

UCG Statements on Spiritual Gifts

Assembled by C. White
Version 2.4

3.2 FUNCTIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH

There is one body, the Church, which is a spiritual organism. The Church has many members, to each of whom God has bestowed a measure of faith through the Holy Spirit. Through that Spirit, our Father has made us one in the body of Christ, and, individually, members one of another. **He has given us gifts that differ according to His will and has entrusted His Spirit to each of us so that we might exercise those gifts with humility, gentleness and patience in submission, first to Jesus Christ, and then to one another. By the establishment of this Constitution, we acknowledge the truth of Scripture that all members have a different function within the Church, and that it is our Father who determines each member's function within the Church.**

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A. UCG Statements on Spiritual Gifts

1. From the United Church of God Constitution

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There is one body, the Church, which is a spiritual organism. The Church has many members, to each of whom God has bestowed a measure of faith through the Holy Spirit. Through that Spirit, our Father has made us one in the body of Christ, and, individually, members one of another. **He has given us gifts that differ according to His will and has entrusted His Spirit to each of us so that we might exercise those gifts with humility, gentleness and patience in submission, first to Jesus Christ, and then to one another. By the establishment of this Constitution, we acknowledge the truth of Scripture that all members have a different function within the Church, and that it is our Father who determines each member's function within the Church.**

2. United Church of God Vision Statement

“The vision of the United Church of God is ‘A Church led by God’s Holy Spirit, **joined and knit together by what every member supplies**, with all doing their share and growing in love to fulfill God’s great purpose for humanity to bring many children to glory’ (Ephesians 4:16; Hebrews 2:10).”
(approved by the Council of Elders <https://www.ucg.org/united-news/whats-our-vision>)

To be able to utilise the gifts and talents within the Church, the ministry are meant to get to know each member and then to assist in identifying and utilising their gifts and talents.

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Early UCG statements that attracted members

"How do we encourage the spiritual development **and involvement of each individual in the Church?**" asks the Council of Elders of the United Church of God in the *New Beginnings* magazine (September 16 1996, page 5). This is something ministers must do as part of their job – get to know each member and see how to use their talents and gifts, not trip up members and refuse to use them.

The *New Beginnings* (13 November 1995, pages 2-3) contains the following very encouraging statements:

1. "The present board has also put in place **the provision for input from member committees composed of men and women at the local level.** The leadership of the Church must not be cut off from the membership and we are trying to encourage that necessary communication link according to what we perceive the New Testament model to be".
2. "Congregational Development. **To recognize and promote the ability of members to participate,** under the care of the pastor, in the organization and functioning of the local congregation".
3. "Furtherance of the Gospel. **To encourage the involvement of each member** and congregation in the advancement of the gospel internationally, nationally and local".

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Bob Dick - How a Church Leader Leads

<https://youtu.be/y4ftipk-K00?si=VQ1sNGVjznI2R1RE>

“This focused and practical message, given at the NW Men's Weekend in Seabeck, WA, explores Ephesians 4:11–12 to clarify the biblical role of a pastor as both shepherd and teacher. Drawing from a foundational memo written in 1994, Mr. Dick explains how true spiritual leadership isn't about doing all the work—but about equipping others to serve. This sermon is a must-watch for anyone preparing to lead, train, or mentor within God's Church.”

Listen after 30 minutes were he talks about gifts.

How Can I Help?

By Roger Meyer (guest columnist) | Tuesday, November 12, 2013

Some people are helpers by nature. It is part of their personality to be caring, helpful and insightful of the needs of other people. Being a helper is an important aspect of God's nature, and one to which we should all aspire. How can we help, and why is it important?

Of course, God is the greatest helper of all. Many scriptures mention how God is our help in time of need: “...For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The LORD is my helper; I will not fear what man can do to me?’” (Hebrews 13:5–6).

Jesus promised the “Helper”—the Holy Spirit—to those who had repented and been baptized. John 14-16. He sent the Holy Spirit after He ascended to heaven on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). The Spirit “...**helps** in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” ([Romans 8:26](#)).

