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TOWARD AN ECCLESIOCENTRIC MODEL
OF SPIRITUAL GIFT IDENTIFICATION

A Dissertation
Presented to
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Doctor of Philosophy

by
Robert William Pochek
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APPROVAL SHEET

TOWARD AN ECCLESIOCENTRIC MODEL

OF SPIRITUAL GIFT IDENTIFICATION

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To Susy,

I love you more than words
can adequately express.
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PREFACE

Although this work bears my name, it is the culmination of the efforts of many people who saw something in me that I was not sure was there. Because this is an academic work, I would be remiss if I did not begin by thanking the professors at the three institutions at which I have been blessed to study: Hannibal-LaGrange University, Covenant Theological Seminary, and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Space is not adequate to list every professor at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary who has impacted my life. Dean Charles Lawless challenged me to think critically and constructively about theology and practice in the local church. Professor George Martin helped me see God’s heart for the nations on every page of Scripture. And, Professor Tim Beougher demonstrated that it is not a contradiction to have both the mind of a rigorous theologian and the heart of an evangelist. I also wish to thank my cohort group – Steve Crouse, David Prince, Grady Smith, and Matt Spradlin – for their constant encouragement.

I extend my deepest appreciation to the churches I served during my doctoral pursuits: Lighthouse Community Church in Nashville, Illinois and Raleigh Road Baptist Church in Wilson, North Carolina. I would be remiss if I did not extend special thanks to Mike and Rhonda Eatmon, members at RRBC, who graciously opened their beach house to me so that I could complete this project.

A special thanks to the pastoral and support staff at RRBC for their encouragement. In particular, I extend my deepest appreciation to Pastor Greg Carr for his editorial advice throughout this process. Though my ministry has been enriched through this process, it is my great joy to be able to give my full attention to the local church once again.
Without a supportive family, it would be impossible to pursue an undertaking such as this. My parents, Charles and Rosie Pochek, provided encouragement from the beginning. It was their love of God’s Word and his Church that first birthed in my heart a desire to answer the research question contained herein. In a lot of ways, this work is an extension and culmination of their early discipleship of their son.

To our children, David and Jessica, I say thank you for allowing me to study and write, write and study, and then study and write some more. May God restore the years that this doctoral pursuit has eaten. More than that, may they both become all that God intends for them to be for the sake of his glory.

I do not have words adequate to thank my wife, Susy. For nearly half of our 22 year marriage I have been pursuing one degree or another. She has selflessly allowed me to pursue every one of them, because she believed in me and in the potential for God to use me in some way to benefit his Kingdom. Words are not enough to thank her, so I pray that God will honor her sacrifice as we move to the next chapter of our lives.

Finally, I thank my Heavenly Father, who saved me and called me to be an equipper of his people (Eph 4:11). It is a constant surprise to me that God would allow me to be a vessel to speak (or write) anything that would benefit his people. I pray that he has allowed me to do so here. SDG.

Robert W. Pochek

Wilson, NC

December 2011
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since approximately 1972\(^1\) segments of the North American church, particularly those influenced by the Church Growth Movement (CGM), have increasingly regarded a conscious understanding of spiritual gifts and the utilization of those gifts in the life of the church as important for individual followers of Christ.\(^2\) C. Peter Wagner, a leader in the CGM for over thirty years, is a strong advocate for the use of spiritual gifts in the life of the church.\(^3\) Wagner contends that there is no “dimension of the Christian life that more effectively joins the teachings of Scripture with the day-to-day activities of

\(^1\)Although this date is not intended to be exact, C. Peter Wagner states in *Your Church Can Grow* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1976), 71, “I believe the real turning point [on the matter of spiritual gifts] to be the publication of *Body Life*, written by Pastor Ray Stedman of Peninsula Bible Church in Palo Alto, California. The unusual popularity of that book in 1972 is due largely to the receptive climate for spiritual gifts that had already been five years in the making.”

\(^2\)“Spiritual gifts” is the term used to refer to the broad range of concepts described by the Greek words *pneumatika* and *charismata* in 1 Cor 12:8-10, 28-30; Rom 12:6-8; Eph 4:11; and 1 Pet 4:10-11. Transliterations of *pneumatika* and *charismata* will be used throughout the project for the sake of consistency as a number of sources do not use the original language spelling.

\(^3\)Although the CGM addresses more issues than spiritual gifts, Wagner is widely regarded as the authority in the CGM on this particular subject. According to Thom Rainer, *The Book of Church Growth: History, Theology, and Principles* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1993), 113 n. 1, Wagner’s *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1994) was “the first complete monograph on the subject relating the gifts specifically to church growth.” While recognizing there is some diversity of opinion on the subject of spiritual gifts within the CGM, Wagner will be primarily cited throughout this project as representing the CGM perspective on spiritual gifts.
the people of God than spiritual gifts.” Thom Rainer, founding Dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a recognized authority on the CGM, indicates that the CGM encourages Christians to discover their spiritual gifts and then use those gifts to build up the body of Christ, which will result in the church’s growth.

Over the past thirty-five years or so, an increasingly large amount of material on the subject of spiritual gifts has been produced. This material includes books, seminars, and spiritual gift identification instruments (both paper based and online), frequently called “spiritual gift inventories.” Of these resources, the “spiritual gift inventory” has become a frequently used method by which churches aim to help believers discover their spiritual gifts. Yet, is the use of a spiritual gift identification instrument the best way for people to find their place of joyful service within the church?

Four passages within the Pauline corpus provide the primary biblical basis from which the conventional view of spiritual gifts is derived: 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Romans 12:6-8, and Ephesians 4:11. The understanding of the spiritual gifts described in these passages and defined primarily as “God-given abilities” has become

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6 Because several documents under review in this dissertation bear the title “spiritual gift inventory,” the term “spiritual gift identification instrument” will be used throughout this project when referring to spiritual gift inventories in general. Those documents bearing the title “spiritual gift inventory” will be identified by SGI, followed by the primary author of the document (i.e., SGI-McMinn).

7 In addition to the Pauline texts, 1 Pet 4:10-11 includes what are often regarded as two additional gifts: speaking and serving gifts. The Petrine text will be important later in this study as a way of categorizing gifts, rather than a listing of additional gifts.
the conventional view in much of evangelicalism.⁸ According to the conventional view, for individuals to properly understand God’s place and purpose for them within the church, and for the church to function and grow as God intends, conscious knowledge and use of spiritual gifts is indispensable.

At this point it would be helpful to define the term “spiritual gifts” as used within the aforementioned resources. Wagner defines a spiritual gift as “a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ, according to God’s grace, for use within the context of the Body.”⁹ Leslie Flynn provides a similar definition in stating “a gift is a Spirit-given ability for Christian service.”¹⁰ Bruce Bugbee, Don Cousins and Bill Hybels define spiritual gift(s) as “spiritual gifts are special abilities distributed by the Holy Spirit to every believer according to God’s design and grace for the common good of the body of Christ.”¹¹ Other examples could be cited that all utilize a similar definition. ¹² The term spiritual gifts will be defined here as “the God-given calling and equipping to serve in the body of Christ in order to advance the

⁸Kenneth Berding, What Are the Spiritual Gifts? Rethinking the Conventional View (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006), 25.


Kingdom of God.”

There are three common elements in these definitions: the source of spiritual gifts is the Holy Spirit; the purpose of spiritual gifts is the building up of the Body; and the nature of spiritual gifts as God-given abilities. There is some question as to whether defining spiritual gift(s) as “ability” is consistent with the intention of the biblical writers, or whether the concept of ability has been imported onto the text by modern translators. It is this element of defining spiritual gifts primarily in terms of ability that is tied directly to the use of spiritual gift identification tools. Chapter Three will address the issue of how spiritual gifts are defined from a biblical and theological perspective.

In addition, significant question remains as to whether the spiritual gift identification instruments actually reveal the abilities they purport. Chapter Four will address the issue of the reliability and validity of spiritual gift identification instruments by examining previously published empirical analyses of a select number of instruments. Based on the findings of the empirical analyses reviewed, the use of spiritual gift identification instruments will be subjected to further examination.

**Thesis**

At least three major areas of concern are associated with using spiritual gift identification instruments. First, such instruments are dependent upon defining spiritual gifts as abilities that may be accurately self reported, which may not accurately represent the New Testament teaching regarding the nature of spiritual gifts. Second, in addition to utilizing a suspect definition of spiritual gifts, spiritual gift inventories have been constructed in a way that has not been demonstrably reliable. Finally, spiritual gift inventories have tended to hyper-individualize the entire process of spiritual gift discovery and use, placing the individual as the center of attention rather than the church to whom and for whom the gifts have been given. The aforementioned reasons provide the basis for a scholarly examination of the development of spiritual gift inventories and
the presuppositions underlying them in order to argue for an ecclesiocentric model that more accurately reflects the New Testament evidence and emphases.

Because spiritual gifts have been defined primarily in terms of ability, it has been assumed that such gifts could be discovered primarily through observation and personal self evaluation. Thus, spiritual gift identification instruments have been developed to discover those gifts. The initial instrument devised for the discovery of spiritual gifts was entitled the Spiritual Gift Inventory (SGI-McMinn) and was developed by Gordon McMinn, a professor at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary. In addition to the SGI-McMinn, this dissertation traces the development of two spiritual gift identification instruments (the SGI-Gilbert and SGI-WMHQ) widely used in evangelical circles. Both the SGI-Gilbert and the SGI-WMHQ share design characteristics found first in the SGI-McMinn, and the first major revision of the SGI-McMinn, the SGI-L.

The SGI-McMinn is a forced answer ipsative instrument, which means that individuals are given two statements or words and asked to choose which response most accurately describes them. The ipsative format of the SGI-McMinn presented a number of difficulties for researchers and individuals, including the length of time required to complete the instrument, the difficulty of generating normative data, and the difficulty of individuals to accurately respond to the array of possible responses.

As part of her research investigating the validity of the SGI-McMinn, Frederickson developed a version of the instrument that utilized a modified, four point

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14 Two additional spiritual gift identification instruments will be examined in Chapter Four as they are each the subject of an empirical analysis examining reliability and validity of spiritual gift identification instruments.

Likert response format, referred to as the SGI-L. The majority of spiritual gift identification instruments have followed this pattern, with the greatest difference between them being the way in which the Likert scale is constructed in each. However, the underlying problems associated with using instruments based largely – if not solely – upon self-assessment have not been adequately addressed from a theological perspective. The theological problems associated with self-assessment will be one aspect of the overall reliability of spiritual gift identification instruments examined in this dissertation.

During the 1970s two additional spiritual gift identification instruments were developed: the SGI-Hocking (developed by David Hocking in 1975) and the Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire (developed by Richard Houts in 1976 and later adapted and modified by C. Peter Wagner in 1979). To date, the historical development of neither the SGI-Hocking nor the SGI-WMHQ has been extensively investigated. Due to Wagner’s influence and prolific writing, the SGI-WMHQ is likely the most widely used spiritual gift identification instrument in North America; therefore, the SGI-WMHQ will be one of the two prominent tools investigated in this dissertation. The SGI-Hocking is the subject of one of the empirical analyses that is examined in Chapter Four.

The second prominent spiritual gift identification tool investigated in this dissertation is the Team Ministry Spiritual Gift Inventory. Larry Gilbert developed this tool and will be described throughout the dissertation as the SGI-Gilbert. This particular spiritual gift identification tool became available in written form in the mid-1980s and is available online.

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16 Ibid., 39.


18 Wagner, Discover Your Spiritual Gifts.

19 Larry Gilbert, Spiritual Gift Inventory (Elkton, MD: Church Growth Institute, 2005) [on-line]; accessed 24 April 2007; available from http://www.churchgrowth.org/analysis/intro.php; Internet.
currently available in that format as well as online. The SGI-Gilbert reports that over four and one half million copies of their paper based inventory have been sold and the online version has been viewed over two million times.\textsuperscript{20}

The responses of individuals to the questions in spiritual gift identification instruments is supposed to provide the basis for determining which spiritual gift(s) the respondent is likely to possess. This entire process is based upon the assumption that spiritual gifts are self reportable abilities and that spiritual gift identification instruments can accurately assess those abilities.\textsuperscript{21} Further, this process is dependent upon the reliability of self-analysis. However, if the assumed definition of spiritual gifts itself is inaccurate or misleading or if spiritual gift identification instruments are not proven to be reliable or valid, this approach to discovering those gifts will be inaccurate and misleading as well. Thus, tests intended to aid believers in discovering their gifts and release them for ministry may, in fact, do more harm than good if they result in confusing natural ability or preferences with a genuine demonstration of the Spirit within the body of Christ.

There is significant debate among scholars about the nature and purpose of spiritual gifts.\textsuperscript{22} Some of these debates pertain to the nature of certain gifts (i.e. cessation

\textsuperscript{20}The start page of the online version of the SGI-Gilbert, available at http://www.churchgrowth.org/cgi-cg/gifts.cgi?intro=1, reported 2,085,319 page views as of 29 June 2010.

\textsuperscript{21}Although some spiritual gifts are more closely connected to ability than others, all spiritual gift identification instruments are dependent upon the observable activity inherent in a spiritual gift.

vs. non-cessation), while other debates address the nature and purpose of spiritual gifts in general. While much of the work on the subject of spiritual gifts is based on the aforementioned passages of Scripture, scholars and theologians often arrive at differing conclusions as to the meaning of those texts and the relevance of those texts for today. One example of differing conclusions concerns what Paul is referring to in Eph. 4:11 as he describes apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Scholars debate the question of whether these “spiritual gifts” should be understood as describing individual abilities, ministry roles or functions within the church, the individuals who carry out those functions, some combination of these, or something else entirely.

Despite the scholarly debate over the nature of spiritual gifts, understanding spiritual gifts as the result of divine enablement to believers has been well accepted within the larger Christian culture. That this view is widely held has been demonstrated by the aforementioned definitions of spiritual gift. It is my contention that the emphasis on divine enablement has led to an unfortunate and fundamental misunderstanding of the best way to “discover” spiritual gifts; namely spiritual gift identification instruments.

Perhaps more significant than the concerns about the definition of spiritual gifts, the methodology that underlies the construction of spiritual gift identification instruments used in the spiritual gift discovery process is cause for concern. In her dissertation on the subject, Susan Fredrickson raises serious questions as to both the theological presuppositions involved in the development of the SGI and the psychometrics utilized in it, resulting in her conclusion that the SGI (and later the SGI-L) was “far from being a valid instrument.”\(^{23}\) Frederickson expresses concerns primarily with the definitions of certain gifts and the biases demonstrated in which gifts were

actually included in the inventory.\textsuperscript{24} Subsequent research has only strengthened Frederickson’s concerns about reliability and validity of spiritual gift identification instruments. Both the SGI-Hocking and the SGI-WMHQ have been subjected to a variety of psychometric analyses to determine validity and reliability.\textsuperscript{25}

The results of those analyses are instructive to those seeking to help others discover their spiritual giftedness. Consistently, findings indicated that spiritual gift identification instruments are not useful in identifying single gifts, but are useful in helping people understand the primary area of ministry they seem to be most equipped for. In fact, empirical research has shown that gifts generally fall into two main categories of speaking and serving described in 1 Peter 4:11.\textsuperscript{26} Thus, the best use of a spiritual gift identification instrument may be to reveal an area of spiritual giftedness, rather than identifying the possession of a specific gift.

There is also a tendency among those emphasizing the use of spiritual gift identification instruments to de-emphasize the nature and role of ecclesiology with respect to spiritual gifts. While this de-emphasis may not be intentional, one recognizes in much of the teaching about spiritual gifts a shift of focus from the New Testament

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid.


\textsuperscript{26}Kehe, “An Empirical Assessment of The Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire,” 97. A recent project by DellaVecchio and Winston has sought to produce a statistically reliable instrument; however, it is limited to the gifts of Rom 12. DellaVecchio and Winston’s project may be found at http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/working/DellaVecchio-Winston%20Romans%20gift%20test%20and%20profiles%20manuscriptdv.pdf.
emphasis on the relationship of spiritual gifts to the corporate body to an emphasis upon the individual. A demonstration of this shift is the minimal way in which spiritual gift identification instruments address the relationship of spiritual gift discovery to ecclesiology. More often than not, the primary focus of the conventional view is that of spiritual gifts described solely in terms of the individual’s function within the body; that is, gifts possessed by individuals and exercised in the corporate body of Christ. In an almost mechanistic fashion, believers are regarded as having a gift that they use within the church. All but ignored, however is the role of the church, and of church leadership in particular, for helping people identify their most useful place of service for the body.

An approach that tends to focus solely on the abilities of gifted people or the function(s) that gifted people play in the body will ultimately de-emphasize the corporate nature and purpose of spiritual gifts. This happens as a result of overemphasizing the individual who exercises spiritual gifts rather than the body that is to benefit by the gifts. Additionally, instead of understanding the church as central to the discovery of a believer’s place of kingdom service, there is a danger that the church can be viewed as little more than a collective of divinely gifted individuals. The fact that one can find countless spiritual gift identification instruments available online, without regard to the important role of the church in helping believers understand their place of service, is an example of the aforementioned hyper-individualism.

27 Just as detrimental as focusing on the individual to the exclusion of the ecclesiological significance of spiritual gifts is to so emphasize ecclesiology that one neglects the role of spiritual gifts altogether. Although perhaps unintentional, Mark Dever, The Deliberate Church (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005) emphasizes the corporate aspects of the church, but makes no reference at all to the work of the Holy Spirit or to the gifts of the Spirit in the life of the church.

28 Wagner is illustrative of this type of thinking in Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, 73, where he writes, “Every single believer has been fitted into the body of Christ according to God’s master plan, and has been given one or more spiritual gifts to fulfill that function properly.”
Yet it is difficult to properly understand the role of spiritual gifts apart from their relationship to ecclesiology – the doctrine of the Church.\textsuperscript{29} To view spiritual gifts apart from their relationship to ecclesiology inevitably diminishes the role of spiritual gifts as demonstrations of the Holy Spirit empowering the body of Christ in the advance of God’s kingdom and exalts the role of specially gifted individuals strengthening the church. This subtle shift demonstrates a move from understanding spiritual gifts to be the Spirit-given ministry of believers in response to the grace of God to that of abilities (skills) possessed by individuals. Thus, an unhealthy individualism encroaches upon the New Testament’s corporate purpose for spiritual gifts: namely, the building up of the body of Christ, the Church.

**Background**

Three threads have been woven together in my life to create an interest in studying spiritual gifts and spiritual gift identification instruments: my personal journey of faith in Christ, my academic course of study, and my experience as a pastor in the local church. Each of these threads has served to strengthen my resolve to better understand how to help believers joyfully serve in the church of Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God.

My interest in spiritual gift identification instruments began shortly after becoming a follower of Christ at 11 years of age. My parents had trusted Jesus as their Savior when I was just 7 years old, and for the next several years they sought to attend Bible believing churches. We began attending Gateway Baptist Church in Millstadt, Illinois, just as the church was calling a new pastor. That new pastor introduced a number of innovations to help people find their most effective place of ministry within the church, including the utilization of a spiritual gift identification instrument: the SGI-

Gilbert. Although only a young teen, I was encouraged to complete the SGI-Gilbert. Even as a 16-year-old student, I had questions about where the instrument came from, who developed it, and whether or not it was a “biblical” tool. Indeed, I vividly remember wondering “what would Paul think of this?”

My academic interest in spiritual gift identification also began at a young age. At the age of 17, I responded to the internal call of the Holy Spirit to enter full time vocational ministry and determined to attend Hannibal-LaGrange College for ministry training. At Hannibal-LaGrange there was much discussion about spiritual gifts and about leading every member of the church to engage in ministry. At Hannibal-LaGrange there were several classes in which this theme was present. New Testament courses addressed the classic spiritual gift texts identified earlier. Theology courses also dealt with spiritual gifts as the role of the Holy Spirit, the nature of the church, and the priesthood of all believers was studied. As one might expect, the issue of spiritual gift identification were most emphasized in the courses in Practical Theology and Pastoral Leadership. When issues of spiritual gift identification were raised, I inquired as to the use of spiritual gift inventories. Without fail, I was told that while the use of spiritual gift identification instruments was not best, they may be useful for helping people begin to come to grips with the spiritual gifts they possess. It seemed there was resistance to utilizing such instruments, but no research to support that hesitancy.

During my college years I remember a phone conversation with my mother, who was struggling to figure out where to serve in her local church. At the advice of her pastor she had completed a spiritual gift identification instrument. The results, however, confused her because they did not match up with her passions. Here was a woman who, at that time, had been a believer for over fifteen years and yet had no confidence she was serving faithfully because of the results of a spiritual gift identification instrument. At some point during the phone call, I remember asking her where she wanted to serve. I asked her what she was good at and how she could utilize that within the church. She
commented that she had not previously thought about spiritual gifts in that fashion. For me, that conversation began an increasing sense of concern about the usefulness of spiritual gift identification instruments and only deepened my personal interest in their origins.

During my course of Master of Divinity studies first at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis and later at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, several new discoveries were made in my quest to better understand spiritual gift discovery. First, at Covenant Seminary, I was exposed to a distinctly Reformed understanding of spiritual gifts. For the first time I was exposed to an understanding of spiritual gifts that was much more closely tied to the idea of spiritual gifts as a blessing to the church rather than a blessing for an individual. In addition, the perspective gained at Covenant helped me to see the gifts as the result of the victory of Christ, the bestowal of grace, and the distribution of gifts by the Spirit—all for the benefit of the church. Of particular help were the extensive lectures by Robert Peterson in ST 330: Christ and Salvation and David Jones in ST 350: Ecclesiology and Eschatology.

At The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, I took several courses that engaged the issue of spiritual gift(s) and spiritual gift discovery. Introduction to Church Growth, Principles and Methods of Church Growth, and Renewal in the Church all touched on the issue particularly as it relates to the importance of engaging church members in ministry. In addition, two New Testament courses dealt with the issue as the class came to key spiritual gift texts. Later, as I began my course of doctoral studies in the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth at The Southern

30 See, for example, Sinclair B. Ferguson, The Holy Spirit, Contours of Christian Theology, ed. Gerald Bray (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996); Edmund Clowney, The Church, Contours of Christian Theology, ed. Gerald Bray (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995); and Gaffin, Perspectives on Pentecost.
Baptist Theological Seminary, I began to pay particular attention to using research papers as a tool to deepen my understanding of spiritual gift identification from a number of different perspectives.

My first Evangelism and Church Growth seminar was Contemporary Church Growth led by Charles Lawless. For that course I chose to write a paper entitled “A Healthy Church Reproduces Itself.” The thesis concerned the importance of healthy churches planting new churches. I found, however, as I engaged the research, I was drawn continually to discussions of healthy churches engaging members in ministry. A key component of engaging members in ministry is helping those members discover their spiritual gifts. I determined to do as many future papers as possible related to the subject of spiritual gifts and spiritual gift identification.

The next semester included a seminar entitled Biblical and Theological Principles of Evangelism led by Tim Beougher. For that seminar wrote a research paper seeking to determine whether the mention of “evangelist” in Ephesians 4 refers to a spiritual gift or an office in the church. This research allowed me to significantly study material related to both the Ephesians 4 passage as well as the nature of spiritual gifts themselves. Indeed, the research for this seminar uncovered yet another way to describe spiritual gifts proposed by Ronald Y. K. Fung: function.31 Reading Fung’s work helped me to understand that the primary definition of spiritual gift in terms of ability is not as clear as I had previously thought.

The following semester I had my first Theology seminar entitled Ecclesiology led by Russell Moore. For that seminar I did a research paper to provide a theological and biblical analysis of spiritual gift identification within the CGM. The more I studied and

researched in this seminar, the more certain I became that the conventional understanding of spiritual gifts as abilities and the use of spiritual gift inventories for the discovery of those abilities was not only misguided, but detrimental to the health of the church.

It was in the research for this seminar that I was exposed to the work of Kenneth Berding for the first time. Berding is an Associate Professor of New Testament at the Talbot School of Theology at Biola University specializing in the area of hermeneutics and biblical interpretation. In his book *What are the Spiritual Gifts? Rethinking the Conventional View*, Berding asserts that the current definition of spiritual gifts as abilities is in error. The feedback received by my fellow seminar participants and the encouragement of Moore were of great assistance in concluding that the need for a major study examining spiritual gift identification methodology was in order.

The next semester provided another opportunity to investigate theological implications regarding spiritual gift identification and discovery in the seminar entitled Revelation, Scripture, and Authority led by Chad Brand. I shared with Brand that I had been researching spiritual gifts and spiritual gift discovery as a possible dissertation subject. With his permission, I wrote a paper on the impact of Wayne Grudem’s fallible prophecy hypothesis to biblical authority. The research for this paper led me to revisit many of the resources I had first been exposed to at Covenant Seminary, which was invaluable to refining my understanding of the nature of spiritual gifts. Further, the research for this seminar provided the basis for a paper entitled “Is God Still Speaking?”


33Berding, *What Are the Spiritual Gifts?*

Pastoral Implications in the Debate Concerning Ongoing Revelatory Gifts” that I was privileged to present at the 60th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) in Providence, Rhode Island.35

In addition to my ongoing personal and academic interest in the origins of the spiritual gift identification instruments, as a local church pastor I have also experienced the challenge of helping Christians determine their place of service within the church. I have served in four different congregations as a full-time pastor. At each of these congregations it has been my desire to lead people to serve as joyfully and effectively as possible. To be honest, I have wrestled with the best way to do that. More often than not, I have resorted to utilizing some type of spiritual gift identification instrument, despite my reservations about doing so. Indeed, the more research I have engaged in on the academic level, the less comfortable I have felt utilizing spiritual gift inventories in the local church. A personal goal I have for this current project is to provide academic research that will move the discussion of spiritual gift identification toward an ecclesiocentric model for the discovery and use of spiritual gifts.

Thus far my research indicates at least two factors that have contributed to the fact that this question has not been previously addressed in scholarly research. The first factor is that the majority of work on the subject of spiritual gifts assumes the conventional definition of spiritual gifts in which the focus of attention is on the observation of an individual’s abilities. As long as spiritual gifts are defined solely in terms of ability, few will seriously question the use of spiritual gift identification instruments as aids for identifying spiritual gifts.

A second factor militating against scholarly research on the question above is that, while the development of spiritual gift identification instruments initially took place

within theological academia, the use of these tools has largely been in the local church and the larger Christian subculture. Once in use in the local church, little academic attention has been paid to spiritual gift identification instruments by theologians. As something of a populist instrument, spiritual gift identification instruments have not garnered widespread academic attention among serious Bible scholars. In fact, outside of examining its historical development or its psychological underpinnings, one is hard pressed to find any serious scholarly work on the history or development of spiritual gift identification instruments.  

**Delimitations**

Several delimitations to this study must be noted. First, there are two issues concerning the nature of spiritual gifts that will not be addressed in this study: the continuationist / cessationist debate and the number of spiritual gifts. This study will not specifically seek to address the continuationist / cessationist debate. The issue will be raised and addressed with respect to the construct of spiritual gift identification instruments, but not to determine which view is more accurate. Nor will this study

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examine the classic spiritual gift texts in order to determine the specific number of spiritual gifts. The number of gifts will be examined only as it relates to the development of spiritual gift identification instruments.

A second delimitation to be noted is that this study will not seek to determine the validity of one spiritual gift identification instrument over another. A historical examination of the Spiritual Gift Inventory (SGI-McMinn), the Likert version of the Spiritual Gift Inventory (SGI-L), the Wagner-Houts Modified Inventory (SGI-WHM), and the Team Ministry Inventory developed by Larry Gilbert (SGI-Gilbert) will be undertaken in order to understand the progression of the thinking of those advocating the use of spiritual gift inventories. A comparative examination of the SGI-WHM and the SGI-Gilbert will be undertaken to demonstrate the influence of theological presuppositions that influence the design of these tools. The primary concern of this study is not to determine which spiritual gift identification instrument is the best way for believers to identify spiritual gifts, but whether these instruments should be used at all.

**Methodology**

The research proceeded with an examination of primary resources related to the development of spiritual gift identification instruments beginning with the SGI-McMinn and proceeding through the development of the SGI-L, SGI-WHM, and the SGI-Gilbert. My initial research suggests that the SGI-McMinn and the SGI-L have been at least the theoretical basis for the vast majority of instruments in use, including the two most prominent: SGI-WHM and the SGI-Gilbert.\(^37\) There are several resources that have investigated the historical development of the aforementioned instruments and will be useful to this present study.

\(^37\)This is not to suggest that the SGI-WHM or the SGI-Gilbert were developed to explicitly follow the model of the SGI-McMinn or the SGI-L. However, the principles underlying all four instruments bear significant similarities.
I have been fortunate to have engaged in background research while preparing papers for Ph.D. seminars that will be useful for this present study. My earlier research indicates that the library at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has access to a large portion of primary resources that will be required. In addition, my close proximity to Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary proved tremendously valuable for accessing additional resources. Further, the number of resources available via electronic media from the aforementioned institutions, as well as several others, will only serve to facilitate the research.

In addition to written resources, I was privileged to interview several key figures instrumental in the development of my research. The first interview conducted was with C. Peter Wagner. Wagner was a key figure in the early development of the CGM, and due to his influence, those writing within the CGM increasingly emphasized the importance of spiritual gift identification. Wagner still teaches and leads seminars, though he has broadened his interests considerably. The interview with Wagner was useful to understanding the early development of spiritual gift identification instruments. In addition, the interview with Wagner provided unique insight into the way in which the SGI-WMHQ has been revised over the past twenty years.

A second interview I was privileged to conduct was with Larry Gilbert, the developer of the SGI-Gilbert. This interview was particularly meaningful for me, as the SGI-Gilbert was the first spiritual gift identification instrument that I was exposed to as a student at Gateway Baptist Church in Millstadt, Illinois. Gilbert made me aware of the influence of Bill Gothard on the development of the SGI-Gilbert, a fact I was completely unaware of prior to speaking with him. Gothard’s influence was helpful in understanding why Gilbert’s instrument has a fundamentally different theological bias than the SGI-
McMinn, SGI-L, or SGI-WMHQ.\textsuperscript{38} Gilbert confirmed that he employs a similar method of review and revision to the SGI-Gilbert as Wagner does for the SGI-WMHQ, indicating that, although the two instruments have differing theological presuppositions, they have other characteristics in common.

I was pleased to initially speak to Ken Hemphill about this dissertation topic at the 2010 Southern Baptist Convention, at which point he indicated his willingness to help with the project. In the Fall of 2010 I was able to travel to North Greenville University in Tigerville, South Carolina and interview Hemphill. Hemphill has written extensively on the subject of spiritual gifts, including his own Ph.D. dissertation on the subject.\textsuperscript{39} I was surprised that Hemphill’s greatest contribution to this project was not in the area I presumed it would be, namely, the original languages of the gift lists in the New Testament. Instead, Hemphill’s greatest contribution to my thinking about spiritual gifts was his assertion that too many discussions concerning spiritual gifts do not take “natural” or birth talents into account. In addition, in 2009 Hemphill wrote \textit{You are Gifted: Your Spiritual Gifts and the Kingdom of God}, which addresses a number of issues that will be touched on in this dissertation.\textsuperscript{40}

\textbf{Conclusion}

As a result of my preliminary research, with the delimitations above noted, this dissertation seeks to determine if spiritual gift identification instruments are based on a flawed definition of spiritual gifts, if those instruments have been developed using an

\textsuperscript{38} Gothard’s influence can also be seen in Don Fortune and Katie Fortune, \textit{Discovering Your God-Given Gifts} (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 2009).


unreliable methodology, and if those instruments tend to emphasize the ability of the individual to the detriment of the church.

My personal interest, my academic research, and my pastoral experience have led me to desire to develop more fully an understanding of the issues related to spiritual gift identification, including:

1. What were the psychological, theological, and biblical presuppositions involved in the origin and development of the Spiritual Gift Inventory (SGI-McMinn) and subsequent versions (SGI-L, SGI-WHQ, and SGI-Gilbert)? Were those presuppositions sound?

2. Are there sound psychometric principles underlying the construction of spiritual gift identification instruments? Based on empirical research, should spiritual gift identification instruments be regarded as reliable and valid?

3. Should spiritual gifts be defined primarily in terms of abilities, ministries, or functions within the body of Christ?

4. Is it appropriate to talk about service to the kingdom through an individual’s “natural” talents and describe that service as a spiritual gift?

5. Is there a way to develop a paradigm for spiritual gift identification that is centered in the church’s life and mission rather than one that is focused solely upon observation of an individual’s abilities and that may be undertaken completely independently of the church? Are there implications of implementing such a model on church structure and governance?

In answering these questions, this dissertation will seek to answer the questions above within the overarching framework of answering the question, “Is the use of a spiritual gift identification instrument the best way for people to find their place of joyful service within the church?”
CHAPTER 2
THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUAL GIFT IDENTIFICATION INSTRUMENTS

Introduction

Spiritual gift identification instruments did not develop in a vacuum. Rather, they developed in an era of increasing interest in church growth. Inherent in the Church Growth Movement (CGM) was an interest in how to make the theoretical principles of church growth useful for the practical realities of local church life. Indeed, the CGM has been interested in discovering the factors that lead to the expansion of the church, and disseminating those factors as widely as possible. This interest in turning church growth principles into practical tools for ministry helped lead to the development of spiritual gift identification instruments.

Although the development of spiritual gift identification instruments initially took place within theological academia, the use of these tools has largely been in the local church, parachurch ministries and the larger Christian subculture. As a result, spiritual gift identification instruments have become something of a populist instrument and have not garnered widespread academic attention among serious biblical scholars. Few doctoral dissertations have been undertaken on the subject of the history and development of spiritual gift identification instruments. Indeed, other than research from the discipline of psychology, one is hard pressed to find any serious scholarly work on the history or development of spiritual gift identification instruments.¹

¹See, for example, Susan Frederickson, “The Construction and Preliminary Validation of the Spiritual Gift Inventory, Research Version” (Ph.D. diss., Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1985); Ronald J. DeVries II, “Is It a Gift? The
The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief overview of the development of the CGM itself, and then demonstrate the development of spiritual gift identification instruments beginning with the SGI-McMinn. The main body of the chapter will focus on the development of the SGI-McMinn and a subsequent version of it, the SGI-L, as well as two popular spiritual gift identification instruments (one from a cessationist perspective and one from a non-cessationist perspective). After an overview of the development of the aforementioned spiritual gift identification instruments is presented, an assessment of that instruments relative strengths and weaknesses will follow.

It is important to note that not every spiritual gift identification instrument in use today will be examined. Only the development of four spiritual gift identification instruments, each having historical significance, will be shown. Those four spiritual gift identification instruments include two of the earliest spiritual gift identification instruments and two subsequent instruments that have achieved widespread usage in the United States. While there are dozens of varieties of spiritual gift identification instruments, these four provide a solid foundation on which to evaluate and assess their relative effectiveness.

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A Brief History of the CGM

The CGM traces its beginnings to the publication of Donald A. McGavran’s *The Bridges of God* in 1955.² At the time of its publication, McGavran was serving as a missionary in India. In *The Bridges of God*, McGavran sought to provide some explanation as to why some churches in India were growing and others were not. Although the primary focus of *The Bridges of God* is to demonstrate the difference between a people movement and the mission station approach to missions, the underlying question of the research is “why do some churches grow and others do not?” The approach taken by McGavran in seeking to determine why some churches were growing and others were not growing involved the utilization of what has become a hallmark principle of the CGM: the application of social science research to assist the local church.³

The decade of the 1960s was a period not only of significant social change in the United States, but of heightened awareness of and receptivity to the principles of the CGM within evangelicalism. Indeed, the CGM began to expand its influence significantly during the 1960s. McGavran points to five key events that contributed to the expansion and growth of the CGM: the establishment of the Institute of Church Growth on the campus of Northwest Christian College in 1961; the publication of the *Church Growth Bulletin* in 1964; the relocation of the Institute of Church Growth to Fuller Seminary at Pasadena in 1965; the establishment of the William Carey Library for the publication and circulation of church growth books; and the creation of the Institute for American Church Growth in 1973 by Win Arn.⁴ It is not surprising then, that as interest

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⁴ Ibid., 105.
was intensifying around the movement itself, some of the individual principles espoused by the movement would be seized upon for further study. The “principle of spiritual gifts” was not an exception.\(^5\) Indeed, Wagner describes the period of the 1960s as a time in which there was a “receptive climate for spiritual gifts” was well underway.\(^6\)

Within the CGM, a principle is defined as “a universal truth, which, when properly interpreted and applied, contributes significantly to the growth of churches and denominations.”\(^7\) Because the CGM utilizes the term “principle” to describe all of the factors, including those that are specifically biblical and those that are extra-biblical, that contribute to the expansion of churches, the exact number of principles embraced by the CGM is debatable. Indeed, even among key CGM leaders the number of principles espoused varies considerably, with McGavran espousing sixty-seven principles, Wagner fifty-one principles, and Arn twenty-eight.\(^8\) Regardless of the differences in identifying an exact number of principles, the principle of spiritual gifts is consistently identified as an essential part of a larger CGM principle of mobilizing laity for ministry.\(^9\) If the laity is to be mobilized for ministry according to their spiritual gifts, how can one determine what gifts they possess? This was a question facing the CGM in the late 1960s and the early 1970s.

\(^5\)Ibid., 116.

\(^6\)C. Peter Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1984), 70.


\(^9\)For a few examples of the way in which the principle of spiritual gifts is connected to the mobilization of the laity for ministry in CGM literature, see C. Peter Wagner, *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), 69-70; idem, *Your Church Can Grow*, 70; Rainer, *The Book of Church Growth*, 200.
Need for Tool to Raise Awareness of and Identify Spiritual Gifts

Prior to the 1960s there is no evidence of any type of written spiritual gift identification instrument in use. The 1960s, however, proved to be a decade in which a number of psychological instruments were coming into widely accepted use. For example, the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator, which had been in development from the 1940s, began to receive extensive publication in the 1960s. The desire to utilize the tools of social science research for the benefit of the church and the increasing interest in the principles of the CGM helped lead to the development of the first spiritual gift identification instrument, the SGI-McMinn.

