

Pentecostal Youth and the Abuse of Spiritual Gifts

Alade Tayo Omokayode

Abstract

Tools are important in any workshop for the purpose of which the workshop is established. Each tool is designed to solve or contribute to a mega purpose and the misuse of any tool will result in retardation of the mega purpose of the workshop. Spiritual gifts are also like tools in the workshop aimed at purpose in the body of Christ. Spiritual gifts are grace gift given to the body of Christ for the purpose of building and equipping the saint for every good work for which they are created anew in Christ Jesus. African Pentecostalism has a brand of African Christianity owes its growth and identity to manifestation and utility of spiritual gifts. This manifestation of spiritual gifts in African Pentecostalism becomes a marketable phenomenon after the 1930s revival that opens the flood of spiritual giftedness to Africans. The wave of spiritual giftedness does not only touch the adult but the youth alike in the Pentecostalism. However, these blessed gifts of grace have suffered a great blow in recent time among Pentecostals, many disdainful attitudes and practices now accompany the sacred gifts. This includes extortion, commercialization, arrogance, pride, unscriptural acquisition, intimidation, immoralities and slavery. This paper employs empirical method to the study of abuse of spiritual gifts in African Pentecostalism. .

Introduction

Pentecostalism and Spiritual gifts are like two concepts that are inseparable. Spiritual gifts and their usage is an important phenomenon in Christian ministry and a crucial spiritual attraction among the Pentecostals. However, there are challenges regarding their usage that need to be addressed. A cursory search of Christian bookstores reveals that the subject of the Holy Spirit and particularly the subject of the gifts of the Spirit are burning issues.²³⁰ Research shows that the more spectacular ones such as, tongues, prophecy, healing, miracles and so forth usually receive the most attention²³¹. Also, investigation among the Pentecostals majority is interested after salvation in exploring spiritual gifts and the desires to manifest one spiritual gift or the others a quest that is hold in high esteem.

This excitement to know and develop spiritual gift among Pentecostals is what Peter Wagner points out as '*new thing*'.²³² The newness of this is revealed in the different forms of emphasis that is laid on spiritual gifts among the Pentecostal fellowships. This emphasis including you is not born again if you are not speaking in tongues or having so and so spiritual gift. In recent time a great dissection has been found among Pentecostals on the basis of the manifestation of gifts, the tongue speaking Christian and the Non-Tonguing Christian. It is obvious that many of the programs seem incomplete when there is no impartation of the spiritual gift with evidence of speaking in tongue or some form of gyration.

The crux of this paper is spiritual gifts and its abuse among youth in the 21st century church in Nigeria. The burden of this paper lies on the abuse that is widespread among the

²³⁰ Daniel J. Lewis, *The Charismata: Spiritual Gifts* (Michigan: Diakonos, Inc, 1999), 4.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

²³² C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1979), 26.

Pentecostal which pose great threat to the health of the Church. The burden to speak in tongues, perform miracle, the desire to be known as a prophet or a teacher becomes an insane mentality among Pentecostals. Different means are used to obtain these spiritual gifts. The true identity of Christianity is now submerged and rebrands with spiritual gifts display not spiritual fruit. Christianity among most Neo Pentecostals is Christianity of spiritual gifts and not of the gospel of Christ. Among these burden and misuse of spiritual gifts, this paper proposes that spiritual gifts are gift to the body of Christ with a divine purpose. It is not an end in itself but a means to an end.

Understanding Spiritual Gifts

It is crucial for the 21st church to understand spiritual gift from a biblical point of view rather than only experiential manifestation of it which has it way into the body of Christ today. Pseudo understanding and the purpose of spiritual gifts has caused much havoc among believers especially among the Pentecostals. This is as a result of the wave of spiritual dominance and egoism that has made its way to the fellowship of Pentecostals. However, spiritual gifts are given based on a purpose by the triune God to the body of believers. The metaphor of the body employed by Paul in teaching spiritual gifts in 1 Cor. 12:18 shows that spiritual gifts are purposeful to the body of Christ as they are central on relevance of individual to the body and contribute to the central growth of the body.