Most of us can think of one or more individuals who really helped us at some time in our life. We welcomed their help and have never forgotten it. Hopefully, we thanked them for their time, energy and expertise to help us solve our problem and fill our need.

We do not all have the same gifts to give. “For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them” (Romans 12:4–6).

We all have gifts and opportunities to help those in need. Romans 12 goes on to give some examples of different gifts and how those gifts can be used to help others. For instance, “...he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness... distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality... Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:7–15).

Some of these may seem very low and simple. **But these simple things can have a tremendous impact on the recipient, filling the greatest need at that time in their life.** It is hard to put a value on such things as showing empathy and simply listening to someone who needs to express their grief and concerns. Giving someone some direction, respectfully showing them steps to take, the right way to go, and “opening doors” through your contacts to assist someone may be of tremendous help. What is the value of time spent with another human being who just needs someone to be there with them, or of encouraging someone who is discouraged?

Some who have been helpers are mentioned in Romans 16. Phoebe was commended by Paul in verse 1–2: “I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed **she has been a helper of many** and of myself also.” In verses 3–4, Paul mentions “Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.” In verse 6 he mentions Mary, “who labored much for us.” These followers of Christ used their gifts in service to God and His work being done through the Apostle Paul.

Using our gifts to help others is the task of every true Christian.

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General Conference of Elders Meeting Begins – 4 May, 2013

The annual General Conference of Elders meeting of the United Church of God began with a Sabbath service on May 4, 2013. This year’s focus is on developing spiritual gifts and providing an environment for spiritual growth in the Church.

Elders and their families from the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia gathered in Cincinnati, Ohio, to worship and fellowship on God’s Sabbath day. The service included split sermons by Bob Berendt, pastor of UCG congregations in Alberta and Saskatchewan, Canada, and Gary Antion, an elder in Cincinnati and instructor at Ambassador Bible Center.

Mr. Berendt’s sermon focused on the need for the Church to have a strong vision of God’s coming Kingdom. His Kingdom will last forever, and it will span an eternity with no pain, suffering, grief or sin. Mr. Antion spoke about the fact that spiritual gifts flow from God’s Holy Spirit working in the life of a Christian. He stressed that any gift given through God’s Spirit must be used to serve God and other people, and never to serve oneself.

After a several hour recess for fellowship, the conference reconvened Saturday night. The chairman of UCG’s Council of Elders, Robin Webber, introduced the conference and spoke about the theme of spiritual gifts. He then led the entire conference in a question-and-answer session, which covered topics such as UCG’s gospel proclamation efforts, the presidential selection process, and how the Church facilitates parents in raising godly children.

The session ended shortly after 10 p.m. and will reconvene at 9 a.m. Sunday, May 5.

Milan Bizic—Media and Communications Services

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The General Conference of Elders - 30 April, 2004

“Please pray earnestly that God will shower us with his favor and blessings and guiding hand. I sincerely ask that you petition our Heavenly Father to pour out upon our ministry ‘the wisdom that is from above.’ A wisdom which is ‘pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy’ (James 3:17).” *Robin Webber*

Friday, May 3: the administration and Robin Webber (acting president and chairman of the COE) will sit down

with our international representatives to hear about God's work in their respective areas and how we can

most effectively serve them.

Sabbath, May 4: Combined service

Sunday, May 5: **Business of the Church; this year's conference theme is *Edifying the Body Through Spiritual Gifts (1 Corinthians 12)***. Keynote speakers: Scott Ashley – *Edifying the Body through Spiritual Gifts* and Darris

McNeely – *Creating an Environment for Growth*.