Because the CGM was concerned with utilizing the best practices of social science to assist the local church, it was consistent to determine if there was an application of tools like the MBTI to the issue of spiritual gift discovery. That is not to suggest that there was a conscious attempt to apply the principles or methodology of the MBTI specifically to spiritual gift discovery. Rather, the entire social and cultural context was one in which the use of psychological testing tools had become commonplace, and neither the CGM nor the evangelical world was immune to that influence. The point here is not that the CGM or McGavran was emphasizing the use or development of spiritual gifts or spiritual gift identification instruments, but that there was a very receptive climate to social and psychological research instruments during the same period that the first spiritual gift identification instruments were developed.

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11 According to Wagner, the issue of laity involvement was important to McGavran, but McGavran “did not have the template to understand laity involvement in the context of spiritual gifts.” McGavran, the father of the CGM and Wagner’s Dean of Fuller Seminary at the time, never fully embraced Wagner’s teaching on spiritual gifts. C. Peter Wagner, telephone interview by author, 5 April 2011.
The close relationship between the construction of spiritual gift identification instruments and personality tests is illustrated in Fredrickson’s dissertation on the SGI-McMinn, in which she begins with a lengthy description of the various strategies for constructing personality tests.\(^\text{12}\) It is clear from Fredrickson that spiritual gift identification instruments have their developmental roots in personality inventories and are subject to the same validity and reliability challenges as those faced by personality inventories.\(^\text{13}\)

Since 1972, an increasingly large amount of material on the subject of spiritual gifts and spiritual gift identification has been produced.\(^\text{14}\) This material includes books, seminars, and spiritual gift identification instruments (both paper based and online), frequently called “spiritual gift inventories.” As the decade of the 1970s gave way to the 1980’s, the use of and reliance upon spiritual gift identification instruments increased, particularly among those churches influenced by the CGM. Indeed, Wagner contends that there is no “dimension of the Christian life that more effectively joins the teachings of Scripture with the day-to-day activities of the people of God than spiritual gifts.”\(^\text{15}\) Thom Rainer, a leader in and authority on the CGM, indicates that the CGM encourages


\(^\text{13}\)The validity and reliability challenges faced by both personality and spiritual gift identification instruments are similar. Indeed, it is telling that more scholarly work has been done on the issue of spiritual gift identification instruments from discipline of Psychology than from Theology. The issues of validity and reliability for spiritual gift identification instruments will be thoroughly examined in chap. 4.

\(^\text{14}\)The year 1972 is cited by Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, 71, where Wagner states, “I believe the real turning point [on the matter of spiritual gifts] to be the publication of Body Life, written by Pastor Ray Stedman of Peninsula Bible Church in Palo Alto, California. The unusual popularity of that book in 1972 is due largely to the receptive climate for spiritual gifts that had already been five years in the making.”

\(^\text{15}\)C. Peter Wagner, Leading Your Church to Grow (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1984), 131.
Christians to discover their spiritual gifts and then use those gifts to build up the body of Christ, which will result in the church growing.\textsuperscript{16}

One telling example of the increased reliance upon spiritual gift identification instruments is found in comparing the material on spiritual gift discovery in two books by Wagner. In 1976, Wagner’s section entitled “Discovering Your Spiritual Gift” included five steps: explore the possibilities, experiment with as many [gifts] as possible, examine your feelings, evaluate your effectiveness, and expect confirmation from the body.\textsuperscript{17} A number of years later, that section was published as a small book; which expanded the “experiment with as many [gifts] as possible” section to include the following injunction:

One of the best ways to determine which gifts to experiment with first is to go through a spiritual-gifts questionnaire…although a gift inventory like this should not be considered the final word on discovering gifts, it can be very helpful in pointing you in the right direction.\textsuperscript{18}

Because spiritual gifts have been defined primarily in terms of observable ability, it has been assumed that such gifts could be discovered primarily through self-evaluation. Thus, spiritual gift identification instruments were developed and recommended to believers to discover those gifts. We now turn to an investigation into the development of four key spiritual gift identification instruments (SGI-McMinn, SGI-L, SGI-WMHQ and SGI-Gilbert). The SGI-McMinn and the SGI-L, which provide the foundational work on spiritual gift identification instruments that has been built upon by subsequent instruments, and two of the more prominent spiritual gift identification instruments developed in the past twenty years, the SGI-WMHQ and the SGI-Gilbert.

\textsuperscript{16}Rainer, \textit{Book of Church Growth}, 113.

\textsuperscript{17}Wagner, \textit{Your Church Can Grow}, 74.

\textsuperscript{18}Wagner, \textit{Discover Your Spiritual Gifts}, updated and expanded ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2005), 74.
Development and Assessment of the SGI-McMinn (1972)

The initial instrument devised for the discovery of spiritual gifts was entitled the Spiritual Gift Inventory (SGI-McMinn) and was developed by Gordon McMinn, a professor at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary.\(^{19}\) McMinn’s work built upon an “extensive exegetical study on the concept of spiritual gifts” that had been undertaken in 1965 by a fellow professor at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary.\(^{20}\) The goal of the exegetical work was to provide a solid theological and theoretical base from which an instrument could be developed to assist believers in the discovery of their spiritual gifts.

This section will present the development of both the SGI-McMinn as well as a follow up spiritual gift identification instrument by Susan Fredrickson that built directly upon the work of McMinn. Fredrickson’s instrument will be referred to as the SGI-L, because the major modification Fredrickson made to the SGI-McMinn was the utilization of a Likert scale in the instrument. Following a presentation of the development of the SGI-McMinn and the SGI-L, an assessment of each will follow.

Development of the SGI-McMinn

McMinn joined several others on a spiritual gift identification project in 1972 and was tasked with employing the conclusions of the exegetical work on spiritual gifts in the development of an instrument through which spiritual gifts could be positively identified. Fredrickson outlines several steps the research team took in the development of the SGI-McMinn.\(^{21}\) The first step in the development of the SGI-McMinn was clearly defining scriptural terms such as “gift,” “ministry,” and “effect.” A “gift” was defined as


\(^{20}\)Ibid.

\(^{21}\)Ibid., 29-37.
that which was “not a natural talent, but rather a God-given ability which demonstrates to other believers that the Holy Spirit indwells the individual exercising the gift.”\textsuperscript{22} The gift was distinguished from a “ministry,” which was regarded to be the way in which the gift is employed. An “effect” was the result of exercising the gift.\textsuperscript{23} The definition of a spiritual gift as something other than a natural talent and the threefold framework of “gifts, ministries, and effects,” helped establish a framework for how spiritual gifts and spiritual gift identification would be discussed in CGM literature well into the future.\textsuperscript{24}

The second step in the process involved determining which gifts would be included in the spiritual gift identification instrument under construction. A decision was made to use twelve of the twenty gifts mentioned in the four relevant spiritual gift passages in Scripture (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:8-10, 28-30; Eph 4:11; and 1 Pet 4:10-11). A decision was made not to include the charismatic, or sign gifts (healings, miracles, speaking in tongues, and interpretation of tongues), along with the offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher. The remaining twelve gifts were divided into two categories: speaking gifts and serving gifts.\textsuperscript{25}

The third step in developing the SGI-McMinn was to determine the best way to identify the twelve spiritual gifts that the researchers had settled upon. Because the

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{22}Gordon McMinn, \textit{Spiritual Gifts Inventory} (Forest Grove, OR: self published, 1982), 2.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{23}The difficulty of using these definitions of “gift,” “ministry,” and “effect” will be addressed in chap. 3.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{24}See Kenneth Berding, “Confusing Word and Concept in ‘Spiritual Gifts’: Have We Forgotten James Barr’s Exhortations?” \textit{Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society} 43 (2000):37-51 for an excellent discussion of the difficulties presented with the aforementioned definitions.
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research team operated from a belief that spiritual gifts are observable God-given abilities which demonstrate to other believers that the Holy Spirit indwells the individual exercising the gift, a series of twenty five behavioral statements were developed that were thought to be descriptive of each gift. Those statements were then evaluated and revised to determine the most salient behavioral components indicative of each gift. The twelve best items were then retained for each gift, creating a total of 144 test items. These 144 test items were then rated by a panel of judges uninvolved in the development process to determine if they were able to match each statement to the intended gift. Those items that were identified with three or more gifts were discarded and new statements were written, with the goal that each statement would be clearly related to only one gift.

The first three steps in the development of the SGI-McMinn had yielded twelve spiritual gift subscales, with each one being assigned twelve descriptive statements. It was the belief of the researchers that the twelve gifts identified represented twelve separate behavioral domains, with minimal overlap among them.26 The following is a list and definition of the twelve gift subscales that the SGI-McMinn proposed to identify through the aforementioned behavioral statements.27

Preaching – “The God-given ability to set before the people the word and wisdom of God persuasively through personality as a herald.”28

Exhortation – “The God-given ability to draw alongside of someone in order to comfort, encourage, rebuke or lead into insight toward action.”29

Teaching – “The God-given ability to lay down in systematic order the


27Ibid., 31-36.

28McMinn, Spiritual Gifts Inventory, 6.

29Ibid.
complete ladder of a doctrine and to apply it incisively and diligently to life.”

Word of Wisdom – “The God-given ability to locate formerly unknown principles as well as to combine known principles of God’s Word and to communicate them to fresh situations.”

Word of Knowledge – “The God-given ability to arrange the facts of Scripture, to categorize these into principles and to communicate them to repeated or familiar situations.”

Faith – “The God-given ability to see through mountainous problems to the ultimate source with the vision that it is timely to rely absolutely on both God’s ability and willingness to perform in this particular matter.”

Giving – “The God-given ability to make and to give things most liberally and beyond all human expectation.”

Mercy – “The God-given ability to be sensitive or empathetic to people who are in affliction or misery and to lift internal burdens with cheerfulness.”

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30Ibid.

31A problem that will plague the development of a valid and reliable spiritual gift identification instrument is the definition of gifts. The definition here presented for “Word of Knowledge” and, following it, “Word of Wisdom,” is a case in point. In the SGI-McMinn, these are not regarded as particularly supernatural in their nature. However, subsequent developments of spiritual gift identification instruments, particularly those that follow the SGI-WHMQ, regard these gifts as subsets of the gift of prophecy. See Wagner, Discover Your Spiritual Gifts, 111, 113-15. The problem of theological bias in the design of spiritual gift identification instruments will be addressed in Chapter Three.

32McMinn, Spiritual Gifts Inventory, 7.

33Ibid.

34Ibid., 8.

35Ibid.

36Ibid., 9.
Helps – “The God-given ability to see tasks and to do them for and with someone in order to lift external burdens.”

Ruling – “The God-given executive ability to stand before people and to inspire followers by leading them aggressively but with care.”

Administration – “The God-given legislative ability to stand behind people in order to collect data, set policy, [and] develop plans which will guide a course of action with skill and wisdom.”

Discerning Spirits – “The God-given judicial ability to stand over people in order to detect a genuine or non-genuine motive by distinguishing the spirit-source behind any person’s speech or act.”

The fourth step in the development of the SGI-McMinn was to state the 144 test items four different ways, yielding 576 statements. These 576 statements were grouped together in 192 triplets. Initial subjects were asked to indicate which of the statements in a given triplet was most and least like them, leaving one sentence blank. Table 1 is the first triplet set from the SGI-McMinn, with first box indicating the statement “most” like them and the second box indicating the statement “least” like them: When the test was scored, a system of pre-determined weights was utilized, taking into account items assigned more than one gift subscale as well as those items indicated as most and least like a person.

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37 Ibid.
38 Ibid., 10.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 The complete SGI-McMinn can be found in the Appendix.
Table 1. SGI-McMinn Sample Triplet

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Most</td>
<td>Least</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Find it easy to pick out the main points in a presentation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Like to be told exactly what a job requires before accepting it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seem to detect weak areas in a message more quickly than others.</td>
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Assessment of the SGI-McMinn

The SGI-McMinn was the first formal attempt to construct a spiritual gift identification instrument that was intended to aid believers in the discovery and use of their spiritual gifts. Many biblical, theological, and psychological considerations were taken into account by researchers in the development of the SGI-McMinn. Careful thought was given to representing a biblical understanding of spiritual gifts. There were, however, challenges inherent in the SGI-McMinn that prevented it from becoming as useful a tool as initially hoped.

The SGI-McMinn is a forced answer ipsative instrument. Ipsative testing is based on subjects being forced to choose that which is most and least like them, from a set of at least two interlinked statements. In the SGI-McMinn individuals are given three statements and are asked to indicate which statement is “most” like them and “least” like them. A fundamental problem with the SGI-McMinn is that the ipsative format does not lend itself to the development of norms. Thus, the philosophical framework underlying the SGI-McMinn affords no way of comparing the responses of individuals to a control set.

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Another problem the ipsative format of the SGI-McMinn presented for researchers and individuals was the length of time required to complete the instrument. Respondents found being forced to choose between items that are most and least like them quite difficult, resulting in the test often taking well over an hour to complete. Not only is such a time frame unwieldy, but also calls into question the reliability of the data gathered. Indeed, a number of researchers have demonstrated the relationship between the length of tests and the resultant attitudes that affect reliability.

In addition, the development team quickly realized that the hand scoring of such an inventory was burdensome and time consuming. Thus, a computer generated inventory was quickly developed. However, even with technological assistance and, despite inclusion in a book on spiritual gifts, the labor intensive nature of completing, scoring and interpreting the SGI-McMinn contributed to it not gaining widespread use.

**Development and Assessment of the SGI-L (1984)**

The SGI-L was developed as part of Susan Fredrickson’s research at Western Conservative Seminary investigating the validity of the SGI-McMinn. Because the

45Ibid., 38.


48It should be noted that Fredrickson’s work was, chronologically, after the publication of at least two other, significant, works on spiritual gifts. Richard Houts’ spiritual gift questionnaire was first published in May 1976 in *Eternity* magazine. And, Wagner published the first version of the Wagner Houts Modified Questionnaire (SGI-WHMQ) in *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* in 1979. Because the SGI-L is so closely tied to the SGI-McMinn, its development will be addressed here. The development of the SGI-WHMQ will be addressed in the next section of this chapter.
SGI-L was built largely upon the original work of McMinn, this section will identify the areas in which Frederickson diverged from the original instrument. In particular, the two major areas of weakness Fredrickson noted in the SGI-McMinn and sought to correct in the SGI-L will be noted.

**Development of the SGI-L**

Fredrickson recognized that certain problems inherent in the SGI-McMinn prevented it from being useful for developing normative data or for providing any type of multivariate statistical analysis.\(^{49}\) The goal of Fredrickson’s work was, in fact, to investigate whether an instrument could be developed that would measure spiritual giftedness in the same way that other dimensions of personality are measured.\(^{50}\) Beginning with the SGI-McMinn, Fredrickson developed a version of the instrument that utilized a modified, four point Likert response format, which is referred to as the SGI-L.\(^{51}\) Today, the majority of spiritual gift identification instruments follow this pattern, with the greatest difference between them being the way in which the Likert scale is constructed in each.

Fredrickson takes issue with several aspects of the SGI-McMinn, which she seeks to correct in her spiritual gift identification instrument, the SGI-L. The first issue is the format of the SGI-McMinn, itself. As mentioned above, the ipsative format of the SGI-McMinn presented numerous problems including the inability to develop norms, the length of time to complete the assessment, and others. Fredrickson sought to resolve this issue by adopting a modified, four-point Likert scale as the format for the instrument.\(^{52}\)


\(^{50}\)Ibid, 41.

\(^{51}\)Ibid, 39.

\(^{52}\)Ibid.
Additionally, for the SGI-L, the number of behavioral statements is reduced from 576 to 144, which represented twelve statements for each of the twelve gifts tested.

The use of Likert scales is regarded as superior in the development of psychological tests. Kline observes,

Likert scales consist essentially of statements followed by 5 or 7 point rating scales which indicate the extend of a subject’s agreement with the item…Likert scales based on the classical model of error variance (which, conveniently, are far more simple to construct) are more consonant with the structure of attitudes. For all these reasons the classical model of error variance is still seen as the most valuable for understanding and constructing psychological tests.53

Rather than asking respondents to select which statement was most and least like them, in the SGI-L, the points on the rating scale included CF–Completely False, PF–Partially False, PT–Partially True, and CT–Completely True.54 Fredrickson’s Likert scale was modified by eliminating a mid-point choice in order to avoid neutral responses.

Another issue Fredrickson has with the SGI-McMinn is the theological presuppositions involved in determining which spiritual gifts were defined and targeted for assessment. The researchers who developed the SGI-McMinn relied upon a literal hermeneutic of the gift passages that resulted in an understanding of the gift lists as a precise and complete list of gifts. Fredrickson recognizes that such a view ignores theological work that has been done regarding spiritual gifts and creates faulty theological assumptions on which both the SGI-McMinn and the SGI-L are based.55

The SGI-L, however, maintained the gift list from the SGI-McMinn as she was attempting to develop a way to provide validity and reliability to the SGI-McMinn, not correct perceived theological weaknesses. Even within the research itself, she recognizes


55Ibid., 42 and 96.
the inherent difficulty of so doing. Indeed, she points out,

The authors [of the original SGI-McMinn] did not consider the fact that most theologians who wrote about the concept of spiritual gifting from the decade of the 1940’s on supported the idea that the gift lists were examples of a Hebrew literary device, meant for illustration and example, and were not intended to be operationally defined and identified in persons.\(^{56}\)

In both the SGI-McMinn and the SGI-L is a process in which test authors exegete a gift passage and then make inferences about behavior that is potentially implied by the definition they develop for each gift. In so doing, Fredrickson notes that the definitions of gifts that emerged were more the result of theological hair-splitting than of an actual understanding of the passages in context.\(^{57}\)

**Assessment of the SGI-L**

The SGI-L is a significant improvement over the SGI-McMinn in at least two respects. First, the SGI-L is intended to be a spiritual gift identification instrument that is not only theologically sound, but also based on sound psychometrics. Fredrickson’s stated intention in developing the SGI-L is to gather reliability and validity data in order to determine how many psychological dimensions (spiritual gifts) are measured by the instrument.\(^{58}\)

Indeed, of the twelve psychological factors tested for in the SGI-L, Fredrickson found that three psychological factors accounted for nearly two-thirds of total test variance.\(^{59}\) Of these three factors, two could be described as “serving gifts” and the other as a “speaking gift.” In seeking to determine if there was a demographic predictor for spiritual gifts, Fredrickson found that gender was the best predictor of spiritual

\(^{56}\)Ibid., 86.

\(^{57}\)Ibid.

\(^{58}\)Ibid., 2.

\(^{59}\)Ibid., 81.
giftedness, as measured by the SGI-L, while a correlation among other demographic variables was not conclusive.\textsuperscript{60}

A second contribution made by Fredrickson’s work was to demonstrate the level of theological bias that went into the development of the SGI-McMinn. Fredrickson observes that the SGI-L “was probably constructed on faulty theological assumptions” driven by “inaccurate interpretation of relevant spiritual gift passages.”\textsuperscript{61} Indeed, Fredrickson argues that the entire theological foundation upon which the SGI-McMinn and SGI-L are based is fraught with too many difficulties to make further research with the current instrument to be “an exercise in futility.”\textsuperscript{62}

\textbf{Development and Assessment of the SGI-WMHQ (1979)}

In addition to the SGI-McMinn, additional spiritual gift identification instruments were developed during the 1970s, most notably the Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire (SGI-WMHQ).\textsuperscript{63} The next two sections will present the development of two of the most prominent spiritual gift identification instruments utilized by believers and churches over the past thirty years; the SGI-WMHQ and the Team Ministry Spiritual Gifts Inventory developed by Larry Gilbert (SGI-Gilbert). Following a presentation of the development of the SGI-WMHQ and the SGI-Gilbert, an assessment of each instrument will follow.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{60}Ibid., 93.
  \item \textsuperscript{61}Ibid., 96-97.
  \item \textsuperscript{62}Ibid., 97.
  \item \textsuperscript{63}In addition to that of Wagner and Houts, a spiritual gift identification instrument was published in David Hocking, \textit{Spiritual Gifts} (Orange, CA: Promise Publishing, 1992). However, Hocking’s spiritual gift identification instrument did not gain widespread use in the larger Christian community and is therefore not a subject of further investigation in this dissertation.
\end{itemize}
Development of the SGI-WMHQ

The SGI-WMGQ is the result of the combined efforts of Richard Houts and C. Peter Wagner. The SGI-WMHQ began as a spiritual gift questionnaire originally developed and published by Richard Houts in 1976. Like McMinn, Houts was a professor who developed his spiritual gift identification instrument in the context of academia. Houts published his self described “inventory” in Eternity magazine in May of 1976, an article that Wagner described as a “light going off” for him in his pursuit to better assist believers in their understanding of spiritual gifts. The development of the Houts questionnaire will be dealt with first, and then Wagner’s modifications to it will be described.

There are several significant differences between the SGI-McMinn and Houts’ original instrument. First, the format of the two instruments is different. While the SGI-McMinn uses a forced-answer, ipsative format, in which respondents are asked to select statements that are most and least like them from three possible options, the Houts’ format uses a modified Likert scale. Houts asks respondents to read a statement and then rate the degree to which they have experienced that statement in their life. The scale is a modified Likert format, in that it does not provide a neutral response. Rather, each point on the scale is attributed a numeric value as follows: 3–much, 2–some, 1–little, 0–not at all.

A second difference, related to the format of the instrument, is the brevity of Houts’ instrument. Houts provides 100 single statements to which respondents are asked to respond compared to the SGI-McMinn which provides 576 statements grouped in 192 triplets which respondents were asked to indicate which was “most” and “least” like

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65 C. Peter Wagner, telephone interview by author, 5 April 2011.
The structure of the Houts instrument significantly shortened the length of time required to complete the instrument as well as significantly simplifying the scoring of it.

A third difference between the Houts and the SGI-McMinn is the number of spiritual gifts that each instrument seeks to identify. While the SGI-McMinn seeks to identify twelve spiritual gifts, the Houts instrument seeks to identify the following twenty spiritual gifts found by collating the gift lists of found in 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and Romans 12.67

Apostleship – An extinct office, represented today by the Spirit-given ability to minister cross-culturally with church-planting goals.

Prophecy – The ability to cause the word of the apostle to shine (2 Pet 1:19; 1 Cor 14:3). It includes congregational preaching which explains pointedly and applies God’s revelation.

Evangelism – An effective instrument of God in soul winning.

Shepherding – As in pastoring, to guide, feed, and protect a flock of followers in Christ.

Teaching – Facilitating detailed understanding of biblical truth to those willing to learn.

Exhortation – Coming alongside for the sake of another in need of encouragement, challenge or earnest advice.

Knowledge – Ability to easily master a body of truth.

Wisdom – A reverential awe of God coupled with the ability to use knowledge effectively.

Helps – Temporal aid given to release other Christian workers for spiritual

66 The original Houts instrument can be found in the Appendix.

67 The following twelve gifts and definitions come from Houts, “All God’s Children Have Gifts,” 21.
ministry.

Hospitality – Ability to provide open house and graciousness to those in need of food, lodging and fellowship.

Giving – Able to earn money, manage it well and wisely give it for the Lord’s work.

Administration – Working with and through followers toward achieving biblical goals.

Leading – Influencing others, or presiding or ruling over others in the body of Christ.

Mercy – Aiding the suffering and undeserving.

Faith – Unusual trust in the presence and power of God.

Discernment – Ability to distinguish between truth and error, or between good and evil.

Miracles, Healing, Tongues, Interpreting Tongues – Sign gifts variously understood.

In addition to including the sign gifts (miracles, healing, tongues and interpretation of tongues), the Houts’ instrument also includes apostleship, evangelism, shepherding, and hospitality. Houts includes what the SGI-McMin calls “preaching” as part of the gift of prophecy. The differences in the number and kind of gifts tested for demonstrate the bias of the test designer, an inherent problem in the development of spiritual gift identification instruments.

In 1978 Houts modified his original instrument by revising some questions in which the wording seemed to be confusing. A question could be considered “confusing” for several reasons. If the question seemed to indicate more than one spiritual gift or if the language of the question seemed antiquated, it was considered “confusing” and was replaced. The rewording of confusing questions became something of a “standard
practice” among those developing spiritual gift identification instruments.68

Wagner’s journey with spiritual gifts was long and unexpected. Wagner recounts that his first exposure to spiritual gifts did not come through formal seminary training, but through the writings of Alexander Rattray Hay’s textbook, The New Testament Order for Church and Missionary,69 which he encountered while serving as a missionary in Bolivia.70 It was Hay’s textbook that provided Wagner with an understanding of spiritual gifts that had been severely lacking in his formal training.71 Wagner began to study the book of First Corinthians as he prepared to teach a course on the book at the Bible Institute in Bolivia. As he reflected on the concepts he gleaned from Hay and those he discovered in his study of First Corinthians, he began to develop a framework for teaching others in the larger Evangelical community about spiritual gifts.

As Wagner studied, wrote and taught on the subject of spiritual gifts, he did so with an understanding of the “full complement of gifts,” even though he was not in the charismatic stream of Christianity at that time.72 When Wagner moved to Fuller Theological Seminary to serve as a professor in 1971, he incorporated biblical teaching

68 During the author’s interview with them, both Larry Gilbert and Peter Wagner confirmed that they engaged in this practice in an attempt to ensure that a question would apply as narrowly as possible to a single spiritual gift.


70 C. Peter Wagner, telephone interview by author, 5 April 2011.

71 Wagner notes the dearth of teaching on the subject of spiritual gifts during his years in seminary in Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, 70, and emphasized it during the author’s telephone interview with him on 5 April 2011.

72 C. Peter Wagner, telephone interview by author, 5 April 2011. In Wagner, Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow, 15, he states “as far as spiritual gifts are concerned, I do not identify with either the Pentecostal or the Neo-Pentecostal or the charismatic movements, although I have enjoyed extensive ministry among all these groups.”
on spiritual gifts in all of his coursework. Part of the reason for the incorporation of teaching on spiritual gifts was Wagner’s desire to better equip his students in the area of spiritual gifts than he had been equipped. In addition to his classroom teaching, Wagner helped develop a spiritual gifts workshop that could be conducted by local churches.  

The Modified Houts Questionnaire was included in that workshop as an aid in helping believers to identify their spiritual gift.

Wagner found the Modified Houts Questionnaire to be useful in the spiritual gift workshop he developed. But, also found it to be limiting. By definition, a spiritual gift identification instrument is intended to measure a set number of spiritual gifts. Wagner holds that the spiritual gift lists in the New Testament are not exhaustive, but representative of the gifts the Holy Spirit brought to the mind of the New Testament writer at the time. Because Wagner understands the gift lists to not be exhaustive, as spiritual gifts not listed on the Modified Houts Questionnaire became apparent to him, he needed to be able to adjust the gifts that were being tested for. While working on his book, Discover Your Spiritual Gifts, Wagner asked for and received permission from Houts to adapt and modify the Modified Houts Questionnaire, resulting in the Wagner Modified Houts Questionnaire (SGI-WMHQ).

Since the first publication of Discover Your Spiritual Gifts, Wagner has modified the SGI-WMHQ seven times. Due to Wagner’s influence in the CGM and his prolific writing, the SGI-WMHQ is likely the most widely used spiritual gift identification instrument in North America; therefore, the SGI-WMHQ is one of the two

73 Wagner, Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow, 255.
74 C. Peter Wagner, telephone interview by author, 5 April 2011.
75 Ibid. The Wagner Modified Houts Questionnaire can be found in the Appendix.
76 Ibid.
prominent tools investigated in this dissertation.

**Assessment of the SGI-WMHQ**

The SGI-WMHQ has the distinction of being something of a joint effort between two men who have deep roots in academia. Yet, those roots are not in psychology, but in missions, evangelism, and religious education. As a result, the SGI-WMHQ has the weakness of not being subjected to intense psychometric scrutiny, especially as it relates to validity and reliability testing. It should be noted that the SGI-WMHQ is not intended to be, nor does it purport to be, a psychological instrument. It is intended to be a practical tool to help Christians gain some understanding of their place of greatest usefulness in the advance of God’s kingdom. The lack of such psychometric rigors in the development of the SGI-WMHQ does not mean it is an inferior instrument, but it does present a couple of issues worth noting in making an assessment of the SGI-WMHQ.

The first issue the lack of psychological rigor presents is the entire question of validity and reliability. Does the SGI-WMHQ actually provide what it intends to deliver; namely, an accurate assessment of spiritual giftedness? Like the SGI-McMinn and the SGI-L, this is a highly debatable topic. Chapter Four will go into greater detail in examining empirical analyses of spiritual gift identification instruments, but it is clear from the development of the spiritual gift identification instruments that, at best, the tests are heavily influenced by the biblical and theological bias of the instrument designers.

A second issue faced by the SGI-WMHQ is the question of what gifts are actually being tested for. The SGI-WMHQ has been modified seven times. Included in those modifications has been the addition of spiritual gifts, previously not tested for. While Wagner’s rationale for doing so is consistent with these changes – because he does not view the gift lists as exhaustive – the impact on those utilizing the instrument can be confusing. At the very least it can create some significant confusion for individuals who
complete an earlier version of the SGI-WMHQ with one result; then, upon taking a “revised version,” finds they may have another gift, not previously tested.

Overall, the SGI-WMHQ is one of the most oft utilized spiritual gift identification instruments in use today. The issues noted above have not diminished the value some have found in the instrument. There is little doubt that the instrument has served the purpose of raising the awareness of spiritual gifts and of helping believers to find a “starting place” for service within the church.

**Development and Assessment of the SGI-Gilbert (1986)**

The second prominent spiritual gift identification tool selected for investigation in this dissertation is the Team Ministry Spiritual Gift Inventory (SGI-Gilbert). Larry Gilbert developed this tool which will, therefore, be described throughout the dissertation as the SGI-Gilbert. The SGI-Gilbert became available in written form in the mid-1980s and is currently available in that format as well as online. According to Gilbert, there will be a new printing of the SGI-Gilbert in 2011 as demand for the instrument has remained strong. In fact, over four and one half million copies of their paper based inventory have been utilized by Christians seeking to understand their spiritual gifts.

**Development of the SGI-Gilbert**

Unlike the other spiritual gift identification instruments examined in this dissertation, the SGI-Gilbert began, not in academia, but as a result of the practical search

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for how to be a more effective servant in the local church by a lay person. As Gilbert engaged in a variety of ministry tasks in his local church, he became concerned that he did not feel qualified for some and was not experiencing joy from others. In 1975-1976, after consulting with his local pastor, Gilbert began an intentional study of spiritual gifts. Beginning in 1979-1980 he began to amass a large collection of writing and resources on spiritual gifts and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

When examining the development of the SGI-Gilbert, it is helpful to consider the key individuals who were significant influences on Gilbert. Gilbert indicates that Bill Gothard was one of the initial influences on his thinking regarding spiritual gifts and probably had the greatest influence on him. In 1965 Gothard developed a course for Wheaton College entitled “Basic Youth Conflicts.” The course’s popularity led to the development of an entire ministry in 1974 built around the principles taught in the Wheaton course; principles which Gothard presents at Basic Seminars held throughout the United States. As Gothard’s ministry grew, an Advanced Seminar was developed in which Gothard taught the influence spiritual gifts have over one’s entire life. As will be illustrated, Gilbert’s exposure to Gothard’s teaching on spiritual gifts had a significant effect on the development of the SGI-Gilbert.

A second influence on Gilbert was C. Peter Wagner. The influence of Wagner

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79The narrative detailing the development of the SGI-Gilbert was shared during a telephone interview with the author, 9 March 2011.

80Larry Gilbert, telephone interview by author, 9 March 2011.


did not take shape until about 1982, after Gilbert had begun studies at Liberty University. Wagner’s book *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* and the initial publication of the SGI-WMHQ were helpful to Gilbert thinking about pairing information about spiritual gifts with tools designed for spiritual gift identification. Gilbert wanted to make such resources cheap and accessible for believers interested in understanding spiritual gifts.

In developing the SGI-Gilbert, the first step was to determine what gifts the instrument would be testing for. Here the influence of Gothard is evident. Gothard divides spiritual gifts into three major categories: Motivation, Ministry, and Manifestation.\(^\text{84}\) This is similar to the gifts-ministries-effects arrangement noted above, but in Gothard’s paradigm, all spiritual gifts fall into one of the three categories. In Gothard’s arrangement, there are seven Motivation gifts, with every believer receiving one. The Motivation gifts are: Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhorting, Giving, Organizing, and Mercy.\(^\text{85}\) These Motivation gifts are exercised through the Ministry functions of the church, which include: Apostles (Missionaries), Prophets, Teachers, Miracles, Healings, Helps, Governments, and Tongues.\(^\text{86}\) As the Motivation gift works through the Ministry function, there are various Manifestation in the hearts and lives of those affected, including any or all of the following: Word of Wisdom, Word of Knowledge, Faith, Healing, Miracles, Prophecy, Discerning Spirits, Various Tongues, and Interpretation of Tongues.\(^\text{87}\)


\(^{85}\)Ibid., 9. Gothard’s motivational gifts correspond directly to the gift list found in Rom 12:6-8.

\(^{86}\)Ibid., 4-5.

\(^{87}\)Ibid., 9.
Gilbert follows Gothard in two major ways: the fact that he categorizes gifts into three major areas and that he envisions one of those categories as a catalyst for a different category. Gilbert categorizes spiritual gifts as Miraculous, Enabling, and TEAM gifts. In his division, Miraculous gifts include the Charismatic gifts of Apostle, Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues, Miracles, and Healing. In the SGI-Gilbert the entire “Charismatic controversy” is avoided by not testing for those gifts at all. While Gothard envisions Motivation gifts working through the catalyst of church Ministry, Gilbert envisions Enabling gifts as the catalyst for TEAM gifts. Enabling gifts are defined as spiritual qualities possessed by believers that are tied to spiritual gifts. TEAM gifts are task oriented gifts that Gilbert divides into the broader categories of speaking and serving. The SGI-Gilbert is designed to test for what he calls the TEAM gifts.

Gilbert identifies the following as TEAM gifts:

Evangelism – The Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by leading people, beyond [their] natural sphere of influence, to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Prophecy – The Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by proclaiming God’s truth. The gift of prophecy is carried out most commonly through preaching.

Teaching – The Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by making clear

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88 Gilbert, How to Find Meaning and Fulfillment, 63.

89 Ibid., 65.

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid., 66.

92 The SGI-Gilbert can be found in the Appendix.

93 Gilbert, How to Find Meaning and Fulfillment, 78.

94 Ibid., 84.
the truth of the Word of God with accuracy and simplicity.\(^{95}\)

Exhortation – The Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by motivating others to action by urging them to pursue a course of conduct.\(^{96}\)

Pastor/shepherd – The Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by overseeing, training, and caring for the needs of a group of Christians.\(^{97}\)

Showing mercy – The Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by identifying with and comforting those who are in distress.\(^{98}\)

Serving – The Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by rendering practical help in both physical and spiritual matters.\(^{99}\)

Giving – The Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by giving of his material resources, far beyond the tithe, to further the work of God.\(^{100}\)

Administration – The Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by organizing, administering, promoting, and leading the various affairs of the church.\(^{101}\)

Gilbert examined the writings of over one hundred theologians and Christian leaders to compile a thorough list of the characteristics and description of these gifts and their function. Twelve test statements were then formulated for each gift, with each statement framed to elicit a response in keeping with the characteristics of each gift. For example, since one of the characteristics of the gift of evangelist is a “consuming passion

\(^{95}\)Ibid., 89.

\(^{96}\)Ibid., 96.

\(^{97}\)Ibid., 101.

\(^{98}\)Ibid., 105.

\(^{99}\)Ibid., 111.

\(^{100}\)Ibid., 117.

\(^{101}\)Ibid., 122.
for lost souls, “one of the statements designed to test for that gift is: I have a consuming passion to reach lost souls. Respondents are asked to indicate whether that statement is true of them almost always (70-100 percent of the time), occasionally (40-70 percent of the time), or not very often (less than 40 percent of the time). After the first edition of the Gilbert-SGI was published, Gilbert began to compile information from completed inventories. He sought to assess the effectiveness of the test statements by examining how many of them were answered positively that did not correlate to the primary gifts identified by the instrument. If a particular statement received a positive response from individuals who did not end up having the gift represented by that statement, the statement was reworded. The goal of the rewording of the statement was the attempt to eliminate as many positive responses for gifts that were not most dominant in an individual.

In the 2005 edition of the SGI-Gilbert, some words and phrases are “amplified.” Following the example of the Amplified Bible, words that are not as common in everyday English usage are given additional words to help make the definition more clear. Gilbert cited the word “burden” as an example of how the inventory was amplified. He has found that few people understand this word, so he added “heartfelt desire, passion, great concern” as clarifiers. Decisions about which words were

102 Ibid., 78.
103 Gilbert, Spiritual Gifts Inventory, question 1.
104 Gilbert, Spiritual Gifts Inventory, Instructions. The first edition of the SGI-Gilbert asked respondents to assign a numeric value to each response, with “Always” receiving 2 points, “Occasionally” receiving 1 point, and “Not Very Often” receiving 0 points. That system was replaced by an answer sheet that was self-scoring and included a bar graph to provide a visual tool to demonstrate primary areas of giftedness.
105 Larry Gilbert, telephone interview by author, 9 March 2011.
106 Amplified Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001).
amplified and which ones were not was based on anecdotal evidence from individuals who had completed the SGI-Gilbert.

Assessment of the SGI-Gilbert

Unlike the SGI-McMinn, SGI-L, and even, to some degree, the SGI-WMHQ, the SGI-Gilbert did not develop as an academic pursuit, but in order to provide a practical tool to help believers discover their spiritual gifts. As such, the academic rigors present in the development of the SGI-McMinn and the SGI-L, in particular, are not present in the development of the SGI-Gilbert. The lack of academic rigors in the development of the SGI-Gilbert does not mean it is an inferior instrument, but it is worth noting in making an assessment of the SGI-Gilbert.