Paul's body metaphor remains a solid basis for understanding spiritual gifts and it purpose in the church. David W. Hoover and Roger W. Leenerts posit spiritual gifts help answer the following questions: "How do I fit in?" "What is my part in the church?" "What can I do?" "What should I do?" "What is my

role in the task of ‘making disciples of all nations?’²³³ This shows that spiritual gifts point to the following, place, position, responsibility, ability and duty of each believer in the body of Christ. On this basis, a proper understanding of spiritual “gifts could radically revolutionize the way the church operates.”²³⁴

Spiritual Gifts defined

What is a spiritual gift? How should we explain the theological concept of spiritual gifts? However it should be noted that the term spiritual gift is not used within its original languages, though the concept represented by the English phrase is found primarily in four passages, viz. Romans 12:3–8, 1 Corinthians 12–14, Ephesians 4:7–16, and 1 Peter 4:10–12. However, the question is what is spiritual gift? Much water has passed under the bridge and many definitions have arisen in giving semantic meaning of the concept. However, this paper will give definitional notes on what spiritual mean and the same time explores the New Testament etymology of the term spiritual gift for a lucid understanding of the term.

Packer posits that Spiritual gifts are capacities of believers to express and communicate the knowledge and power of Christ for the purpose of edifying the church.²³⁵ From Packer understanding of Spiritual gifts as the capacities of each believer to communicate and express knowledge in the power of Christ with a central purpose which is to edify the body of Christ. This points to the fact that every believer in Christ is empowered with one Spirit which is the giver of the gifts and are given the same purpose which must be expressed in unity of

²³³ David W. Hoover and Roger W. Leenerts, *Enlightened with His Gifts: A Bible Study on Spiritual Gifts* (St. Louis: Lutheran Growth, 1979), 6.

²³⁴ Kent R. Hunter, *Gifted for Growth: An Implementation Guide for Mobilizing the Laity* (Corunna, Ind: The Church Growth Analysis and Learning Center, 1983), 152.

²³⁵ J.I. Packer, *Keep in step with the Spirit: Finding fullness in our walk with God*, rev. edn., (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI. 2005), 145.

purpose and usage of the gift. Spiritual gifts are given to edify the body of Christ and not emulous.

In addition to this, Wagner corroborates Packer when he observes that “A spiritual gift is 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.”²³⁶ Several aspects of this definition are noteworthy. First, the importance of the body as the context for the discussion of spiritual gifts is emphasized. Second, a spiritual gift is defined as a “special attribute.” Others refer to it as a “special ability.” As we will see, the term “spiritual gift” nearly always has reference to a particular capacity or skill that one has been given. Third, every Christian has been given at least one gift. Fourth, these gifts are given by the Holy Spirit at a particular point in time simultaneously with or after one’s conversion.

However, there is some precision that is needed here on what spiritual gifts are not or what it did not denote. First, spiritual gifts are not equivalent to natural talents. Talents are not spiritual anymore as spiritual gifts are. Regeneration is not needed to be talented. Talents are not prevalent to both believers and unbelievers, but spiritual gifts are limited to believers. There are many that still confuse spiritual gifts and talents. For instance natural gifts like ability to repair automobiles or intelligence are seeing among youth refer to as spiritual gift since they are born again.

The Second precision, spiritual gifts are not identical with the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Much mixed up has occurred between spiritual gifts and spiritual fruits. The latter category has to do with ethical qualities that all Christians hold in common and should exhibit. Spiritual gifts are given and determined not by the individual but solely on the prerogative of the Holy Spirit while spiritual fruits are produced in the

²³⁶ C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*, 42.

believer by his cooperation with the Holy Spirit which may be a gradual manifestation. Wagner observes that spiritual fruits are needed for processing spiritual gifts.²³⁷ Spiritual gifts are supposed to travel on the wheel of spiritual fruits which enable gifts to perform its expected purpose among the body of Christ. This accounts for much disorderliness among believers and commotion in the body of Christ in respect to the use of spiritual gifts. Disorderliness in the usages of spiritual gifts points to the fact that spiritual gifts ride on the tires of ego, intimidation and pride and not spiritual fruits.

Having set definitions on the semantic understanding of the term spiritual gifts, it is important to map out some etymological understanding of the term.