Monday, May 6: Workshops, building on the main theme. Topics: Biblical Research Tips and Tools; **Actually Using Spiritual Gifts; Women, Spiritual Gifts and Service; Responsibilities of the GCE; Spiritual Gifts—Building Blocks for Healthy Congregations; Motivating Generation Xs and Millennials; Seeking a More Accurate Biblical Understanding and Application of Spiritual Gifts; Spiritual Gifts: Abuse of Them; Are You Nurturing Spiritual Gifts in Yourself and Others?; Developing and Mentoring Leaders...**

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Council of Elders Meeting Report – 27 February, 2013

United Church of God, an International Association

Council of Elders Quarterly Meeting

Cincinnati, Ohio

Wednesday, February 27, 2013

Chairman Robin Webber called the morning session to order, and after opening prayer, presented Council member Scott Ashley to address the subject of spiritual gifts in preparation for the GCE in May.

Discussion of Spiritual Gifts in Preparation for the GCE—Scott Ashley

Mr. Ashley said that he had heard only one sermon about spiritual gifts in all his years in the Church. He reflected that 13 years ago he had been a part of a committee to research what the Bible says about spiritual gifts. At that time he wrote the resulting study paper and distributed it to the Council for review. Reading from the paper, he cited the middle section of Article 3.2 of the UCG Constitution, which says of God that Father, “He has given us gifts that differ according to His will and has entrusted His Spirit to each of us that we might exercise those gifts with humility, gentleness and patience in submission, first to Jesus Christ, and then to one another.”

Darris McNeely reported on his Winter Family Weekend presentation about spiritual gifts. Some of his material came from a recent book on the subject, and he explained the difference between talents, skills and gifts. He sensed from giving the presentation that there was a definite interest for this subject among the brethren. Victor Kubik added that he found the presentation very balanced and that in our past the idea of “gifts” was thought of only as for the ministry.

Gary Antion asked if it will be presented to the GCE as doctrine when the paper itself says that we have never made a definitive decision about spiritual gifts. Mr. Ashley explained that for that reason it was important that the Council take this time in session to address this point. Mark Mickelson suggested that we don’t need a doctrinal review unless it’s something that we disagree on. This subject is biblical, but we simply haven’t systematically thought it through.

Mr. Ashley continued reading the study paper citing three key things we need to know about spiritual gifts:

- We are told to be knowledgeable of them (1 Corinthians:12:1).
 - We are expected to use them (1 Timothy:1:6-7; 1 Timothy:4:14; 2 Timothy:1:6-7; 2 Timothy:4:5).
 - We are accountable for the use of our gifts as stewards (1 Peter:4:10; Matthew:25:14-30).
- His paper then asked the question, “Why does God give spiritual gifts?”
- Spiritual gifts are given to prepare God’s people for service (Ephesians:4:7-8, Ephesians:4:11-12; Ephesians:2:20).
 - Spiritual gifts are given to build the Body of Christ (Ephesians:4:1-16; 1 Peter:4:10; Galatians:6:10).

- Spiritual gifts are given because God loves us (Matthew:7:9-11).

Several discussed when God begins to give spiritual gifts. Some said that it may well be prior to baptism (like Apollos in Acts 18, or our children), when God begins to work with a person. Roy Holladay pointed out that gifts can be enhanced physical skills at times to (as Bezalel in Exodus:35:30-31). Carmelo Anastasi pointed out that God gives gifts to people as part of His broader grace.

Mr. Ashley moved then to another point about to whom gifts are distributed. The paper comments about 1 Peter:4:10-11 that “ministry titles indicate general roles; spiritual gifts indicate specific functions...” The apostles took it for granted that spiritual gifts are spread widely throughout the Church (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12). Paul says to earnestly desire the best gifts (1 Corinthians:12:31). In essence, God gives His gifts to whom, how and when He chooses.

How we desire spiritual gifts was addressed by Mr. Mickelson, as he emphasized being balanced and humble in our approach. Mr. Anastasi commented no one should think of who has which gift and who doesn't as some sort of competition, which it certainly is not.

Dr. Ward stated that spiritual gifts in Scripture are specifically supernatural gifts of God—as distinguished from the natural gifts God gives us through our family background or birth itself. They overlap somewhat and complement each other.