The most obvious area in which the lack of academic influence is seen is the lack of validity and reliability testing conducted for the SGI-Gilbert. Gilbert acknowledges that no such testing was conducted and, indeed, is not sure how he would go about doing that. Instead, the SGI-Gilbert relies heavily on anecdotal evidence from individuals who have completed the instrument in evaluating its effectiveness. Gilbert reports, based on the anecdotal evidence, the ratio of individuals reporting that the instrument seems to have accurately indicated their area of giftedness is around 50 to 1. That is, for every 50 individuals who claim the instrument accurately assessed their spiritual giftedness there is 1 who believes the instrument inaccurately assessed their spiritual giftedness.

The SGI-Gilbert is comprised of 108 statements to test for 9 spiritual gifts, resulting in 12 statements per gift. Gilbert states that utilizing 12 questions for each gift is

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107 Larry Gilbert, telephone interview by author, 9 March 2011.

108 Ibid.
intended to provide as thorough an examination as possible. In this respect, the construction of the SGI-Gilbert exhibits similar rigor to that of the SGI-McMinn and the SGI-L. The SGI-McMinn provided 48 statements per gift, but because that was unwieldy, the SGI-L reduced that number to 12 per gift. By comparison, the SGI-WMHQ uses 5 statements per gift.

The SGI-Gilbert has undergone several revisions since its first publication. Because the instrument was designed to be useful in the local church, one of the first revisions was the coordination of the scores onto a graph. Initially, respondents simply added up the number of responses tied to individual gifts. The result was a numeric score for each individual gift, with the top two or three gifts designated as the primary areas of giftedness. The inclusion of a graph onto the answer sheet and the instruction to fill in the bar graph has resulted in the instrument becoming both easier to administer and to demonstrate results.

In the early 1980s, Gilbert became increasingly concerned with the topic of spiritual gifts being dominated by discussions of prominent charismatic gifts. Indeed, the first manuscript Gilbert produced on spiritual gifts was entitled *The Other Gifts*, as an attempt to shift the spiritual gifts discussion from charismatic gifts to task gifts. Gilbert views task gifts that as having the building up of the body of Christ as the primary focus. Gilbert’s decision not to test for charismatic gifts is a reflection of his desire to emphasize task oriented gifts. It is also indicative of a major weakness of spiritual gift identification tools in general; specifically, they are subject to the theological and biblical convictions of the designer. Gilbert points out that those utilizing spiritual gift identification instruments need to provide teaching consistent with those instruments. Gilbert warns that if the teaching about spiritual gifts does not match the underlying

\[\text{109}^{\text{Ibid.}}\]
\[\text{110}^{\text{Ibid.}}\]
conviction set of the inventory itself confusion about gifts results.  

**Conclusion**

The desire within the Church Growth Movement and those churches influenced by it to help believers discover and use their spiritual gifts is admirable. It was in such a context that the first spiritual gift identification instruments were developed. What was not taken into account, however, was the significant level of dependency on unreliable psychometrics inherent in the development of spiritual gift identification instruments. As a result, the SGI-McMinn, the SGI-L, the SGI-WMHQ and the SGI-Gilbert, all contain test questions that seem to be correctly correlated to the spiritual gift definitions provided with each instrument, yet have no proven reliability or validity that they actually indicate that which is claimed. So that, while the SGI-McMinn, and later the SGI-L claimed to be testing for twelve spiritual gifts, Fredrickson noted: “the results of factor analysis demonstrated a weakness in the intuitive construction approach utilized by the SGI-L authors and supported the hypothesis of this study that fewer than twelve discrete psychological dimensions are actually measured by the instrument.”

In addition, the historical development of spiritual gift identification instruments demonstrates significant theological bias in the development of the instrument. While some bias is inescapable, the wide variation in the number of gifts tested for, does not produce as much clarity as it does confusion about the subject of spiritual gifts. Further, in each instrument, there is the assumption that each gift list should function as if it were a static and unchanging list. The one(s) responsible for

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111 Ibid.


113 Kenneth Hemphill, *You Are Gifted* (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 192 refers to this bias as creating spiritual gift identification instruments that have a “static quality and
instrument construction must make biblical and theological decisions about the gifts that are intended to be tested for with the instrument. The selection of certain gifts to be tested for and the exclusion of other gifts demonstrate theological bias.

The responses of individuals to the questions in spiritual gift identification instruments is supposed to provide the basis for determining which spiritual gift(s) the respondent is likely to possess. This entire process is based upon the assumption that spiritual gifts are self reportable abilities and that spiritual gift identification instruments can accurately assess those abilities. However, if spiritual gift identification instruments are not proven to be reliable or valid, this approach to discovering those gifts will be inaccurate and misleading as well. Thus, tests intended to aid believers in discovering their gifts and release them for ministry may, in fact, do more harm than good if they result in confusing natural ability or preferences with a genuine demonstration of the Spirit within the body of Christ.

Chapter 3 will take up the issue of the biblical and theological bias inherent in the design of spiritual gift identification instruments. Two popular spiritual gift identification instruments will be compared to demonstrate this dependence: the SGI-WHQ and the SGI-Gilbert. This comparison will include examining common biases in each regarding how spiritual gifts are defined and the dependence upon accurate self assessment. In addition, two areas of theological bias will be examined: the nature of the spiritual gift lists in the New Testament and the purpose of spiritual gifts.

thus does not have any place for new gifts God may be giving His church to enable it to accomplish its mission in its unique context.”

114 As noted by Peyton Marshall, “The Measurement of Spiritual Gifts Using the Modified Houts Questionnaire” (Ph.D. diss., St. Louis University, 1986), 44, there is an inherent weakness with self-evaluation as the object being evaluated is, in fact, a part of the very organism doing the evaluating.
CHAPTER 3

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BIAS
IN THE DESIGN OF SPIRITUAL GIFT IDENTIFICATION INSTRUMENTS

Introduction

Since the early 1970s the number of spiritual gift identification instruments has been growing. Local churches, parachurch ministries, publishing houses and even individuals have developed their own spiritual gift identification instruments.¹ A significant number of these instruments have their basis in the spiritual gift identification instruments developed by McMinn (SGI-McMinn), Fredrickson (SGI-L), Wagner (SGI-WMHQ), and Gilbert (SGI-Gilbert).² Whether examining the older instruments (i.e., SGI-McMinn) or the later instruments (SGI-WMHQ or SGI-Gilbert), all share the inherent challenge of overcoming biblical and theological bias in their development. This chapter will seek to examine biblical and theological bias in the development of spiritual gift identification instruments.

¹For example, see Philip McCallum, Discover Your Spiritual Gifts [on-line]; accessed 11 July 2011; available at http://www.newlifechurch.org/spiritualGifts.jsp; Internet, which was developed for New Life Church, Colorado Springs, CO; Andrew Kulp, Gifted2Serve [on-line]; accessed 11 July 2011; available at http://buildingchurch.net/g2s.htm; Internet, which is a modified version of the SGI-WMHQ that was developed for Lakeview Baptist Church, Auburn, AL; Dan Reiland, Spiritual Gifts (Atlanta: Injoy, 1998) was developed for the parachurch ministry of John Maxwell; Bruce Bugbee, Don Cousins, and Bill Hybels, Network: Leader’s Guide (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), and idem, Network: Participant’s Guide (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), both developed in cooperation with Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, IL.

²The historical development of the SGI-McMinn, SGI-L, SGI-WMHQ, and SGI-Gilbert can be found in chap. 2 of this dissertation.
The phrase “biblical bias” will refer to the degree to which those developing spiritual gift identification tools adhere to the strict wording of the classic spiritual gift passages in determining the number and identity of spiritual gifts. Biblical bias is understood here on something of a continuum, ranging from strict adherence to the biblical text and wording for number and identity of gifts on the one end to a loose adherence to the text on the other end of the continuum. Such bias will be evident as some spiritual gift identification instruments hold firmly to a set, unchanging number of gifts tested for, while other instruments are modified significantly over time. This biblical bias is problematic as it lends to creating confusion over the number and identity of spiritual gifts.

“Theological bias,” on the other hand, will refer to the degree to which those developing spiritual gift identification tools place the focus of spiritual gifts upon the recipient of gifts rather than focusing upon the New Testament purpose for gifts, namely, the building up of the body of Christ. It may be helpful to think of theological bias on a continuum with the focus on the individual at one end and the emphasis on the body of Christ at the other. The goal here is to determine a bias toward the individual in spiritual gift identification instruments.

A related issue is the ability of individuals to accurately make self-assessments of their area of giftedness. Spiritual gift identification instruments are dependent upon the ability of the individual to make accurate self-assessments, yet, there is considerable reason to believe that such ability is skewed. A brief excursus will examine two practical

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3 The phrase “biblical bias” in no way implies a lack of appreciation for and embrace of biblical authority on the part of developers of spiritual gift identification instruments, specifically C. Peter Wagner or Larry Gilbert.

4 There are good biblical and theological reasons to believe that the Fall has impaired the ability of human beings to accurately assess their own behavior. For example, see Gen 3:1-24, Jer 17:9, Rom 3:10-18, 7:15-20 and 12:3.
reasons that self-assessment is unreliable.\textsuperscript{5} A fundamental problem in the development of spiritual gift identification instruments is the tendency to de-emphasize the nature and role of ecclesiology with respect to spiritual gift discovery. Indeed, there is absolutely no connection to a local body of believers necessary for the use of such an instrument. Further, those developing spiritual gift identification instruments utilize a definition of spiritual gifts that may not be what the writers of the New Testament intended. Wagner is representative of this tendency when he defines a spiritual gift as “a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ, according to God’s grace, for use within the context of the Body.”\textsuperscript{6} A spiritual gift identification tool developed and used in one of the largest churches in America states that “spiritual gifts are special abilities distributed by the Holy Spirit to every believer according to God’s design and grace for the common good of the body of Christ.”\textsuperscript{7} While there is some emphasis in this second definition of “the common good of the body of Christ,” the primary focus of spiritual gifts remains on “special abilities…to every believer.” In other words, the emphasis seems to be on gifted individuals, which, as will be shown, is not the emphasis of the New Testament.

Because the conventional view\textsuperscript{8} of spiritual gifts has defined gifts primarily in terms of ability, the use of inventories and standardized tests to discover those gifts seems

\textsuperscript{5}A more thorough examination of the shortcomings of self-assessment may be found in chapter 4, which examines spiritual gift identification instruments in light of empirical analyses from a psychological perspective.


\textsuperscript{7}Bugbee, Cousins and Hybels, \textit{Network: Leader’s Guide}, 78.

\textsuperscript{8}The phrase “conventional view” is borrowed from Kenneth Berding, \textit{What Are the Spiritual Gifts?} (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006), 25 and is used to describe the prevalent understanding of spiritual gifts as (1) an ability or enablement in and of itself, (2) given by the Holy Spirit, and (3) to be used in building up the community of believers.
like a simple enough exercise. However, if the definition itself is inaccurate or misleading, the approach to discovering the (ill-defined) gifts will likely be inaccurate and misleading as well. Such tests, intended to aid believers in discovering their gifts and release them for ministry, may in fact, do more harm than good by confusing natural ability or preferences with a genuine demonstration of the Spirit within the body of Christ.

Biblical Bias in the Design of SGI-WMHQ and SGI-Gilbert

Biblical bias in the design of spiritual gift identification instruments will be shown by comparing and contrasting two representative instruments: the SGI-WMHQ and the SGI-Gilbert. This comparison will reveal the degree to which the degree to which the aforementioned spiritual gift identification instruments seek a biblical basis for the number of gifts each purports to test. An examination will then follow of how Paul utilized lists in the New Testament and how the influence of local church circumstances influence the lists found in 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and Romans. It will be shown that although most spiritual gift identification instruments function with a loose adherence to the text in determining for which gifts to test, they ignore the implications of local church circumstances that impacted Paul’s original lists. In so doing, spiritual gift identification instruments must create static lists of spiritual gifts for general use, despite the fact that there is no evidence Paul ever intended to create such a list.

The Nature of the Gift Lists in the SGI-WMHQ and SGI-Gilbert

The SGI-WMHQ and the SGI-Gilbert find their biblical basis for identifying

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9 The SGI-WMHQ and SGI-Gilbert were chosen because they are both very popular spiritual gift identification instruments (see chapter 2 for precise statistics) and they approach Charismatic gifts from differing perspectives.
the gifts they purport to test in four passages of Scripture that contain “lists” of spiritual
gifts.\textsuperscript{10} Yet, as Table 2 below indicates, the SGI-WMHQ includes twenty-eight spiritual
gifts, while the SGI-Gilbert tests for only nine. How can two spiritual gift identification
instruments utilizing the same primary texts of Scripture test for such a widely different
number of gifts? Simply stated, it is apparent that there are biblical biases at work in the
development of the two instruments examined in Table 2 below.\textsuperscript{11}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SGI-WMHQ</th>
<th>SGI-Gilbert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prophecy</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Miracles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>Healing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Tongues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhortation</td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discerning of Spirits</td>
<td>Voluntary Poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving</td>
<td>Celibacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps</td>
<td>Intercession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercy</td>
<td>Deliverance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionary</td>
<td>Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelist</td>
<td>Apostle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>Leading Worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Martyrdom\textsuperscript{12}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both instruments have in common that neither is simply creating a composite
master list of gifts from the three spiritual gift passages in 1 Corinthians, Romans, and
Ephesians. In reflecting on the biblical bias continuum mentioned above, which would
envision strict adherence to the biblical text and wording for number and identity of gifts

\textsuperscript{10}See Wagner, \textit{Discover Your Spiritual Gifts}, 16-18, and Larry Gilbert, \textit{How to Find Meaning and Fulfillment} (Lynchburg, VA: Church Growth Institute, 1987), 63.

\textsuperscript{11}SGI-WMHQ list from Wagner, \textit{Discover Your Spiritual Gifts}, 103. SGI-Gilbert list from Gilbert, \textit{Spiritual Gifts Inventory}, Answer Sheet, rev. ed. (Elkton, MD: Church Growth Institute, 2005).

\textsuperscript{12}Wagner includes martyrdom as a spiritual gift, but has not “found a way to test for it.” C. Peter Wagner, telephone interview by author, 5 April 2011.
on the one end to a loose adherence to the text on the other end of the continuum, it is clear that neither the SGI-WMHQ nor the SGI-Gilbert represent strict adherence to the text.\(^{13}\)

The SGI-WMHQ comes closest to creating a composite list; however the fact that Wagner has included a number of gifts that are not included in those texts reveals a less dogmatic approach to identifying spiritual gifts exclusively from the traditional gift lists.\(^{14}\) This less dogmatic approach is not exclusive to Wagner, but is seen in other spiritual gift identification instruments as well.\(^{15}\) Wagner contends that some gifts may be inferred from other texts, while others may be based on personal observation of people serving in the church.\(^{16}\)

The SGI-Gilbert, on the other hand, has no extraordinary gifts listed at all. Such exclusion is by design. When Gilbert initially began working on his spiritual gift material, he initially called it \textit{The Other Gifts}, in order to combat the prominence of the charismatic gifts.\(^{17}\) Gilbert was concerned that the value of spiritual gift study and

\(^{13}\)Gilbert does create a composite list of the gifts in Gilbert, \textit{How to Find Meaning and Fulfillment}, 63, which he divides into Miraculous, Enabling, and TEAM gifts. The SGI-Gilbert, however, only tests for the TEAM gifts.

\(^{14}\)The term “gift-list(s)” will be employed in this dissertation to comprehensively refer to the lists of spiritual gifts in 1 Cor 12:8-10; 1 Cor 12:28-30; Rom 12:6-8; and Eph 4:11.

\(^{15}\)For example, see Bugbee, Cousins, Hybels, \textit{Network: Participant’s Guide}, 69-70, and Reiland, \textit{Spiritual Gifts}. Both of these spiritual gift identification instruments include the gifts mentioned in the gift lists, as well as several other gifts not found there.

\(^{16}\)C. Peter Wagner, telephone interview by author, 5 April 2011. Wagner cited “celibacy” as a gift based on 1 Cor 9:5, 15 and “martyrdom” based on 1 Cor 13:3. He also noted that he added “intercession” and “deliverance” based on seeing believers practice such gifts in the local church.

\(^{17}\)Larry Gilbert, telephone interview by author, 9 March 2011. Eventually his manuscript went to press as \textit{How to Find Meaning and Fulfillment through Understanding Your Spiritual Gifts}.
discovery was getting blurred by the focus on charismatic gifts. Further, Gilbert’s focus is to get people engaged in ministry, which he believes is accomplished most successfully by focusing on the TEAM gifts.

The lack of agreement, even on the number of gifts to test is problematic in that it indicates a very different approach taken to the nature of the gift lists themselves, which is not expressed to those utilizing the spiritual gift identification instrument. Thus, it is irrelevant to the purpose of this chapter as to whether the approach taken by Wagner or Gilbert is sound. Rather, the purpose here is to demonstrate that it is not possible to avoid the biblical and theological bias of the designer in the composition of spiritual gift identification instruments.


When reflecting on the gift lists in the New Testament, an important issue to resolve is what Paul’s intentions were in creating a list of “spiritual gifts.” When seeing the gift lists side by side as in Table 3, it would seem that Paul’s purpose is not to produce an exhaustive list of spiritual gifts.\(^{18}\)

An examination of the list of items described in Table 3 must not begin with the *a priori* assumption that we know what the lists are a list of. Yet, that is precisely the case, not only for designers of spiritual gift identification instruments, but even commentators evaluating those texts seem to begin with an assumption that the items in view are spiritual gifts.\(^{19}\) Before the identity of what Paul is listing in these passages can

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\(^{18}\)Table 2 is an English version of a similar listing found in Ronald Y. K. Fung, “Ministry in the New Testament,” in *The Church in the Bible and in the World*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 156.

\(^{19}\)See, for example, W. Harold Mare, *1 Corinthians*, in vol. 10 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 261-67; Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 162-76; Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer,
be made however, we need to know something of how Paul used lists in the New Testament. In so doing, two results are experienced: the confusion over why the lists differ is significantly diminished and the identity of what Paul is describing changes significantly.

Table 3. Gift-lists in Pauline corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Cor 12:8-10</th>
<th>1 Cor 12:28-30</th>
<th>Rom 12:6-8</th>
<th>Eph 4:11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word of Wisdom</td>
<td>Apostle</td>
<td>Prophecy</td>
<td>Apostle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of Knowledge</td>
<td>Prophet</td>
<td>Serving</td>
<td>Prophet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Pastor-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healing</td>
<td>Miracles</td>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miracles</td>
<td>Healing</td>
<td>Sharing/Generosity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophecy</td>
<td>Helps</td>
<td>Caring/Assisting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discerning of Spirits</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongues</td>
<td>Tongues</td>
<td>Showing Mercy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation of Tongues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kenneth Berding has examined Paul’s writing in the New Testament to compile the “list of lists” found in Table 4 below. Table 4 lists the nearly one hundred lists that Paul uses in the New Testament. The passages that are traditionally used as “spiritual gift lists” are in italics. To be considered a list, Berding sought out the occasions where Paul groups together four or more items that could conceivably be considered a list. Some lists more closely resemble the “gift lists” than others, so Berding devised a method of demonstrating how closely other Pauline lists correspond to the “gift lists.” Within Table 4 below, a value of A to H is assigned each Scripture reference that contains a list, with A representing those lists that closely adhere to the “gift lists” and H

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Berding, What Are the Spiritual Gifts?, 79-80.
representing those that are least like the “gift lists.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4. Berding’s “list of lists”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rom 1:14 (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom 1:28-32 (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom 2:17-20 (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom 2:21-23 (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom 3:10-18 (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom 5:3-5 (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom 8:30 (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom 8:35-36 (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom 8:38-39 (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom 9:4-5 (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom 11:33-36 (H)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom 12:6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom 12:9a-21 (A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom 13:7 (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom 13:9 (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom 13:13 (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom 15:18-19 (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom 16:25-27 (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cor 1:12 (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cor 1:30 (E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cor 3:12 (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cor 3:22 (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cor 4:10-13 (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cor 5:11 (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cor 6:9-10 (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cor 7:29-31 (D)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With Paul’s lists represented in Table 4, it is striking the sheer number and frequency of lists that Paul uses. Berding makes six observations about Paul’s use of lists that are significant; they are as follows:

1. Paul uses lists in every letter he writes (except Philemon).
2. Paul’s lists include virtue lists, vice lists, qualifications lists, doxologies, and confessional statements that in some cases may have already been in use before he used them.
3. A clear majority of Paul’s lists appear to have been created by him for the particular needs and issues he was addressing as he wrote.
The words in a list may all be in the same grammatical form, or may be in mixed grammatical forms.

Lists are not arbitrary. A concept or theme always holds them together.

Paul regularly and repeatedly indicates the nature of his list. In the majority of cases (around 80 percent) in which he creates or uses a list, he somewhere besides in the list itself uses explicit words to identify what the components of the list.\textsuperscript{22}

The significance of Berding’s work is that it sheds significant light on what holds the traditional “gift lists” together. The conventional view has been that each of the four traditional gift lists fits under an overarching umbrella of “spiritual gifts,” which are typically defined as “abilities” or “attributes” given to the believer by the Holy Spirit at conversion, for use within the body of Christ. In other words, the conventional view sees these four traditional gift list passages providing a list of divinely given abilities. As a result, spiritual gift identification instruments have utilized a composite of the four passages to create a list of gifts to test. To create a composite list, however, ignores significant differences in the churches to whom Paul was writing.

An additional problem related to the use of lists is the use of similar terms with vastly different meanings. For example, Wagner includes prophecy in his list, but defines prophecy as “the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to His people through a divinely anointed utterance.”\textsuperscript{23} Compare that to Gilbert’s definition of prophecy, which he also includes in his list, as “the Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by proclaiming God’s truth.”\textsuperscript{24} Here, Wagner and Gilbert have vastly different meanings intended by the same word: Wagner viewing prophecy as a gift closely related to the

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., 80-82.

\textsuperscript{23}Wagner, \textit{Discover Your Spiritual Gifts}, 113.

\textsuperscript{24}Gilbert, \textit{Spiritual Gifts Inventory} Answer Sheet. See also idem, \textit{How to Find Meaning and Fulfillment}, 84.
prophets of the Old Testament, while Gilbert sees prophecy as more akin to preaching.25 Because of this inherent problem, Gilbert admonishes pastors to ensure that they “only use an inventory that matches their theology.”26

Is the concept of “ability,” however, what holds those particular lists together? If not, then the composition of the instruments themselves is called into serious question. There are at least two reasons to believe that something other than the concept of “ability” holds the “gift lists” together. The first reason is the historical setting in the churches to whom the “gift lists” were originally written, and the second is the fact that Paul provides clues within the text itself as to the “conceptual glue” for each list.

**The influence of historical setting on the gift lists.** Each gift-list in Table 3 has unique characteristics that are influenced by the circumstances in the local church itself.27 In examining the gift list passages in 1 Corinthians, Romans, and Ephesians, one notes significant differences in the number and type of gifts represented. These differences are not incidental, but are the result of specific historical concerns in each respective church. First Corinthians, for example, contains two lists of gifts. The first list is in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 and contains extraordinary gifts,28 while the second listing of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:28 contains seven gifts, including five gifts of a more reserved nature that were not mentioned in the list in vv. 8-10: apostle, prophet, teachers, helps

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26 Larry Gilbert, telephone interview with author, 9 March 2011.


28 Extraordinary gifts are also referred to as “charismatic” gifts and include word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues.
and administrators. Hemphill argues that the difference in these two lists is intentional and driven by Paul’s concern over the “spirituals” in Corinth who were using their exercise of ecstatic gifts as “proof of their advanced spirituality.” Thus, it would be an error to merge the two lists into one list of possible spiritual gifts, when, in fact, the lists were being used to broaden the Corinthians understanding of spiritual gifts.

When considering the context of 1 Corinthians 12, it is essential to keep in mind the overall context of the first letter to the church at Corinth. Even a cursory reading of 1 Corinthians will demonstrate that the church at Corinth was a church filled with divisions and factions. Early in the letter, Paul takes the church to task for their alignment with certain personalities. His assessment of their condition in 1 Corinthians 1:10-12 is quite revealing:

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What I mean is that each of you says, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ.”

D. A. Carson points out that as the content of 1 Corinthians unfolds, it appears that Paul is striving to work out mediating principles for the church that will ensure their unity. These mediating principles extend to a number of issues including the exercise of spiritual gifts. It seems that in Corinth there were those who experienced envy and jealousy over the gifts exercised by others. Others seem to have been intimidated by the exercise of certain gifts to the point that they were either excluded or withdrew from the body (see especially, 1 Cor 12:14-26). Thus, it is the emphasis on unity, driven by the

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29 Hemphill, You Are Gifted, 160.

30 Ibid.

31 Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from English Standard Version.

32 Carson, Showing the Spirit, 17.
division created by the exercise of certain gifts, that plays a significant role in the gifts mentioned in the letter to Corinth.

The context of Romans in general and Romans 12 in particular, demonstrates a similar, but different problem of disunity in that church from that which faced the church at Corinth. The problem in Rome was different from that in Corinth in that the problem in Rome was driven primarily by the ethnic divide between Jews and Gentiles. Thomas Schreiner argues that Paul’s effort to resolve this ethnic division was one of the reasons he wrote the letter to Rome.33

This purpose for writing Romans becomes clear early in the book, as Paul describes the gospel by saying: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom 1:16). Further, Paul argues that both alike are under sin when he writes: “What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin.” (Rom 3:9). The theme of unity between Jews and Gentiles appears again in Romans 4:9ff., 7:1ff., 9:1-11:36, and later in 14:1-15:33. In the midst of these latter and longer two sections (Rom 9:1-11:36 and 14:1-15:33), one finds a short section (Rom 12:3-8) that emphasizes the importance of unity, despite a diversity of gifts. The placement of these verses is intended to emphasize that the exercise of spiritual gifts should not be separated from the unity of the body.34

Regarding spiritual gifts, Hemphill considers Rome to be the “control”

33 Thomas R. Schreiner, Romans, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 19. According to Schreiner, the resolution of ethnic disunity between the Jews and the Gentiles has now become the majority position among New Testament commentators regarding the purpose for the writing of Romans. For a list of commentators taking this position see Schreiner, Romans, 19 n. 42.

34 Ibid., 650.
situation, as there is not a specific threat to orthodoxy or orthopraxy. In Romans 12:6-8 there is no mention of the extraordinary gifts, so the problem in Corinth is clearly not in view, but rather the emphasis instead is on leadership and service gifts. If Rome is the control situation, the fact that only gifts of leadership and service are mentioned is significant as it reflects those gifts as priorities in Paul’s mind in the absence of a specific problem related to spiritual gifts to address.

There are a variety of opinions as to the occasions and purpose for the writing of Ephesians. Andrew Lincoln argues that the letter has a number of general purposes including encouraging the Ephesians in knowledge about salvation, greater appreciation for their identity as believers, the unity of the Church, and a number of issues related to personal relationships.

Narrowing the focus a bit, John MacArthur sees the purpose of Ephesians as telling of the “great riches, inheritances, and fullness in Jesus Christ and in His Church” that is the possession of every believer. Still not arriving at a specific purpose, William Hendriksen contends that Paul’s intent was to “express his inner satisfaction with the Christ-centered faith of the addressed and their love for all the saints” as well as to “picture God’s glorious redemptive grace toward the church.” Best concludes that Ephesians is intended to provide new Gentile converts information on the nature of the

35 Hemphill, You Are Gifted, 120.


Church and the requisite conduct required in it.\textsuperscript{39} All of these proposals are lacking at least from the fact they are too vague to accurately recreate a specific purpose for the writing of this letter.

Rudolf Schnackenburg helps to narrow the focus considerably and aid us in understanding the context for the spiritual gift discussion in chapter four by contending that Paul was concerned with two basic issues: “the internal unity of the congregation….and….a distinctly Christian way of life” which is set apart from the larger world.\textsuperscript{40} With Schnackenburg a purpose for writing emerges that is related to the issue of the unity of the church in Ephesus. Such an emphasis presupposes that there is something causing (or, may cause) disunity in the body. Clinton Arnold sees that threat to unity in the form of new converts who were still living in fear of oppressive spiritual “powers” that had been a part of their pre-Christian experience.\textsuperscript{41} Hemphill regards the Colossian heresy as the likely culprit threatening unity and a significant influence on the composition of the gift list of Ephesians 4.\textsuperscript{42}

While it may be impossible to be dogmatic about the precise threat to unity, it seems reasonable to assume that the unity of the church is a dominant theme of the letter.\textsuperscript{43} Concerning spiritual gifts, the emphasis in Ephesians is on leadership, teaching, and service gifts, which seems most likely to be in response to the “unique needs created

\textsuperscript{39}Ernest Best, \textit{Ephesians}, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 75.

\textsuperscript{40}Rudolf Schnackenburg, \textit{The Epistle to the Ephesians}, trans. Helen Haron (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 34


\textsuperscript{42}Hemphill, \textit{Spiritual Gifts}, 154-59.

\textsuperscript{43}Harold W. Hoehner, \textit{Ephesians} (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 102.
by the threat of false teaching.” Indeed, Hemphill notes that “Ephesians 4 is the only text in which Paul connects the use of the gifts to the maintenance of doctrinal stability.” Paul reminds the Christians in Ephesus that genuine unity flows from a deep and abiding love for Christ, who has demonstrated his supremacy over all “spiritual” powers and has provided gifts to his body so that it may grow to full maturity.

The possibility of local circumstantial influence is significant, for if the gifts exist as individual abilities apart from the life of the church, one might expect to find a more static list, such as the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). If the gift lists, however, are influenced by the circumstances within the local church, there is significant question as to whether or not the gifts are intended to be static. Wagner himself holds that the gift lists are not intended to be exhaustive, but are “representative of gifts the Holy Spirit brought to the mind of the biblical writer” at the time the text was written. Hemphill also concludes that “the lists were never intended to be comprehensive but only illustrative of the sort of abilities God might give an individual that would enable him or her to serve the King of kings acceptably” (italics his). If the gift lists are representative of possible gifts, then the enablement of the Spirit may vary from one congregation to another.

If, in fact, the gifting of the Spirit is in keeping with the needs and circumstances of the individual congregation, is it possible for an individual to exercise different “gifts” depending upon the congregation in which they find themselves? If

44Hemphill, You Are Gifted, 160.
45Ibid.
46The exception to this may be the list in Eph 4:11. However, the position taken here is that the gifts mentioned in that passage describe individuals within the church that are, in themselves, gifts to the body.
47C. Peter Wagner, telephone interview by author, 5 April 2011.
48Hemphill, You Are Gifted, 133.
individuals do exercise different “gifts” depending on the needs of the congregation, is it even appropriate to talk about “gifts” as individual possessions at all? It seems more appropriate to describe the “gifts” in terms of ministries or functions within the body rather than individually possessed “abilities” that may be moved around at the will of the individual. Indeed, the fact that the listing of spiritual gifts is apparently driven more by the needs within the church itself rather than a static, terminal list of gifts from which Paul may select, provides a clue as to the ecclesiological nature and purpose of the spiritual gifts themselves.

**Clues within the text as to the “conceptual glue” of the gift lists.** Berding argues that Paul indicates what each of the lists in the four traditional gift list passages have as their conceptual glue.⁴⁹ In Ephesians 4, the conceptual glue is the phrase “for the equipping of the saints.” Thus, the content of the Ephesians 4 list is concerned with a list of equippers God has chosen to bestow upon the Church. In Romans 12, the primary conceptual glue seems to be the idea of functions and members in those functions, found in verse 4, which reads “and all the members do not have the same function.” First Corinthians 12:27-31 contains the phrase “And God has placed/appointed in the church” (v. 28), which, when taken together with the overarching body metaphor in verse 27, reveals a conceptual glue of appointments or placements. In 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, the conceptual glue is found in v. 7: “But to each one is give the manifestation of the Spirit.” The list that follows is a list of activities that manifest the Spirit.

In every case above, the gift list is held together, not by the conceptual theme of specially gifted individuals, which is the conventional view that has been critical for the development of spiritual gift identification instruments. Rather, the conceptual glue is intimately tied to the circumstances within the local church that Paul argues God has

⁴⁹Berding, *What Are the Spiritual Gifts?*, 82-83.
provided for through various ministries. For the church at Corinth, he points out manifestations of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:7-10) and ministry appointments (1 Cor 12:28-30). To believers in Ephesus, Paul emphasizes equippers of the body to maintain orthodoxy (Eph 4:11-13) and to those in Rome, his focus is on members serving in their ministry functions.

**Theological Bias Common to SGI-WMHQ and SGI-Gilbert**

A careful assessment of context and content of the major gift list passages will demonstrate the New Testament purpose for spiritual gifts and the implications for spiritual gift identification. Here the accompanying materials for taking the SGI-WMHQ and the SGI-Gilbert will be examined to demonstrate a shift in focus to the recipient of gifts rather than focusing upon the New Testament purpose for gifts. namely, the building up of the body of Christ. In addition, a brief excursus of the related issue of the ability of individuals to accurately make self-assessments of their area of giftedness will be undertaken.

**The Purpose for Spiritual Gifts**

Wagner and Gilbert are very close to rightly representing the New Testament position regarding the purpose of spiritual gifts. Wagner is emphatic in his insistence that “spiritual gifts are designed for members of the body. Most of the things God does in the world today is done through believers who are working together in community and complementing each other with their gifts.”

50 In fact, Wagner argues that “the health of the church and its subsequent growth depend” on individual believers discovering and developing their spiritual gifts. 51 Thus, the exercise of spiritual gifts is understood to be

50 Wagner, Discover Your Spiritual Gifts, 22.

51 Wagner, Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1994), 32.
essential to the health of the church. Further, Wagner contends that “the foundational key to understanding the organization of the Church” is an understanding of spiritual gifts. Wagner goes so far as to argue for organizing the church around spiritual gifts.

Unfortunately, far more space is taken up by Wagner in emphasizing the personal dimension of spiritual gifts, such as his comment regarding the good news that every believer has been given at least one spiritual gift: “It is wonderful to be assured that God knows me, He loves me, and He considers me special enough [italics mine] to give me a personal gift so that I can serve Him”. Further, Wagner implies that the spiritual gift that a believer has is in relation to their faith, which seems to be in direct contradiction to the overwhelming New Testament evidence that spiritual gifts are exercised in faith, but are distributed according to the sovereign will of the Holy Spirit. The idea of gifts given in relation to faith also seems to be in contradiction to Wagner’s disposition in another place, where he describes spiritual gifts as “gifts of grace and, as such, they emerge from God with no reference to the degree of merit or sanctification that the recipient may have attained. The fact that they are given to brand-new Christians before they have had time to mature spiritually confirms this.” The apparent contradiction of Wagner in one place defining gifts in relation to faith and elsewhere as a result of grace with no reference to merit or sanctification is an indication of the need for a more consistent theological treatment of the purpose of spiritual gifts.

Gilbert has not written as extensively as Wagner, yet, has published a book that accompanies the SGI-Gilbert. Gilbert argues that spiritual gifts are “the means to fulfill

52 Wagner, Discover Your Spiritual Gifts, 17.
53 Ibid., 18.
54 Ibid., 16.
55 Wagner, Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow, 36-37.
56 Gilbert, How to Find Meaning and Fulfillment.
the task” of the Great Commission. He differs with Wagner, slightly, in that he does not define gifts as abilities, per se, but as a “supernatural capacity” for service to God; a “capacity to develop an ability.” Here Gilbert explains the distinction between ability and capacity:

A spiritual gift is really not an ‘ability’, but rather a ‘capacity’ to develop an ability. Ability implies that you are able to do something. A proper distinction between the two words is hard to make because descriptive words of both have somewhat the same meanings. The real difference being: an ability is a state of being, or present tense, and a capacity enables for the future, or future tense. The whole point is that if someone is saved on Monday night and at the moment of his salvation God gives him the gift of teaching, he would not wake up Tuesday morning, a supernatural teacher. But rather, he would wake up with the supernatural capacity (though unknown to him at this point) to develop the supernatural ability of teaching (italics his).

Overall, the focus of Gilbert’s work is on the utilization of gifts that are beneficial to the body of Christ, which is why, in the SGI-Gilbert, he focuses on enabling and TEAM gifts rather than miraculous gifts. In so doing, Gilbert reflects his embrace of the conventional view of spiritual gifts. Berding points out that the conventional view of spiritual gifts includes three components: an understanding of spiritual gifts as (1) an ability or enablement in and of itself, (2) spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit, and (3) spiritual gifts are to be used in building up the community of believers. It is the third aspect that is most closely related to the question of purpose. Initially, it seems that the conventional view of spiritual gifts is rightly focused on the body of Christ. Unfortunately, it will be demonstrated that there is far more time taken in emphasizing the role of the individual in much of the literature on spiritual gifts. The context of the

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57 Ibid., 9.
58 Ibid., 36.
59 Ibid., 36-37.
60 Berding, What Are the Spiritual Gifts?, 25.
gift list passages points to the ecclesiological nature of spiritual gifts. Each of these contexts, 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4, will be examined below in order to show the ecclesiological significance of each.

**Evidence from the Content of the Gift list Passages**

The larger context of the gift list passages in the epistles indicates a purpose in writing having to do with disunity within the congregations to whom the particular letters were addressed. It is now prudent to turn our attention to the content of the gift list passages themselves to determine if there are any clues within those passages indicating the purpose for the gifts. Neither time, nor space will permit a verse by verse exegetical examination of the passages under consideration. Rather, the passages will be examined for indications of an ecclesiological purpose; should such a purpose be found it will be explored, particularly as it relates to the development and use of spiritual gift identification instruments.

Palma notes that “it is especially significant in the three major passages in the epistles dealing with the subject of the gifts, the body of Christ is also mentioned.”