Significant Greek Words

The New Testament employs different words at different contexts to teach about spiritual gifts most of which are explicit in the epistles of Paul. If the contemporary church will understand and explore the benefit of spiritual gifts it is important to understand these gifts from their biblical meaning.

The Use of *χαρισμα* (*charisma*, “gift”)

The common term among the body of Christ and especially Pentecostals of spiritual gift is *Charisma*, from which the church movement charismatic is derived. *Charisma* comes from the verb *charizomai*, “I show favor”, which is derived from the noun *charis*, “grace”. In the New Testament it is used in the subjective sense of “favor toward men” and in the objective sense as the result of a gracious action, best understood as “grace.”²³⁸

²³⁷ C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*, 88

²³⁸ William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, rev. and ed.

The verb *charizomai* means simply “to say or do something agreeable” and, more specifically in the NT, “to give graciously or cheerfully.”²³⁹ *Charizomai* therefore, means ‘to give,’ with special reference to the grace, favor and kindness which inspire and accompany the gift.”²⁴⁰ *Charisma*, having the *-ma* ending, looks to the result of the action²⁴¹. *Charisma* is the result of the action of *charizomai*—a gift freely and graciously given or a “gift of grace.”

Charisma is prominently used by Paul in the New Testament to mean gift with inner connotation that it is gift of grace. This gift is unmeritable or can be worked for but lies on the will and choice of God to give believers. To further this, spiritual gift are not what a person decides that this is the kind of gift I want to have, because it is a divine endowment from God.

The Use of πνευματικός (*pneumatikos*, “spiritual”)

It is important to underpin here that it is not only *Charisma* that was used in the NT to denote Spiritual gift but also another term used by Paul is *pneumatikos*, which means spiritual. The term occurs often in the NT and almost always refers to the divine *pneuma*, “Spirit”, “caused by or filled with the Spirit, pertaining or corresponding to the Spirit.” It could best be translated “spiritual.”²⁴²

Frederick William Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), 1078-81.

²³⁹ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940), 1978.

²⁴⁰ David L. Baker, “The Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 12-14,” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 46/4 (October-December 1974):225.

²⁴¹ F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961) 59.

²⁴² Bruce M. Metzger, *Lexical Aids for Students of the NT Greek* (Princeton, N.J.: Theological Book Agency, 1972), 43.

Important to this discussion is Paul's use of *pneumatikos* in Romans 1:11 where it is linked with *charisma*. Also significant are the occurrences in 1 Cor 12:1 and 14:1. In these last two instances the genitive plural *pneumatikos*, may be either masculine or neuter. However, Parry suggests that the Corinthian were using this word to mean the gift of tongues in particular and that Paul used it to speak of spiritual things in general in 12:1 and 14:1.²⁴³

One wonders why Paul will also employ *pneumatikos* in talking about spiritual gifts. The study opines that Paul wants his reader to understand that spiritual gifts are spiritual things that must be handled as spiritual. It is not unusual to see this engagement in Paul writing, most cases Paul sometimes set a distinction between what is spiritual and not in his writing, such as a spiritual man and the natural man (1 Cor 2:14-15), spiritual body and the natural body (1 Cor 15:46). Most of this comparison is drawn to distinguish that which is spiritual and that which is natural so that what is natural is handled as natural and which is spiritual is not desecrated. Spiritual gifts are sacred gifts that are not to be desecrated by believers. The abuse of spiritual gifts will be direct abuse of the grace of God by anyone and perversion of gift equals perversion of what is sacred.

The Use of *δομα* (*doma*, “gift”)

The word *δομα* comes from the Greek word *διδωμι* (*didomi*, “I give”) and simply means “gift.” Vine observes that *doma* lends greater stress to the concrete character of the gift than to its beneficent nature (Matt 7:11, Phil 4:17).²⁴⁴ This word may

²⁴³ John Parry, *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: University Press, 1926)174.

²⁴⁴ W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of NT Words*, 4 vols. in one (Westwood, N.J.: Revell, 1952) 2:147.

mean divine endowment. One can rightly refer to spiritual gifts as spiritual endowment.