Mr. Antion said that every time it says “spiritual gifts,” it means God's specific, supernatural gifts. He raised a key question: “Who determines who has which spiritual gifts?”

Mr. Ashley offered in response 1 Corinthians:12:31: “But I show you a better way,” which was genuine love. Mr. Kubik talked about how there is also structure in the Church, plus humility and service. Robin Webber commented that a gift given by God will be discernible in the person by others—if it divides people and especially the Body of Christ, then it is not of God—it has to build up and not divide people. Mr. Ashley also added from the study paper that it appears from Paul's writings that when “gifts” were used for contention, God withdrew them.

Can gifts be developed? The parable of the talents shows that they can be increased, but never left unused, as indicated in Hebrew 5:12. How many in God's Church in our time remain or remained as students when the Bible encouraged us to become teachers of God's truth?

Identifying gifts (as with aptitudes) can take time and service to come to light. If we are hearers only, how will we know where we have been given gifts to serve? Sometimes there is overlap between spiritual gifts and commands. God is not so concerned about our being able to list our gifts, rather He want us to obey, love and serve Him most of all. All gifts must be bound to the fruit of the Spirit. Bill Bradford questioned the emphasis on trying to “discover” our gifts as being a preoccupation. Dr. Ward added that spiritual gifts are something that God specifically gives for the service of edifying—building up the Church.

Mr. Webber then asked Mr. Ashley to wrap up the discussion with regards to planning for the GCE. He cited 12 summary points at the end of the paper.

1. We are not placed in the Body of Christ randomly or by chance (1 Corinthians:12:18).
2. Remember that the purpose of our gift(s) is to strengthen and build up the body (1 Corinthians:14:12;Ephesians:4:16).
3. Though we are all in the same body, we all have different functions and gifts according to the grace given to us (Romans:12:5-8).
4. Spiritual gifts are not the same as talents.
5. We are expected to stir up the gifts that are in us—both the gift of God's Holy Spirit as well as individual spiritual gifts (2 Timothy:1:6; Romans 12: 6-8).
6. Recognize, appreciate and encourage the use of others' spiritual gifts (Hebrews:10:24; 1 Peter:4:10).
7. Exercise godly humility as we use our gifts (Romans:15:1).
8. The overriding motivation for the use of all gifts and talents whether spiritual or physical should always be love (1 Corinthians:13:1-13).

9. God sets a very high standard (Romans:15:1-3).
10. While efforts should be made to confirm the best fit for members' gifts, considering their interests and abilities, the fundamental needs of the Body as a whole are most important.
11. The primary role of the ministry is to prepare the Body for works of service and to build and bring unity to the Body (Revelation:20:4, Revelation:20:6).
12. As we all work together to learn where God has placed us in His Body, we must pray for guidance as we come to understand and appreciate one another.

Mr. Antion commented on an additional statement for the paper: "Whoever receives spiritual gifts is God's decision, but the thrust of this article is to emphasize how church members are able to benefit the Church." Mr. Mickelson suggested that more time for discussion is needed on this topic.

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Chairman's newsletter - 18 Dec, 2012

>Of special interest to our elders will be the theme of the 2013 General Conference of Elders: Edifying the Body Through Spiritual Gifts. Ultimately, God willing, it will be of benefit to all in the Church. The underlying scriptural principles derive from 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12:6 and Ephesians 4:7. This topic will enhance our individual and collectively abilities to develop towards our Vision Statement, which is that the United Church of God be "A Church led by God's Holy Spirit, joined and knit together by what every member supplies, with all doing their share and growing in love to fulfill God's great purpose for humanity to bring many children to glory" (Ephesians 4:16, Hebrews 2:10).<

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So I ask myself, what will be done to implement the identifying and use of spiritual gifts; how to ensure it is done; to have feedback where/when it doesn't happen; the dealing with those who refuse to carry this out as well as preach on our doctrines.