What makes the connection of gifts to the body of Christ so significant is the extended use of the body of Christ image in the New Testament as a descriptor for the church. Millard Erickson states that “perhaps the most extended image of the church is its representation as the body of Christ.” Erickson further argues that the body of Christ image is important because it demonstrates the connection of the group of believers to Christ; the role of individual believers in drawing their life from Christ; and the

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61See discussion above, beginning at 66.


interconnectedness of believers with each other.\textsuperscript{64} Even the more reserved view of Louis Berkhof, who does not regard the body of Christ imagery to be a complete definition of the church, does acknowledge its proper designation for both the universal as well as local church, and its stress on unity.\textsuperscript{65} The fact that spiritual gifts are not mentioned in the Pauline corpus apart from their connection to the body of Christ, a clear image of the church with ecclesiological import, gives another clue as to the ecclesiological purpose of spiritual gifts.

**Evidence from the content of 1 Corinthians 12.** Spiritual gift passages appear in two sections of 1 Corinthians 12; first, they appear in verses 8-10 and then again in verses 28-30. It is not the purpose of this paper to examine each spiritual gift individually, rather to determine from the passages containing the list of those gifts a clue as to the purpose of the gifts. It is worth noting that chapters 12-14 comprise Paul’s response to a debate within the church at Corinth over the proper exercise of one spiritual gift; namely, the gift of tongues.\textsuperscript{66} Thus, while spiritual gifts are specifically mentioned in the two passages cited above, the entire discussion of chapters 12-14 must be taken into account. Therefore, from the entirety of Paul’s discussion in 1 Corinthians 12-14 evidence will be gathered to determine the overall purpose of the distribution of spiritual gifts. It is further worth noting that 1 Corinthians 12-14 is the most extended discussion in the New Testament concerning spiritual gifts, their purpose, and their use in the church, so the amount of space devoted to this section of Scripture will be longer than the other two.

Paul begins his discussion in 1 Corinthians 12 by indicating in verse 1 that he

\textsuperscript{64}Ibid., 1037.


\textsuperscript{66}Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 17-18.
does not want the Corinthians to be ignorant concerning *pneumatika*. Conzelmann suggests that is was Paul himself who introduced the term *pneumatika* to the Corinthians to describe spiritual gifts.\(^6^7\) Although the term is used interchangeably by Paul with the *charisma* “family” of terms, *pneumatika* tends to emphasize the Spirit as the giver of the gifts, while *charisma* tends to emphasize the act of grace in bestowing the gifts.\(^6^8\) It may be that *pnuematika* was the term preferred by those in Corinth to describe spiritual gifts, which is why Paul begins his discussion using their term.\(^6^9\) The close relationship between spiritual gifts and those exercising them may have led to Paul using a term that could apply to either one. Others, however, argue that *pneumatika* is not a reference to spiritual gifts at all, but a reference to the individuals within the church at Corinth who identified themselves by that term.\(^7^0\)

In 1 Corinthians 12:4, however, Paul switches to the term *charismata* to describe spiritual gifts. While this change in terminology does not negate the Spirit as the source of the gifts, it does emphasize their gracious, freely given nature.\(^7^1\) Further, it begins the drive toward Paul’s description of the gifts and the purpose for which they are given; namely the unifying and building up of the body of Christ (the church).

Note in verse 7 the manner in which Paul introduces the gift-list in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, and the manner in which he concludes it. The entire section is


\(^6^8\)Palma, “Spiritual Gifts – Basic Considerations,” 7.

\(^6^9\)Ibid, 23.

\(^7^0\)Ward Powers, *First Corinthians: An Exegetical and Explanatory Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008), 277. Indeed, Powers argues that identifying *pneumatika* as spiritual gifts is “unnecessarily restrictive, and inaccurate, and wrong” (emphasis his).

To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

Here we can discern two truths that are vital to understanding the purpose for which spiritual gifts have been given. First, we recognize that the gifts are given by the determination of the Spirit. Indeed, the Spirit may be regarded as the “sole Giver of all the gifts.” In light of the problems at Corinth with jealousy over gifts, this fact would cut out the heart of pride and eliminate boasting. Gifts are given as the Spirit wills, not in response to the excellence of the individual. Thus, there is no room for boasting.

Second, one can readily detect that the purpose for the gifts is “the common good.” On this point, Palma states, “The all-embracing function of the gifts is that they might edify or build up (oikodemein) the congregation.” This, of course, fits perfectly with Paul’s confrontation of those who sought to exalt one gift (or one type of gift) above the others and, in so doing, lose sight of the unity for which the gifts have been given. Thus, regardless of the individual identification of the gifts in verses 8-10, or of their particular definition, Paul indicates that all of the spiritual gifts are intended to build up the congregation and it is this concept that must be emphasized. Gordon Fee ties these gifts to the eschatological victory of Christ when he comments, “the reason for the gifts in the assembly is to build us [believers] as we live out the life of the future in the present

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72 Conzelmann, I Corinthians, 208.
73 Palma, “Spiritual Gifts – Basic Considerations,” 19.
Spiritual gifts are given for the good of the church, not for the exaltation of the individual; an attitude which is often destructive to the church.

Evidence from the content of Romans 12. Paul’s discussion of spiritual gifts in Romans 12 is distinct from that in 1 Corinthians 12 in a number of ways. Primarily, Paul’s discussion of spiritual gifts in Romans 12 is not central to the theme of the book. Rather, the discussion of spiritual gifts is among the first topics dealt with in a larger section in which “Paul gives the community specific instructions on how to honor God concretely in their everyday lives.” Because Paul’s discussion of spiritual gifts is more succinct in Romans 12 (only 3 verses) than the more detailed treatment over the three chapters of 1 Corinthians 12-14, some have concluded his comments as a precaution to help the church at Rome avoid the errors of Corinth.

In Romans 12, Paul introduces the subject of spiritual gifts with the use of the body analogy in verses 4-5, which gives us an indication of the purpose for the spiritual gifts that will immediately follow in verses 6-8:

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: If prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Unlike the spiritual gift explanation given the church at Corinth, Paul does not here mention the role of the Spirit in the distribution of the gifts. Rather, in keeping with the overall tenor of the letter to the Romans, Paul emphasizes the graciousness of God in


76 Schreiner, Romans, 639.

the giving of spiritual gifts.\textsuperscript{78}

The purpose for spiritual gifts in Romans 12 is made clear by at least two factors. First, Paul addresses “every member of the community in an emphatic way” when he writes in verse 4: “For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you.”\textsuperscript{79} Here Paul indicates that every member of the community is in view for what he is about to write. No one is exempt; the entire body of believers is in view in his forthcoming discussion about spiritual gifts.

The second factor is found as Paul’s thought in verse 4 is completed when he writes that they are: “not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.” The intention here is to circumvent the possibility of any one of them from taking pride in “their” spiritual gift(s) to the detriment of the unity of the body as a whole. Paul wants the members of the body to understand their “proper bearing.…in the community.”\textsuperscript{80}

\textbf{Evidence from the content of Ephesians 4.} Similar to Romans 12, Ephesians 4 begins a section of the letter in which believers are called upon to live out the doctrinal truths expressed in the earlier portions of the letter.\textsuperscript{81} The first six verses of chapter 4 stress the importance of and the source of unity in the church. The sevenfold repetition of the word “one” in verses 4-6 (one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all) demonstrates the stress Paul places on unity. It is, in

\textsuperscript{78} Schreiner, \textit{Romans}, 655.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 651.

\textsuperscript{80} Sanday and Headlam, \textit{Epistle to the Romans}, 355.

\textsuperscript{81} The division of Ephesians into two major sections of three chapters each is nearly universally embraced by commentators. Moule’s comments are representative in this regard: “The close of the third chapter and the beginning of the fourth mark that point, not precisely in respect of space, for the last three make a considerably longer section than the first three, but in respect of subject matter. With some obvious qualifications, the first three chapters treat of doctrine, and the last three of practice…” H.D.G. Moule, \textit{Ephesian Studies}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 147.
fact, Paul’s emphasis upon “one body” that is the primary concern of this entire section.\(^{82}\)

The purpose for which the gifts are given appears in Ephesians 4:12-13 which is here placed in its natural context immediately after the list of gifts in verse 11:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the full measure of the fullness of Christ.

There are at least two options for understanding the purpose of the gifts described in verse 11.\(^{83}\) The first is that the clauses in verse 12 are coordinate to each other, that is, they are three different aspects of the work that is to be done by the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers. In this understanding it is the entire group, who are to equip God’s people, do works of service, and so build up the body of Christ. The entire responsibility for ministry falls on those who are the formal, authoritative leaders in the church creating a sharp distinction between the clergy and laity. Such a distinction runs counter to the larger body of Paul’s teaching on the subject, not to mention the overall emphasis of unity within Ephesians generally, and chapter four specifically.\(^{84}\)

A second and preferable approach is to understand the first preposition (“to prepare God’s people”) as expressing the immediate purpose of the gifts given in Ephesians 4:11, with the other two prepositions (“for works of service” and to “build up

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\(^{83}\)For detailed discussions of these options, see Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, The Anchor Bible Commentary (New York: Doubleday & Co, 1974), 479; Schnackenburg, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, 182-84; Best, *Ephesians*, 395-99; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 547-51. A simplification of the options can be found in Hemphill, *Spiritual Gifts*, 177-78.

the body”) as expressing direction and goal.\textsuperscript{85} In this understanding the gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher are given to the church to equip the entire body to do the work of ministry with the ultimate goal being the building up of the body of Christ. Here again, the emphasis is placed upon the vital nature of every believer exercising his or her individual spiritual gift(s) and being led to do so by those who have been corporately given to them as person gifts.\textsuperscript{86} It is this second understanding that is embraced here and so provides the purpose for which the person gifts have been given: to lead the entire body of believers to exercise their spiritual gift(s) in service to the Lord Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{87}

**Conclusion**

Spiritual gift identification instruments contain biblical and theological bias that raises serious question as to their usefulness in the local church. To determine biblical bias on the part of those designing spiritual gift identification instruments, the gift lists in the SGI-WMHQ and the SGI-Gilbert were compared with the list of gifts found in the New Testament. It has been demonstrated that the SGI-WMHQ and the SGI-Gilbert test for a significantly different number of gifts, and that neither maintain a strict adherence to the gift lists as presented in the text. In one sense, the SGI-WMHQ and SGI-Gilbert rightly understand that Paul is nowhere trying to create an exhaustive list of gifts,

\textsuperscript{85}Ibid., 549.

\textsuperscript{86}The term “person gifts” reflects the position that certain “gifts” are offices within the church.

\textsuperscript{87}Sinclair Ferguson, *Let’s Study Ephesians* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2005), 109-13, notes that these four gifts function primarily through ministering the Word to the body of Christ. He contends it is only the “prolonged, intensive, faithful exposition of God’s word” (113) that develops the kind of unity and the full maturity of the body of Christ that Paul desired. In this sense all four of the person gifts can be subsumed under a larger gift of the ministry of the Word of God given to the church by her ascended Lord.
but rather he utilizes lists that are significant for the orthodoxy and orthopraxy of the church to whom he is writing. However, by determining a set number of gifts for which to test, the SGI-WMHQ and the SGI-Gilbert narrow the focus of spiritual gift identification in a way Paul never intended.

Paul’s use of lists in relation to spiritual gifts is not to place the emphasis on specific gifts possessed by specific individuals, but is driven by local church concerns and on individuals finding their place of service within the body of Christ. If believers are taught spiritual gifts in such a way that emphasizes their finding a “function” within the body, rather than seeking to discover a divinely given ability, the emphasis shifts from anthropocentric to ecclesiocentric. No longer is the individual seeking to find a newly given talent or ability, rather, they are seeking to discover where they can most benefit the church. And that place of beneficial service may vary widely from one church to the next, and may include “gifts” that are not mentioned in any of the four passages above. It is a subtle distinction to be sure, but it is a distinction with a difference.

With respect to theological bias, particularly as it relates to the purpose of spiritual gifts, the key gift list passages in the New Testament were examined. The content of 1 Corinthians 12 reveals Paul’s goal of encouraging the Corinthian church to exercise the gifts of the Spirit for the good of the body, rather than the exaltation of the individual. The spiritual gift discussion in Romans 12 encourages humility toward our place of service in the body for the good of the body indicating, at least implicitly, that the goal of spiritual gifts is to foster unity in the body. The list of gifts in Ephesians 4 is explicit in its explanation that the purpose of individual believer employing spiritual gifts by engaging in works of service is to build up the body of Christ. On this subject, Calvin comments,

But Scripture, to conduct us to this, reminds us, that whatever we obtain from the Lord is granted on the condition of our employing it for the common good of the
Church, and that, therefore, the legitimate use of all our gifts is a kind and liberal communication of them with others.\textsuperscript{88}

It is clear that the New Testament posits a purpose for spiritual gifts that is ultimately and intimately connected to the life of the body. The church is not merely a collective of individuals possessing special abilities, but is a body of Spirit-enabled believers that is dependent upon the exercise of spiritual gifts for its very life and existence.

Wagner and Gilbert recognize the role of spiritual gifts in providing for the health and vitality of the church and in so doing do seem to have the intent of the New Testament authors in mind. Unfortunately, there is a tendency inherent within the design of spiritual gift identification instruments to emphasize the nature of the gifts individualistically as opposed to their more corporate and ecclesiological purpose. This problem is insurmountable as long as spiritual gift identification instruments utilize a format that creates a set list of gifts and is based on self-assessment of individual abilities.

\textbf{Excursus: The Problem of Self-Assessment}

Spiritual gift identification instruments have one undeniable characteristic in common: they require an individual to make an assessment of himself or herself. The problems related to the reliability and validity of self-assessments from a psychological perspective will be addressed in Chapter Four, however, it is important to note here several practical observations of a theological nature. There are at least two reasons to question the reliability of self-assessment; they are gift projection and inexperience.

The first problem with self-assessment, referred to here as “gift projection.”\textsuperscript{89} Gift projection is the problem of responding to the statements in a spiritual gift identification instrument with answers that reflect behaviors in which the respondent


\textsuperscript{89}Hemphill, \textit{You Are Gifted}, 192.
believes they should engage or believes they would like to engage. Hemphill observes “it is possible to take a gift inventory and discover that we score high in the area of our desired giftedness rather than our actual giftedness” (italics his). For example, Wagner includes the statement “I have an insatiable appetite for the presence of God” as a question related to worship leading. Most believers would acknowledge that they should have such a desire to be in God’s presence, and that knowledge may influence them to respond more affirmatively than is actually the case. Likewise, Gilbert includes the statement “I have a consuming passion (strong desire, great concern) to reach lost souls” in the SGI-Gilbert. Again, most believers would acknowledge that such a statement should be true of them. Wagner recognizes the problem of gift projection with self-assessment (though he may not call it that) and warns his readers in bold type:

“Warning! Do not score according to what you think should be true of your life or what you hope might be true in the future” (bold and italics his). However, such warnings, while well intentioned, cannot overcome the human condition.

A second problem with self-assessment is the problem of ministry inexperience. The issue of ministry inexperience is problematic for churches that regularly distribute spiritual gift identification instruments to new members or to individuals inquiring about serving in ministry. Though the intention is good, there are

90Ibid., 193.
91Wagner, Discover Your Spiritual Gifts, 90.
92Gilbert, Spiritual Gift Inventory, statement 1.
93Wagner, Discover Your Spiritual Gifts, 86. The Network spiritual gift materials recognize this issue and, consequently, have developed a separate observation assessment to be used in helping determine a spiritual gift. See Bugbee, Cousins, and Hybels, Network: Leader’s Guide, 132; idem, Network: Participants Guide, 57-60.
94For example, see FBC West Palm Beach, Ministry Gifts Inventory [on-line]; accessed 18 July, 2011; available at http://www.fbcwpb.org/Files/Complete-Vltr-Packet.pdf; Internet. See also McCallum, Discover Your Spiritual Gifts.
inherent problems with this practice. As Wagner points out,

There is an obvious shortcoming to the questionnaire [SGI-WMHQ]. The answers, as you will see, are based on your personal experience. Consequently, if you are a new believer or a young person, you probably do not have much of a track record in ministry to go on. You will enjoy the experience, but hold the results lightly. If this describes your situation, you definitely want to take the test one or more times down the road.  

Because spiritual gift identification instruments begin with the conventional view that includes the idea that spiritual gifts are given to new believers by the Holy Spirit at conversion, they fail to take into account “natural talents” or abilities an individual may possess prior to conversion. This matter will become critical in Chapter Five as an ecclesiocentric model for spiritual gift identification is posited. For now, it will suffice to contend that such an understanding of spiritual gifts creates a narrow list of activities that require ministry participation to validate. As a result, if new believers are depending upon the results of a completed spiritual gift identification instrument for guidance in their place of service, they will be disappointed.

The problem of self-assessment will be further explored in Chapter Four, which will bring together a number of empirical analyses of spiritual gift identification instrument construct, validity, and reliability. Regardless of the supposed biblical or theological basis for utilizing spiritual gift identification instruments, the research from psychology into the construct of the instruments themselves is vital to determining their usefulness in the church. The empirical analyses demonstrate that the methodology inherent in the development of spiritual gift identification instruments is not demonstrably valid or reliable to reveal individual spiritual gifts, but is reliable for revealing at least two broad gift categories: speaking and serving.

95 Wagner, *Discover Your Spiritual Gifts*, 85.
CHAPTER 4
EMPIRICAL ANALYSES OF SPIRITUAL GIFT IDENTIFICATION INSTRUMENTS

Introduction

Although the initial development of spiritual gift identification instruments occurred in the 1960s, such instruments experienced a significant amount of growth and acceptance within the Christian community during the 1970s and 1980s. During that period of increasing growth and acceptance, a number of variations of spiritual gift identification instruments appeared, including Fredrickson’s revision of McMinn (SGI-L), the Houts Inventory (SGI-Houts), the Wagner-Modified Houts Inventory (SGI-WMHQ), the Hocking Spiritual Gifts Inventory (SGI-Hocking), Fortune and Fortune’s Motivational Spiritual Gifts Inventory (SGI-Fortune), and the Team Ministry Spiritual Gift Inventory (SGI-Gilbert).¹ During the 1990s two additional spiritual gift identification instruments appeared: the Network Spiritual Gift Assessment and Dan Reiland’s Spiritual Gifts Test.² In addition to the aforementioned published instruments, a large number of churches and individuals created their own instruments, often borrowing heavily from


previously published instruments. Yet, the development of and proliferation of spiritual
gift identification instruments is not, in and of itself, a guarantee that such instruments
actually do what they claim to do; that is, identify spiritual gifts. Popularity is no
guarantee of reliability or validity.

The methodology that underlies the construction of spiritual gift identification
equipment is cause for concern. Yet, beyond anecdotal concerns from theologians about
the usefulness of spiritual gift identification instruments, very little research from a
theological perspective has been done on this vital issue. Indeed, the vast majority of
doctoral research on the construction, validity and reliability of spiritual gift identification
instruments has been conducted by psychology students. In her dissertation on the

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3For example, see Philip McCallum, Discover Your Spiritual Gifts [on-line]; accessed July 11, 2011; available from http://www.newlifechurch.org/spiritualGifts.jsp; Internet, which was developed for New Life Church, Colorado Springs, CO; Andrew Kulp, Gifted2Serve [on-line]; accessed July 11, 2011; available at http://buildingchurch.net/g2s.htm; Internet, which is a modified version of the SGI-WMHQ that was developed for Lakeview Baptist Church, Auburn, AL. A Google search of “spiritual gifts test” will produce dozens of additional instruments of a similar nature.

4For psychometricians, “reliability” refers to the ability of an instrument to
provide consistent and stable findings for a single individual over multiple applications.
“Validity” refers to the ability of an instrument to measure what it is supposed to
measure. See Anne Anastasi, Psychological Testing, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle Ridge, NJ:
Prentice Hall, 1982), 131, and Alison Thomas-Cottingham, Psychology Made Simple

5For example, Frederickson, “The Construction and Preliminary Validation of
the Spiritual Gift Inventory, Research Version”; Peyton Marshall, “The Measurement of
Spiritual Gifts Using the Modified Houts Questionnaire” (Ph.D. diss., St. Louis
University, 1986); Ronald J. DeVries II, “Is It A Gift? The Relationship between
Therapeutic Competence and Individual Therapist Characteristics of Experience,
Personality and Spirituality” (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1994); Kenneth J.
Stone, “Relationship Between Personality and Spiritual Gifts” (Psy.D. diss., George Fox
College, 1991); Fitzroy Samuel Maitland, “An Investigation of the Effectiveness of
Training in the Utilization of Spiritual Gifts in the Personal Ministries of Ontario
Seventh-Day Adventists (Canada)” (Ed.D. diss., Andrews University, 1990); Chek Yat
Phoon, “A Correlational Study of Jungian Psychological Types and Nineteen Spiritual
Gifts” (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1987); Roland Lerius Joachim, “Relationship
subject, Susan Fredrickson raises serious questions as to both the theological presuppositions involved in the development of the SGI-McMinn and the psychometrics utilized in it, resulting in her conclusion that the SGI-McMinn (and later the SGI-L) was “far from being a valid instrument.”\(^6\) Frederickson expresses concerns primarily with the definitions of certain gifts and the biases demonstrated in which gifts were actually included in the inventory.\(^7\) Subsequent research has only strengthened Frederickson’s concerns about reliability and validity of spiritual gift identification instruments.

This chapter will begin with examining why empirical analysis of spiritual gift identification instruments is important. From there, an overview of four psychometric analyses, each examining a different spiritual gift identification instrument, will seek to determine if the construction of spiritual gift identification instruments has produced demonstrably reliable and valid instruments. Finally, several implications derived from the results of the psychometric analyses will be observed including an alternative testing approach for spiritual gifts.

**The Importance of Empirical Analyses**

Empirical research seeks to discover the answer to research questions through direct observation and experimentation. Psychometrics, the field of psychology that specializes in the development of psychological assessments, engages in empirical research between Four Temperament Types and Nineteen Spiritual Gifts” (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1984); Nathaniel P. Lewis, “A Correlational Study of Myers-Briggs Personality Types and Naden's Spiritual Gifts Clusters among Members of Selected Southern Baptist Churches” (Ed.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1992); Donald W. Haston, “A Correlational Study of the Ministry Skills and Aptitudes of Church Lay Persons as Perceived by Themselves and as Perceived by Ministry Supervisors (Spiritual Gifts Inventory, Ministry Skills, and Aptitudes Ranking Inventory)” (Ph.D. diss., The University of Tennessee, 1997).


\(^7\)Ibid.
analysis to determine the reliability and validity of instruments to ensure those instruments actually reveal what they purport to reveal. Fredrickson observed that “a number of researchers have encouraged the application of sound psychometric principles to the empirical study of religious constructs; however the topic of spiritual gifts has not seen such scientific endeavor.” Indeed, Wagner indicated that he did not “move into the social scientific realm” in developing his instrument, the SGI-WMHQ. Gilbert, likewise, indicated he was not sure how to apply reliability and validity testing to the SGI-Gilbert.

Yet, spiritual gift identification instruments are similar in appearance to a number of well established psychometric tools. In fact, Cooper and Blakeman contend that this scientific appearance is partially responsible for the popularity of spiritual gift identification instruments:

Much of the reason for this success [the popularity of spiritual gift inventories] is due to the scientific appearance of these inventories in their format, scoring, and interpretation. However, they have not typically undergone rigorous test standardization methods, such as those described in the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (American Psychological Association, 1985), that are necessary to produce a highly reliable and valid assessment instrument.

Ledbetter and Foster likewise observe “these inventories resemble psychometric scales in procedures, format, and scoring, and in fact seem to be modeled on their psychological counterparts . . . . Unfortunately these tests have not been subjected to the basic checks that normally accompany the development of new

\[8\] Ibid., 40.

\[9\] C. Peter Wagner, telephone interview by author, 5 April 2011.

\[10\] Larry Gilbert, telephone interview by author, 9 March 2011.

psychological instruments, and yet are in widespread use.” The lack of psychometric testing for validity and reliability is not intended to malign those who have developed spiritual gift identification instruments. Rather, Ledbetter and Foster observe that the lack of psychometric rigor results from a lack of awareness of test construction.

Those not working in the field of test construction may not be aware of the psychometric issues involved in test construction. Psychological scales like the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, or the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis, may appear to the authors of spiritual gift inventories to be a simply set of subjectively derived questions, but in fact the questions on the scales have been carefully selected and have survived numerous checks of reliability and validity similar to those in this study. Thus, the lack of psychometric rigor is attributable, at least in part, to the fact that spiritual gift identification instruments were developed intuitively to meet a perceived need within the Church and they were not developed by psychometricians.

The most common method of evaluating spiritual gift identification instruments to determine reliability and validity is called factor analysis. Factor analysis is “a statistical process used to discover patterns among the variations in values and variables.” Factor analysis seeks to determine the least number of underlying and unifying factors that account for variance between items. If factor analysis were applied, for example, to a basket filled with a number of items identified as apples, bananas, oranges, pears, and pineapples, the goal would be to determine the underlying and unifying factor common to all these items. In this example, all of the aforementioned items could be described in terms of a single factor: fruit.

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13 Ibid., 282.

Factor analysis is an important tool in determining the validity of spiritual gift identification instruments because, in factor analysis, one is attempting to discern if an instrument actually measures what it claims to measure. Spiritual gift identification instruments purport to measure between eight gifts (SGI-Gilbert) and twenty-seven gifts (SGI-WMHQ). When factor analysis is applied to spiritual gift identification instruments, the goal is to determine the smallest set of underlying unifying factors that are actually being measured or whether the instrument does, indeed, measure as many factors (or, in this case, gifts), as is claimed. When spiritual gift identification instruments have been subjected to psychometric analyses to determine validity and reliability, the results have been mixed. Yet, such analysis is important because “these inventories are being used to help Christians detect the presence or absence of spiritual gifts and thus purport to provide both examiner and examinee with relevant information that is accurate and useful.”

**Frederickson’s Analysis of the SGI-McMinn/SGI-L**

The SGI-McMinn was the first spiritual gift identification instrument published. As part of her doctoral dissertation in psychology, Susan Fredrickson examined the SGI-McMinn to determine its reliability and validity as an instrument. Fredrickson stated “in the 12 years the SGI [McMinn] has been in use, little or no

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16Ledbetter and Foster, “Measuring Spiritual Giftedness,” 274.

17The historical development of the SGI-McMinn and the SGI-L may be found in chap. 2 of this dissertation.

18Fredrickson, “The Construction and Preliminary Validation of the Spiritual Gift Inventory, Research Version.”
reliability or validity data has been gathered…it seemed important to discover whether, indeed, the inventory is valid and reliable.”

Specifically, Fredrickson sought to examine the construct validity of the SGI-McMinn, as opposed to either content or criterion-related validity, since construct validity involves the extent to which a test is found to measure that which it purports to measure.

Upon examining the SGI-McMinn, Fredrickson found several issues that prevented her from performing extensive reliability or validity testing upon it. The most troublesome issue was the ipsative nature of the SGI-McMinn. Ipsative testing is based on subjects being forced to choose that which is most and least like them, from a set of at least two interlinked statements. The SGI-McMinn includes three statements from which respondents are asked to select one that is most like them and one that is least like them. The ipsative nature of the SGI-McMinn makes it a challenging instrument to administer, because respondents struggle to decide between “most” and “least” like them and it is difficult to generate normative data from ipsative tests. Indeed, the difficulty in attempting to apply a factor analysis to the SGI-McMinn led to Fredrickson developing a modified version of the SGI-McMinn, utilizing a Likert scale for scoring (SGI-L).

For Fredrickson’s research, the SGI-L was administered to a group of volunteers at a large Baptist church in suburban Portland. The test was administered to over 360 individuals, with 150 being utilized in the Fredrickson’s factor analysis. The

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20 Ibid., 21.

21 Ibid., 38.

gender breakdown of the test participants was 45 percent male and 55 percent female.\textsuperscript{23} None of the individuals participating in the inventory reported a conversion experience within a year of the time the test was administered.\textsuperscript{24}

Fredrickson’s factor analysis provided at least two observations that are significant for those considering the reliability and validity of spiritual gift identification instruments. The first observation relates to a weakness in the intuitive construction approach utilized by the SGI-L.\textsuperscript{25} Individuals developing spiritual gift identification instruments typically determine the number of spiritual gifts found in Scripture and then develop statements that are reflective of said gifts. This process is filled with difficulties, not the least of which is a failure to recognize the intentional variations in the content of the gift lists in the New Testament.\textsuperscript{26} In reflecting on the value of her study and how a new study might proceed, Fredrickson advises to “begin with a consideration of the theoretical, theological underpinnings of the SGI-L.”\textsuperscript{27}

A second observation from Fredrickson’s research to note is that the factor analysis yielded three factors rather than the twelve proposed. The SGI-L was supposed to test for twelve spiritual gifts, yet when a factor analysis is made of the results, three factors can account for the majority of the variance. Fredrickson notes, “regardless of whether two or three factor solutions were considered did not alter the fact that three

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{23}Fredrickson, “The Construction and Preliminary Validation of the Spiritual Gift Inventory, Research Version,” 58. Additional demographic information is available in Fredrickson, 58-61. Gender and conversion information is noted here since both seem to have a strong bearing on spiritual gift identification instrument results.

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., 60.

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., 80.

\textsuperscript{26}See chap. 3 for a full discussion of the gift lists in the New Testament as compared to those utilized in a sampling of spiritual gift identification instruments.

\textsuperscript{27}Fredrickson, “The Construction and Preliminary Validation of the Spiritual Gift Inventory, Research Version,” 96.
\end{footnotesize}
psychological factors accounted for almost two-thirds of the total variance of the SGI-L, and two factors accounted for over one-half of the variance.”

Fredrickson notes that the original authors of the SGI-McMinn,

did not consider the fact that most theologians who wrote about the concept of spiritual gifting from the decade of the 1940’s on supported the idea that the gift lists were examples of a Hebrew literary device, meant for illustration or example, and were not intended to be operationally defined and indentified in persons. Thus, the problem of testing for twelve factors (gifts) and yielding only three distinct factors could be related to the misapplication of the gift lists in the New Testament.

It is clear that there are concerns with the construct of the SGI-McMinn and the SGI-L. It is additionally clear that, when subjected to the rigors of factor analysis, the SGI-McMinn and the SGI-L do not indicate twelve separate and distinct factors (gifts), but only two to three. The poor construct as well as significant questions regarding the theoretical and theological underpinnings of those instruments, led Fredrickson to conclude that the SGI-McMinn and the SGI-L were far from being valid instruments.

**Ledbetter and Foster’s Analysis of the SGI-Hocking**

In 1989, as the interest in spiritual gift identification instruments was gaining significant strength, Mark Ledbetter and James Foster sought to examine the psychometric properties underlying such instruments. Ledbetter and Foster chose to examine a spiritual gift identification instrument developed by David Hocking (SGI-Hocking) and to report those findings in a journal article. The SGI-Hocking seeks to

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28Ibid., 84.
29Ibid., 86.
30Ibid., 97.
31Ledbetter and Foster, “Measuring Spiritual Giftedness,” 274-83.
test for 14 spiritual gifts including:32

Prophecy – the ability to clearly proclaim God’s truth in a comforting or convicting way.

Teaching – the ability to explain God’s truth to believers and non-believers.

Exhortation – the ability to reassure and comfort others in time of need.

Word of Wisdom – the ability to see people and situations in a way that the average person may overlook.

Word of Knowledge – the ability to understand things others cannot.

Leadership – the ability to lead others in a personal, caring way.

Administration – the ability to make efficient and goal-oriented decisions.

Serving – meeting the needs of others in a joyful way.

Helps – the ability to relieve others’ burdens by giving support or performing tasks.

Giving – the ability to joyfully and unselfishly give money or goods.

Showing Mercy – the ability to show compassion for those physically suffering and joyfully meet their needs.

Hospitality – the ability to joyfully open your home to others.

Faith – the ability to trust God in difficult circumstances.

Discerning of Spirits – the ability to immediately determine whether what was spoken was from God or Satan.

The SGI-Hocking is similar to the SGI-McMinn in that both are in a forced answer ipsative format. For the SGI-Hocking, nine statements were developed for each of the 14 gifts to be tested, for a total of 126 statements. Respondents are to indicate a “yes” or “no” for each statement. Scoring is conducted by assigning a point value of “1” for a “yes” and “0” for a “no.”

Ledbetter and Foster distributed the SGI-Hocking to members of two Sunday School classes discussing the concept of spiritual gifts and asked them to complete the survey. Once the surveys were completed and collected, Ledbetter and Foster then subjected the results of the survey to a battery of psychometric tests. Although the sample size was less than 100, there were still enough surveys to provide a factor analysis at the subtest level.

A factor analysis of the SGI-Hocking was conducted by Ledbetter and Foster resulting in a number of significant observations. One of the first observations from Ledbetter and Foster is that “11 percent of the SGI [Hocking] items were measuring gifts contrary to the author’s intention.” At the very least, the statements in the SGI-Hocking that are measuring gifts not intended need to be reworded in favor of those that are consistent with the gift under scrutiny.

Further, the factor analysis of the SGI-Hocking conducted by Ledbetter and Foster revealed a three factor solution rather than the fourteen factors tested. The three factors indicated by Ledbetter and Foster’s testing were speaking, serving, and governing. The results of factor analysis again suggest that it may be necessary to organize spiritual gifts into smaller categories rather than applying a literal hermeneutic to the text in evaluating the gift lists of the New Testament. Regardless of how one arrives at the set number of gifts to test, there remains the fact that “the items generated

33 Ledbetter and Foster, “Measuring Spiritual Giftedness,” 278.
34 Ibid., 278-79.
35 Ibid., 278.
36 The finding of three factors corresponds to the findings of Fredrickson, though the gifts that loaded on the three factors were not identical, since the original gift lists were not identical.
37 Ledbetter and Foster, “Measuring Spiritual Giftedness,” 280.
may reflect personal perceptions of how to measure the gift.”

Ledbetter and Foster conclude that spiritual gift identification instruments are not capable of distinguishing large numbers of distinct spiritual gifts. Most troubling is the fact that the SGI-Hocking resembles a psychometric instrument in format, procedure and scoring, yet lacks even minimal checks of reliability and validity. The appearance of a scientific instrument can result in an aura of credibility and respectability that is not warranted. Further, Ledbetter and Foster observe “proper theological/psychological integration requires psychologists to have more than a superficial understanding of Scripture and theologians to have more than a superficial understanding of psychology and its research methodology.”

**Cooper and Blakeman’s Analysis of the SGI-Fortune**

In 1974, Don and Katie Fortune were introduced to the teachings of Bill Gothard on the subject of spiritual gifts, particularly the gifts found in Romans 12. The analysis of the SGI-Fortune is important because it shares a common lineage with one of the most popular spiritual gift identification instruments on the market today: the SGI-Gilbert. Both the Fortunes and Gilbert were significantly influenced by Gothard, influences that remain a critical component of their spiritual gift identification instruments.

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38 Ibid., 282.

39 Ibid., 280.

40 Ibid., 282.

41 Fortune and Fortune, *Discover Your God-Given Gifts*, 9. Gothard refers to these as “motivation, ministry, and manifestation gifts.” For a full discussion of Gothard’s gift division, see Chapter Two of this dissertation. See also, Institute in Basic Life Principles, *Understanding Spiritual Gifts* (Oak Brook, IL: Institute in Basic Life Principles, 2005), 3.
The Fortunes have been studying and presenting spiritual gift seminars throughout the United States and around the world since that time, including the development of a spiritual gift identification instrument that is included with their book. Fortune and Fortune indicate that their motivation for developing a spiritual gift identification instrument was rooted in their intrigue over psychological and aptitude tests they had previously taken. Thus, they set out to develop such an instrument to test for the seven motivational gifts.

Though neither Don nor Katie Fortune have a background in psychometrics, they developed a set of characteristics for each of the seven motivational gifts and then descriptors for each, including career options that are best suited for individuals who possess certain gifts. The seven motivational gifts tested for include (1) Exhorter, (2) Server, (3) Perceiver, (4) Teacher, (5) Giver, (6) Administrator, and (7) Compassion. The SGI-Fortune provides 20 statements for each of the seven motivational gifts, followed by an additional five statements per gift of “problem areas.” These statements are rated by the respondent on the following scale: 0 = Never; 1 = Seldom; 2 = Sometimes; 3 = Usually; 4 = Mostly; 5 = Always. The results are then placed on a graph to create a gift profile sheet.

Building on and seeking to expand the work of Ledbetter and Foster, Stewart Cooper and Stephen Blakeman undertook a psychometric analysis of the SGI-Fortune. The SGI-Fortune was selected, in part, “because of its originators’ steadfast literalist

42 Fortune and Fortune, Discover Your God-Given Gifts, 48.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., 50.
45 Ibid., 51.
46 Cooper and Blakeman, “Spiritual Gifts,” 39-44.
position that exactly seven such motivational gifts exist.”47 Specifically, Cooper and Blakeman sought to accomplish three goals with their study, namely, to “(a) investigate the internal reliability and construct validity of the Motivational Gifts Inventory [SGI-Fortune], (b) compare the results to those found by Ledbetter and Foster including differences by gender, and (c) discuss implications for those who use this type of instrument.”48

Cooper and Blakeman asked 175 college-aged students involved in five theology classes in a small Midwestern university to participate in the study by completing and returning the SGI-Fortune.49 Eighty-six students, 13 male and 73 female, returned the study and were included in the study. A factor analysis identical to that utilized by Ledbetter and Foster was then conducted of the 86 spiritual gift identification instruments returned to Cooper and Blakeman.50

The result of the factor analysis conducted by Cooper and Blakeman is not favorable for indicating the SGI-Fortune actually tests for the number of gifts purported. The SGI-Fortune intends to test for the seven motivation gifts found in Romans 12. In fact, Cooper and Blakeman report that the SGI-Fortune does not test for seven factors (gifts), but “the examination of the factor correlation matrix for the three factor model was congruent with earlier research findings in revealing three factors with non-statistically significant correlations.”51 This finding is consistent with Ledbetter and Foster’s examination of the SGI-Hocking and Fredrickson’s examination of the SGI-L.

47 Ibid., 39.
48 Ibid., 39-40.
49 Ibid., 40.
50 Ibid., 41.
51 Ibid.
Thus, a third different spiritual gift identification instrument has been subjected to factor analysis with remarkably similar results.

