to foster the growth of the church (Eph. 4:11-12)
 - He does it so that His people will be built up.
 - To each church member is given a gift or gifts of the Spirit “for the common good” (1 Cor. 12:4-7)
- The exercise of spiritual gifts is time-sensitive (1 Cor. 13:8-12).
 - This passage isn’t about weddings, but spiritual gifts.
 - The “now...then” framework in which Paul discusses the exercise of the gifts is standard eschatological language.
 - The now focuses on the period between the first and second comings of Christ.
 - Thus, we exercise gifts now, because in the future, when Christ returns (the Perfect comes), they will not be exercised. So use them now.

Ministries of the Church

- Ephesians 4:11-13 – And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹² equipping the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness.
- 1 Cor 12:4-7 – Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶ And there are different activities, but the same God produces each gift in each person. ⁷ A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good
- 1 Cor 13:8-13 – Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹ For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put aside childish things. ¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, as I am fully known. ¹³ Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love—but the greatest of these is love.

Spiritual Gifts

- These are the types of Spiritual Gifts.
 - Apostles/apostleship
 - Prophets/prophecy
 - Teachers/teaching/pastor-teachers
 - Evangelists
 - Word of wisdom and word of knowledge (we don't know exactly what this is).
 - Exhortation
 - Leading/administration
 - Faith (strong biblical vision of what the Lord wants to take place).
 - Service/helping
 - Giving
 - Acts of mercy
 - Gifts of healing
 - Workings of miracles
 - Distinguishing of spirits (to determine what is from the Holy Spirit).
 - Kinds of tongues (the code)
 - Interpretation of tongues (the key to unlock the code)
 - Other "gifts"



Spiritual Gifts

- Concerning the spiritual gifts in the church today, there are two debating positions: Continuationism and Cessationism.
 - Do all of these gifts *continue* to be distributed by the Holy Spirit and thus are operative in the church today (the position of *continuationism*), or have some *ceased* their functioning according to the divine design for them (the position of *cessationism*).
- Cessationism is not that all spiritual gifts have ceased to be given, but instead that only some have: tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophecy, word of wisdom, word of knowledge, miracles, healings, and exorcisms (if one considers that a gift).
 - Formerly the classic argument was made from 1 Cor 13:8-13, but most cessationists have moved away from it.
 - They tried to define the "perfect" as the closing of the NT canon. The perfect clearly DOES NOT refer to the canon, hence this argument is not as popular today.



Spiritual Gifts

- Cessationism Continued.
- Some of the other (better) arguments.
 - The primary purpose of spiritual gifts for sign gifts, was to testify to the gospel of Jesus Christ and its heralds. God was confirming that the messengers were divinely warranted (Heb 2:3-4).
 - Another argument is the sign gifts were largely restrictive to the apostles. In 2 Corinthians 12:12, he says the signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs, wonders, and mighty works. So these sign gifts were particularly associated with the apostles and their band. Now that there are no apostles, the sign gifts have ceased.
 - Finally, the revelatory or sign gifts are usually associated with the foundation of the church of Jesus Christ (Eph 2:20). So there was activity in the early church of laying the foundation. It included the sign gifts. Now that the foundation is laid, there is no need for these gifts.



Spiritual Gifts

- Continuationist Arguments.
- First, the primary purpose of the gifts is edification of the body of Christ.
 - Its about the growth of the church. Given the fact that church is certainly not mature, it continues to need all the gifts. The edification of the church will not be over until Christ returns. Then and only then will the gifts cease.
 - In 1 Cor 1:7, Paul applauds the Corinthians in that they are not lacking in any spiritual gift as they await the revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Second, the sign gifts were clearly not restricted to the apostles and the apostolic band.
 - The Corinthian church was richly endowed with all the gifts.
 - They were common place among the members of the Corinthian Church. The Galatian church (3:5) was gifted with miraculous gifts.
- Finally, no NT text bifurcates the gifts into regular and sign gifts. That is arbitrary.



Spiritual Gifts

- A few final thoughts.
 - SWCC's position.
 - My personal experience.
 - Rightly defining the "gifts."
- I've seen both sides appeal to personal experience for either accepting or rejecting the continuation of the "sign" gifts.
- Exercising of the spiritual gifts.
 - Regardless of one's cessationist or continuationist perspective, all Christians agree that (at least some) spiritual gifts are critical for the growth of the church; thus, it must understand how the operative gifts are to function.