BUT THEN I SAW THIS COE REPORT:

COE Report - 12 Dec, 2012

Chairman Webber called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and asked Council member Scott Ashley to open the day's session with prayer. He then introduced Peter Eddington, who serves on the GCE Planning Committee to review the initial plan.

General Conference of Elders (GCE) Annual Conference Planning Committee Update—Peter Eddington

A handout was distributed, which carried the proposed theme: "Using Your Measure of Christ's Gift." Several Council members expressed approval of the theme concept, adding that the Church has been long overdue in addressing the subject.

... *[Verses 1-6 of Ephesians chapter 4 indicates who verse 7 refers to: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called..." It is the brethren at large. "Spiritual gifts" has been viewed by many ministers in the past to apply only to the ministry, which is a major reason why they have not placed much emphasis on recognizing, using and developing gifts within the brethren]* Don Ward recommended using 1 Corinthians 12 as the longest

treatise in the Bible about God's many gifts that He gives us. Darris McNeely also suggested Romans 12:6. Mr. Eddington then revised the theme scripture to 1 Corinthians 12. Roc Corbett pointed out that these passages very much include the gifts that God has given to all the Church, both members and ministers.

The discussion then focused on selecting a title for the conference theme. Dr. Ward suggested, "Edifying the Body Through Spiritual Gifts." Mark Mickelson cautioned about the avoiding an often-used approach in some churches of encouraging everyone to find his or her gift and then in essence demanding the "right" to use their gift. *[This concern can take the form of a fear...fear which can lead to suppressing member involvement as it might become something they can't fully lead or control.]*

Robin Webber encouraged that any discussion be focused more on what the Bible actually says about gifts so we can truly learn, rather than spending undue time in how others have misunderstood and misapplied the topic. *[Good!]*

Instead we need to look around and see who has various gifts and find ways to put them to good service. *[Good approach!]*

Vic Kubik recited our historical attempts (in UCG and before) to address the concept of gifts—and the continual problem of self-promotion. *[Paul foresees this and admonishes the brethren in this area...but says we should still be using and growing gifts in members at large. Too often the approach has been to ignore gifts in members "in case it gets out of hand" (which can be a control issue)]*

Over the years some have claimed self-appointed gifts. He said that Ministerial and Member Services will be happy to work with the GCE Planning Task Force to work out the details of the conference.

Mr. Eddington then began a straw poll on Dr. Ward's suggestion of a working title "Edifying the Body Through Spiritual Gifts." The poll was unanimous at 11 to 0 (Gary Antion was ill and unable to attend the morning's meeting).

John Elliott suggested providing some GCE Conference time for the elders of the GCE to have some time set aside for conferring on various topics—since our governing documents list 27 responsibilities for GCE members. Bob Berendt stressed the importance of emphasizing the personal involvement in spiritual gifts.

Mr. Eddington answered that topic and speaker planning will be turned over to Gary Antion's education team and Ministerial and Member Services as we prepare for the GCE weekend. A final agenda and list of topics and speakers will be presented to the Council for approval at its February, 2013, meeting.

Mark Mickelson proposed the need for more elder discussion of sensitive issues—such as this current year's fiscal budget—at the GCE Conference. Various ones pointed out that such discussion can be done on the GCE forum, which will have a full month prior to the annual conference to discuss the upcoming budget and other items. Chairman Webber also pointed out that since most elders are unable to attend the GCE and send in their ballots ahead of time, extensive at-conference discussion could create "weighted" ballots.

Mr. Mickelson offered two points of need that he sees for the Church: First, we have not held each other accountable in a godly way. Second, we have managed disagreements poorly. He encouraged us to consider those points generally and in planning for the annual conference.

<http://coe.ucg.org/council-report/council-elders-meeting-report-december-10-13-2012-2012-12->

18?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+whatsnew%2Ffeed+%28UCG+Member+Updates%29

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Drive: New UCG short film

Drive: New UCG Short Film

December 30, 2011

We were created with a desire to work, and work hard, at something we believe in. God gives us talents and He expects us to use them. Our talent is the fuel that drives us.