From the above exploration it is clear that spiritual gifts are gift of grace and are divinely endowment by God which is spiritual in nature. Now the researcher will switch the focus of this research work to the purpose of spiritual gifts. Just as the common English saying that where the purpose of a thing is not known abuse is inevitable. To correct the 21st century Youth disposition to spiritual gifts and the prevailing abuse of spiritual gifts among them, it is important a clearly and precise purpose of spiritual gifts is set in this piece. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts?

Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

This research maintains that there are two prominent purposes of spiritual gifts; one is for communal purpose and the other is individual purpose. However, a careful attention is needed to understand the purpose of spiritual gifts amidst the tide of abuses and various teachings.

Two solid passages are important in figuring out the purpose of spiritual gifts as stated in the scripture. 1 Corinthians 12–14 and Ephesians 4:11–16. 1 Corinthians 12–14 is a long discourse of Paul on spiritual gifts and their purpose in the body of Christ. Paul in this long discourse with the Corinthians Church proposed that different spiritual gifts are given by the Spirit for different ministry functions, which are used for different activities in the church. Verse 7 explains the reason the Spirit's presence and work is made known in the spiritual gifts of believers: 'To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good'. Verse 25 implies another reason why a diversity of spiritual gifts is given and how they should be properly used in the body: 'that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another'. The Spirit has gifted each member of the

body in different ways so that the holistic use of these gifts will function in unity to provide mutual care to all members.²⁴⁵

While spiritual gifts are purposed to benefit the church, they can also serve as a source of building up for individual such as one who speak in tongue where there is no interpreter. Such is believed to be a edification of the speaker alone. However, there is a radical difference between spiritually-gifted ministries that builds up compared with a personal giftedness that has limited value to the whole church. Thus spiritual gifts, while perhaps useful in private settings, are primarily to be used for building up the church²⁴⁶. The focus is not on the individual believer who has been gifted, but rather on the purpose and result of the gift within the church.

Ephesians 4:11–16 open up another purpose of spiritual gifts. Although, the context of this is christo-centric and not basic on gift but in the discourse Paul states the purpose of the gift Christ has given to the Church. Ephesians 4:11–16 explains that the gift of Christ’s grace is distributed, particularly – in this passage – through officially appointed church leaders, in order to equip the saints (i.e. all believers united with Christ) for two interrelated activates: ‘for the work of the ministry’ and ‘for building up the body of Christ’. Thus each believer has to cooperate in mutual ministry for growth of the whole body, just as all the parts and ligaments of the human body work together properly for healthy growth and maturity. The goal in view is a mature spiritual body, which Paul compares by analogy with ‘the statute of the fullness of Christ’, the new multi-ethnic humanity in Christ (Eph 2:15). In so doing this spiritual body of Christ – the church of believers – will avoid being distracted by false teaching and deceitful schemes, thus demonstrating they are no longer spiritual children but mature spiritual members of Christ’s spiritual body.

²⁴⁵ D.A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1987), 49–50.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 101–103

Explaining the Spiritual Gifts

Different attempt has been made in theological discourses on spiritual gifts to classify them or put them in some categories. Different forms of classification have emerged through the years. There is a school of thought that uses the classification mode of power gifts and sign gifts. While there is also another classification that has been adopted which is miraculous gifts and non-miraculous gifts²⁴⁷. Another classification falls under the gifts for today and the past gifts. Those who hold to this form of classification believed that there are some gifts that are prevalent in the past and no more in the body of Christ while there are some gifts that are today gift. This view is prominent among the cessationists.²⁴⁸ . However, this study will not adopt any form of the classification, but the researcher will explore the kinds of spiritual gift base on biblical passage which forms an appropriate grouping for this work.

The Gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:8-11; 28-31

1 Cor. 12:8-11 gives a list of some spiritual gifts which are present in the body of Christ. This list is not exhaustive on kinds of spiritual gifts. The gifts mention under this heading are as follows; “utterance of wisdom,” “utterance of knowledge,” “faith,” “gifts of healing,” “working of miracles,” “prophecy,” “distinguishing between spirits,” “various kinds of tongues,” and “the interpretation of tongues.” It is important to pick them one after the other and explain each of them.