A disturbing finding with the SGI-Fortune is the attempt to present the instrument as psychologically valid. In the section of their book in which they are preparing readers to take the SGI-Fortune, the Fortunes include a story about a “well-known clinical psychologist, Edward Carr” who proceeds to affirm their work by telling them “the research of these secular psychologists simply confirms what you are teaching.”\(^{52}\) A careful reading of the Fortune’s narrative indicates that Mr. Carr’s comments had to do with the recognition by psychologists that there are multiple personality types. His comments were not an affirmation of the test itself. However, the placement of the story in the middle of the section on how to score the test seems, at best, ill-conceived and, at worst, disingenuous. Fortune and Fortune remark that they “were grateful to know that what [they] were teaching was not only biblically sound, but psychologically accurate.”\(^{53}\) The fact is that no psychometric analysis of the SGI-Fortune has ever demonstrated it to be reliable or valid. In fact, Cooper and Blakeman observe the results [of the factor analysis] indicated that the MGI [SGI-Fortune] does not deliver the level of construct validity described by the Fortunes in *Discovering Your God-Given Gifts*, nor do the subscales have the level of internal reliability desired in better psychological inventories. Many of the gift reliabilities were simply inadequate and would thus be inappropriate to use as a primary source for career decision-making or personality labeling.\(^{54}\)

**Kehe’s Evaluation of the SGI-WMHQ**

In 2000, Judith Kehe undertook an analysis of the psychometric properties of the Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire. Such an undertaking is instructive since the

\(^{52}\)Fortune and Fortune, *Discover Your God-Given Gifts*, 48.  
\(^{53}\)Ibid., 49.  
\(^{54}\)Cooper and Blakeman, “Spiritual Gifts,” 42-43.
SGI-WMHQ remains one of the most popular spiritual gift identification instruments available today.\(^{55}\) In addition, Wagner has acknowledged that he “did not move into the social scientific realm” in developing or revising the SGI-WMHQ. Thus, it is essential that psychometric analyses take place in order to clear up any discrepancy between the number of factors (gifts) these instruments purport to test for and the actual underlying factors that they do.

The focus of Kehe’s study was not solely to perform a factor analysis of the SGI-WMHQ, but to explore “clergy and lay differences as well as the potential use of spiritual gift inventories among pastoral counselors.”\(^{56}\) Such an investigation is prudent, for it is not beneficial to proceed to administer an instrument without knowing if it is reliable or valid. Kehe’s study involved 144 subjects, 67 males and 75 females (no gender was indicated by two participants), who were invited to participate through classroom presentations and personal invitations.\(^{57}\)

Because Kehe’s study was focused on whether the SGI-WMHQ could accurately predict the gifts of pastoral counselors, her findings are mixed. Like Ledbetter and Foster, Cooper and Blakeman, and Fredrickson before her, Kehe found many “significant correlations” between “the spiritual gifts, which hints at the potential overlapping of items.”\(^{58}\) The overlapping of items within the spiritual gift identification instrument leads to the appearance that multiple factors are being tested, when, in reality, only a few are. Previous studies had indicated three factors as underlying the larger

\(^{55}\) For the historical development of the SGI-WMHQ, see chap. 2 of this dissertation.


\(^{57}\) Ibid., 89.

\(^{58}\) Ibid., 93.
number of factors (gifts) that were being tested. Kehe’s research bears that out as well. In fact, Kehe found that “the identification of three factors explained 64% of the variance” in the results.\(^{59}\)

Unlike previous studies, Kehe is optimistic about the use of the WMHQ. She found promising that “seven of the eleven hypothesized gifts had higher mean scores among pastoral counselors.”\(^{60}\) It may be that instruments such as the SGI-WMHQ are useful in distinguishing among clergy.\(^{61}\) The fact that there was a distinction between pastoral counselors responses from non-pastoral counselors, led Kehe to conclude that “the reliabilities found in this inventory [SGI-WMHQ] are rather encouraging and suggest that this inventory may be a worthwhile tool for further development in empirical research.”\(^{62}\) However, she acknowledges that the overlapping of many items and the finding of three underlying factors hint at the continued need for both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis in researching spiritual gifts. The finding of three factors in this study and in previous studies also forces one to look at the conceptual understanding of spiritual gifts and the exploration of whether the information found in the biblical passage of 1 Peter 4:11 supports the notion of two broad categories of spiritual gifts.\(^{63}\)

At best, Kehe’s study is inconclusive with regard to determining the validity and reliability of the SGI-WMHQ. While her work does seem to indicate that the SGI-WMHQ is useful for distinguishing between certain types of service within the Church, it is not valid or reliable in the sense that it accurately tests for the twenty-seven gifts that it lists. Others have undertaken to examine the SGI-WMHQ as well, but none have

\(^{59}\)Ibid., 94.

\(^{60}\)Ibid.

\(^{61}\)Ibid. See also, DeVries, “Is It a Gift?”, 88.


\(^{63}\)Ibid.
concluded that the instrument is valid and reliable to test twenty-seven unique factors (gifts).\textsuperscript{64}

**Implications Resultant from Empirical Analyses**

The fact that spiritual gift identification instruments are designed by Christians and for Christians necessitates that all those involved strive for accuracy. In John 14:6 Jesus declared that he was “the way, the truth, and the life,” and in Psalm 31:5, the Psalmist declares that God is “the God of truth.” It is incumbent upon Christians, then to ensure that the instruments we develop and utilize for the benefit of the Kingdom of God are, in fact, designed to do what they purport. If spiritual gift identification instruments, as represented by the instruments analyzed above, do not accurately identify the number of factors (gifts) that they purport a re-examination of their usefulness is in order. Below are several observations and implications for the further use of spiritual gift identification instruments based on the results of the empirical analyses above.

**Comparison of Factor Analyses**

Beginning in 1982, at least five separate factor analyses have been conducted on a variety of spiritual gift identification instruments. The results of those analyses have been detailed above. When the results of all five of those studies are examined side by side, as in Table 5 below, it is striking to see how poorly spiritual gift identification instruments perform.

The anomaly in the studies in the table below is the one conducted by Marshall. While the other analyses conducted report finding three factors, Marshall reports 11. It is worth noting, that while Marshall concludes an 11–factor solution, an

\textsuperscript{64}Marshall, “The Measurement of Spiritual Gifts Using the Modified Houts Questionnaire.” In his dissertation, Marshall examines the psychometric properties of the SGI-WMHQ and argues that the instrument tests for eleven factors, seven of which are indicated by the Rom 12 gifts. See also, DeVries, “Is It A Gift?”
examination of the variance explained by each factor in his study, reveals that the first three factors are of greater statistical significance than the other eight.\textsuperscript{65}

Table 5. Summary of empirical analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Instrument Examined</th>
<th>Number of Factors Purported</th>
<th>Number of Factors Found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Fredrickson\textsuperscript{66}</td>
<td>SGI-McMinn/SGI-L</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Marshall\textsuperscript{67}</td>
<td>SGI-WMHQ</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Ledbetter/Foster\textsuperscript{68}</td>
<td>SGI-Hocking</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Cooper/Blakeman\textsuperscript{69}</td>
<td>SGI-Fortune</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Kehe\textsuperscript{70}</td>
<td>SGI-WMHQ</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fredrickson, Ledbetter and Foster, Cooper and Blakeman, and Kehe all conclude a three factor solution, rather than the number of factors (gifts) actually purported by the instruments they were analyzing. And, as noted above, Marshall’s study does not rule out a three factor solution. The problem is with the design of the instrument.


\textsuperscript{66}Fredrickson, “The Construction and Preliminary Validation of the Spiritual Gift Inventory, Research Version.”

\textsuperscript{67}Marshall, “The Measurement of Spiritual Gifts Using the Houts Modified Questionnaire.”

\textsuperscript{68}Ledbetter and Foster, “Measuring Spiritual Giftedness.”

\textsuperscript{69}Cooper and Blakeman, “Spiritual Gifts.”

\textsuperscript{70}Kehe, “An Empirical Assessment of the Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire.”
itself. Few, if any, spiritual gift identification instruments have been subjected to the rigors of psychometric evaluation.⁷¹ As Ledbetter and Foster observe,

> Items for these scales are typically generated intuitively, referenced to biblical authority, and the items to be included are then selected on the basis of face validity . . . . Even when a presumed scriptural foundation is used to generate the items for spiritual gifts inventories, the possibility of subjective bias in writing items makes validation critical.⁷²

Apart from such validation, there is no assurance of reliability or validity.

In addition, there has been a question among some theologians about the benefit of using spiritual gift identification instruments at all.⁷³ Several have noted that either their unease with the instrument or their caution that the results of utilizing the instrument should not be considered the final word on spiritual gifts.⁷⁴ Such caution seems warranted. Five separate analyses of four different spiritual gift identification instruments conducted by five separate researchers over a period of eighteen years, all arriving at a similar conclusion: spiritual gift identification instruments are not based on sound psychometrics. It is clear that, whatever the spiritual gift identification instruments analyzed above are measuring, it is not the distinct number of spiritual gifts that the

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⁷¹One possible exception is a recent project by DellaVecchio and Winston who have sought to produce a statistically reliable instrument. Their working paper is available at Dorena DellaVecchio and Bruce Winston, “A Seven-Scale Instrument to Measure the Romans 12 Motivational Gifts and a Proposition that the Romans 12 gift Profiles Might Apply to Person-Job Fit Analysis” (Virginia Beach, VA: Regent University, 2004) [on-line]; accessed 9 September, 2009; available at http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/working/DellaVecchio-Winston%20Romans%20gift%20test%20profiles%20manuscriptdv.pdf.

⁷²Ledbetter and Foster, “Measuring Spiritual Giftedness,” 277.


⁷⁴For example, see Kenneth Hemphill, You Are Gifted: Your Spiritual Gifts and the Kingdom of God (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 192-93; Wagner, Discover Your Spiritual Gifts, 85; Bugbee, Cousins, and Hybels, Network: Participant’s Guide, 46.
developer of each instrument had intended.

The Potential of a Two/Three Factor Solution

One of the results of the empirical analyses of spiritual gift identification instruments has been the consistency with which three factor solutions appear. Fredrickson, Ledbetter and Foster, Cooper and Blakeman, and Kehe all report finding respondents answers to instrument statements “clustering” in three areas: speaking, serving, and governing. Could it be that spiritual gift identification instruments do not reveal individual gifts, but do, in fact, point to broad categories of service? If so, does this cohere with the biblical teaching on spiritual gifts?

First Peter 4:10-11 is an often overlooked passage regarding spiritual gifts because it only contains two items generally thought of as “gifts”:

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God’s supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

A brief examination of this passage reveals that Peter emphasizes many of the Pauline themes seen in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4. Those themes include the source of spiritual gifts being God’s grace, the purpose for spiritual gifts to serve others and build up the body of Christ, and the goal of exercising spiritual gifts being the glory of God. Where Peter differs from Paul is that Peter does not provide a lengthy list of gifts. He includes only two activities: speaking and serving.

There are several good reasons to believe that the Petrine teaching on spiritual gifts has much to offer to those seeking to understand where they should be serving in the

local church. First, 1 Peter 4:10-11 is the only location outside of Pauline texts that *charisma* is used.\(^{76}\) While it is not being argued that *charisma* is a technical term used by Paul for spiritual gifts, it is a word that Paul uses to emphasize the grace God gives in calling us to serve in the Church.\(^{77}\) Peter certainly was acquainted with Paul’s writing (2 Pet 3:15-16) and, his use of *charisma* in this text, was likely due to Paul’s influence.

Second, 1 Peter 4:10-11 is the only location in the New Testament in which spiritual gifts are discussed, albeit briefly, apart from specific, local contextual issues driving the content.\(^{78}\) Indeed, no other text pertaining to spiritual gifts is as “general” in its intended audience as 1 Peter 4:10-11, which is not written to a specific body of believers, but “to those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythinia” (1 Pet 1:1). Thus, if we want to gain some understanding of the most general biblical teaching on spiritual gifts, 1 Peter 4:10-11 is an excellent source. In this text, there are no outside issues that Peter is seeking to address. Unlike Ephesians 4, here there are no heresies he is seeking to combat by emphasizing leadership gifts. Unlike Corinth, there are no misunderstandings about spiritual gifts he is seeking to correct. Here we find teaching about spiritual gifts in their simplest form.

When Peter discusses serving in this text, he does so with two words: speaking and serving. None of the Pauline gift lists include “speaking” as a spiritual gift. There are several gifts that would surely incorporate speaking, such as teaching, words of wisdom, 

\(^{76}\) *Charisma* is also found in a few variants in the LXX. See Berding, *What Are the Spiritual Gifts?*, 283 n. 19.

\(^{77}\) Ibid., 59-63. The Pauline concept and usage of *charisma* is further explored in chap. 5 of this dissertation.

\(^{78}\) This is not to deny that Rome is the “control situation” with regard to Paul’s expanded discussions of spiritual gifts. See chapter 3 for a discussion of Rome’s importance to properly understanding the driving factors in the Pauline gift lists.
words of knowledge, prophecy and the like. But, no list anywhere includes “speaking” as a spiritual gift. Perhaps Peter’s intention is not to list two gifts, per se, but to simply identify two broad categories of giftedness. Such an understanding is not new, but it has lost ground, particularly in the wake of the proliferation of spiritual gift identification instruments. 79

Factor analyses of certain spiritual gift identification instruments reveal a three factor solution including speaking, serving and governing gifts. However, Fredrickson notes that “the second and third factor loadings in each of the three factor solutions seemed to have more to do with serving behaviors.” 80 She goes on to note that regardless of whether a two factor or three factor solution was sought, “factor one remained stable as a large, general factor encompassing speaking, leading and goal setting behaviors.” 81 Thus, if factor one represents “speaking” gifts and factors two and three have to do with “serving” behaviors, it seems that factor analyses would support the idea of two broad categories of gifts, such as those described in 1 Peter 4:10.

In Fredrickson’s analysis a three factor solution accounts for nearly 66 percent of the variance, while a two factor solution accounts for over 50 percent of the variance. 82 Therefore, it would seem reasonable that spiritual gift identification instruments are useful in helping a believer determine whether he or she should engage in “speaking” or “serving” gifts. But, they are not reliable or valid in determining a specific spiritual gift.

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81 Ibid., 84.

82 Ibid.
The Role of Gender and Spiritual Gifts

The factor analyses conducted by Fredrickson, Ledbetter and Foster, Cooper and Blakeman, and Kehe were remarkably consistent in another finding: the role of gender in determining spiritual gifts. All four studies reveal a clear and distinct pattern in which males score differently than females. Yet, the literature accompanying the spiritual gift identification instruments examined in this dissertation gives no indication that such a distinction will occur. Indeed, the focus is on the concept of every believer, male and female having at least one spiritual gift.83

An overview of each of gender differences from each of the analyses is instructive. In fact, the pattern of gifting related to gender is so clear that Fredrickson observed that gender “was the most consistent predictor” of spiritual gifts. Ledbetter and Foster’s analysis indicated that males scored higher on prophecy, teaching, word of knowledge, leadership and discernment, while females scored higher on helps.84 Although Cooper and Blakeman’s analysis lacked a statistically significant number of males participating, males nonetheless scored significantly higher on the gift of administration.85 Kehe noted that her study “supported previous findings of gender differences among spiritual gifts.”86

Such a finding raises questions about the nature of spiritual gifts and their intended purpose. Is it possible that God determines spiritual gifting based on gender? Or,

83For example, see Wagner, Discover Your Spiritual Gifts, 18; Fortune and Fortune, Discover Your God-Given Gifts, 22-29; Larry Gilbert, How to Find Meaning and Fulfillment through Understanding the Spiritual Gifts Within You (Lynchburg, VA: Church Growth Institute, 1992), 24-25.

84Ledbetter and Foster, “Measuring Spiritual Giftedness,” 281.

85Cooper and Blakeman, “Spiritual Gifts,” 43.

more accurately, is it more appropriate to question ability of spiritual gift identification instruments to accurately reveal an individual’s spiritual gift? It is more likely that the gender difference emerge as the two/three factor solutions described above divide gifts generally along traditional gender lines. Thus, according to the psychometric analyses examined above, males tend to score more highly in gifts that cluster around speaking and leadership factors, while females tend to score more highly in gifts that cluster around serving factors.  

An Alternative:  
The Open-Ended Inventory

There are both theological and psychometric challenges to the use of spiritual gift identification instruments. In fact, at least one of the theological challenges creates a psychometric challenge in that there is little agreement on the number of gifts that should be tested. Thus, while there is little agreement among theologians as to the number and identity of spiritual gifts, a set number of gifts must necessarily be selected in order to create a testing instrument. As a result, not only are no two instruments identical in the content of the statements or the gifts tested, but some instruments actually change or add gifts over time. This lack of cohesion creates tremendous psychometric challenges for purposes of validation.

One potential solution to this problem is for future attempts to create spiritual gift identification instruments to take into account psychometric factors during the design process.

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87 It is not within the purview of this dissertation to examine the male / female roles as it relates to serving with God’s kingdom.

88 See chap. 3 of this dissertation for a full discussion of this issue.

89 C. Peter Wagner, telephone interview with author, 5 April 2011.
process. Additionally, those spiritual gift identification instruments already in use may benefit from the authors of such instruments seeking a psychometric analysis of the instrument. Such an effort would demonstrate a desire to provide a tool that is reliable and valid. To her credit, Fredrickson proposes just such an analysis of her own instrument, the SGI-L. 

Even with a focus toward ensuring solid psychometrics underlie spiritual gift identification instruments, the theological problem of creating a closed gift list remains. As noted in chapter 3, the New Testament nowhere provides an exhaustive, closed list of spiritual gifts. Yet, the attempt to create a spiritual gift identification instrument must necessarily create just such an exhaustive, closed list of spiritual gifts. Thus, in order to create an instrument, we must necessarily do what the New Testament does not do.

A better option, and one more consistent with the New Testament teaching on spiritual gifts, would be an open-ended spiritual gift identification instrument. Such an instrument would not need to create an exhaustive, closed list of gifts, but would ask probing questions intended to help believers ascertain their most likely place of joyful service within the church. Hemphill advocates the use of just such an open-ended inventory, which is provided included below:

1. What do you perceive to be the greatest need of the church?

2. If there were no barriers and no ministry slots to fill in your church, what would you most like to do to advance the kingdom of God?

3. What do you do that encourages others?

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90See DellaVecchio and Winston, “A Seven-Scale Instrument to Measure the Romans 12 Motivational Gifts and a Proposition that the Romans 12 gift Profiles Might Apply to Person-Job Fit Analysis,” a recent attempt to apply psychometrics during the development of a spiritual gift identification instrument.


92Hemphill, You Are Gifted, 196-97.
4. In what areas of service do you find satisfaction, fulfillment, and energy?

5. What ministry area generates the greatest sense of enthusiasm and excitement?

6. List the things you have done that have caused people to say, “You do that well,” or, “You ministered to me.”

7. What area(s) of service do you think about when you are talking to your heavenly Father about the needs of the Christian community?

8. Which training classes have created the most interest for you?

9. List areas of service you have attempted, and ask yourself which seemed most comfortable to you?

10. What needs do you see in your own church or community that aren’t being met? Which one causes you the greatest concern?

11. Do you find yourself praying regularly for a particular need? What need?

12. What birth gifts do you have that could allow you to meet these needs?

13. Are you willing to surrender any and all abilities the Spirit reveals to you to the Lord? Are you open to training opportunities to develop your gifts?

14. If you are still struggling to list gifts and abilities that you might use for the kingdom, ask the Holy Spirit to give you the ability necessary to meet the unique need that most burdens you. Find a prayer and accountability partner to pray with you.

Hemphill’s open-ended survey is useful in that it is unique to the individual and to the local church that individual is a part of. The connection of the local church circumstances and ministry needs and the placement by God of individuals who can meet those needs is consistent with the New Testament teaching regarding spiritual gifts. Although such surveys are much more difficult to score or derive norms from, they may be far more effective at actually accomplishing the goal of helping believers find their place of most joyful service in the Kingdom of God. In addition, Hemphill makes the connection between birth gifts (question 12) and places of service within God’s kingdom. Hemphill argues that spiritual gifts may be “birth gifts that have been
transformed by the Spirit” and that they are, at the very least, consistent with their birth gifts.93

Making the connection between birth gifts and spiritual gifts immediately removes one of the biggest barriers to new believers utilizing a spiritual gift identification instrument. Wagner makes this very point in the pages just before respondents take the SGI-WMHQ.

There is an obvious shortcoming to the questionnaire. The answers, as you will see, are based on your personal experience. Consequently, if you are a new believer or a young person, you probably do not have much of a track record in ministry to go on. You will enjoy the experience, but hold the results lightly. If this describes your situation, you will definitely want to take the test one or two more times down the road.94

An open-ended spiritual gift identification instrument that addresses birth gifts removes that barrier. All but the very youngest of believers will have some idea of their gifts, abilities and skill set. And, most will have an idea of what area(s) of ministry burdens them the most. Thus, an open-ended survey that takes into account local church circumstances and ministry needs may be the most effective tool for helping believers to discover their joyful place of service.

Conclusion

Although spiritual gift identification instruments have been in existence since the late 1960s and have grown in popularity over the past forty years, there is significant concern that the instruments do not actually measure what they purport. The fact that spiritual gift identification instruments look very similar to other psychometric instruments does not mean that they have faced the kind of scrutiny other such instruments have experienced. Such an observation is important because, spiritual gift

93Ibid., 185. The connection between birth gifts and spiritual gifts will be explored in greater detail in chap. 5 of this dissertation.

94Wagner, Discover Your Spiritual Gifts, 85.
identification instruments purport to reveal an individual’s spiritual gift, which is considered important for faithful service in the church.\textsuperscript{95}

This chapter began by arguing that empirical analysis of spiritual gift identification instruments is essential for insuring the instruments are reliable and valid. Factor analysis is the primary means of determining the validity and reliability of psychometric instruments like those intended to measure spiritual giftedness. Yet, to date, only one spiritual gift identification instrument was designed utilizing the kind of rigorous testing required to demonstrate sound psychometric properties, and that instrument has not gained much widespread use.\textsuperscript{96} It is essential that those developing spiritual gift identification instruments take seriously the psychometrics that undergird such instruments. On that note, it is worth recalling Ledbetter and Foster’s admonition,

Those not working in the field of test construction may not be aware of the psychometric issues involved in test construction. Psychological scales like the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, or the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis, may appear to the authors of spiritual gift inventories to be a simply set of subjectively derived questions, but in fact the questions on the scales have been carefully selected and have survived numerous checks of reliability and validity similar to those in this study.\textsuperscript{97}

An overview of four empirical analyses of four separate spiritual gift identification instruments revealed similar results. The results of those analyses are instructive to those seeking to help others discover their spiritual giftedness. Consistently, findings indicated that spiritual gift identification instruments are not useful in identifying single gifts. Ledbetter and Foster observe, “Our analysis, like that of Frederickson (1985),

\textsuperscript{95}C. Peter Wagner, \textit{Leading Your Church to Grow} (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1984), 131.

\textsuperscript{96}See DellaVecchio and Winston, “A Seven-Scale Instrument to Measure the Romans 12 Motivational Gifts and a Proposition that the Romans 12 Gift Profiles Might Apply to Person-Job Fit Analysis.”

\textsuperscript{97}Ledbetter and Foster, “Measuring Spiritual Giftedness,” 282.
suggests that, thus far, spiritual gift inventories are not capable of distinguishing large
to small numbers of distinct spiritual gifts.”98 The factor analyses conducted demonstrated that
spiritual gift identification instruments tend to reveal two to three factors that underlie the
larger number of gifts actually being tested.

In fact, the empirical research above has shown that gifts generally fall into
two main categories of speaking and serving. Kehe notes that this finding may parallel
what is described in 1 Peter 4:10-11.99 It is argued above that Peter is, in fact, describing
two broad categories in which spiritual gifts may be organized. Such an understanding
not only coheres with the biblical text, but with the results of the empirical research
examined in this chapter. Consequently, spiritual gift identification instruments may be
useful in helping people understand the primary area of ministry for which they seem to
be most inclined or equipped.

The most prudent way forward for spiritual gift identification may be to utilize
open-ended surveys rather than spiritual gift identification instruments that use closed gift
sets. Further, such an approach would free believers from the temptation of answering
questions the way they think they should and answer more honestly and freely.
Psychometricians understand the challenge of social desirability, or “faking.”100 “Faking”
refers to the tendency to answer questions in keeping with expectations of self or others
rather than as accurately as possible.101 In addition, the use of an open-ended survey also

98Ibid., 280.
Questionnaire,” 97.
100Thomas-Cottingham, Psychology Made Simple, 138.
101The SGI-WMHQ, the SGI-Gilbert, the Network spiritual gift materials, and
the SGI-Fortune all include stern warnings to answer the questions as truthfully and
honestly as possible. An excursion on “The Problem of Self-Assessment” is included in
chap. 3 of this dissertation.
provides new believers and younger believers the opportunity to investigate where they might serve most effectively.

It is clear that the use of spiritual gift identification instruments is not a reliable and valid method of discovering one’s place of joyful service within the Kingdom of God. Chapter 5 will examine a different approach to spiritual gift identification: an ecclesiocentric model. In the ecclesiocentric model, spiritual gift identification is rooted in the life of the church. The role of the church and church leadership will be examined; as such an approach is more intensive than the conventional method of paper and pencil instruments, or their online versions. In addition, key texts concerning spiritual gifts will be examined in light of the ecclesiocentric model, showing that spiritual gifts are really ministries in and for the church.
CHAPTER 5
AN ECCLESIOCENTRIC MODEL OF SPIRITUAL GIFT IDENTIFICATION

Introduction

Theology is not simply a collection of isolated disciplines that are self-contained. Theological disciplines do not exist in isolation, but they are connected to other disciplines. This fact is particularly important because the strength of a theological system is often dependent upon expressing how one area of theology informs and supports another. If the findings of several theological disciplines are found to be contradictory with each other, the strength of the entire system is called into question. Further, and more pertinent to the focus of this chapter, if various theological disciplines are not understood in proper relationship to related theological disciplines, there is the danger that significant issues will be overlooked by both disciplines.¹

It is this danger that has proven to be all too real when one examines the literature of spiritual gift identification. Most spiritual gift discussions revolve around soteriology (gifts are granted at salvation) and pneumatology (gifts are granted by the Holy Spirit).² However, largely missing from the discussion is ecclesiology (the role of

¹Stuart Murray makes just such a point with regard to the issue of church planting, which he suggests is located at the “intersection” of ecclesiology and missiology in Stuart Murray, Church Planting (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001), 53.

the church in gift identification), Christology (gifts are given by Christ and for Christ), and even Theology Proper (God is the sovereign Giver of gifts, including birth gifts). Using Murray’s terminology, the issue of spiritual gifts is found at the intersection of Theology Proper, Christology, Pneumatology, Soteriology, and Ecclesiology. Such an understanding is the basis for the ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification that follows in this chapter.

It is clear from the preceding chapters that the conventional approach to spiritual gift identification has serious shortcomings. While spiritual gift identification instruments were developed with the best of intentions—to aid people in finding their most useful and joyful place of service within the church—they are, regrettably, ill equipped to accomplish that goal. Not only are there concerns about the biblical and theological bias that inevitably enters into the design of the instruments, but there are serious questions concerning the psychometric properties underlying them. That is not to say, however, that there is no way to assist individuals in discovering their place of joyful service within the Kingdom of God.

This chapter will present an alternative approach to spiritual gift identification in which spiritual gift discovery and service is rooted in the life of the church. Initially, a quick review of the inherent tendency of spiritual gift identification instruments to place the focus on the individual will be undertaken. Following that, the biblical basis for an ecclesiocentric model for spiritual gift identification will be presented. A key component of that model will be addressed next, namely, that spiritual gifts are best defined as ministries in and for the church. Finally, the role of the church and church leadership in particular to spiritual gift discovery will be examined, as part of the five-part strategy of


3Chapter 3 addresses the biblical and theological bias inherent in spiritual gift identification instruments and chapter 4 addresses several empirical analyses that question the validity and reliability of spiritual gift identification instruments.
an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification.

**The Emphasis on the Individual in Spiritual Gift Identification Instruments**

This dissertation examined the development of four spiritual gift identification instruments in Chapter 2. Each of these instruments has played a significant role in the proliferation of spiritual gift identification instruments that the Christian community now experiences. The SGI-McMinn was the first spiritual gift identification instrument developed and put into use. The SGI-L was the first spiritual gift identification instrument to utilize a Likert scale in a move away from the forced answer, ipsative format of the SGI-McMinn. Largely due to Wagner’s influence, the SGI-WMHQ has become one of the most popular spiritual gift identification instruments available today. Since its first publication in 1979, it has gone through seven revisions. The SGI-Gilbert, too, is a tremendously popular spiritual gift identification instrument, with over 4.7 million people having used either the paper-based instrument or the online instrument. Clearly there is a desire on the part of individuals to understand and discover their spiritual gift.

One recognizes in the teaching of the CGM and proponents of spiritual gift discovery the interrelatedness of spiritual gifts possessed by individuals and the effect of the exercise of those gifts in the corporate body of Christ. References to the church in such teaching are often made in order to describe spiritual gifts in terms of their function

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4. C. Peter Wagner, telephone interview with author, 5 April 2011.

5. Larry Gilbert, telephone interview with author, 9 March 2011.

6. The phrase “proponents of spiritual gift discovery” will be utilized in this dissertation to describe those involved with the development and proliferation of spiritual gift identification instruments. The phrase will often be linked with CGM to describe the significant role that the CGM has played in the propagation of literature related to the concept of spiritual gifts, the importance of spiritual gifts to the life of the church and spiritual gift discovery. See Thom Rainer, *The Book of Church Growth* (Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 113-18; Elmer Towns, John Vaughn, and David Seifert, *The Complete Book of Church Growth* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1990), 116-17.
within the body.\textsuperscript{7} However, since the onset of spiritual gift identification instruments, very little attention is given to the role of the church in spiritual gift identification. Such an approach tends to deemphasize the corporate aspects of spiritual gifts and overemphasize the individual exercising the spiritual gifts. Rather than understand the faithful, obedient exercise of spiritual gifts as central to the life and existence of the church, the church can begin to be viewed as little more than a collective in which specially gifted individuals work together for a common goal.

A demonstration of this shift of focus from the New Testament emphasis on the corporate body to an emphasis upon the individual is the rarity with which the CGM and proponents of spiritual gift discovery address the relationship of spiritual gifts to ecclesiology in the discovery process.\textsuperscript{8} Yet it is difficult to imagine properly understanding the role of spiritual gifts apart from their relationship to ecclesiology—the doctrine of the Church.\textsuperscript{9} To do so inevitably diminishes the role of spiritual gifts as demonstrations of the Holy Spirit empowering the body of Christ in the advance of God’s kingdom and exalts the role of specially gifted individuals strengthening the church.

This shift, while subtle, demonstrates a move from understanding spiritual gifts to be the Spirit-given enabling of individuals in response to the grace of God to that of

\textsuperscript{7}Wagner is illustrative of this type of thinking in C. Peter Wagner, \textit{Your Church Can Grow: Seven Vital Signs of a Healthy Church} (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1984), 73, where he writes, “Every single believer has been fitted into the body of Christ according to God’s master plan, and has been given one or more spiritual gifts to fulfill that function properly.”

\textsuperscript{8}A Google search of “spiritual gift test” will result in over one million hits. A significant number of those hits are opportunities to participate in an online spiritual gift identification instrument, typically completely disconnected from any local church. While such an approach is convenient, it reflects a disconnect from the utilization of spiritual gifts and the life of the local church.

abilities (skills) possessed by individuals. Thus, an unhealthy individualism encroaches upon the New Testament’s corporate purpose for spiritual gifts. It was just this sort of radical individualism that Paul addresses with the church at Corinth concerning their misuse of spiritual gifts. Spiritual gift discovery must not be an activity that is focused on the individual’s abilities, per se, but rather the purpose for which God has placed them in the particular local church to which they belong.

**The Biblical Basis for an Ecclesiocentric Model**

It is the Holy Spirit who empowers the church and endows the church with spiritual gifts. The CGM and proponents of spiritual gift discovery tend to emphasize the idea that spiritual gifts are special attributes or Spirit-endowed abilities. But, is this accurate? Should Paul’s use of the terms pneumatika and charismata be understood as describing special abilities? Or, does Paul have a different concept in mind, perhaps

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10 Just as detrimental, however, is to so emphasize ecclesiology that one neglects the role of spiritual gifts altogether. An example of this may be found in Mark Dever, *The Deliberate Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005) in which Dever, while emphasizing the corporate aspects of the church throughout, makes no reference at all to the work of the Holy Spirit or to the gifts of the Spirit in the life of the church.


12 See Acts 1:8; Acts 2:14-21, 38-39; Rom 15:18-19; 1 Cor 12:7-11; and Phil 3:3.


14 *Pneumatika* and *charismata* figure most prominently in the defining of the term “spiritual gift” as they are central to Paul’s discussion in 1 Cor 12-14. It is recognized that there are other terms translated as “gifts” or “spiritual gifts” in the New Testament, most notably domata in Eph 4:11. For a more complete discussion of the terms used for spiritual gifts, see Klaas Runia, “The ‘Gifts of the Spirit,’” *The Reformed Theological Review* 29 (1970): 82.
Spirit-given ministries carried out within the church? In order to establish a solid biblical basis for an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification, it will be necessary to examine key biblical texts concerning spiritual gifts. Specifically, the purpose here is to work toward a New Testament understanding of spiritual gifts and to determine whether Paul has abilities, ministries, or some other concept in view when he uses *charismata* and *pneumatika*.

**Paul’s Use of Charismata**

In 1 Corinthians 12-14, Paul uses the words *pneumatika* and *charismata*, which are both translated as “spiritual gifts.” The word, *pneumatika*, however, is not crucial to this discussion of spiritual gifts, as it was not the word that Paul regularly utilized when talking about spiritual gifts. Indeed, there is significant question as to whether the word should even be translated as “spiritual gifts,” as Berding argues:

> The way Paul chooses to use *pneumatika* suggests that is not a word he himself wants to use in this context at all; rather it is a word the Corinthians have been fond of using...It looks as if Paul may have begun his discussion with the Corinthians’ preferred term and then ignored it until he resumed his topic in chapter 14, at which point he used the word just once more to signal that he was picking up the subject again...*Pneumatika* was quite likely the Corinthians’ favorite word to describe in particular the miraculous activities that had so captivated their interest, particularly the types of activities listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. Paul begins answering their question using their own favorite word and then moves the discussion in the direction he wants to take it.

Hemphill, likewise, agrees that the use of *pneumatika* is not related to spiritual gifts, per se, but a description of the individuals at Corinth who believed that the possession of

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16Throughout this section, the words *charismata*, *charisma*, and *charm* should all be understood as referring to the concept of spiritual gifts. The three words are used here interchangeably due to the usage by those authors cited.

certain spiritual gifts made them “spiritual persons.” It is Paul’s decision to replace the Corinthians’ preferred word with charismata that is a clue to his understanding of spiritual gifts. Again, Hemphill notes, “the change of Greek words to discuss gifts is not obvious in most English translations, but it has tremendous significance. It provides the platform for introducing the “grace corrective.” Pneumatika, therefore, is not central to the biblical basis of an ecclesiocentric model for spiritual gift identification.

It is, however, particularly important to determine what is meant by Paul’s use of charismata, because charismata is his preferred term when discussing what are commonly referred to as “spiritual gifts.” Charismata is the most frequently used word in the New Testament for spiritual gifts. In fact, Max Turner points out that “there are no known textually secure pre-Pauline uses of the word charisma, and of the 17 New Testament occurrences all but one (1 Pet 4:10) are in the Pauline’s (though it is unlikely he coined it, as he uses it without explaining it to his readers).” That is not to say, however, that Paul’s usage of the term is without debate.

Technical versus non-technical use of charismata. Scholars today are divided over whether Paul uses the term charismata in a special, technical sense in the gift-list passages. Determining whether Paul’s use is technical or non-technical will aid us in further determining the specific exercise of the gift(s) that Paul has in mind. In fact,


19Ibid., 44.


where one comes down on the issue of the technical / non-technical use of charismata will largely determine the matter of whether Paul has abilities, ministries, or some other concept in view when he uses the term. Perhaps the most prominent proponent of the technical use of charismata is James D. G. Dunn. Dunn’s desire is to guard the Pauline goal of a community of faith in which every member has an active role. In so doing, Dunn regards charisma as “any function, word, or action which contributes to the corporate life of believers in any place.” In so defining charisma(ta), Dunn reduces the term to refer to the actual act or event that is in view. Thus, for Dunn, there is no sense in which a Christian “has” or “possesses” a spiritual gift, only the experience of spontaneous expressions of grace by the Spirit. Dunn states that “charisma means, by definition, manifestation, embodiment of grace (charis).”

For Dunn, this expression of grace does not happen apart from the body of Christ. In fact, it may be that these gifts are not expressed apart from the body of Christ, gathered. He contends, “we can even say that the charismata are only complete when they function corporately.” In this way of thinking, the manifestation, or demonstration of the Spirit through an individual, at that moment, within and for the benefit of the body as a whole is what Paul means by charismata. Dunn continues:

For Paul, the concept of the charisma and of the Christian as charismatic is wholly bound up with the concept of the body (Rom 12; 1 Cor 12). Charisma he [Paul]

23 Dunn is not alone in his understanding of charismata in this technical sense. For additional perspectives from theologians embracing the technical use of charismata, see Siegfried Schatzmann, A Pauline Theology of Charismata (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), and Ernst Kasemann, Essays on New Testament Themes (London: SCM Press, 1964).


25 Ibid.

defines as a function of an organ of the body (Rom 12:4)—to each organ its own function, its own charism . . . the organ exercises its function in harmony with the functions of the other organs. And in this the entire community has a responsibility . . . In short, the experience of the Spirit as a shared experience, that shared experience as the basis and fundamental dynamic of Christian community, and the character of Christian community as one of mutual dependence on the grace of the Spirit—these are all essential features of what Paul in particular has to say on our subject.  