As the apostle Peter wrote: "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10, NASB). Each of us have been blessed with God's many wonderful gifts to be used in the service of others. So use your gift well. View this new short film from the [United Church of God](#) and the producers of [Beyond Today](#) television: "[Drive.](#)"

Peter Eddington—Media and Communications Services

[United Church of God](#) | December 30, 2011 at 3:37 pm

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The *New Beginnings* statement – 6 May, 1996

In the *New Beginnings* (6 May, 1996, page 13) we find the following interesting statement:

“We must not be so secretive about our beliefs that others think we do not *want* them to be a part of the United Church of God. Nor do we want people to feel that we do not care whether they are with us or not”.

May the membership forever be involved in spreading the truth and in evangelistic outreach efforts. The local committees (let's call them work groups that have sign up lists for us to volunteer for) can assist and drive local efforts, but should not replace personal initiative in doing the Work in the local community. We all have a responsibility in accomplishing a part of the Work dependent upon our spiritual gifts, natural talents, resources and time - in other words **disengaging from passiveness**. This disengagement will require active encouragement and nurturing by the ministry.

In some areas it is what the local elder wants - the entire local church is based on HIM, not Christ. It revolves around what HE wants and he refused to implement UCG direction or policy and never will. So what we have here is just a protestant church that meets on Saturday. Very sad indeed.

"... opposition from other ministers, both within this church and without, was met at every turn continually" (*The Autobiography* (vol 1), page 319).

“From the very first, in my association with these ... brethren, I was treated by their ministers as a greenhorn tail-ender. The ... brethren all loved me. But their **jealous** ministers used every device constantly to humiliate me and persecute. God blessed my efforts to produce ‘fruit,’ but their efforts produced none!” (“History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God,” *The Good News*, May 1980).

He further wrote "**Persecution from their [jealous] ministers** continued" ("History of the Beginning and Growth of the Worldwide Church of God," *Good News*, September, 1980, page 28).

"But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth." (James 3:14, *ESV*)

"The rotting ... effect of envy ... pictures an inevitable, ongoing decay, like a cancer. It produces miserable physical health [all sorts of disease] and decaying emotional health. If prolonged, it can be so destructive as to render a person ineffective" (*Proverbs. A Topical Study*, page 181).

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What Don Ward wrote:

In brief, why should a church have a plan for general education? The vitality of the church is first and foremost dependent upon the spiritual commitment and courage of its members to live by their convictions and to grow in grace and knowledge. So that they will no longer be tossed about by every wind of doctrine in their minds or in their practices. The members must be grounded in the present truth and then they must proceed toward maturity so that they might become teachers. The youth must be thoroughly catechized so that they can develop a sense of identity and responsibility with, and for, God's way of life. **The perpetuity of the church depends upon its ability to evangelize and to retain its members--especially the youth. General education of the entire congregation is indispensable to both of these goals.**

Secondly, the ability of the church to perform its mission depends upon the spiritual gifts of the members and the ability, skill and willingness of the administration to mobilize these gifts and talents. It seems evident from scripture that spiritual gifts, talents and education go hand in hand. Moses was skilled in all of the wisdom of the Egyptians. Daniel was one of the wise men of Babylon. Which means that he had received a special training in the king's court. Paul apparently received a classical education even before he sat at the feet of Gamaliel. Tarsus was second greatest learning center in the Mediterranean world in the first century. The original twelve apostles were not formally educated, but they were taught by the master teacher for three and a half years.

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Preaching the Gospel through the local Church by Vic Kubik - 5 May, 1996

Since going back to pastoring local churches in the past few months, I have developed a special interest in how the CONGREGATION can further the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I find a lot of enthusiasm, interest and spiritual gifts that could be used to do just that in the local churches as people want to be more directly involved. I would like to see this section become a forum for ideas and practical methods. I'd like to hear from you.