²⁴⁷ Rolland D. McCune, “A Biblical Study of Tongues and Miracles,” *Central Bible Quarterly* 19 (1976):15

²⁴⁸ Cessationists are a school of thought on spiritual gifts that the manifestation of some gifts has stop in the body of Christ. They believe this gifts are for the early church and since the Church has being established. They are of no use to the church. Although, there are some differences on which gifts have stop in the church. Such gifts includes, apostle, prophecy, miracles and some include tongues.

Utterance of Wisdom and Utterance of Knowledge

The gift of utterance of wisdom and utterance of knowledge has been closely viewed together by scholars of the bible. The usage of the words by Paul makes it very much add to separate the two. Robertson and Plummer²⁴⁹ assert that only the Corinthians can be sure of the difference between the two words. The obscurity of the words makes these gifts very hard to define. However, what can be hold is that both are revelatory in nature and both word of wisdom and knowledge are gift of the spirit.

Faith

The gift of faith appears to be the supernatural enablement that makes one to trust God than the normal act of faith. Some refer to it as “heroic faith,” a faith that enables a person to perform some extraordinary work. It is described in 1 Cor. 13:2 as a faith that can move mountains. Carson believes this gift of faith enables one to believe God to walk in a way even when one has no promise to lay claim on.²⁵⁰ Nevertheless, The inclusion of πιστις [*pistis*, “faith”] in the list of the Spirit’s gifts probably means that the word is to be understood as “trust” in the miraculous power of God to perform signs through human agents, rather than as the personal relationship of faith in Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 13:2).²⁵¹ This gift enables believer to go beyond the level of daily trust in Christ to supernatural realm of trusting God for greater things which is unusaul in itself.

²⁴⁹ Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978), 264.

²⁵⁰ Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 36

²⁵¹ David Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meaning* (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), 267.

Miracles and Healings

The gifts of healing undoubtedly involve miracles in some form or another. Interestingly, *both* terms are plural, so that the literal translation is “gifts of healings” (cf. 1 Cor. 12:28, 29). “The working of miracles” (literally “workings of powers”) also appears in the plural. It may be that “all healings are demonstrations of miraculous powers, but not all miraculous powers are healings.”²⁵² The term gifts of healings are plural in the context of its usage by Paul. This suggests that there are different gifts of healing for different sickness or healing. One person may be endowed with a different gift of healing. The researcher sees this as an answer to why everyone is not healed by most that possess gift of healing. However, there is an overlapping between gifts of miracle, faith and healing.

Prophecy

Boyer contends that “Prophecy in the New Testament is the same as prophecy in the Old Testament; it is a continuation of the same office and function.”²⁵³ Paul encourages his readers to seek the gift of prophecy above all others (1 Cor. 14:1). Unlike tongues, which edify the self, prophecy builds up, exhorts, and encourages the church (1Cor. 14:5). Paul in this contest did not define what prophecy means. Although, the understanding of prophecy from the Old Testament which could mean fore-telling and forth-telling but here Paul stressed further what gift of prophecy could mean. First, although Paul says that prophecy is for the “upbuilding and encouragement and consolation” of the congregation (14:3), he does not define prophecy. It would seem that Preaching, teaching, and prayer, for example, serve the same ends. Second, there is evidence to suggest that prophecy in the New Testament includes what we today would call preaching or

²⁵² Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 40

²⁵³ James L. Boyer, “The Office of the Prophet in New Testament Times,” *Grace Journal* 1 (1960), 13.

expounding Scripture. Third, 1 Corinthians 14 suggests that prophecies were “spontaneous, Spirit-inspired, intelligible messages, orally delivered . . . for the edification or encouragement of the people.”²⁵⁴

Distinguishing between Spirits

The verb form, (*diakrino*), means “to separate,” and thus (*diakrisis*) has come to mean “distinguishing,” or “differentiating.” When used with *pneumatikn* it means distinguishing spirits. In 1 Cor 12:10, 14:29, 1 Thess 5:20f., and 1 John 4:1-6, the gift is often closely associated with prophesy. Since “distinguishing between spirits” immediately follows prophecy on Paul’s list of gifts, it is possible that he has in mind something more closely related to prophecy. Perhaps it should be viewed as paralleling the “interpretation of tongues” and as performing similar functions. If so, it may have involved discerning, differentiating, or properly judging prophecies as in 1 Cor. 14:29. The language of “spirits” would then refer to prophetic utterances (cf. 1 John 4:1, where distinguishing between spirits is related in some way to doctrinal or confessional discernment).

Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues

The nature of tongues is a study in itself. Some hold that tongues are bona-fide foreign languages.²⁵⁵ Others, however, understand tongues as ecstatic utterances²⁵⁶. Numerous mediating positions are held such as that of Best, who suggests the Corinthians spoke in a “heavenly tongue.”²⁵⁷ The gift of interpretation is closely related to that of tongues as

²⁵⁴ Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994), 595.

²⁵⁵ Robert G. Gromacki, *The Modern Tongues Movement* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971) 159.

²⁵⁶ A. J. Grieve, “Charismata,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, 13 vols. (New York: Scribners, 1928), 368-72.

²⁵⁷ Ernest Best, “Interpretation of Tongues” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28 (1975), 47.

seen in 1 Corinthians 14. Paul uses the word ***diermeneuo***, which can mean “translate” (Acts 9:36) or “interpret” (Luke 24:27). On account of the apparent unintelligibility of tongues, this gift “evidently was the ability to transmit the content and message of such ‘language’ for the benefit and edification of the speaker and other members of the body of Christ.”²⁵⁸

Apostles

Paul lists apostles in first place. Interestingly enough, whereas the other gifts were manifested in the congregation at Corinth, there is no evidence that Paul believed that each local church had its own apostles. Perhaps they are mentioned first here in order to highlight their role in building up the body and to serve as a reminder of Paul’s own ministry as an apostle.

Prophets

After the Apostle Paul mentioned Prophet on his life of gifts that Christ gave to his Church. It is not clear whether Paul has in mind a “specific group of people known as ‘prophets’ vis-à-vis ‘apostles’ and other members of the community” or whether the phrase is purely functional and refers to anyone who exercises the gift of prophecy²⁵⁹. His function as a spokesman for God included foretelling (prediction) and forthtelling (preaching), in either case on the basis of possessing supernatural knowledge (cf. John 4:19; Eph 3:3-5).

²⁵⁸ *The Charismatic Movement and Lutheran Theology*, A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1972, and *The Lutheran Church and the Charismatic Movement: Guidelines for Congregations and Pastors*, A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1977. Pdf. 20.

²⁵⁹ G. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 620.

Teachers

Another gift on the line is teaching gift. Carson posits that Teaching is intrinsic to the office of apostle and of bishop or overseer.²⁶⁰ In Eph. 4:11 Paul links teachers with pastors, which suggests a broader scope of meaning. The functions of teaching might include edification, comforting, and spiritual direction. It is difficult to distinguish with any degree of precision the activities of teachers from those of prophets. Teaching may involve a source less direct than that of prophecy, conveying instead the “tradition” of the church. It could refer to the catechumenate, oral tradition, and/or doctrine as well as the church’s practices and forms of worship. Finally, however, it is not clear whether this gift designates a particular office, or a role assumed by some or all Christians in certain circumstances.

Pentecostals Youth and the Abuse of Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual giftedness has been a blessing to the body of Christ in Nigeria after the 1930 revival which brings to light the spiritual treasure that is incarnated in the gospel of Christ for Africa. However, the wave of this spiritual giftedness among the 21st century Pentecostals youth has taken a great dimension which seems far from its initial nature. One can considerably say that there is infusion of youthful abuse into the use of spiritual gift among youth. Chip Ingram sounds a warning of the usage of spiritual gift among youth when he declares; beware when spiritual gifts are used as a means of manipulation, power, or control in personal and/or church relationships. And notice, they're all going to start with "beware." That's a warning sign. Beware when spiritual gifts are used as a means of manipulation, power, or control in personal and/or church relationships.²⁶¹ The Youth have

²⁶⁰ D.A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 91.