Although Dunn’s desire to emphasize the corporate body of Christ and the right use of gifts within that body are appreciated, it is not necessary to posit such a narrow, technical use of the term charismata in order to emphasize the corporate purpose for spiritual gifts. After all, Paul could have simply pointed out that no one “has” a spiritual gift, strictly speaking, but is simply used by the Holy Spirit on an occasional basis to benefit the body of Christ. Indeed, Hemphill, who advocates a non-technical use of the term charisma(ta), effectively puts down the argument of those like Dunn who would seek a technical use of charismata when he writes, “if Paul thought of the charismata primarily as Spirit-given events or acts, he could have curtailed much of the Corinthian boasting by pointing out that no one can in fact possess or have such gifts. In

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27 Ibid., 346-48.

28 Dunn is concerned that all but a technical use of charismata inevitably leads to a view of ministry that diminishes the participation of the members of the body. In reflecting on the advanced ecclesiology of the Pastorals, he writes, “Even if the Pastorals were written by Paul and reflect his changed attitude as death drew near, are we to conclude that he would have wished to withdraw his vision of the body of Christ as a charismatic community in his earlier letters? . . . That is surely too bold a conclusion to draw from the more amenable ecclesiology of the Pastorals. But the alternative is to recognize as also canonical a broader concept of ministry than that which begins to take shape in the Pastorals, to recognize as also normative a different theology of ministry from that defined in terms of ordination” (Dunn, “Ministry and the Ministry,” 306-07). Unfortunately, Dunn has created a false distinction between the emphasis on the whole body found in 1 Cor 12 and Rom 12 and the more complete ecclesiology found in the Pastorals. The driving force behind this distinction is Dunn’s understanding of charismata as spontaneous expressions of the Spirit in the body rather than ministries given to individuals within the body. If Dunn’s definition of charismata were more consistent with Paul’s use of the term, his difficulty with the Pastorals would resolve itself.
fact he [Paul] freely speaks of people having certain gifts, and gives instructions for the
use of the gift one has.”

Turner argues that, in order to fully understand what Paul means by *charisma*,
one must examine how the word was/is formed, how *charisma* relates to other words
meaning ‘gift,’ and the way in which Paul uses the term. Turner contends that
charismata is not used in a special or technical sense, and, in fact, is not related to *charis*
(grace) at all, but to *charizomai* (to give graciously). While Turner’s line of
argumentation is not embraced in this dissertation, it is his conclusion that is significant:
“In sum, the word *charisma* in Paul probably means no more than simply “(gracious)
gift.” That is, *charisma* is used by Paul in a non-technical way to refer to any gift of
God wrought by his grace.

Carson embraces a non-technical use of *charismata*, though not for the same
reasons as Turner. While Turner sees *charismata* as related to *charizomai*, Carson
understands *charisma(ta)* to be related to *charis* (grace) and best understood as a “grace
gift.” Thus, the emphasis is not only upon the gift as something given, but upon the
very nature of the gift itself as a result of grace. Paul uses the term *charismata* to point to

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29Kenneth S. Hemphill, “The Pauline Concept of Charisma: A Situational and
Developmental Approach” (Ph.D. diss., Cambridge Univ., 1976), 78 n. 92.


31Ibid., 264.

32Ibid., 266.

33There are at least six occasions when *charisma(ta)* is used to describe
something other than “special ability”: Rom 1:11, Rom 11:29, 2 Cor 1:11, Rom 5:15-16
(word used twice), and Rom 6:23. And, there are four times when it is highly unlikely the
word means “special ability”: 1 Tim 4:14, 2 Tim 1:6, 1 Cor 7:7, and Rom 12:6. For a full
explanation of each of these occurrences, see Berding, *What Are the Spiritual Gifts?*, 56-
64.

34Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 19.
spiritual gifts as concrete expressions of the grace of God in the life of the believer.\textsuperscript{35} The expressions of grace described by \textit{charismata} are not limited simply to what we call “spiritual gifts,” but also are used to describe a number of other “gifts” including, but not limited to,

the “spiritual gift” he [Paul] wishes to impart to the Romans when he sees them, in the context of the mutual encouragement of faith (Rom. 1:11); to the “gift” that generates life over against the trespass of Adam that generated death (Rom. 5:15-16, where the word is also in parallel with \textit{dorema} [gift]); to the gift of God, eternal life in Christ Jesus, that alone can offset the wages of sin, which is death (Rom 6:23); to the election of Israel, since God’s “gifts” and call are irrevocable (Rom. 11:29)…to the “gracious favor” granted to Paul in response to the prayers of many – presumably deliverance from an unspecified “deadly peril”…the “gift” that was given him [Timothy] through a prophetic message when the elders laid their hands on him.\textsuperscript{36}

Berding, who has written extensively on Paul’s use of \textit{charismata}, maintains a similar position, suggesting that “Paul may have been drawn to use this word because of its formal similarities to the word \textit{charis}, a word that is often – but not always – translated using the English word ‘grace.’”\textsuperscript{37} This, too, would indicate a non-technical use of \textit{charismata} and would militate against those who would seek to define the word in a strict, technical sense. Unfortunately, the word is typically translated in just such a technical way in many bible translations, further muddying the water as to Paul’s intended meaning. Berding advocates an understanding of \textit{charisma} as emphasizing a practical, tangible outworking of the grace of God and suggests that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{35}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{36}Ibid., 19-20.
\item \textsuperscript{37}Berding, \textit{What Are the Spiritual Gifts?}, 63. Berding addresses the uses of \textit{charisma} both in the classic spiritual gift passages of 1 Cor 12, Rom 12, and Eph 4, as well as the other times the word appears in the New Testament. According to Berding, of the 16 times \textit{charisma} is used by Paul in the New Testament, at least 10 have nothing to do with “ability.” See Berding, “Confusing Word and Concept in ‘Spiritual Gifts’: Have we Forgotten James Barr’s Exhortations?” and idem, \textit{What Are the Spiritual Gifts?}, 56-70 for his full discussion of \textit{charisma}.
\end{itemize}
a Bible translator should begin with the understanding that the word *charisma* most often indicates observable ways that God shows his grace, and then look for a word or expressions in the particular passage being translated that communicates the nature of that particular grace in action.\textsuperscript{38}

In light of the multiple ways that Paul uses the term *charismata*, there does not seem to be any linguistic basis for concluding his usage in the gift list passages is unique and, therefore, technical. Carson explains,

> it is very clear that the term is not a technical one for Paul that refers only to a select set of supranormal gifts like healing and tongues. Not only can it embrace gifts like encouraging and generous giving, but it can be used repeatedly for the gift of salvation itself – not to mention the gift of celibacy and the gift of marriage…It is reductionistic to think the word refers only to the fundamental gift of salvation, or only to specific acts or events immediately imparted by the Spirit, but having no underlay in the individual’s natural gifts.\textsuperscript{39}

Although there is some linguistic debate on the matter, the evidence favors a non-technical understanding of *charismata* as found in the gift list passages. Paul’s use of the term is meant to point to the source of the gifts and their humble reception by believers. Further, Paul’s emphasis in using the term is based on his desire for these factors – the source and reception of the gifts – to foster a sense of unity and interdependence in the body of Christ. Thus, far from exalting one particular gift or type of gift, Paul’s emphasis is upon their common reception as gifts from the Spirit for the purpose of building up the body of Christ.

In light of the fact that *charisma* is used to refer to gifts of the Spirit as a result of grace, the question becomes what is the nature of those gifts? Does *charismata* refer to special abilities or ministries within the body or something different altogether?

**Charismata defined as abilities or ministries.** The most common understanding of the meaning of *charismata* when applied to spiritual gifts is that of

\textsuperscript{38}Berding, *What Are the Spiritual Gifts?*, 63.

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid., 20-21.
Spirit-given abilities. Wagner defines spiritual gifts as “a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ, according to God’s grace, for use within the context of the Body.” It is interesting to note, however, that through the remainder of his work on spiritual gifts, Wagner substitutes the word “ability” for “attribute” when defining specific spiritual gifts. The understanding of spiritual gifts as “abilities” has become the predominate view among writers in (and out of) the CGM. Further, this definition has contributed to the development of spiritual gift inventories and other tools ostensibly designed to help individuals discover their spiritual gifts. Despite its popular acceptance, this particular definition of charismata as special abilities needs scrutiny to determine if it can fit within the framework of Paul’s usage of the term.

There are two factors that prove confusing when defining spiritual gifts in terms of abilities. The first is the overlap (and confusion) in the way in which the idea of giftedness is used with respect to natural abilities. Such overlap in the terminology is reflected when individuals with natural abilities are referred to as “gifted,” illustrating a close relationship between the terms gifts and abilities in non-spiritual matters. The result is that when one hears “spiritual gifts” we think in terms of “spiritual abilities.” The second challenge is the tendency to see a close relationship between natural abilities and

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41 Wagner, Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow, 34.

spiritual gifts. Edmund Clowney, for example, comments that “in advancing the work of the Spirit, we cannot sharply separate natural gifts from spiritual gifts.”\(^{43}\) However, that does not mean that, simply because a person is a good public school teacher he or she has the spiritual “gift” of teaching. Wagner recognizes that God may take a natural talent and transform it when that person becomes a follower of Christ but warns against confusing natural talents with spiritual gifts.\(^{44}\)

Berding argues that the confusion of gift and ability is derived from misunderstanding the concept that lays behind the term *charismata* and that a close alignment of gift and ability is not at all what Paul intended.\(^{45}\) A sort of middle ground is taken by Hemphill who notes that it is not likely that the more miraculous gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 are related to any “permanent natural abilities possessed before one becomes a Christian,” he leaves open the possibility that other gifts are related to natural abilities.\(^{46}\) Perhaps the matter will become clearer if the use of the term ability is compared that with Paul’s description of how *charismata* function.

Ability has been defined as the quality or state of being able to do a particular thing. The word is related to able, which is defined as having sufficient power, skill, or resources to accomplish an object. An indication of what is usually meant by the use of the word “ability” or “able” in our culture is its close association with the word “skill.” The danger in such an association is aptly described by Berding, who writes, “when we mistakenly equate the entity we call ‘spiritual gifts’ with special abilities, we end up reading *special* skills into a place where *special* ministries (supported by *general*)

\(^{43}\)Clowney, *The Church*, 66.

\(^{44}\)Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*, 81-83.

\(^{45}\)Berding, “Confusing Word and Concept in Spiritual Gifts,” 38.

empowerment) rather than special abilities are in view.”  

If we understand *charismata* as describing abilities, our use of that term becomes a detrimental factor. For, we typically utilize the word in emphasizing an individual’s capacity to do a particular thing; which, is the very thing Paul is seeking to dissuade the Corinthians (not to mention the Romans and the Ephesians) from doing. Paul’s desire is to de-emphasize an individual’s opportunity for boasting by reminding him or her that the *charismata* are not, in fact, directly traceable to the individual but to the sovereign Spirit who determines the distribution of gifts.

Ronald Y. K. Fung has made several significant contributions to understanding the relationship of spiritual gifts and abilities by arguing persuasively for an understanding of gift and function that is complementary. In his understanding, “gifts” are abilities possessed by individuals as a result of the manifestation of God’s grace to them. “Function” refers to the role that is carried out by a gifted person without formal recognition by the body. Fung cites the Romans 12 passage as a clear example of the interrelatedness of gift and function; the passage is included here for the sake of convenience:

> Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: If prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Note in verse 7, Paul’s advice to the church at Rome concerning the gift of teaching: “if it is teaching (spiritual gift), let him teach (function).” Notice that the spiritual gift of

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teaching is related to a real life function: to teach. The one who possesses the gift should function in that gift.

Does this addition of the term “function” aid us in understanding charismata? It does to some degree. However, Fung’s understanding is dependent upon “gift” and “function” being complementary and brings us no further in resolving what is actually meant by charismata. For, it does not resolve the matter as to whether an individual who is not engaged in a ministry function, may still, in fact, possess the ability inherent in their spiritual gift.

**Biblical Basis Summary**

It seems apparent from the above discussion that there are several factors involved in seeking a definition of spiritual gifts that takes into account all five doctrinal areas that are foundational to an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification. First, spiritual gifts are clearly demonstrations of the Spirit’s power in the life of the church. In that regard, Gilbert observes “a spiritual gift is the primary channel by which the Holy Spirit can minister through the believer.” These are not momentary demonstrations of power, contra Dunn, but serve as an “external manifestation of the triumph and enthronement of Christ.”

Second, it appears that Paul uses the term charismata to refer to gifts of grace that are bestowed upon individuals. These gifts widely vary, so it is not beyond reason to consider that the unifying factor in Paul’s usage of charismata is his concern to emphasize the Giver of the gift rather than the nature of the gift itself. Indeed, based on

49 Gilbert, *How to Find Meaning and Fulfillment*, 34.

the evidence above, it is best to understand Paul’s use of *charismata* to refer to ministry assignments or callings rather than abilities or “gifts.”  

Third, Paul’s emphasis to the church at Corinth of unity and of valuing every member of the church in the exercise of spiritual gifts would seem to imply that *charismata* includes the concept of abilities possessed by individuals. After all, why would Paul warn the Corinthian believers against feelings of superiority (and, inferiority, for that matter) if there was not some sense in which the individuals “possessed” spiritual gifts? It is obvious that Paul is calling on the Corinthian believers to modify their attitudes in the exercise of the *charismata* they have received. Berding argues that Paul incorporated the “items in this list [1 Cor 12:7-11]—which the Corinthians viewed as abilities – into the larger category of ministry roles and functions.” If an understanding of *charismata* as identifying special abilities is adopted, doing so isolates Paul’s use of the word there from everywhere else he uses it. Berding notes that “Paul doesn’t make a Christian’s abilities the focus of his discussion anywhere else” in the New Testament. Once again, the rationale for understanding *charismata* as referring to ministry assignments rather than gifts or abilities should be clear.

Fourth, it is not detrimental to the definition of *charismata* to recognize that some of these ministry assignments may be related to natural abilities. That is not to suggest they are little simply sanctified natural talents. Rather, it is recognizing that the Spirit may choose to utilize the abilities, skills, and experiences that God, in his

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51 The preference of “ministry assignment” over “gift” in the ecclesiocentric model will be explored in the next section of this chapter.


54 Ibid., 122.
sovereignty, placed within an individual from birth in the advance of his Kingdom. It is
the use of those abilities, skills, and experiences by the Spirit for the benefit of the body
of Christ that distinguishes them from natural talents alone.

The evidence indicates that the CGM and proponents of spiritual gift discovery
generally understand charismata to refer to abilities imparted by the Spirit and possessed
by individuals. And, that these abilities may or may not be related to natural talents. On
these two matters, the CGM and proponents of spiritual gift identification fail to
recognize the non-technical use of the word charismata by Paul, particularly in the gift
list passages. Further, poorly defining charismata leads to significant debate over the
relationship between spiritual gifts and birth gifts.

The CGM and proponents of spiritual gift discovery tend to emphasize the use
of spiritual gifts in such a way as to encourage every member of the church to be engaged
in ministry. In fact, the CGM and proponents of spiritual gift discovery have been at the
forefront of encouraging the use of spiritual gifts in ministry. Wagner attributes this
emphasist on the ministry of all believers to a progression from Luther’s emphasis on the
priesthood of all believers. Rick Warren sums up this philosophy well:

Every believer isn’t a pastor, but every believer is called into ministry. God
calls all believers to minister to the world and the church. Service in the body isn’t
optional for Christians . . . . At Saddleback, we teach that every Christian is created
for ministry (see Eph. 2:10), saved for ministry (see 2 Tim. 1:9), called into ministry
(see 1 Peter 2:9-10), gifted for ministry (see 1 Peter 4:10), authorized for ministry
(see Matt. 28:18-20), commanded to minister (see Matt. 20:26-28), to be prepared
for ministry (see Eph. 4:11-12), needed for ministry (see 1 Cor 12:27), accountable
for ministry, and will be rewarded according to his or her ministry (see Col. 3:23-
24) (italics his).

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55 Rainer, The Book of Church Growth, 113.

56 Wagner, Discover Your Spiritual Gifts, 11.

57 Rick Warren, The Purpose Driven Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 368.
The understanding of the CGM and proponents of spiritual gift discovery on “every member ministry” seems to reflect Paul’s concerns as he wrote to the church at Corinth. Thus, on this matter, the CGM and proponents of spiritual gift discovery appear to be consistent with the biblical teaching.

**Gifts as Ministries in and for the Church**

Foundational to an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification is the understanding that the conventional view of defining spiritual gifts as “special abilities divinely granted at conversion” is flawed. Based on the biblical analysis above, an ecclesiocentric model for spiritual gift identification understands the items listed in the traditional “gift list” passages to be descriptions of ministry assignments. These lists of ministry assignments differ from one another because they are unique to each church to which Paul is writing.

The purpose of identifying the items in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4 as “ministry assignments” is not semantics, but a genuine recognition of God’s placement of individuals within the local church for ministry purposes. This shift in terminology is not only consistent with the biblical text, but also combats the radical individualism that is inherent in the conventional “abilities” terminology. In an ecclesiocentric model, the emphasis is no longer on gifted individuals, per se, but upon willing servants placed in the body by God. As a result, individuals are less concerned with discovering “their gifts” and more concerned with getting involved in service. Such

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58 This is a definition that approximates those found in the works in n. 41 above.

59 This terminology is borrowed from Berding who prefers to use the term “ministries” as opposed to “abilities.” See Berding, “Confusing Word and Concept in Spiritual Gifts,” 39. idem, *What Are the Spiritual Gifts?*, 68.

60 For a brief description of the local circumstantial factors affecting the content of Paul’s lists in 1 Cor 12, Rom 12, and Eph 4, see Hemphill, *You Are Gifted*, 171-75.
a view is affirmed by Berding when he notes, “Paul doesn’t encourage his readers to try to discover their special spiritual abilities; rather, he challenges and encourages them to strengthen the community of faith in whatever roles of ministry that God has placed them.”

In an ecclesiocentric model then, the question is not “what is your spiritual gift?” but “what is your ministry?” Again, this is far more than semantics. Such terminology is consistent with an understanding of every member being a minister. As MacArthur observes, “If the Body is to be healthy and mature, and thus have a single dynamic testimony to the world, every believer must actively and intensely involve himself in the function God has given him.”

One advantage of the conventional view of spiritual gifts is that the “gift lists” of 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4 serve as a closed set of items from which an individual seeks to determine his or her own specific spiritual gift. However, it has been sufficiently demonstrated that Paul nowhere provides an exhaustive, closed list of gifts. If the traditional “gift lists” of 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4 are not intended to be an exhaustive catalog of gifts, then by what criteria can a “ministry assignment” be determined?

There is, no doubt, a subjective criterion for a ministry assignment; that is, a clear sense of call from God to a particular ministry. An ecclesiocentric model for spiritual gift identification recognizes it is vital to have that internal, subjective call validated by those in local church authority (Acts 6:6, 13:1-3; 1 Tim 4:14); a subject

61 Berding, What Are the Spiritual Gifts?, 77.


63 For an extended discussion of Paul’s use of lists, see chap. 3 in this dissertation. See also, Berding, What Are the Spiritual Gifts?, 78-84.
addressed in the next section. In an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification, a subjective sense of call to a particular ministry assignment is validated, in part, by the objective criteria for a ministry assignment. There are at least two objective criteria for determining a ministry assignment in an ecclesiocentric model: ministry assignments are for the benefit of the body and ministry assignments extend the church’s witness.⁶⁴

**Ministry Assignments Are for the Benefit of the Body**

Much of the literature on spiritual gift discovery acknowledges that “spiritual gifts” are given for the benefit of the body of Christ.⁶⁵ The context of the traditionally understood “gift list” passages emphasizes the good of the body as Paul’s primary concern. Berding points out that, in the context of discussing “spiritual gifts,” Paul uses terminology and a metaphor that indicates his primary concern is the building up of the body.⁶⁶ Note the following emphasis on ministry for the benefit of “one another” in the context of the traditional gift list passages:

> So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. (Rom 12:5, italics mine)

> Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord . . . . Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. (Rom 12: 10-11, 13, italics mine)

> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Cor 12:7, italics mine)

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⁶⁴Donald Bridges and David Phypers, *Spiritual Gifts and the Church* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1973), 18-19.


⁶⁶Berding, *What Are the Spiritual Gifts?*, 71-73.
But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. (1 Cor 12:24-25, italics mine)

On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. (1 Cor 14:3, italics mine)

So that the church may be built up. (1 Cor 14:5c, italics mine)

So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church. (1 Cor 14:12, italics mine)

For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up. (1 Cor 14:17, italics mine)

Let all things be done for building up. (1 Cor 14:26, italics mine)

So that all may learn and be encouraged (1 Cor 14:31, italics mine)

With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Eph 4:2-3, italics mine)

To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God… (Eph 4:12-13, italics mine)

When each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Eph 4:16b)

Thirteen times in the context of these three short sections of Scripture, Paul emphasizes that his primary concern is not an individual finding and exercising his or her abilities, but that the churches to whom he is writing understand that engagement in any ministry assignment must be for the benefit of the body of Christ. The fact that Paul mentions the issue more often in 1 Corinthians is a testament to the circumstances faced by the church at Corinth in which some had become fascinated with outward manifestations of power rather than realizing that such manifestations are meaningless if they do not benefit the body. On that point, Hemphill comments, “the grace gifts of God [ministry assignments in an ecclesiocentric model] are designed to edify and enable the
As if Paul’s emphasis on serving for the benefit of “one another” was not enough to make his point, his employment of the body metaphor reinforces that ministry assignments are for the benefit of the body. Note again the repetition of the body metaphor in the context of the traditional gift list passages:

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. (Rom 12:4-5, italics mine)

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. (1 Cor 12:12, italics mine)

But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members have the same care for one another. (1 Cor 12:24-25, italics mine)

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (1 Cor 12:27, italics mine)

There is one body and one Spirit . . . (Eph 4:4, italics mine)

To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, (Eph 4:12, italics mine)

From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Eph 4:16, italics mine)

Here again, Paul utilizes a consistent metaphor in the context of all three discussions of “spiritual gifts.” And, like his emphasis on “one another,” the church at Corinth receives the greatest number of body metaphor references from Paul. And, rightfully so, it was, after all, the church at Corinth that struggled the most with understanding the interconnectedness of believers; an issue the body metaphor addresses directly. Hemphill points out that Paul’s emphasis in 1 Corinthians 12 indicates that the Corinthian believers had a “lack of understanding concerning both the appropriate role of

67Hemphill, You Are Gifted, 34-35.
gifts and the inherent limitation of gifts.”⁶⁸ Likewise, Berding observes “in opposition to the Corinthian Christians’ self-centered interest in miraculous activities, Paul says that God has placed each believer in roles of ministry for the purpose of edifying his church.”⁶⁹

The single greatest unifying theme of all three passages is not the encouragement of individuals to discover their “spiritual gift,” but the admonition that every engagement in a ministry assignment must benefit the body of Christ and build others up. Carson notes that “these gifts are not for personal aggrandizement, but ‘for the common good.’”⁷⁰ Indeed, language of “ability” is absent from the very place one would expect to find it, according to the conventional view of spiritual gift discovery. The focus instead is on an individual serving in the role, function, or ministry assignment in which God has placed him or her. Indeed, Martin observes “the body metaphor stresses functionality as its chief feature.”⁷¹

Even if an individual is not aware of his or her ministry assignment or it has not been acknowledged by others, engaging in activities that build up the body of Christ is still warranted. In the early 1970s Getz wrote to combat what he considered to be an unhealthy emphasis on spiritual gifts and sought to encourage the same kind of engagement. He notes,

In fact, as a Christian ministers to other members in the body, if he has a ‘special’ gift which is recognizable, it will become increasingly clear to himself as well as to other Christians. But if it does not become recognizable, Christians shouldn’t be concerned, but continue to help ‘one another’ in the many ways

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⁶⁸Hemphill, You Are Gifted, 31.
⁶⁹Berding, What Are the Spiritual Gifts?, 77.
⁷⁰Carson, Showing the Spirit, 34.
⁷¹Martin, The Spirit and the Congregation, 30.
specified in the New Testament.\textsuperscript{72}

Thus, an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification maintains that if an individual engages in activities that build up the body, over time, his or her ministry assignment will become clear. Such activity coheres with the first test for a ministry assignment in an ecclesiocentric model: does the ministry assignment build up the body of Christ; does it benefit others? The emphasis, then, is not on an individual figuring out his or her “gift,” but to focus on actions that build up the body first, with the understanding that clarity about an individual’s ministry assignment will follow.

\textbf{Ministry Assignments Extend the Witness of the Church}

The second objective test of a ministry assignment is whether it extends the witness of the church. In stepping back from the conventional view of spiritual gift identification that focuses on the individual discovering his or her abilities and reflecting on the fundamental call on the church, one is immediately struck by the emphasis found in the Great Commission:

Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Mt 28:18-20).

The emphasis here is clearly on Jesus’ call to his followers – the church – to make disciples of all nations. Likewise, Jesus provides a strategy for that disciple-making to happen:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8).

Here the mandate of the Great Commission is sharpened with the addition of a two-

\textsuperscript{72}Gene Getz, \textit{Sharpening the Focus of the Church} (Chicago: Moody, 1974), 117.
pronged disciple-making strategy: the power of the spirit and a geographical process that begins where the disciples are and moves outward from there. It is the first part of this strategy that bears directly on the issue of “spiritual gifts.” For, the calling and empowering of local churches for the fulfillment of the Great Commission is a task of the Holy Spirit.  

In addition to the fundamental call of the Great Commission, in the context of his extended discussion of ministry assignments to the church at Corinth, Paul makes clear that the right use of ministry assignments has an impact on unbelievers:

If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you. (1 Cor 14:23-25)

Here Paul’s primary concern is that the ministry assignments engaged in (i.e. tongues or prophecy) are done with an eye toward extending the church’s witness. In this case, Paul argues for the primacy of prophecy over tongues, because prophecy extends the witness of the church.  

Carson notes that Paul’s “goal was not so much to generate the maximum number of tongues-speakers as to bring sinners to their knees in repentance and worship.”

An examination of the book of Acts provides insight into the relationship between the work of the Spirit through individuals and the witness of the church:

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73Hemphill, You Are Gifted, 207-08.

74This is in direct contrast with the effect of tongues in Acts 2:1-12 which resulted in 3,000 people being baptized. For a detailed treatment of the distinction between the tongues spoken in Acts 2:1-12 and those referenced in 1 Cor 14:23-25, see Carson, Showing the Spirit, 138-43.

75Ibid., 116.
So those who received his [Peter’s] word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:41-47)

Beginning with the effect of Peter’s Spirit-filled preaching, the result of engaging in God-given ministry assignments is to extend the witness of the church. In the passage above there are at least eight ministry assignments are mentioned: preaching, teaching, fellowship, hospitality, prayer, miraculous acts, giving, and worship. As these ministry assignments are engaged in, not only is the body of Christ build up, but the kingdom of God is extended. The extension of the witness of the church is an objective test of a ministry assignment in an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification.

**Gifts as Ministries Summary**

Based on a careful biblical analysis of the traditional gift list passages of 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4, it is clear that Paul’s emphasis and focus is not on specially gifted individuals, but on individuals faithfully serving in the ministry assignment which God has placed them. Such an understanding is fundamental to an ecclesiocentric model, which places the emphasis not on an individual and his or her abilities, but on the church. Bridges and Phypers observe “the importance of understanding the place of spiritual gifts within the life and witness of the church as a whole cannot be overstressed, for when this is done their value for others, rather than for the individual Christian exercising them, is emphasized.”\(^{76}\) This is, indeed, the goal of an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification, stressing the life and witness of the church over the individual.

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\(^{76}\)Bridges and Phypers, *Spiritual Gifts and the Church*, 20.
The Role of the Church in Spiritual Gift Identification

Prior to the proliferation of spiritual gift identification instruments, Christians faithfully served the Lord in a number of ways. The methods utilized by those believers are still valid today. Indeed, Berding contends that individuals should investigate where to serve in ministry the same way they make any other decision, including prayer and the counsel of others.\textsuperscript{77} Stedman advocated a three step approach to determining one’s “spiritual gift.”\textsuperscript{78} Drawing on the way in which we discover other kinds of abilities, Stedman offered, “you simply \textit{liked} whatever it is you are talented at, and found yourself drawn toward those who were already doing it.”\textsuperscript{79} Thus, a good question to ask of a believer seeking to determine their ministry assignment is: what do you like to do?

In his earliest monograph on the subject of spiritual gifts, Wagner espouses a five step approach to determine spiritual gifts:

1. \textit{Explore the possibilities}. Read and study the lists of gifts in the New Testament. Know the options that appear in the Word of God so that you have something rather concrete to look for as you move ahead.

2. \textit{Experiment with as many as possible}. If you do not try a particular gift, you will have a hard time knowing whether you have it or not . . . .

3. \textit{Examine your feelings}. If you try a gift out and enjoy doing it, that is a good sign. On the other hand, if you find yourself disliking the task the gift involves, that in itself is a fairly good sign that God hasn’t given it to you.

4. \textit{Evaluate your effectiveness}. Spiritual gifts are functional . . . . If you begin to think you have a certain spiritual gift be sure that you see the appropriate results when you use it. If you get no results, you may not have the gift.

5. \textit{Expect confirmation of the body}. No gifts can be developed or used alone . . . . Other

\textsuperscript{77}Ibid., 200-01.

\textsuperscript{78}Stedman, \textit{Body Life}, 56-57. Stedman’s three steps include the following: “You simply \textit{liked} whatever it is you are talented at and found yourself drawn toward those who were already doing it . . . . The next step is to watch for improvement and development . . . . Do others recognize this gift in you?” (italics his).

\textsuperscript{79}Ibid., 56.
Christians will recognize your gift and confirm to you that you have it. If you think you have a gift, but no one else agrees you have it, be very suspicious of your assessment in the matter [italics his].

Wagner’s approach here came several years before he encountered the Houts spiritual gift inventory. After encountering and modifying the Houts Questionnaire, Wagner added “using a spiritual gifts inventory” to step two above, as “one of the best ways to determine which spiritual gifts to experiment with first.”

The proliferation of spiritual gift identification instruments has, unfortunately, diminished the role of the local church in spiritual gift identification. Because spiritual gift identification instruments look like their psychological counterparts, they provide a false sense of assurance to those completing them. Thus, once a person has received the “results” of the instrument, the need for confirmation of the body diminishes.

An ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification is fundamentally different than the conventional approach to spiritual gift discovery in at least two ways. First, an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification places the responsibility for engaging individuals in ministry on the church. This includes being intentional about guiding people into their place of most joyful service and developing methods of evaluation for those serving. Such an approach is an important contrast to those who advocate the use of spiritual gift identification instruments, which can be utilized with no local church interaction whatsoever.

Second, an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification understands

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80 Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow*, 74.

81 Wagner, *Discover Your Spiritual Gifts*, 74.

82 The observation that the need for confirmation diminishes is based on the practical effect of taking a scientific-looking instrument. For a person to assume the accuracy of such instruments is one of the concerns of Mark Ledbetter and James Foster, “Measuring Spiritual Giftedness: A Factor Analysis Study of a Spiritual Gifts Inventory,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 17 (1989): 274-83; Stewart Cooper and Steven Blakeman, “Spiritual Gifts: A Psychometric Extension,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 22 (1994): 39-44.
charisma(ta) to refer to ministry assignments, rather than abilities granted at conversion. In so doing, an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification places the benefit of the body and extending the witness of the church as crucial objective tests to determine ministry assignments, rather than the identification of post-conversion abilities. This principle is based on the recognition of the gift lists in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4 being shaped by local church circumstances, rather than being exhaustive, closed lists.⁸³

An ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification is a five-part strategy to engage individuals in the ministry assignment God in which God has called them to serve. This five-part strategy, which can be described by the acronym S-E-R-V-E, is detailed below and includes both theoretical components and practical considerations for local church implementation. This strategy is not dependent upon nor unduly influenced by local church circumstances or cultural considerations. Rather, the genesis for an ecclesiocentric model is found in the recognition that the conventional approach to gift discovery fails precisely because it fails to take into account the local church circumstances that influence the traditional gift list passages.⁸⁴

**Seek God’s Face in Prayer**

The church implementing an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification will begin with prayer. Church and ministry leadership, as well as individual members are called to pray. Following the example of Jesus, church and ministry leadership should pray for the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into the

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⁸³ For a full discussion of the issue of the role of local church circumstances on the gift lists, see chap. 3 of this dissertation.

⁸⁴ An examination of local church influence on the traditional gift list passages may be found in chap. 3 of this dissertation.
The leadership of the church must begin by asking God, “Who are you raising up to serve to meet the needs of this body?” The individuals that God sets apart to serve should be the result of answered prayer.

Likewise, individuals are called to pray. Berding comments “the person who follows the spiritual-ministries approach need ask only a single question–a question asked repeatedly throughout the history of Christianity: ‘Lord, where do you want me to serve?’” For the individual, prayer critical because the most effective method in determining what ministry assignment in which God would have us to serve is to know God. In discussing how to recognize a ministry assignment, Blackaby comments,

Here again we must emphasize this truth: The relationship is the key. You must know Christ well enough that you already know your answer before He tells you the assignment. The answer must be “Yes, Lord.” You’ll need to trust that God knows what He’s doing. We must never look first at ourselves, our abilities, and our desires to determine whether we will obey or not (italics his).

Placing a priority on prayer is crucial for the individual and those in church leadership. As both seek God’s face, clarity as to whom God has set apart for various ministry assignments will become clear. Prayer may require patience, but it is worth the wait. The prevalence of spiritual gift identification instruments will make waiting challenging, particularly for those ministering in a context heavily influenced by the West, which is concerned with timeliness, effectiveness and efficiency. Hemphill advocates prayer as a priority as well and laments that he is “saddened to discover that many Christians would rather spend thirty minutes filling out a gift inventory than thirty

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87 Berding, What Are the Spiritual Gifts?, 201.
minutes talking with their Father about their giftedness.”

Equip through Biblical Teaching

While prayer is first and crucial, it must be accompanied by equipping the body through clear biblical teaching. Too often churches neglect discussions or teaching on “spiritual gifts” because they can be controversial, however, such an approach ignores the task to which the church is called: to equip the saints for the work of ministry (Eph 4:11). Embracing an ecclesiocentric model will, too, be controversial, as the primary focus of this model cuts against the grain of much that has been previously taught regarding gift discovery.

There are two key concepts that must be taught in order to implement an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification. The first concept is the biblical understanding that “spiritual gifts” are really ministry assignments in which individuals engage. The first section of this chapter provides sufficient biblical warrant for a re-thinking of the conventional view of spiritual gifts as “special abilities divinely granted at conversion.” It is not necessary to re-visit all of the concepts examined previously in this chapter, but suffice to say that teaching an ecclesiocentric approach to gift discovery is vital. Such teaching of an ecclesiocentric model is not simply to combat the conventional view of spiritual gift discovery, but because Christians need to be made of aware of the fact that they are called to serve in the church in some capacity and that such service is itself a gift to the church. Berding observes that this approach is markedly

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89 Hemphill, You Are Gifted, 193. To Hemphill’s point, the cover of the SGI-Gilbert states: “Discover your spiritual gifts in only 20 minutes!” See Larry Gilbert, Spiritual Gift Inventory, rev. ed., (Elkton, MD: Church Growth Institute, 2005).

90 The idea that spiritual gifts are controversial is a reference to the debate over cessationism/non-cessationism, the number of spiritual gifts indicated in the Scripture, etc.

91 See n. 60 above.
different than that typically found in those embracing the conventional approach to spiritual gift discovery.

In conventional-view circles is an almost exclusive discussion of personal abilities – which must, of course be ‘used’ – with almost a complete lack of emphasis on the idea that people who serve in their ministry roles are themselves a gift given to the church.\textsuperscript{92} Berding further observes that Paul rarely drew a sharp distinction between the roles to which God called individuals and the individuals themselves:

Although it seems apparent from Paul’s own statements that these ministry roles are given to individuals (1 Cor 12:7, 11; Rom 12:3-8), it seems equally clear that the people in those ministries are given to the church (Eph 4:11-12; 1 Cor 12:18, 28)…the line for Paul between a ministry assignment and a person in his or her ministry assignment is very thin.\textsuperscript{93} Such a position is a significant departure from much of the spiritual gift literature, which often draws a sharp distinction between “spiritual gifts” and ministry roles.\textsuperscript{94}

The second concept that must be taught in an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification is that individuals serve under the authority of the local church. The fact that ministry assignments are given for the benefit of the body and for the extension of the witness of the church emphasize the corporate nature of service. The Scripture indicates that the earliest Christians followed a model of service that recognized and submitted to the authority of the local church, through the laying on of hands.\textsuperscript{95} Such an act was an endorsement that the church recognized an individual had been set apart by God for ministry.

\textsuperscript{92} Berding, \textit{What Are the Spiritual Gifts?}, 197.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 196-97.

\textsuperscript{94} For example, see Gilbert, \textit{How to Find Meaning and Fulfillment}, 27-28; Wagner, \textit{Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts}, 32-33; idem, \textit{Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow}, 60-62.

\textsuperscript{95} See Acts 6:6, 13:1-3; 1 Tim 4:14.
Encouraging individuals to recognize that they are serving under the authority of the local church has a number of benefits. First, recognizing the authority of the local church and serving under is an acknowledgement that the individual is engaged in a spiritual undertaking. By submitting to local church authority for the way in which a ministry assignment is conducted, there is an acknowledgement of spiritual leadership that is crucial to serving faithfully. Second, because ministry assignments are given for the benefit of the body and not the glorification of the individual, the recognition of local church authority helps curb selfish reasons for service. It is the responsibility of local church leaders to ensure that ministries are conducted in such a way as to benefit the body and extend the witness of the church. Third, it is the responsibility of local church leaders to determine what ministries are needed in order to help the church in accomplishing its mission. Finally, local church authority provides much needed accountability. Hemphill advises that “the local church provides the checkpoints, balances, and accountability necessary for proper use of all gifts.”