What SHOULD local churches be doing that will EFFECTIVELY fulfil the commission of Matthew 28:18-20?

BOOK: William M. Easum, ***Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers -- Ministry Anytime Anywhere by Anyone***, Nashville: Abingdon, 1995.

AUTHOR: William M. Eason is a pastor of more than thirty years and a professional consultant on Church Growth and Development. A prolific writer, his major works include *How to Reach Baby Boomers*, and *Dancing with Dinosaurs*.

THESIS: Established churches worship at the feet of the sacred cow of CONTROL. If they do not cease worshipping this god of control, they will perish.

MAJOR SECTIONS:

Chapter 1: Making decisions and controlling what happens is more important in established churches than making disciples. This sacred cow of control will be ground into gourmet hamburger by a new form of congregational life -- permission giving networks.

Chapter 2: In this Quantum age of fast, revolutionary change, tightly controlled organizations will not survive. **Only churches with permission giving networks will free and empower Christians to explore their spiritual gifts on behalf of the body of Christ.**

Chapter 3: Controllers confuse accountability with control, uniformity with unity and representative democracy with the Body of Christ. God can free us from such confusion for His mission to the world. The author explains how.

Chapter 4: The Body of Christ is the best biblical metaphor to connect with the Quantum Age because such a body is a bottom-up network based on cooperation freedom, and the common good.

Chapter 5: Permission giving churches bend over backwards to err on the side of giving permission to new ministries which reflect trust, common mission, freedom, autonomous decision making, decentralization, networks and collaborative individuals and teams.

Chapter 6: **Running the church, instead of exercising their spiritual gifts, is the primary reason lay people never have time to minister to one another and the world. A new mind-set is needed.**

Chapter 7: In permission-giving churches, leaders must "follow" the directions of those gifted in areas where the "leader" is deficient. Followers often "lead" as they exercise on- the-spot decision-making.

Chapter 8: **Permission-giving churches require an organization that encourages each individual to use his or her spiritual gifts without going through a maze of committees to get approval. Networking is the foundation of this organization.**

Chapter 9: In the place of standing committees, permission-giving churches encourage the formation of self-organizing and self-governing teams which minister to others.

Chapter 10: The purpose of organization in permission-giving churches is to provide the environment in which individuals live out their spiritual gifts in the everyday world.

Chapter 11: Developing a permission giving church requires: Pastor's commitment; congregational context; understanding the community; committed leadership; casting a vision, and implementation.

RELEVANCE TO FIELD OF RESEARCH: Bill Easum's book has been nationally recognized as offering a powerful charter, and chart, of how to do ministry in the 21st century. It is required reading in seminaries throughout the country.

B. Statements by Herbert W Armstrong

Extracts from "Why Some Ministers Have Failed," *Pastor-General's Report*
Vol 4, no 8, 19 February, 1982: 1-3

I was just reflecting on why some ministers have reached the top or close to the top in rank in God's Church, and then found themselves outside, many working with their hands, unqualified for any outside job, position or profession.

Two serious mistakes proved their undoing: 1) they wanted "the chief seat" for themselves and 2), they wanted to be served instead of serving. And back of both of these reasons is probably the fact, saddening and regretful as it is, they may never have been really converted in the first place. **How many think that just being a "Church member" means being converted!**

...

Others have wanted to be served, and not to serve. To serve was "beneath them." By sheer natural ability, after graduation from Ambassador, they rose to a fairly high rank, either in the ministry or at headquarters. One would never arrive at his headquarters office until around 9:30. He would be gone to lunch by 11:30. He would return around 2:00 or 2:30, and be gone for the day by 4:00 or 4:30. But he was good at delegating his responsibilities to others. **Another, a minister of Pastor rank as area coordinator, preached a sermon no more frequently than once in six weeks, leaving all that to ministers under him. He was "too busy" loafing to bother to visit or pray for the sick. But he was very strict with the ministers under him. [the way some get around that nowadays is to recycle the same sermons every 2-3 years and then re-title them]**

...