²⁶¹ Chip Ingram, <https://livingontheedge.org/broadcast/warning--beware-of-spiritual-gift-abuse-part-1/daily-radio#.W5QOY7pIMII> Accessed on 9th Sept. 2018.

grown weird in the use of spiritual gift adding flavour of profound secularism and element of self-affirmation, commercialization, and propagation to spiritual giftedness. The researcher will underscore some of the misuse of spiritual gifts among Pentecostals as follows:

Commercialization and extortion of spiritual gifts. Extortion by means of spiritual gifts is a common issue among youth nowadays. Different means of extortion are rampant in the name of spiritual gifts. It is very common among to trade spiritual prowess for cash. The level of extortion includes material things, and even sexual extortion all in the name of spiritual gifts. On October 2017 Samuel Ogundipe of Premium Times news²⁶² paper reported the case of a young Pastor who billed people for deliverance a receipt of five thousand naira paid go viral on the social media. It is not new to hear among Pentecostals today that the Holy Spirit led me to cast out demon in her by lying with her. Selling of mantle, anointed pen, pencil, shirts, holy water, holy sex for exorcism are different means of extortion among youth today.

Intimidation is another misuse of spiritual gifts. The level of intimidation that comes along with some sign gifts among the youth today is so alarming that those intimidated want to possess such power or sign gifts. Worship today is bastardized as everyone wants to show forth his or her gifts. This has made many places of worship less than or equal to gift-talent show on many occasions of fellowship or prayer meeting as different pitch of tone of tongues compete to be heard. Competition has ensnared the youth mind. Often the critical mind asks of the genuineness of such tongue. Speaking in tongues has become a common language among youth. Greeting in tongues, blessing food in tongues, any shocking

²⁶² Samuel Ogundipe, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/south-south-regional/246482-churchs-n5000-deliverance-fee-stirs-controversy.html> Accessed on 9th Sept. 2018.

thing *bla bla, ka, ka, ma, ma*, all in attempts to intimidate or show that they speak in tongues.

Self aggrandizement is another misuse of spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts have suffered a great blow to its purpose in the body of Christ. Many gifted youths shifted the focus and the usage of those spiritual gifts from serving the church to serving themselves. From building the body of Christ to building an empire of self-glory named after them. Misappropriation of the spiritual gifts has made many to become slave to the so-called gifted men in the body of Christ. The gospel of Christ is not a fast-selling commodity in the church today, but the gifts sell better at a fast rate than the gifts giver. The gospel today is the gospel of the gifts and the gifted as attention shifted from the giver to the gifts and the gifted.

Aberration in the means of acquiring spiritual gifts among the youth shows another form of mis-use of spiritual gifts. This includes learning of tongues from one person to another. There are some phenomena of speaking in tongue where the whole congregation speaks in the same tongues, same rhythm, same pitch and modulation. The interconnectedness of this as shows that is it a learned tongue. Youth today organizes spiritual classes as it is called for those who are yet to speak in tongues and are taught telling them to say after them. Prophecy and prophetism has been greatly bastardized that prophecy is not one for one thousand or even more. There are specialists among the youth with different area of specialization in the spiritual gifts. The ingenuity of such gifts are evidence in many bounced prophecy like bounced cheque.

Another profound mis-use of spiritual gifts is in the area of teaching gift. The desire to be teacher of the word is so great among youth today. This wave has resulted in different erroneous teaching that has plastered the church and false teachers parading the altar. Many trending news on erroneous teachings have made wave on the social media and

newspaper. A youth pastor with a mega youth church even affirm his willingness to disobey God on sowing.²⁶³ When been a teacher of the word is a gift from Christ self-made teacher are prominent and many are growing among the youth and desecrating the teaching ministry with heretical teaching, tearing down the body of Christ with heretical teaching.

Repositioning Spiritual Gifts among Pentecostal Youth

Today it seems that spiritual gifts have been subsumed among the youth under the carpet of commercialization, intimidation, self-aggrandizement, falsehood, and extortion. This has made the church to be at the receiving end of this incongruity between the biblical purpose of spiritual gifts and the manifestation of spiritual gifts by the youths. The question that begs for answer is way out of the scope of spiritual gifts and the youth in Nigeria. This paper is advancing that the solution to the problem of spiritual gifts and the Youth in Nigeria is a critical repositioning of the spiritual gifts base on it purpose within the body of Christ.