**Recruit Workers**

Consistent with recognizing local church authority, as well as the responsibility of church leaders to equip believers for service, church leaders need to create a systematic method of recruiting workers to serve. There are at least three possible options with regard to recruitment. The first is to utilize existing ministry leaders and ministry teams to recruit other workers. Essentially, every ministry leader is challenged and held accountable to recruit someone he or she can train in that area of ministry. In so doing, ministry teams take advantage of a sociological aspect of the homogeneous unit principle; namely that people tend to hang around with others who possess similar interests.

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96 Hemphill, *You Are Gifted*, 209.

97 The Homogeneous Unit Principle is a church growth principle that says people “like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers.”
A second approach is the development of mentoring relationships between new and more mature believers.\textsuperscript{98} Wiebe notes “the body of believers has the responsibility of helping individuals in their discovery and exercise of their gifts. This would include encouragement for a person to serve where fellow believers think one might be effective.”\textsuperscript{99} The mentoring relationship would include encouragement to engage in a place of ministry service as well as guidance as to which area of ministry might be the best fit.

One place that mentors and ministry leaders can begin in their recruitment is with the so-called birth gifts, or natural talents, of individual members. Many who subscribe to the conventional view of spiritual gift discovery draw a sharp distinction between birth gifts and spiritual gifts. Such a sharp distinction is not necessary. Hemphill makes the argument that some spiritual gifts may be “birth gifts that are transformed by the Spirit.”\textsuperscript{100} His argument has seven component parts:

1. We are created by God with unique purpose and design.

2. Our life experiences and opportunities become a part of God’s benevolent gift to us that shapes our entire person.

3. At some point we experience spiritual birth which is accompanied by the transformation of our bodies, enabling all the members of our body to be of use in kingdom service (Rom 6:12-13). Birth gifts may become spiritual gifts.

4. With conversion our spiritual blindness is removed, and we receive the Spirit so that we may know the things freely given to us by God (1 Cor 2:12).

5. As believers we present our bodies to the Lord as a living sacrifice, acceptable to God,


\textsuperscript{100}Hemphill, You Are Gifted, 185.
as our spiritual service of worship (Rom 12:1).

6. The empowering of the Spirit transforms all of our abilities and life experiences, enabling us to serve God effectively.

7. We can now accomplish the good works God prepared for us before we were conceived.101

Hemphill is not alone in his understanding of the importance of birth gifts. In Elbert’s examination of Calvin’s understanding of spiritual gifts, he noted that in Calvin’s writing “this distinction [between natural abilities and spiritual gifts] is not as forcefully made in the realm of the gifts, which to Calvin are not always as well defined with regard to the supernatural element and sometimes appear to touch on the cultivation of natural abilities (hopefully with spiritual aid).”102 Regardless of whether one views ministry assignments as spiritually transformed natural abilities or not, at the very least it may be an effective starting place for ministry.

A final possibility for recruitment is the development of an open-ended ministry survey.103 A local church would be wise to create such an instrument following the example provided in Chapter Four of this dissertation. This open-ended survey would be unique to the local church that creates it, for, as stated above, the ministry assignments needed in each local church are largely influenced by the specific needs of that congregation. An ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification only utilizes conventional spiritual gift identification instruments in order to help an individual determine if they are more inclined to a speaking ministry or a serving ministry.104

101Ibid., 185-86.


103An open-ended ministry survey is included in chapter 4 of this dissertation. See also, Hemphill, You Are Gifted, 196-97.

104See chap. 4 for a full treatment of the results of empirical analyses of spiritual gift identification instruments.
Volunteer Access

Regardless of which model of recruitment is pursued, recruitment alone will not touch all the members in a church. In an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification, churches must make access to volunteerism clear and simple. Churches should make clear where the point of greatest need for volunteers is within the church and make the path to getting involved as simple as possible. Such a step does not negate the need for continued prayer either on the part of the church or an individual, but is an acknowledgement that “we will often have greater insight on where to serve in the future as we minister in the present. It is in the midst of service that we often find opportunities and spiritual desire to take the next steps into whatever area of ministry God may have for us.”

God most often moves us to a next step of obedience when we exercise faith to take a first step of obedience.

In an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification, individuals are encouraged to begin serving, even if the individual is not completely sure he or she has found a specific God-given ministry assignment. Often, serving in some capacity will lead to a greater sense of clarity about one’s ultimate place of service. Wiebe has observed “the believer who is willing to use the opportunities for service that are available will be directed to specific gifts and ministries in the course of willing service.” Gilbert, who holds to a conventional view of spiritual gift discovery, noted that he has changed his perspective on the best way to engage individuals in ministry service. Early on Gilbert believed that if a person was taught about spiritual gifts and given an opportunity to discover his or her spiritual gift, that person would get involved in ministry. He has since come to believe that teaching on spiritual gifts and spiritual gift

105 Berding, What Are the Spiritual Gifts?, 203.


107 Larry Gilbert, telephone interview with author, 9 March 2011.
discovery will help those already serving to be more involved and more efficient in their service, but is not effective at motivating people to serve for the first time. Apparently, a key to helping people discover their place of joyful service is to simply get them serving somewhere.

**Evaluate Effectiveness**

The final step in an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification is to create a regular system of evaluation. Once individuals are serving it is vital to ensure they are effective at what they are doing and that they find joy in their service. Ministry leaders need to be conscious of and aware of an individual’s strengths and weaknesses in a given ministry assignment. At least semi-annual evaluations need to be conducted with all individuals serving in various ministries by their ministry leaders. Such an evaluation could include questions such as,

1. Do you have a sense of call from God to continue serving in this area?
2. What do you like best about where you are currently serving?
3. What do you like least about where you are currently serving?
4. How does serving in this area bring you joy?
5. How has serving in this area helped you to grow in Christ?
6. How would it affect you if you could not serve in this area?

In addition, ministry leaders should elicit feedback from those serving with the individual under evaluation. Such insight can be helpful to determine an individual’s level of effectiveness. Regardless of what ministry is under consideration, there are individuals who should be “benefitting” from it. Eliciting feedback from those the individual is ministering to is invaluable. Finally, the utilization of the so-called “3 C’s” can be helpful: character, competence, and chemistry.\(^{108}\)

\(^{108}\) Bill Hybels, *Courageous Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 81.
Practical Considerations

The implementation of an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification requires the examination of several practical considerations regarding ministry leadership and the flexibility of organizational structure. With regard to ministry leadership, an ecclesiocentric model requires more intentionality than the conventional model of spiritual gift discovery. The use of open-ended surveys alone will require the investment of time and energy, not to mention the utilization of a mentor approach. Therefore, the process of engaging individuals in ministry must be led by a clear, visible leader. When Hemphill served as a pastor in Norfolk, VA, the church he led had such a person who coordinated all aspects of integrating people into service. It is the task of this individual to connect people who are looking for a place to serve with ministries that are looking for help.

A second consideration regards ministry structure. Much has been written about various approaches to overall church ministry structure, yet an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification can thrive in any structure that is flexible. Flexible here refers to two things. First, an ecclesiocentric model makes it easy for individuals to access ministry opportunities. If the goal is to get people serving, once motivated, they have to be able to move quickly into service. Second, once serving, individuals need to be able to move between service opportunities. For some, the initial place of service is going

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109 The leader may be a staff member or a lay person. Either way, it will be best for this leader to recruit a team to assist with getting other church members involved in ministry.

110 Ken Hemphill, personal interview with author, 13 September 2010.

111 Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger, Simple Church (Nashville: B & H, 2006); Thom Rainer, Breakout Churches (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009); Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, Comeback Churches (Nashville: B & H, 2007); Geoff Surratt, Ten Stupid Things That Keep Churches from Growing (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009); Warren, Purpose Driven Church.
to be experimentation. If they do not find that initial place of service to be their ministry assignment, they need to be able to move to another place easily.

**Conclusion**

An ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification, as the name implies, has the church at its center. And, the church should be central to any discussion of spiritual gifts. After all, “the church is primarily and fundamentally a body designed to express through each individual member the life of an indwelling Lord and is equipped by the Holy Spirit with gifts [ministry assignments] designed to express that life.”

An ecclesiocentric model for spiritual gift identification is called for, as it is clear that the conventional approach to spiritual gift identification is fraught with difficulties and weaknesses. Those difficulties and weaknesses include biblical and theological bias and poor psychometric construction. The result, to a large degree, has been confusion (from biblical and theological bias) and misinformation (from poor psychometric construction). Yet, a careful examination of the traditional gift list texts indicates that understanding spiritual gifts as “special abilities divinely granted at conversion” is partly to blame. A re-examination of 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4 reveal that the items found there and traditionally referred to as “spiritual gifts” are, in fact, best understood as ministry assignments.

A five part implementation strategy for an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification includes,

1. Seek God’s Face – The Church asks, “Lord, who are you raising up to serve?” as individuals ask, “Lord, where would you have me serve?”

2. Equip through Biblical Teaching – Teach both the biblical basis for an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification and that ministry is conducted under the authority of the local church.

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3. Recruit Workers – Develop a systematic method recruiting workers. Options include utilizing existing ministry leaders, mentoring relationships, and the use of an open-ended survey.

4. Volunteer Access – Make the needs of the church known and the path of service clear and simple. Make it easy for people to get involved in service.

5. Evaluate Effectiveness – Encourage regular evaluations of those serving in various ministry areas. Such evaluation may include open-ended response questions, the feedback of fellow servants, the feedback of those benefitted by the ministry, and/or evaluation of the “3 C’s”: character, competence, and chemistry.

An ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification recognizes that there is something of a symbiotic relationship at work in the life of the church, in that “the body is to call for the gifts of its members to be used. Members are responsible to the body in their use of gifts.”\textsuperscript{113} As individuals seek to selflessly and faithfully work for the benefit of the body and the extension of the witness of the church, those individuals will find their place of joyful service in the kingdom.

\textsuperscript{113} Darrell Robinson, \textit{Total Church Life}, rev. and expanded ed. (Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 38.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

Since approximately 1972, there has been an increasing interest in spiritual gift identification, particularly among churches influenced by the Church Growth Movement (CGM). The CGM has maintained an emphasis on the role of encouraging churches to engage the laity in ministry as it deems the role of lay ministry essential for sustainable church growth. Increasingly, the CGM has emphasized the importance of individual believers discovering and utilizing his or her spiritual gift(s). Rainer notes the emphasis on the emphasis on lay ministry:

The Church Growth Movement has focused extensively on the gifts of the Holy Spirit because of their relationship to unleashing all the laity for ministry. If Christians discover their spiritual gifts and use them for building the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:1ff), then the church will grow naturally.¹

An early CGM advocate of the importance of spiritual gifts, Wagner indicates that a lack of understanding of spiritual gifts leads a number of issues that a problematic for the local church including a lack of numeric and spiritual growth in the church as well as “discouragement, insecurity, frustration, and guilt” among individual believers.² Indeed, the emphasis on spiritual gift discovery is driven by a heartfelt desire to aid individuals in the role God has called them to play in the carrying out of the Great Commission:

The Great Commission is the greatest command, given by the greatest Commander, to the greatest army, for the greatest task ever…Unfortunately, some


have forgotten that the God who assigned us this great task also assigned us the means to fulfill the task – people, men and women whom God has equipped to fulfill that task, men and women whom God has equipped to fulfill that task, men and women with God-given gifts – spiritual gifts (italics his).³

The desire to engage the laity in ministry has led to a proliferation of materials on the significance of spiritual gifts to that end. Among the materials available, spiritual gift identification instruments are among the most popular. These instruments purport to aid an individual in the discovery of his or her spiritual gift through a series of questions or statements, the answers to said questions resulting in a determination of that individual’s spiritual gift(s). The purpose of this dissertation was to examine whether the utilization of spiritual gift identification instruments is the best method for discerning an individual’s place of joyful service in the church. Having researched the historical development of spiritual gift identification instruments, having examined said instruments for biblical and theological bias, having assessed the psychometric properties inherent in their design, and having proposed an alternative model for spiritual gift identification, some final thoughts and observations are now in order.

**Issues Raised and Answered**

At the outset of this dissertation, five sets of questions were proposed as an avenue for investigating the issues related to the utilization of spiritual gift identification instruments. These questions were intended to develop more fully an understanding of the issues related to spiritual gift identification. The following responses are presented as initial answers to the aforementioned questions and the issues raised by them.

First, the way in which the term “spiritual gifts” is defined is absolutely critical. If a faulty (or confusing) definition is utilized, the end result can only be one of misunderstanding the biblical texts that relate to the concept of spiritual gifts. In much of

³Larry Gilbert, *How to Find Meaning and Fulfillment through Understanding the Spiritual Gift within You* (Lynchburg, VA: Church Growth Institute, 1992), 9.
the literature, “spiritual gifts” are defined primarily in terms of “ability.” There is no doubt that whenever God calls an individual to serve in some capacity in the church, there is an empowerment for that particular capacity that accompanies the call. The problem in defining spiritual gifts as “abilities” is not so much that God does not empower individuals for service, but that the way we use the word “ability” or, even “gift” in English does not convey the biblical concept intended by charisma(ta). Berding argues that Paul uses charisma(ta) to refer to the tangible outworking of the grace of God in the life of a believer. The tangible outworking of grace in an individual’s life is demonstrated as men and women selflessly serve in and through the church.

A preponderance of the biblical evidence weights in favor of the idea that the gift lists found in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4 are not a catalog of special abilities that God grants upon conversion. Rather, they are best understood to be examples of the myriad of ways in which an individual may illustrate the grace of God at work in his or her life through his or her service in the church. Defining “spiritual gifts” in this way is not a denial that people have tremendous skills and abilities; it is simply a rejection of the notion that those skills and abilities are what is in view with the word


5Kenneth Berding, What Are the Spiritual Gifts? Rethinking the Conventional View (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006), 63.
charisma(ta). As Berding observes,

What is being argued in this book is not that people lack special abilities (given by God as part of common grace), but rather that the items Paul includes in his ministry lists of Ephesians 4:11-12; Romans 12:6-8; and 1 Corinthians 12:28-30 should not be viewed under the category of special abilities; rather, they should be categorized as lists of ministry assignments that God has given to believers and to the church through those believers.\(^6\)

Such an understanding has a significant impact on spiritual gift identification. Indeed, Berding contends that searching for one’s spiritual gifts is “unnecessary and even unhelpful”, if “the gifts actually are ministry roles rather than abilities.”\(^7\)

Second, based in part on defining spiritual gifts as abilities, developers of spiritual gift identification instruments believe that observable actions and unobservable attitudes accompany the possession of spiritual gifts. Indeed, a recurrent theme in the construction of spiritual gift identification instruments has been the attempt to discern the kinds of behavioral statements that best reflect the spiritual gifts that is being tested.\(^8\)

However, the presupposition that individuals can engage in an accurate self-assessment is flawed not only from a biblical and theological perspective, but from a psychological one as well.

Third, spiritual gift identification instruments have not been found to be valid or reliable when the psychometric properties underlying such instruments have been examined. The instruments have grown in popularity, at least in part because they appear to be very similar to other psychometric instruments (i.e. MMBI, Myers–Briggs Type Indicator, Taylor–Johnson Temperament Analysis, etc).\(^9\) The similarity in procedures, \(\text{--------------------------}\)

\(^6\)Berding, *What Are the Spiritual Gifts?*, 137.

\(^7\)Ibid., 199.

\(^8\)C. Peter Wagner, telephone interview with author, 5 April, 2011 and Larry Gilbert, telephone interview with author, 9 March 2011.

\(^9\)Mark Ledbetter and James Foster, “Measuring Spiritual Giftedness: A Factor Analytic Study of a Spiritual Gifts Inventory,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 17
format, and scoring give spiritual gift identification instruments an aura of credibility that has not been earned through rigorous testing.

Empirical analysis indicates that spiritual gift identification instruments do not measure the number of factors purported (i.e., number of spiritual gifts tested). Rather, spiritual gift identification instruments subjected to factor analysis reveal two to three factors tested. These factors are consistently speaking, serving, and, to a lesser extent, governing.\textsuperscript{10} This may indicate that spiritual gift identification instruments are most useful in helping a person determine a “type” of ministry in which to engage; either one that is primarily service oriented, or one that involves speaking roles. Regardless, it is clear that spiritual gift identification instruments, as constructed currently, are not based on sound psychometric principles and are therefore neither valid nor reliable to provide the results purported.

Fourth, much of the literature regarding spiritual gifts draws a sharp distinction between spiritual gifts and natural abilities.\textsuperscript{11} Such a distinction is based largely upon defining spiritual gifts as “special abilities divinely granted at conversion.” Because spiritual gifts are defined as having been granted at conversion, a distinction must be drawn between spiritual gifts and those abilities possessed by individuals prior to conversion.


There are at least two reasons why such a distinction is unnecessary. First, if spiritual gifts are rightly defined as “ministry assignments” rather than special abilities, the need for the distinction is not as pressing. For, the line between “natural talent” and “spiritual gift” becomes very thin if the utilization of “natural abilities” for kingdom purposes is considered a ministry assignment. Second, recognizing a “natural talent” is utilized by God as a “spiritual gift” is simply an acknowledgement of his sovereignty. As Hemphill observes, “If we can agree that God is the source of all ability, why would it surprise us to discover that we were created with unique birth gifts that would someday enable us to serve God?”

Fifth, rather than encouraging believers to complete a spiritual gift identification instrument, churches should make it simple for believers to get involved in ministry. In an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification, the acronym S-E-R-V-E is a helpful reminder of the five key steps in implementing this strategy:

1. Seek God’s Face – Church leadership asks, “Lord, who are you raising up to serve?” as individuals ask, “Lord, where would you have me serve?”

2. Equip through Biblical Teaching – Teach both the biblical basis for an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification and that ministry is conducted under the authority of the local church.

3. Recruit Workers – Develop a systematic method recruiting workers. Options include utilizing existing ministry leaders, mentoring relationships, and the use of an open-ended survey.

4. Volunteer Access – Make the needs of the church known and the path of service clear and simple. Make it easy for people to get involved in service.

5. Evaluate Effectiveness – Encourage regular evaluations of those serving in various ministry areas, for individuals ought to serve effectively as well as faithfully.

The overarching research question in this dissertation asks “Is the use of a spiritual gift identification instrument the best way for people to find their place of joyful service?”

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service within the church?” Because they have a questionable biblical and theological basis, in addition their failure to be demonstrably valid or reliable in empirical analyses, the use of spiritual gift identification instruments is not the best way for people to find their place of joyful service in the church. Quite the opposite is true. As Getz has observed:

It is no doubt true that every believer in the New Testament church was gifted by God in a special way to function in the body, but it was not always possible nor necessary to identify that gift by name or to be able to “pigeonhole” it by placing it in a “gift list.”

Indeed, the foundational principle in an ecclesiocentric model is that the surest way to find one’s joyful place of service in the church is to serve faithfully and effectively.

Areas for Further Study

Additional areas of research are available concerning spiritual gift identification instruments. One area of research would be to conduct an independent factor analysis of the DellaVechio and Winston instrument. In their work, DellaVechio and Winston provide a spiritual gift identification instrument designed to test for the spiritual gifts found in Romans 12. In their research, DellaVechio and Winston claim their instrument does, in fact, reveal all seven factors they were testing. Independent validation of those findings would prove very useful in providing a model for other spiritual gift identification instruments.

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Another area of research is to determine if it is possible to refine the SGI-WMHQ or the SGI-Gilbert in light of the empirical analyses referenced in this dissertation. The empirical analyses conducted to this point reveal two to three factor solutions.\(^\text{15}\) Both Wagner and Gilbert acknowledge that they did not employ psychometric research in the development of their instruments.\(^\text{16}\) Yet, because of the popularity of those two instruments, seeking to apply psychometric principles to them so they are demonstrably reliable and valid is a worthwhile endeavor.

A final area of research would be to investigate and refine the ecclesiocentric model presented herein. This dissertation is entitled *Toward an Ecclesiocentric Model of Spiritual Gift Identification* for a reason. Namely, this effort has been intended to move the discussion of spiritual gift discovery from the utilization of invalid and unreliable spiritual gift identification instruments to a church–based model of ministry engagement. The model presented herein is a prototype that surely can use the refinement of other scholars and researchers to improve upon it.

**Final Thoughts and Reflections**

There is little doubt that those who have developed the spiritual gift identification instruments examined in this dissertation have done so with the earnest desire to help individuals get involved in local church ministry. Those who would consider this dissertation to be an attack on the character or scholarship of those who have developed spiritual gift identification instruments would be in serious error.

Rather, it is with a shared desire to assist believers in finding their place of joyful service in the local church that this dissertation is offered. Often lost in the

\(^{15}\)See chap. 4 of this dissertation for a full explanation of the empirical analyses conducted on a variety of spiritual gift identification instruments.

\(^{16}\)Larry Gilbert, telephone interview with author, 5 March 2011. C. Peter Wagner, telephone interview with author, 9 April 2011.
examination of instruments and discussions of the technical use of certain terms is the sheer wonder and amazement that God would use any of us in ministry. In that regard, Gaffin comments:

Probably the most important and certainly the most difficult lesson for us to learn is that ultimately spiritual gifts are not our presumed strengths and abilities, not something that we “have” (or even have been given), but what God does through us in spite of ourselves and our weakness.\(^17\)

May God indeed work through contemporary Christians who selflessly give of their time and talents to advance his kingdom on the earth.

This dissertation has examined the historical development of certain spiritual gift identification instruments. Among the instruments examined are the Spiritual Gifts Inventory by Gordon McMinn (SGI-McMinn), the Wagener-Modified Houts Questionnaire by C. Peter Wagner (SGI-WMHQ), and the TEAM Ministry Spiritual Gift Inventory by Larry Gilbert (SGI-Gilbert). In order to observe both the similarities and differences in each instrument, the aforementioned three instruments are presented on the following pages in their original format.

Per the request of the copyright holders and to protect the marketability of the instruments presented herein, the response/answer sheets are not provided. In addition, the following copyright statements are included, per the request of the publishers represented:


SGI-WMHQ – Taken from *Discover Your Spiritual Gifts* by C. Peter Wagner. Copyright 2005, Gospel Light/Regal Books, Ventura, CA 93003. Used by permission. Reproduction of any kind is prohibited.

SGI-Gilbert – Taken from *TEAM Ministry Spiritual Gift Inventory* by Larry Gilbert. Copyright 2005, Church Growth Institute, Elkton, MD 21921. Used by permission. Reproduction of any kind is prohibited.

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See chap. 2 of this dissertation for the historical development of the SGI-McMinn, the SGI-WMHQ, and the SGI-Gilbert.
Spiritual Gifts Inventory by Gordon McMinn
SGI-McMinn
1. □□ Find it easy to pick out the main points in a presentation.
□□ Like to be told exactly what a job requires before accepting it.
□□ Seem to detect weak areas in a message more quickly than others.

2. □□ Analyze a subject with care to get all the details.
□□ Tend to act on feelings without always thinking through the consequences.
□□ Talk with the designers to lay out plans for completion of a project.

3. □□ Speak out to protect others when they are being misled.
□□ Match people with the right job and resources so the project goes smoothly.
□□ Take time to organize a talk so points will be clearly understood.

4. □□ Work with people to help them complete a job after they start it.
□□ Like people to decide right away when the facts are known.
□□ Maintain an active interest in a topic even when study is tedious.

5. □□ Get the job done even though many obstacles need to be overcome.
□□ Make decisions quickly but sometimes hold back due to uncertainty.
□□ Give up personal plans to let others have their way.

6. □□ Use resources to assist people involved in loving deeds.
□□ Join in quickly to help others to get a job done.
□□ Accomplish almost any task if it is important for it to be done.

7. □□ Find others who will join in to help people who are in need.
□□ Plan a project so that each worker has a defined responsibility.
□□ Seek out people to talk to who are well-informed on subjects.

8. □□ Figure out what each person has to do to get the job done.
□□ Carefully follow plans developed by others.
□□ Sometimes neglect duties when caught up in a new idea.

9. □□ Work hard to gain that which will benefit others.
□□ Confront people enthusiastically encouraging them to do their part.
□□ Suggest practical alternatives to people in perplexing situations.

10. □□ Look for ways to be of service to others.
□□ Sense the hidden motives in why people act as they do.
□□ Work well with others as long as they do a good job.

11. □□ Choose to be a worker rather than a leader on a project.
□□ Point it out to people when they have committed a sin.
□□ Tend to let other things slide to give full support to needy projects.

12. □□ React strongly when resources are wasted.
□□ Guide the efforts of team members on a project.
□□ See that each member of the team does his or her part.

13. □□ Look for practical ways to apply what is learned.
□□ Easily let go of one task to take on another one.
□□ Usually think of several options when helping someone make a decision.

14. □□ Often contribute privately to needy causes when they are recognized.
□□ Develop a plan and recruit people so a project can be completed.
□□ Act to help people in need without thinking about the long-range effects.
15. ☐ ☐ Make efficient use of available resources.
   ☐ ☐ Occasionally go astray when following a hunch.
   ☐ ☐ Find it easy to accept what the Bible says without doubt.

16. ☐ ☐ Choose for friends those whose conduct is highly respected.
   ☐ ☐ Try to be very exact and get all the details when studying a topic.
   ☐ ☐ Seek to avoid recognition when contributing to a worthy cause.

17. ☐ ☐ Like to follow a plan without change once it has been accepted.
   ☐ ☐ Try new approaches confidently to achieve worthy goals.
   ☐ ☐ Tend to lose interest when projects are too long.

18. ☐ ☐ Give support to those in positions of leadership in the church.
   ☐ ☐ Find it easier to talk to a group than to an individual.
   ☐ ☐ Accept a job as the leader of a team rather than work alone.

19. ☐ ☐ Find it hard to accept people who don’t live up to what they profess.
   ☐ ☐ Stick with a difficult assignment in spite of the obstacles.
   ☐ ☐ Quickly shift to try a new approach when an original plan does not work.

20. ☐ ☐ Think things through carefully before taking action.
    ☐ ☐ Easily find several alternatives to suggest to people facing decisions.
    ☐ ☐ Change from one project to another in order to get more done.

21. ☐ ☐ See that a job once started is carried through to completion.
    ☐ ☐ Have ability to piece together the details so as to see the full picture.
    ☐ ☐ Spend a lot of time thinking about new ideas.

22. ☐ ☐ Succeed in long-range investments.
    ☐ ☐ Trust people without listening carefully to what they say.
    ☐ ☐ Check to see if work is on schedule and according to plan.

23. ☐ ☐ Quickly spot a person who is insincere.
    ☐ ☐ Plan a course of action to utilize each resource efficiently.
    ☐ ☐ Usually read correctly what people are thinking or feeling.

24. ☐ ☐ Stay with people to encourage them to complete what they start.
    ☐ ☐ Catch on to what is happening more quickly than others do.
    ☐ ☐ Work patiently to achieve distant goals.

25. ☐ ☐ Follow up to see that people complete their assignments on a project.
    ☐ ☐ Quickly see through the motives of people.
    ☐ ☐ Deliberately plan speeches to encourage people to change.

26. ☐ ☐ Continually look for new ways to do a job better.
    ☐ ☐ Find it difficult to leave a task before it is finished.
    ☐ ☐ Risk being hurt to assist people to resolve their differences.

27. ☐ ☐ Readily accept exciting new ideas and try to implement them.
    ☐ ☐ Examine a biblical passage in view of its broader context.
    ☐ ☐ Find an urgency to speak to the basic needs of people.

28. ☐ ☐ Earnestly desire to explain biblical principles to people.
    ☐ ☐ Develop careful plans before starting on a project.
    ☐ ☐ Find it hard to ignore people who are in need.
29. □ □ Try to think through most problems in a logical, scientific way.
   □ □ Stay with a course of action in spite of obstacles.
   □ □ Find it irritating when people have not prepared adequately for a talk.

30. □ □ Check the consequences of each alternative before finalizing a decision.
   □ □ Take on any task when convinced of its worth.
   □ □ Carry through plans in spite of adversity.

31. □ □ Look forward to opportunities to talk with people.
   □ □ Take charge of a project assigning to each person what he should do.
   □ □ Readily do what those in positions of leadership ask to be done.

32. □ □ Talk to people about the importance of high standards of conduct.
   □ □ Find it difficult to work with people who are careless in what they do.
   □ □ Identify correctly the feelings of others.

33. □ □ Show leadership abilities in sticking to a plan.
   □ □ Feel at ease in talking with many different kinds of people.
   □ □ Prefer to speak to a group of people than to talk one-on-one.

34. □ □ Enlist people in order to accomplish planned goals.
   □ □ Confer with others to develop a good strategy for doing a job.
   □ □ Assist in jobs whether large or small.

35. □ □ Refuse to give up in spite of difficulties when working on a project.
   □ □ Seek to support activities which merit assistance.
   □ □ Point out to people in a tactful way changes they need to make.

36. □ □ Assume full responsibility to see that things get done.
   □ □ Find it easy to accept biblical data without question.
   □ □ Lay aside personal plans or desires to help others.

37. □ □ Get involved quickly to assist other team members on a project.
   □ □ Find a job in the project for every participant.
   □ □ Aim for a standard of excellence in all endeavors.

38. □ □ Prefer to work on short-range projects.
   □ □ Often continue to study after others quit to gain additional data.
   □ □ Understand complex ideas quickly.

39. □ □ Choose words carefully so as to explain ideas well.
   □ □ Enlist the efforts of all team members to complete a task.
   □ □ Welcome criticism but only change direction if fully persuaded.

40. □ □ Quickly spot the biblical principles when studying Scripture.
   □ □ Want people to respond in very practical ways to a message.
   □ □ Confer with leaders to develop an organizational plan.

41. □ □ Tend to hold to a viewpoint even when evidence is not very strong.
   □ □ Think through problems in a logical, scientific way.
   □ □ Want to share personal resources to see good things accomplished.

42. □ □ Rely heavily on intuitive ability.
   □ □ Persuade others to join in order to reach a goal.
   □ □ Explain the teachings of the Bible clearly and concisely.
43. □ □ Work hard to aid people who are worthy of assistance.
    □ □ Seem to be the first to speak out when others are being misled.
    □ □ Encourage people to do more so more can be accomplished.

44. □ □ Like a job where what needs to be done is stated in detail.
    □ □ See that each person does his or her share when working on a project.
    □ □ Persist when the going gets tough without getting upset.

45. □ □ Often respond to the need of others without thinking through the consequences
    □ □ Make decisions and initiate action quickly.
    □ □ Confront people when they are doing wrong.

46. □ □ Present personal viewpoint on a subject only after careful study.
    □ □ Enjoy the challenge of seemingly impossible tasks.
    □ □ Accept personal hurt rather than risk offending someone.

47. □ □ Usually succeed in whatever task is undertaken.
    □ □ Display a cheerful spirit most of the time.
    □ □ Speak to people firmly when they fail to do their part on a job.

48. □ □ Stick to a project until the last detail is completed.
    □ □ Work hard though sometimes inwardly discouraged.
    □ □ Assume major responsibilities when asked in order to learn new skills.

49. □ □ Back up concerns with a personal investment.
    □ □ Frequently explain to people that the Bible sets a high standard for conduct.
    □ □ Divide responsibilities among others to get the task completed.

50. □ □ Usually rely on personal insight to know if people are being deceptive.
    □ □ Set timelines and job responsibilities to see a job gets done.
    □ □ Refuse to be discouraged even when things go wrong.

51. □ □ Enjoy making detailed, scholarly presentations.
    □ □ Choose for friends those who hold high standards of conduct.
    □ □ Work with others to develop a well-planned course of action.

52. □ □ Find it easy to talk to people though sometimes get too involved by doing so.
    □ □ Volunteer to help others when they need assistance.
    □ □ Ask others to participate in worthwhile activities.

53. □ □ Choose to work only on jobs where what is expected is stated clearly.
    □ □ Pick out informative details in study which others have not seen.
    □ □ Challenge people to take on more to accomplish what needs to be done.

54. □ □ Seek to be consistent in all dealing with people.
    □ □ Express personal viewpoint only after a careful study has been made.
    □ □ Stay away from people who appear to be hypocritical.

55. □ □ Spend extra effort to gain best long-range results.
    □ □ Want people to respond quickly when they hear the alternatives.
    □ □ Follow a plan carefully after a project has been clearly defined.

56. □ □ Decide quickly, yet cautiously.
    □ □ Work out strategies to help people solve their problems.
    □ □ Speak forcefully to get people to change from doing wrong to doing right.
57. □ □ Get frustrated when well-developed plans are changed impulsively.
    □ □ Want objectives to be clearly stated before supporting a project.
    □ □ Sometimes take on new projects without realizing how much is involved.

58. □ □ Like to study just for the purpose of gaining new information.
    □ □ Tend to take on new endeavors without realizing how much is involved.
    □ □ See to it that any job undertaken is done right.

59. □ □ Find it difficult to accept help from others.
    □ □ Speak up quickly when people overlook details in a Bible study.
    □ □ Sometimes get too deeply involved in the problems of others.

60. □ □ Work to get the most out of available resources.
    □ □ Have an ability to explain difficult portions of Scripture clearly.
    □ □ Sometimes permit emotions to cloud sound thinking.

61. □ □ Tend to be more confrontive with others than most people are.
    □ □ Focus on the information during a talk more than on the individual.
    □ □ Watch to see if people use what resources they have wisely.

62. □ □ Sometimes get too involved in the difficulties of others.
    □ □ Prefer doing the work on a job rather than planning for it.
    □ □ Help people who are in trouble to see some practical alternatives.

63. □ □ Need to know that efforts are accomplishing something worthwhile.
    □ □ Find ways to put many ideas into practice.
    □ □ Usually contribute only after factual data is provided to support the need.

64. □ □ Set up schedules in order to be consistent.
    □ □ Readily assume responsibility for supervising a job.
    □ □ Caution others about situations which may contain pitfalls.

65. □ □ Urge people to respond to a biblical message without delay.
    □ □ Take on assigned tasks readily whether large or small.
    □ □ Often support needy projects anonymously.

66. □ □ Possess a keen sensitivity to the needs of others.
    □ □ Encourage others to consider several alternatives before making a decision
    □ □ Use a systematic approach to study the Bible.

67. □ □ Insist on adequate time to prepare before speaking.
    □ □ Take on difficult tasks without hesitating if endeavor is worthy.
    □ □ Prefer assignments with routine duties which are clearly outlined.

68. □ □ Guide the efforts of a team as opposed to working alone on projects.
    □ □ Prefer addressing a large group to a one-to-one discussion.
    □ □ Show great concern for the needs of people who are having problems.

69. □ □ Try to find all available data before coming to a conclusion.
    □ □ Often see several workable approaches to help others with their problems.
    □ □ Prefer well-defined, routine duties to other kinds of work.

70. □ □ Quickly pick out the central thought when reading.
    □ □ Tend to believe people before evaluating the situation fully.
    □ □ Keep moving toward goals in spite of potential problems.
41. □ □ Look beyond the faults and shortcomings of people to aid them.
□ □ Work to get all members of a project involved in doing their tasks.
□ □ Talk easily and openly with many different kinds of people.

42. □ □ Hesitate to conclude a study until a complete picture is developed.
□ □ Evaluate progress often to see if things are going as planned.
□ □ Formulate opinions quickly with a high degree of accuracy.

43. □ □ Try in everything that is done to set a good example for others.
□ □ Confront people when they are doing wrong.
□ □ Trust personal insight to know if people are not what they claim to be.

44. □ □ Operate intuitively at times.
□ □ Arrive at implications of Scripture with little difficulty.
□ □ Do things without help instead of accepting assistance from others.

45. □ □ Develop a long-range plan to obtain the best results.
□ □ Want to help people in need even though the facts are not known.
□ □ Try to get people to complete a task once they have started it.

46. □ □ Tend to be critical of people who do not keep high standards of conduct.
□ □ Use ability to persuade others to do those jobs that need to be done.
□ □ Plan talks in such a way that people will feel the need to respond.

47. □ □ Use part of what is earned through hard work to help people who deserve it.
□ □ Prepare material for a speech so all those who listen will understand clearly.
□ □ Often get busy talking to people and forget other duties that need to be done.

48. □ □ Often use own resources to assist in worthy causes.
□ □ Prefer a well-planned discussion to casual conversation.
□ □ Get irritated when people are standing around on a job because of poor planning.

49. □ □ Take responsibility as a leader when a task needs to be done.
□ □ Find it easy to talk with people individually or in groups.
□ □ Prefer to speak to a group rather than talk to people individually.

50. □ □ Expect to be told exactly what a job requires.
□ □ Let people know in a positive way when they are not doing their part on a job.
□ □ Have the ability to say things so clearly that almost everyone understands.

51. □ □ Perceive motives behind an action which others might not detect.
□ □ Usually dig for more information than can be used when studying.
□ □ Welcome a difficult assignment as an opportunity to learn.

52. □ □ Insist upon thorough preparation before making a presentation.
□ □ Prefer making decisions quickly rather than hesitating.
□ □ Understand what makes people act as they do.

53. □ □ Accept people readily in spite of their shortcomings.
□ □ Find it easier to talk to a group than to counsel one person.
□ □ Use words to explain situations well.

54. □ □ Often, through study, discover informative details others have not found.
□ □ Come up with a good idea to help people in a difficult situation.
□ □ Accept responsibility to be the manager on a project if asked.
85. Sometimes protect others on a job by accepting blame for their mistakes.  
   ☐ Have the skill to explain biblical truth clearly and concisely.  
   ☐ Use financial abilities to plan for the best use of available resources.

86. Often approach a job in a new way in an effort to learn a new skill.  
   ☐ Try to find a plan that will help people when they are in trouble.  
   ☐ Tend to lose enthusiasm on jobs that take a long time.

87. Gladly contribute to a cause when the money is put to good use.  
   ☐ Stay with a task even though inwardly discouraged.  
   ☐ Feel it is necessary to finish an assignment once it is started.