Becoming a minister of Jesus Christ is a very serious matter. ... One should never start in the ministry until he is fully converted, has received and is really being led by the Holy Spirit of God—**has given his life to God to be used in SERVING, not GETTING** - until he has come to really admit how wrong he is and has been, and wants to serve rather than be served. It's for LIFE--and for ETERNITY!

...

The motive must be to GIVE--to CONTRIBUTE--to help and cooperate, and not to GET rank or power or position, or money for SELF! And we must not TAKE credit to ourselves, but GIVE God all the glory, for He will not share that with any one.

C. Final Thoughts

The above are some UCG statements that I am aware of concerning using spiritual gifts that have never been implemented locally at all. When will they ever be implemented as these were drawcards for members to join in 1995-97? It is not difficult to implement as it is in the Bible, in our hearts and in the UCG constitution.

For **ALL** Christians have been granted spiritual gifts by the Father.

How about this being a requirement to ensure members are used properly:

1. requirements to use spiritual gifts be included in the bylaws, rules of association, minister's contracts and
2. have a 2 or 3 pager outlining how a local church **must** be organised (inc work groups, speakers clubs, socials and sign up lists for ALL non-ordained positions. These lay member positions should be spilled each year – ie you are on a work group for 1 year only and have to vacate the position and unable to serve in that committee again unless no one else volunteered for the position. No voting - just sign up lists)
3. members are told about it in articles and a booklet on using spiritual gifts and talents - I can help with this.

Otherwise it will be the same old same old same old stale, boring, lifeless local church that is spinning its wheels with nothing to really do and little fellowship unless one is in a family or such circle - when members have tried to organise something **it mostly falls flat as there is no structure for it to hang on** AND the local minister will not actively support it. The local church has gone nowhere when it could have been thriving with interested and involved members. Rather, there is nothing to be involved in. You go along each Sabbath and hear a sermon followed by afternoon tea.

Members have a few nice words to say and that is it - you go home on a low as there is no fellowship; no speakers club; and no socials. Members don't even discuss the sermon because it is not interesting and there is no depth. There is also no breadth - the Bible has 100s of interesting topics and all we get is the same old few recycled ones. Watering down or dumbing down God's Word is a major sin - it is not some little thing.

Why are we not allowed to use our spiritual gifts or talents in the local UCG?

1. there is never a genuine, indepth sermon on the subject - you would think that there was not such thing as spiritual gifts
2. when members have used their talents (including me) they are jumped on and undermined and these gifts from God deliberately not used or pushed aside to be unusable. Some excuse is made up to not use the spiritual gifts
3. there is no support for spiritual gifts or talents
4. there is no identification of who has what skill and where/how to use them in any methodical and modern way
5. people who obviously are not gifted in certain areas are given opportunities but are not able to edify the body (eg public speaking or in organisation) as a result
6. whatever edicts there might be from HQ on spiritual gifts is just flouted and ignored. They thumb their noses at all of that. See the collection of some of these positions from HQ below.

... unless required and ministry supervised. We were promised all of this in 1995-98 - but what happened? There is practically nothing to do locally - not even sign up lists! Surely UCG would produce a guideline/policy for local churches and how they should be structured which everyone can view online?

Surely there would be consistent form/template sign up lists for members to download and to be used at church. Otherwise nothing will happen as usual. Here it is just a 'do nothing' church unless one is always running after the local minister.

As Don Ward wrote a number of years ago about something written on this:

**I believe that your document is a piece of ingenious inspiration. Good stuff!
... your paper ... is another breath of fresh air ... it would ... mobilize God's**

great army in this most critical juncture of human history ... Thanks again for your zeal and fervour for advancing God's truth ...

- Donald Ward

However, due to intense jealousy as revealed by a number of members, there are those prevented from using the gifts their Father has granted to them.