The giftedness of the Spirit, according to the Bible, should be used in ways that are consistent with the following four principles²⁶⁴: Firstly, spiritual giftedness is to be used for the purpose of building up the church. As already discussed above, the purpose of the Spirit's gifting of all believers is to build up the body of Christ, the new multi-ethnic humanity which is the church of God (Eph 4:7-16). Paul's instruction to the church of Corinth is the same: 'Let all things be done for building up' (1 Cor 14:26c). So it is necessary and helpful for believers to periodically examine whether they are using their giftedness for the building up of the church, both as a local

²⁶³ Simbiat Ayoola, *If God Appears To Me And Says Sowing Seeds Does Not Work, I'd Tell Him Seed Works -Fatoyinbo* <https://www.naija.ng/1185806-if-god-appears-sowing-seeds-work-id-seed-works-fatoyinbo.html#1185806>. Accessed on 9th Sept. 2018.

²⁶⁴ Brian A. DeVries, *Spiritual Gifts For Biblical Church Growth In die Skriflig* 50(1) 2090. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ids.v50i1.2090> (Pdf), 7.

body of believers, and in some cases more broadly as a regional or international collective of local churches. Practical tests for self-examination could be added here because each situation will be different.

Secondly, spiritual giftedness is to be used in an orderly way and under biblical leadership. Bring the disorderliness that has aroused in the body of Christ because of giftedness need a sane biblical leadership which can administer sanity to the use of spiritual gift. The Apostle Paul teaches that gift use 'should be done decently and in order' (1 Cor 14:40) since 'God is not a God of confusion but of peace' (1 Cor 14:33). Paul exhortation is necessary in curbing the aberrant use of gifts by maintaining orderliness and decency. There are multiple gifts in the body of Christ which are all necessary for building up the church, as many as these gifts are and important each many be it need proper administration. This is where biblical leadership is needed to bring each to its place and where each fit in. In the church in Corinth tongues were causing disorderliness therefore Paul gave instruction on how it should be used. Gifts are a source of commotion and illicit competition in the body of Christ today and tussle for relevance among the older generation and the younger generation. Only biblical leadership can bring orderliness.

Thirdly, spiritual giftedness is to be always used within biblical bounds. Spiritual gifts must be always used within the confine of the Biblical teaching. This must be a great lookout if the menace will be curbed among the youth. Youth must understand that the usage of spiritual gifts is bound by the principle and teaching of the word of God. The gifts are not independent of the Holy Spirit and any attempt to use the gifts outside the stated bound by the Holy Spirit in his inspired word will grieve the Holy Spirit which will attract some measure of punishment.

Fourthly, spiritual giftedness is to be used in faithfulness for God's glory (Rm 12:6-8). Spiritual gifts are given for purposes

which must be fulfilled in their usage. Why the Goal of each of the spiritual gifts are to bring glory to God by the one who minister through them to the body of Christ. It is very germane that all spiritual gifts must be used in faithfulness with an attitude of gracious humility for the glory of God through Jesus Christ (1 Pt 4:10–11).

Conclusion

The abuses of spiritual gifts by youth today post a great threat to the body of Christ. The abuse of many spiritual gifts tells on the health of the church as the purpose of most gifts which are to be used to serve the body of Christ are waitress and waiter of self-acclaimed people. This greatly tells on the level of maturity that is lacking among the fold of Christ. The church today is underfed, mal-nurtured, mal-nourished and unhealthy because the youth who have received one gift or the other from Christ for the purpose of the Church has turn the gifts against the owner's business and commercialized it for personal gain. Gradually, the gospel as become the gospel of gifts and not the giver of the gifts. Gift celebration accrues immorality among youth and a great lacuna has emerged between the Gospel given the youth and the present-day Gospel.

Albeit this paper enjoins church leaders to made a paradigm shift from manifestation of spiritual gifts to the proper usage of them among the youth. These great gifts deposited by grace in the youths need proper cultivation by biblical leaders who will look into how it fit perfectly to building the church and nurture such gifts without commotion and disorderliness in the body of Christ. However, the manifestation of gifts is a grace endowment with accountability and responsibility not on possession alone but faithful in the proper usage of it.

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