88. Need to see results to stay interested in a project.  
   ☐ Study the Bible systematically trying to bring in the total picture.  
   ☐ Enjoy digging for facts to gain new information.

89. Feel free to suggest an alternate plan to the boss if it will work better.  
   ☐ Usually discount a message if the speaker appears to be phony.  
   ☐ Struggle through hurts and joys with others to help them.

90. Study a matter carefully before expressing an opinion.  
   ☐ Tend to get discouraged when a project goes on for a long time.  
   ☐ Stick to an assignment until every detail is finished.

91. Like to contribute to special projects more than to routine programs.  
   ☐ Have an ability to summarize a speech or an article clearly.  
   ☐ Set the guidelines and procedures for the workers on a project.

92. Neglect own responsibilities at times to talk with people.  
   ☐ Bring people and resources together so tasks can be done efficiently.  
   ☐ Quickly spot the main points in a presentation.

93. Examine closely the worthiness of an endeavor before supporting it.  
   ☐ Seek to set an example for others by being consistent in behavior.  
   ☐ Assume responsibility to organize a work force for a project.

94. Like to explain the fine points of Scripture others often overlook.  
   ☐ Tend to come to a conclusion too quickly.  
   ☐ Remain optimistic even when difficulties are encountered.

95. Plan carefully so as to avoid waste in the use of supplies.  
   ☐ Speak up quickly when others don't see details in Scripture.  
   ☐ Readily see in daily activities how often biblical truth applies.

96. Feel the need to help people even though it is against better judgment.  
   ☐ Skillfully point out to others what job needs to be done.  
   ☐ Study carefully so as to pick up all the details.

97. Find new ways to do routine jobs to keep from getting bored.  
   ☐ Encourage others to contribute by giving to worthy causes.  
   ☐ Feel that people who get into difficulty must get out themselves.

98. Stay on a course of action once it has been established.  
   ☐ Respond quickly to help people who are in need.  
   ☐ Often change routine activities to try to find a better way to do the job
99. □□ Look for ways to make it practical when studying.
□□ Emphasize basic values repeatedly when speaking.
□□ Tend to be critical of others or to question their motives.

100. □□ Determine to carry on even though many difficulties may be encountered.
□□ Use personal insight to evaluate situations and to pinpoint difficulties.
□□ Like to work with other members of a team on a project.

101. □□ Readily see the biblical applications for a text.
□□ Get work started by offering to accept responsibility.
□□ Find many personal experiences are guided by biblical principles.

102. □□ Get caught up in new ideas to the neglect of daily tasks.
□□ Welcome difficulties as opportunities for growth.
□□ Tell people when they are not doing what is right.

103. □□ Summarize a presentation quickly by picking out the main points.
□□ Work hard so as to be able to invest in worthy causes.
□□ Study matters thoroughly so as to locate information others overlook.

104. □□ Suggest to the boss another way to do the job if it will work better.
□□ Find a lot of satisfaction in detailed study and research.
□□ Keep feelings inside rather than risk offending someone.

105. □□ Quickly get involved in new projects that have merit.
□□ Criticize those whose conduct is not in line with biblical standards.
□□ Recruit people to implement plans that have been developed.

106. □□ Like to participate in panel discussions when panel members know their subject
□□ React impatiently with those who repeatedly get into difficulty.
□□ Try to get people to reconcile their differences.

107. □□ Need to be told when a job is done well.
□□ Tell people what changes they should make without offending them.
□□ Supervise a job to see that all the details are running smoothly.

108. □□ Seem to have an ability to put people where they are most productive on a job.
□□ Sometimes defend a position even though confidence is lacking.
□□ Look for the best in people without doubting them.

109. □□ Express an opinion to the leader if another way works better.
□□ Try to treat everyone the same way.
□□ Need to be reminded of the value of a project to stay involved.

110. □□ Like to visit with people individually or in groups.
□□ Choose to discuss matters only with people who are well informed.
□□ Desire the best for people in spite of their faults.

111. □□ Invest in projects only when convinced of their merit.
□□ Consciously try in all that is done to set an example of good behavior.
□□ Encourage people to keep growing in their Christian faith.

112. □□ Find it difficult to refuse anyone who asks for aid.
□□ Enjoy study and want to learn as much as possible.
□□ Seek to find ways to put what is heard into practice.
113. □ □ Tell others when they need to change without offending them.
□ □ Try to keep peace by avoiding controversial matters.
□ □ Set a good example of behavior which is respected by others.

114. □ □ Reject emotional appeals for help unless facts are furnished to support the need.
□ □ Find it hard to say no when asked to help others.
□ □ Accept responsibility to oversee a project until it is completely finished.

115. □ □ Resist making decisions before carefully thinking through the consequences.
□ □ Assume responsibility to get people started on a project.
□ □ Feel uncomfortable when not thoroughly prepared to speak.

116. □ □ Refuse to give up on a task in spite of difficulties.
□ □ Point out the weak spots to protect others from ideas which are misleading.
□ □ Help people to take the next step in their Christian growth.

117. □ □ Capably direct a project when asked to assume that responsibility.
□ □ Challenge people to do more so more good can be achieved.
□ □ Use personal enthusiasm to get people to work harder.

118. □ □ At times argue a point even though not fully convinced.
□ □ Detect where there may be problems when evaluating a proposal.
□ □ Get irritated when people give a speech without adequate preparation.

119. □ □ Stick to goals in spite of adverse circumstances.
□ □ Work on a plan to help people get out of their difficulties.
□ □ Quickly recognize if a person’s intentions are good or bad.

120. □ □ Evaluate the quality of a presentation easily spotting the main points.
□ □ Use enthusiasm to get people to do more work.
□ □ Look for things to do to help others who need assistance.

121. □ □ Consciously try to determine what God would want in each task of the day.
□ □ Think of creative alternatives when facing obstacles.
□ □ Go along with what others want rather than start a controversy.

122. □ □ Plan carefully so as to avoid wasted effort.
□ □ Quickly capture the meaning of a biblical passage.
□ □ Invest wisely to provide for self and for others.

123. □ □ Somehow find a way to accomplish a job if it’s important.
□ □ Feel deep concern for people who are going through difficulties.
□ □ Set high goals for each undertaking.

124. □ □ Soon recognize when a person is being hypocritical.
□ □ Stick to a job and work hard until it is finished.
□ □ Set an example for others by supporting worthy endeavors.

125. □ □ Courageously move ahead even when others hesitate.
□ □ Speak firmly to people at times in order to get work accomplished.
□ □ Figure a way to get the most out of the resources that are available.

126. □ □ Point out to others what they could do to help finish a job.
□ □ Find people who are willing to do a necessary assignment.
□ □ Think of what biblical principles should be considered when making a decision
127. □ □ Speak carefully on matters only after a careful study has been done.
   □ □ Patiently work with people no matter how difficult their situation.
   □ □ Persist, even work harder, though inwardly discouraged.

128. □ □ Hesitate to draw a conclusion until all the details have been studied.
   □ □ Accept the position as leader on a project to see each one does his or her job.
   □ □ Abandon personal plans or desires to let others have their way.

129. □ □ Volunteer to assist wherever abilities can be used.
   □ □ Engage in careful study so as not to overlook details.
   □ □ Lead out with new ideas which others can follow.

130. □ □ Discover ways whereby difficult tasks can be completed.
   □ □ Try to please people by responding in a way they expect.
   □ □ Talk people into making changes for the better.

131. □ □ Work to keep project on schedule by getting the most out of available resources.
   □ □ Remind people that their daily conduct should conform to what the Bible says.
   □ □ Work to help people settle their differences.

132. □ □ Take on what others consider to be impossible.
   □ □ Double own efforts when others fail to do their job.
   □ □ Recommend an alternate plan to the leader if it will work better.

133. □ □ Like to contribute when it can be seen that money is used for a good cause.
   □ □ Need frequent encouragement to stick with a long project.
   □ □ Take on a project with a determination to meet obstacles head on.

134. □ □ Readily accept what the Bible says without any question.
   □ □ Tend to stick with goals once they are established.
   □ □ Try to find biblical principles to serve as a guide for daily activities.

135. □ □ Maintain determination to accomplish tasks in spite of difficulties.
   □ □ Analyze most problems by using a logical or scientific method.
   □ □ Have a deep compassion and concern for people in their struggles.

136. □ □ Stop working on a project when beneficial results are no longer seen.
   □ □ Often repeat the primary truths of Scripture.
   □ □ Overide people's opinions if necessary to do the job right.

137. □ □ Prefer to do a job than to give it to someone else to do.
   □ □ See how biblical principles are often worked out in daily experiences.
   □ □ Seem to be able to explain difficult portions of Scripture to others.

138. □ □ Answer questions and provide information with confidence.
   □ □ Encourage others to participate in worthwhile projects.
   □ □ Try to help people to settle their differences.

139. □ □ Like to stay with a project until it is completed in all of its details.
   □ □ Support those that are able to stretch their resources to get the most out of them.
   □ □ Discount the good if a person seems to say one thing and do another.

140. □ □ Evaluate situations and formulate accurate opinions quickly.
   □ □ See clearly even when many details cloud the main points.
   □ □ Risk being misunderstood to see that an important job gets done.
141. Like decisions to be made right away once people know the truth. 
   Quickly see the total picture from examining the parts. 
   Delay benefits now to gain more later.

142. Pick out biblical principles often overlooked by others. 
   Tend to act quickly when presented with a challenge. 
   Like to engage in a thorough analytic study of a topic.

143. Like to study topics in depth to develop a more complete picture. 
   Explain to people how the Bible requires that they behave responsibly. 
   Jump in quickly to help a person in a distressful situation.

144. Refuse to give up on others even when they fail. 
   Invest wisely to achieve long-range goals. 
   Feel an urgency to get jobs done without delay.

145. Assume responsibility to see the job gets done. 
   Hold feelings of bitterness inside when people take advantage. 
   Try to have a personal lifestyle which others can follow.

146. Tend to draw conclusions from outward appearances. 
   Forego immediate returns in light of potential gain in the future. 
   Study the Bible carefully to help people find practical applications.

147. Act quickly to help people when they need assistance. 
   Speak up when what someone has said appears to be misleading others. 
   Explain some alternatives to people who face difficult situations.

148. Talk more easily in a group setting than in a one-to-one setting. 
   Use words well to express ideas. 
   Get upset when people are wasteful with what they have.

149. Take the responsibility to see a job is done correctly. 
   Often question the motives behind why a person did something. 
   Think of several possibilities when helping a person make a decision.

150. Find a program of action to assist people with their difficulties. 
   Often abandon personal plans to do what others want to do. 
   Reserve opinion until carefully thought through.

151. Find it difficult to quit after a project is underway. 
   Expect to see results when supporting a project. 
   Set an example which others often follow.

152. Enjoy group interaction more than personal discussion. 
   Look closely at new programs to see if they make wise use of their resources. 
   Feel at ease in talking with groups or with individuals.

153. Decide carefully what to do in order to furnish a good example for others. 
   Find social gatherings and games uninteresting. 
   Put off routine duties when involved in a new project.

154. Use persuasive abilities effectively. 
   Try to avoid controversial situations. 
   Supervise others to see that the project gets completed.
155. □□ Accept supervisory responsibility for all the details on a project.
     □□ State the facts even though it may hurt the feelings of some people.
     □□ Make a check to see if an appeal is legitimate before contributing.

156. □□ Feel more comfortable talking to a group than to one person alone.
     □□ Give full support to the decisions made by those in positions of leadership.
     □□ Find it necessary to confront people sometimes to get things out in the open.

157. □□ Try not to criticize people, but always look for the best in them.
     □□ Feel an unusually strong concern for people who are going through a crisis.
     □□ Help to pinpoint the source of a difficulty in a given situation.

158. □□ Do the organizational work to get people started on a project.
     □□ Tend to stay with the same job in a church rather than start a new one.
     □□ Encourage people to grow through greater commitment to Christ.

159. □□ Challenge people to live by biblical standards.
     □□ Stay with a task and work hard until it is completed.
     □□ Spend much time thinking about the needs of other people.

160. □□ Do a good job of summarizing what someone has said or written.
     □□ Challenge people to maintain good discipline in their lives.
     □□ Find it very difficult to forgive people when they take advantage.

161. □□ Feel confident in the ability to invest wisely.
     □□ Stick firmly to a plan once it has been established.
     □□ Study a biblical passage thoroughly so as not to overlook any details.

162. □□ Assist others with a job until it is completely finished.
     □□ Prefer organized discussions where participants have studied their subject.
     □□ Usually understand why people feel as they do.

163. □□ Join in quickly to assist other members of the team on a project.
     □□ Look on the bright side of each situation.
     □□ Use a logical, scientific method when approaching problems.

164. □□ Often search for additional details before coming to a conclusion.
     □□ Make decisions quickly unless some questions have created an uncertainty.
     □□ Take time to determine the appropriate biblical principle before making a decision.

165. □□ Seldom overlook details when studying.
     □□ Quietly find a way to help meet the needs of others.
     □□ Readily find biblical principles which pertain in making a decision.

166. □□ Recognize when people are not what they claim to be.
     □□ Rarely talk to people about deeply personal matters.
     □□ Pick up details in such a way as to see the full picture readily.

167. □□ Keep feelings inside rather than to take a chance of being misunderstood.
     □□ Welcome the opportunity to invest in worthwhile endeavors.
     □□ Find workable solutions to assist people who are in trouble.

168. □□ Find details when studying which others have not discovered.
     □□ Do practical things to help people when they need assistance.
     □□ Present material in a well-organized way so that others understand.
169. [ ] Like to share personal resources to help people in worthy endeavors.  
          [ ] Find it necessary to confront people when they fail to do their part on a job.  
          [ ] Spot quickly where the difficulty is when evaluating a situation.

170. [ ] Tell people changes they need to make without alienating them.  
          [ ] Take the initiative to organize a work force for a project.  
          [ ] Try to protect others from being misled.

171. [ ] Delegate responsibilities to others easily.  
          [ ] Seek new ways to do things to keep from getting bored.  
          [ ] Understand the feelings and attitudes of many people.

172. [ ] Establish long-range objectives to gain the best results.  
          [ ] Find ways to help people apply biblical truth to their daily activities.  
          [ ] Prefer to engage in short-range as opposed to lengthy projects.

173. [ ] Feel bad about the troubles in which others find themselves.  
          [ ] Look for the opportunity to share own resources with others.  
          [ ] Have an ability to get people to work hard.

174. [ ] Talk with people to encourage them to do what needs to be done.  
          [ ] Employ study skills when thinking about a topic to obtain precision.  
          [ ] Consider any undertaking to be important.

175. [ ] Find it easy to get too involved when helping others.  
          [ ] Stick to an assignment even though others have quit.  
          [ ] Interpret Scripture with keen insight.

176. [ ] Invest time or resources only if need has been supported by factual data.  
          [ ] Tend to be judgmental when people's motives are questionable.  
          [ ] Study the Bible systematically trying to see how one part relates to another.

177. [ ] Accept the Bible and what it says without any question.  
          [ ] Feel obligated to do a job rather than ask for assistance.  
          [ ] Invest wisely to get the most out of available resources.

178. [ ] Make decisions quickly as a rule, but hesitate when uncertain.  
          [ ] Seek assignments which are not too complicated.  
          [ ] Deliberately plan talks to get observable results.

179. [ ] Quickly detect any hidden motives behind people's actions.  
          [ ] Often act as mediator when people have disagreements.  
          [ ] Have good success in delegating responsibilities to others.

180. [ ] Seek out well-informed people to get information on a subject.  
          [ ] Easily put ideas into words which others readily understand.  
          [ ] Try to do whatever is asked by the leaders in the church.

181. [ ] Usually sense when people are not what they claim to be.  
          [ ] Take orders well but seldom assume leadership on a project.  
          [ ] Stay with a job until it is finished once it has been started.

182. [ ] Refuse to be discouraged in spite of difficulties.  
          [ ] Let other needs go sometimes when contributing to a very worthy cause.  
          [ ] Avoid discussion with people on deeply personal matters.
183. ☐☐ Find own efforts of leadership respected by others.
    ☐☐ Try to think of what God would want done in all that is undertaken.
    ☐☐ Express a desire to keep present assignment when asked to consider a new one.

184. ☐☐ Prefer to work as a leader on a team than to work alone.
    ☐☐ Like to engage in scholarly discussions with well-informed people.
    ☐☐ Listen carefully to criticism but resist change until fully persuaded.

185. ☐☐ Protect others from being taken by a sales pitch.
    ☐☐ Set a personal example of behavior which others have said they respect.
    ☐☐ Think the truth should be known even if feelings are hurt.

186. ☐☐ Like to work on projects but would rather not be the leader.
    ☐☐ Often hold feelings of guilt inside after being hurt by someone.
    ☐☐ Prefer to deal with facts rather than with feelings.

187. ☐☐ Feel confident to do a job when it needs to be done.
    ☐☐ Move ahead with great determination to achieve goals.
    ☐☐ Sometimes appear more confident than is really the case.

188. ☐☐ Tend to hold feelings inside if the other person appears insensitive.
    ☐☐ Look for difficult assignments in order to learn more.
    ☐☐ Stick with a job until it is completely finished.

189. ☐☐ Approach the future with confidence that goals will be achieved.
    ☐☐ Suggest practical ways to apply biblical principles.
    ☐☐ Encourage people to take action once they know the truth.

190. ☐☐ Sacrifice personal desires rather than risk offending someone.
    ☐☐ Look for different ways to do a job so as to learn new skills.
    ☐☐ Consistently endeavor to fulfill all responsibilities to others.

191. ☐☐ Lay out careful plans before starting a particular course of action.
    ☐☐ Often study just to gain more information on a subject.
    ☐☐ Tend to criticize others if their motives appear questionable.

192. ☐☐ Need to be told that work is appreciated and worthwhile.
    ☐☐ Set the pace for others when facing a challenge.
    ☐☐ Correct others when it is obvious they have made a mistake.
The Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire
by C. Peter Wagner
SGI-WMHQ
STEP 1: WAGNER-MODIFIED HOUTS QUESTIONNAIRE

For each statement, mark to what extent it is true of your life: Much, Some, Little or Not at All

1. I have a desire to speak direct messages that I receive from God in order to edify, exhort or comfort others.

2. I have enjoyed ministering to a certain group of people over a long period of time, sharing personally in their successes and their failures.

3. People have told me that I have helped them learn biblical truths in a meaningful way.

4. I have applied spiritual truth effectively to critical situations in my own life.

5. Others have told me I have helped them to discern key and important facts of Scripture.

6. I have verbally encouraged and helped the wavering, the troubled or the discouraged.

7. Others in my church have noted that I am able to see through phoniness before it is evident to other people.
8. I find I manage money well in order to give liberally to the Lord's work.

9. I have assisted Christian leaders to relieve them for concentrating on their essential job.

10. I have a desire to work with those who have physical or mental problems in order to alleviate their suffering.

11. I feel comfortable relating to people of other cultures, and they seem to accept me.

12. I have led others to a decision for salvation through faith in Christ.

13. My home is always open to people who need a place to stay.

14. When in a group, I am the one to whom others often look to for vision and direction.

15. When I speak, people seem to listen and agree.

16. When a group I am in is lacking organization, I love to step in to fill the gap.
17. Others can point to specific instances in which my prayers have resulted in visible miracles.

18. In the name of the Lord, I have been used in curing diseases instantaneously.

19. I have spoken in tongues.

20. Sometimes when a person speaks in tongues, I seem to know what God is saying through them.

21. I could live more comfortably, but I choose not to in order to identify with the poor.

22. I am single and enjoy it.

23. I spend at least an hour a day in prayer.

24. I have spoken directly to evil spirits, and they have obeyed me.

25. I enjoy being called on to do odd jobs around the church.

26. A number of pastors and/or ministry leaders have told me that they desire to minister and to be held accountable under my spiritual covering.
27. I have an insatiable appetite for the presence of God.

28. Through God I have been used to reveal to others specific things that will happen in the future, and they have come to pass.

29. I have enjoyed assuming the responsibility for the spiritual well-being of a particular group of Christians.

30. I feel I can explain the New Testament teaching about the health and ministry of the Body of Christ in a relevant way.

31. I can intuitively arrive at solutions to fairly complicated problems.

32. I have had insights relating to spiritual truth that others have said helped bring them closer to God.

33. I can effectively motivate people to get busy and do what they are supposed to do.

34. I can “see” the Spirit of God resting on certain people from time to time.
35. My giving records show that I contribute considerably more than 10 percent of my income to the Lord’s work.

36. Other people have told me that I have helped them become more effective in their ministries.

37. I have offered to care for others when they have had material or physical needs.

38. I feel I could learn another language well in order to minister to those in a different culture.

39. I have shared joyfully how Christ has brought me to Himself in a way that is meaningful to nonbelievers.

40. I enjoy taking charge of church suppers or social events.

41. I have believed God for the impossible and seen it happen in a tangible way.

42. Other Christians have followed my leadership because they trusted me.
43. I enjoy handling the details of organizing ideas, people, resources and time for more effective ministry.

44. God has used me personally to perform supernatural signs and wonders.

45. I enjoy praying for sick people because I know ahead of time that many of them will be healed as a result.

46. I have spoken an immediate message of God to His people in a language I have never learned.

47. I have interpreted public tongues with the result that the Body of Christ was edified, exhorted or comforted.

48. Living a simple lifestyle is an exciting challenge for me.

49. Other people have noted that I feel more indifferent about not being married than most.

50. When I hear an urgent prayer request, I pray for that need for several days at least.
51. I have actually heard a demon speak in a loud voice.

52. I don’t have many special skills, but I volunteer to do what needs to be done around the church.

53. I am known as a leader of leaders.

54. I intuitively know what should happen next in a worship service.

55. People have told me that I have communicated timely and urgent messages that must have come directly from the Lord.

56. I feel unafraid of offering spiritual guidance and direction to a group of Christians.

57. I can devote considerable time to learning new biblical truths in order to communicate them to others.

58. When other people have a problem, I can frequently guide them to the best biblical solution.

59. Through study or experience I have discerned major strategies or techniques that God seems to use in furthering His kingdom.
60. People come to me in their afflictions or suffering because they know that I will listen to them and understand.

61. I can tell with a fairly high degree of assurance when a person is afflicted by an evil spirit.

62. When I am moved by an appeal to give to God’s work, I usually can find the money I need to help.

63. I have enjoyed doing routine tasks that have allowed more effective ministry on the part of others.

64. I enjoy visiting in hospitals and/or retirement homes, and feel I do well in such a ministry.

65. People of a different race or culture have been attracted to me, and we have related well.

66. Non-Christians have noted that they feel comfortable when they are around me, and that I have a positive effect on them toward developing a faith in Christ.

67. When people come to our home, they indicate that they “feel at home” with us.
68. Other people have told me that I had faith to accomplish what seemed impossible to them.

69. When I set goals, others seem to accept them readily.

70. I have been able to make effective and efficient plans for accomplishing the goals of a group.

71. God regularly seems to do impossible things through my life.

72. Others have told me that God healed them of an emotional problem when I ministered to them.

73. I can speak to God in a language I have never learned.

74. I have prayed that I may interpret if someone begins speaking in tongues.

75. I am not poor, but I can warmly identify with poor people.

76. I am glad I have more time to serve the Lord because I am single.

77. Day in and day out, intercessory prayer is one of my favorite ways of spending time.
78. Others call on me when they suspect that someone is demonized.

79. Others have mentioned that I seem to enjoy routine tasks and do well at them.

80. Christian leaders seem pleased to work under my leadership, and they respect my authority when we undertake a common task.

81. During worship, I can often tell if there is a spiritual force attempting to hinder our connection with God.

82. I sometimes have a strong sense of what God wants to say to people in response to particular situations.

83. I have helped fellow believers by guiding them to relevant portions of the Bible and praying with them.

84. I feel I can communicate significant truths to others and see resulting changes in knowledge, attitudes, values or conduct.

85. Some people indicate that I have perceived and applied biblical truths to the specific needs of fellow believers.
86. I study and read quite a bit in order to learn new biblical truths.

87. I have a desire to effectively counsel those in need.

88. I can recognize whether a person’s teaching or actions are from God, from Satan, or of human origin.

89. I am so confident that God will meet my financial needs that I do not hesitate to give to His work sacrificially and consistently.

90. When I do things behind the scenes and others are helped, I am joyful.

91. People call on me to help those who are less fortunate.

92. I would be willing to leave comfortable surroundings if it would enable me to share Christ with less fortunate people.

93. I get frustrated when others don’t seem to share their faith with non-believers as much as I do.

94. Others have mentioned to me that I am a very hospitable person.
95. There have been times when I have felt sure I knew God's specific will for the future growth of His work, even when others have not been so sure.

96. When I am part of a group, others seem to back off and expect me to take the leadership.

97. I am able to give directions to others without using persuasion to get them to accomplish a certain task.

98. People have told me that I was God's instrument that brought supernatural change in lives or circumstances.

99. I have prayed for others and instantaneous physical healing has often occurred.

100. When I give a public message in tongues, I expect it to be interpreted.

101. I have interpreted tongues in a way that seemed to bless others.

102. Others tell me that I sacrifice too much materially in order to fulfill God's calling.
103. I am single and have little difficulty controlling my sexual desires.

104. Others have told me that my prayers for them have been answered in tangible ways.

105. Other people have been instantly delivered from demonic oppression when I have prayed.

106. I prefer being active and doing something rather than just sitting around talking or reading or listening to a speaker.

107. I regularly receive revelation from God as to what the Holy Spirit is currently saying to the Church.

108. Others have told me that my worship helps them enter into the presence of God.

109. I frequently feel that I know exactly what God wants to do in ministry at a specific point in time.

110. People with needs have told me that I have helped them be restored to the Christian community.
111. Studying the Bible and sharing my insights with others are very satisfying for me.

112. I have felt an unusual presence of God and personal confidence when important decisions needed to be made.

113. I have the ability to discover new truths for myself through reading or observing situations firsthand.

114. I have helped others find a biblical solution to their affliction or suffering.

115. I can tell whether a person speaking in tongues is genuine.

116. I have been willing to maintain a lower standard of living in order to benefit God's work.

117. When I serve the Lord, I truthfully don't care if someone else gets the credit for what I do.

118. I frequently enjoy spending time with a lonely, shut-in person or with someone in prison.
119. More than most, I have had a strong desire to see peoples of other countries won to the Lord.

120. I am attracted to nonbelievers mainly because of my desire to win them to Christ.

121. I have desired to make my home available to those in the Lord’s service whenever needed.

122. Others have told me that I am a person of unusual vision, and I agree.

123. When I am in charge, things seem to run smoothly.

124. I have enjoyed bearing the responsibility for the success of a particular task within my church or in the workplace.

125. In the name of the Lord, I have been able to help blind people receive their sight.

126. When I pray for the sick, either I or they feel sensations of tingling or warmth.
127. When I speak in tongues to a group, I believe it is edifying to the Lord’s Body.

128. I have interpreted tongues in such a way that the message appeared to be directly from God.

129. Poor people accept me easily because I choose to live on their level.

130. I readily identify with Paul’s desire for others to be single as he was.

131. When I pray, God frequently speaks to me, and I recognize His voice.

132. I regularly cast out demons in Jesus’ name.

133. I respond cheerfully when asked to do a job, even if it seems menial.

134. When I call Christian leaders to come together for a certain purpose, a significant number of them respond.

135. I have a compelling desire to lead others into an experience with God.
TEAM Ministry Spiritual Gifts Inventory
by Larry Gilbert
SGI-Gilbert
INSTRUCTIONS: This questionnaire is designed to be combined with an answer sheet. Do not mark in this questionnaire. Lay the answer sheet beside the questionnaire. Read each statement on the questionnaire and decide how it pertains to you. Then on the answer sheet, if the statement fits you 70% to 100% of the time, darken in circle 3: Almost Always. If the statement fits you 40% to 70% of the time, darken in circle 2: Occasionally. If the statement fits you less than 40% of the time, darken in circle 1: Not Very Often.

Most of the statements deal with your feelings or desires, so be sure to give YOUR OWN opinion of yourself. Let your responses reflect how you feel at the present time. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. Do not leave any spaces blank. When you have responded to all the statements, separate the 2-part answer sheet and follow instructions on page 2 to total your score and examine the results.

DO NOT MARK IN BOOKLET—USE ANSWER SHEET

1. I have a consuming passion (strong desire, great concern) to reach lost souls.
2. I put great importance (high priority) on repentance (sorrow, regret, resulting in turning from sin).
3. I believe I am very discerning (perceptive) of other people’s motives.
4. When I speak, I desire to stir other people’s consciences (make them think, convict them to act).
5. I have an unusually strong desire to study God’s Word.
6. I place great importance (value) on education.
7. When I do something, I like to see “tangible” results for my efforts, such as a finished project or measurable results.
8. If I were to teach a group, I would prefer to deal with topics rather than verse-by-verse studies.
9. I am willing to assume a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers.
10. I am people centered, I need many relationships.
11. I am usually soft-spoken.
12. I am patient, not one to jump into things, but am willing to respond to others’ needs quickly.
13. I am fulfilled by performing routine tasks in the church for God’s glory.
14. I am usually involved in or drawn to a variety of activities that help other people.
15. I keep my personal and business affairs well organized.
16. I have a burden (heartfelt desire, passion, great concern) to support missions.
17. I make decisions based strictly on facts and data.
18. I can clearly communicate goals in a way that others may fulfill them.
19. I believe salvation is the greatest gift of all, and am driven to tell others about this gift.
20. Some people think my witnessing methods are pushy.
21. I can spot (discern, point out, recognize) sin when other people cannot.
22. I feel a great need to expose the sin I see in others.
23. I like to use visuals and books to support me when I teach or speak to a group of people.
24. I constantly analyze for better ways to do and say things.
25. I believe I am a very practical, pragmatic person.
26. I am able to provide helpful solutions and advice to others when they have personal problems.
27. I spend a great amount of time praying for other people.
28. I enjoy looking after the spiritual welfare of others; I am protective.
29. I find it easy to express my feelings to others.
30. I have a real burden (heartfelt desire, passion) to comfort others.
31. I am more fulfilled when I work behind the scenes, out of the public eye.
32. I am burdened (greatly concerned) with the physical and tangible needs of others.
33. My giving is a private matter between God and me.
34. I am sensitive to other people’s financial and material needs.
35. I am goal oriented, as opposed to being people or content oriented.
36. I work best in a fast-paced environment, under pressure.
37. I have a desire to meet lost people, even when they are total strangers, so I can share the Gospel with them.
38. I would rather witness (verbally share the Gospel, give my testimony) than do anything else.
39. I am grieved (bothered, troubled, disturbed, upset) with the wrong actions of others.
40. I am disorganized and must depend on others to keep me on schedule.
41. I have an organized system to store facts and figures.
42. I put more emphasis on the content of material than with people or the task.
43. I am more interested in studying the practical areas of Scripture that I can immediately apply to my life.
44. I put great importance on God’s will.
45. I have a burden (compelling desire) to see others learn and grow.
46. I am more relationship oriented than task oriented.
47. I am very sympathetic and sensitive with others. I can “put myself in their shoes.”
48. Other people think I am weak, a pushover, because of my lack of firmness.
49. I enjoy working with my hands.
50. I often let people talk me into doing things I do not want to do.
51. I am always ready and willing to give if a valid (real, proven) need exists.
52. I have the ability to quickly make wise decisions concerning finances.
53. I do things promptly; I make decisions quickly.
54. I dream big dreams and have great hopes, although I do not always share them with others.
55. I have a clear understanding of the Gospel and can relate it easily so others understand it.
56. I am socially active and always get along well with others.
57. I must verbalize (speak) my message; I would never be content to only write it.
58. I always express urgency and want others to make quick decisions.
59. Sometimes I would rather just write, but feel that I "must teach" because others would not present my message correctly.
60. The use of a verse out of context upsets me.
61. I develop several steps of actions to solve every problem.
62. I question the value of deep doctrinal and theological studies.
63. I am very protective of people under my care.
64. Teaching the same material over and over would be boring and unappealing to me.
65. I attempt to show love and concern in all I do.
66. I act on emotions rather than just logic.
67. I am impressed and motivated when exhorted (encouraged) to serve.
68. I like to meet needs immediately (quickly).
69. When giving, I always like my gift to be high quality.
70. Other people misunderstand and think I am materialistic because of the importance I place on money. Much good can be accomplished through using money wisely.
71. I delegate whenever and wherever possible, but I know when and where I cannot.
72. I am willing to attempt impossible tasks for God.
73. I greatly rejoice in seeing people come to Christ.
74. I believe soulwinning (influencing and leading people to Christ, presenting the Gospel to non-Christians) is the greatest responsibility given to every Christian.
75. I enjoy speaking in public, and do it with boldness.
76. I am burdened (have a strong desire/conviction, am moved) to memorize Scripture.
77. I tend to question the knowledge of those who teach me.
78. Others accuse me of giving too many details.
79. I have the ability to motivate others.
80. Impractical teaching upsets and frustrates me.
81. I desire to give direction (guidance, instruction) to those under my care.
82. I am willing to study whatever is necessary in order to lead (nurture, guide) those for whom I care.
83. My heart goes out to the poor, the aged, the ill, the underprivileged, etc.
84. I seem to attract and be drawn to people who are hurting or rejoicing.
85. I am already helping people while others are just talking about what to do.
86. I am quick to recognize and respond when other people need help.
87. I want to know my financial gift is being used properly. I believe in accountability.
88. I tend to judge others' success by the amount of their material assets.
89. I want to be a winner; I cannot bear defeat.
90. I am capable of making quick decisions and sticking to them.
91. When I witness (share the Gospel, present my testimony) to a lost person I always press for a decision.
92. Others think I am more interested in the number of people led to the Lord than in people themselves.
93. You must "prove" me wrong before I will go along with you.
94. Studying is too time-consuming; I rely on others to do my background work for me.
95. I prefer to develop my own material for teaching; other teachers' material would be hard to present.
96. I place great emphasis on word pronunciation.
97. Others think I am not evangelistic because of my emphasis (focus) on personal growth.
98. I am accused of not using enough Scripture when teaching.
99. I enjoy doing a wide variety of activities rather than being confined to only one.
100. I perceive myself as a shepherd (an overseer, guiding and ministering to those under my care).
101. I am an emotional person; I tend to show my feelings and cry easily.
102. I identify emotionally and mentally with others. I am able to empathize (feel with others rather than just for others).
103. Some people think I neglect spiritual needs because of my focus on physical and practical needs.
104. I enjoy mechanical jobs in the church.
105. Financial support is so important to ministry that I am upset when others do not give according to their means. I tend to measure their level of spiritual growth by their giving or lack of giving.
106. I am able to designate large sums of money for designated causes. As a result, others may think I am trying to control ministry projects through my giving.
107. When there is no leadership in a group, I will assume it.
108. I have the ability to organize and harmonize the people with whom I work.
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ABSTRACT

TOWARD AN ECCLESIOCENTRIC MODEL OF SPIRITUAL GIFT IDENTIFICATION

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011
Chairperson: Dr. Timothy K. Beougher

This dissertation seeks to answer the question: “Is the use of a spiritual gift identification instrument the best way for people to find their place of joyful service within the church?” Chapter 1 provides a history of the Church Growth Movement (CGM) through 1972 as an important backdrop for the development of spiritual gift identification instruments, the first of which was the SGI-McMinn. One of the key factors in the early popularizing of the SGI-McMinn was the CGM’s emphasis on every member serving in the church by using his or her spiritual gift. The early 1970s saw a marked increase in the interest of spiritual gifts and their identification that was largely due to the influence of the CGM. This emphasis led to the popularization of the SGI-McMinn, which had been in development since the mid 1960s. The popularization of the SGI-McMinn led to the problematic issue of whether the instrument was based on solid theological and methodological ground.

Chapter 2 provides a thorough examination of the historical development of the SGI-McMinn. This chapter includes an assessment of the relationship between the CGM’s emphasis on spiritual gift utilization and the development of a tool for spiritual gift identification. This chapter examines the development of spiritual gift identification
instruments beginning with the SGI-McMinn (1972), moving to the SGI-L (1984), the SGI-WHMQ (1979), and SGI-Gilbert (1986).

Chapter 3 demonstrates that spiritual gift identification instruments are dependent upon defining spiritual gifts as abilities that may be accurately self-reported. Further, the design of spiritual gift identification instruments is inherently influenced by the biblical and theological bias of those designing them. Two popular spiritual gift identification instruments will be compared to demonstrate this dependence: the SGI-WHMQ and the SGI-Gilbert. Biblical bias is demonstrated as some spiritual gift identification instruments hold firmly to a set, unchanging number of gifts tested for, while other instruments are modified significantly over time. This biblical bias is problematic as it lends to creating confusion over the number and identity of spiritual gifts. Theological bias is demonstrated by the tendency of such instruments to focus on the individual rather than the New Testament purpose for gifts as a blessing to the local church. An excursus on the problem of self-assessment concludes the chapter.

Chapter 4 brings together a number of empirical analyses of spiritual gift identification instrument construct, validity, and reliability. Regardless of the supposed biblical or theological basis for utilizing spiritual gift identification instruments, the research into the construct of the instruments themselves is vital to determining their usefulness in the church. The empirical analyses demonstrate that the methodology inherent in the development of spiritual gift identification instruments is not demonstrably valid or reliable to reveal individual spiritual gifts, but is reliable for revealing broad gift categories.

Chapter 5 presents an alternative approach to spiritual gift identification in which spiritual gift discovery and service is rooted in the life of the church. The chapter begins with a quick review of the inherent tendency of spiritual gift identification instruments to place the focus on the individual will be undertaken. Following that, the
biblical basis for an ecclesiocentric model for spiritual gift identification is presented. A key component of that model is addressed next, namely, that spiritual gifts are best defined as ministries in and for the church. Finally, the role of the church and church leadership in particular to spiritual gift discovery is examined, including a five-step strategy to implement an ecclesiocentric model of spiritual gift identification.

Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation with final thoughts on spiritual gift discovery and how further study of spiritual gift identification might be pursued.
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