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Miracles Knowledge Faith
Interpretation Faith

It's time to
Prophecy!!

By Rodney W. Francis

Healing
Tongues
Wisdom
Discernment

Forewords

“It would be impossible to read the Apostle Paul’s first letter to the Corinthian Church without realizing the important place that Spiritual Gifts held in the gathering together of the Christian believers. In the same way it would be impossible to read what Rodney Francis has written in this book without realizing that largely the contemporary church is missing out on a powerful and supernatural provision for the development and impact of the Church.

The author has presented the Scriptural position in a practical and clear manner that is beyond dispute. He has not sought to gloss over difficulties that can arise because people have not been taught the meaning, purpose and parameters of the gifts, particularly prophecy.

He has also given personal testimony of the impact that prophecy can have, both in individual lives and in public gatherings. This book can be used, both by individuals and also by leaders, in instructing their people. The Church is desperately in need of supernatural intervention. We have many exciting provisions in our contemporary meetings and great helps through modern technology, but there is a cry in the human heart to see the God of the supernatural at work.

I warmly commend this book, but it will need to be taken seriously by leaders and people who are committed to developing a teachable spirit and who are open to loving guidance and if need be, correction.

Let us hear from God through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. **It is time to prophesy!**” ~ *Trevor Chandler* (Founder Christian Life Centre, Brisbane, Australia; Founder/Chairman Emeritus Christian Life Churches International).

“For too long the Church has been like a sleeping giant while the world around it has marched forward. This book **“It’s Time To Prophecy!!”** comes as a wake-up call to that sleeping giant. Over the last two years that I have been Pastor of Marton Elim, Rodney has presented this material in our church at Marton, New Zealand. While I have only been here two years, Rodney has had a significant role from the time he planted the church 31 years ago. Over this time many have been encouraged by the teaching and equipping of Rodney’s ministry. I see this book as an extension of that ministry. This teaching has ushered in a great releasing of people, not only into the Gift of Prophecy, but has led to an opening up of the other Gifts of the Holy Spirit. An ‘air of expectancy’ is created in the meeting that God is there and, because He is there, He will move and things will happen. To have someone come to church for the first time and have an individual in the church speak the word of God over them is a very powerful thing. For that new attendee, that word is often the very word that is needed to convince them that God is real and that He is in that place. When the Prophetic Gift is seen in action in meetings, one can feel the anointing of the Holy Spirit. I see this book as a handbook for church leaders so that the godly principles in this book can be implemented into the life of the reader and the church that they are part of. This book is not a book to join the hundreds of others on the book shelf, but to be found alongside their computer where it can be referred to regularly. The material in this book will bear much fruit if implemented by the reader.” ~ **Graham Moore** (Pastor, Marton Elim Church, New Zealand).

“In my experience, one of the most overlooked and neglected areas of a church leader’s responsibility, is to help equip people to discover, develop and demonstrate their ability to hear from God and thereby

function in the Spiritual Gifts. Indeed you may be reading this and are feeling that you are one who has yet to be fully released in this area. Sadly, it appears that in many churches, the concept of a functioning body seems to consist of a 'large mouth and many tiny ears!' This, of course, would represent a rather ugly body compared to the beautiful Bride that Jesus is coming back for, as described in Ephesians 5. Further, such a dysfunctional body doesn't seem to reflect what Jesus had in mind when He told His disciples that He would build His Church in Matthew 16:18. Neither does it seem like the expression of a multi-functioning body of believers that the New Testament portrays in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12.

However, when we spend time developing this faith skill of dialoguing with God, something quite amazing happens. Church gatherings begin to transform and metamorphose as the life of Christ breaks out from people who were once just passive 'pew fillers.' This is especially the case when leaders decide to take a faith risk to teach these Biblical principles to their people and then give the measured permission and encouragement necessary for them to use them effectively. Tweaked church structures accommodate the new wine and the synergy that begins to revolutionize the church. We begin to find a sense of purpose; we become responsible for attracting God's presence and become channels of blessing through whom God brings direction, healing and growth to the body.

I have known Rodney Francis for ten years and have had several opportunities to both receive ministry from him and minister alongside him in various contexts. Without exception, I have always thoroughly enjoyed his ministry and have been equally challenged by his many books. He is one of those unique pioneers of change who seems to

always manage to find that delicate balance between the extreme nature of trail blazing new prophetic paradigms in the Church, but also ensures that we retain the hallmarks of a true move of God ~ by keeping everything securely founded upon Scripture and fully immersed in God's love. I have watched scores of people helped significantly by the accurate and incisive prophetic words he has given. All leave encouraged, up-built and taken into a new realm of the Holy Spirit. Both Rodney's preaching and his writings are practical and down-to-earth. They challenge people to change, take Jesus at His Word and 'step out of their boat' to demonstrate that they, too, can operate in the supernatural.

'It's Time To Prophecy!' is no exception. This clear-cut, short read will inspire you to embrace the profound reality that God wants to speak very clearly to and through you on behalf of others. Presented in a methodical style and punctuated heavily throughout with Scriptural support, this 'no-nonsense' manual will significantly help you to understand what God is requiring of His Church in these last days. It will also stir your heart to take action and join the growing ranks of God's end-time workers who are becoming increasingly more proficient at engaging in Prophetic Ministry. As the Church of Jesus becomes freed-up to represent His prophetic heart and communicate His very real love in such a way that all feel the awesome touch of His presence, unbelievers will see, feel, hear and encounter the living Christ displayed in His multi-functioning Body. As such I highly commend this book to you." ~ **Martin Allen** (Founding Director of Caleb Ministries, Mountain Ash, Wales). www.caleb.org.uk

"Having been in Pentecostal churches for a number of years, I thought I knew about the Gifts of the Spirit and prophecy, but wasn't really

moving freely in them. I guess I didn't really expect God to speak through me and relied more on the church leaders. Then Rodney and Jean moved in as our neighbours and I got involved with The GFM Ministry. Through the Equipping Station meetings and Rodney's teaching, I began to understand the importance of the gifts and how to use them in practical ways that made so much sense to me. It is a great honour to see this latest book from Rodney, particularly as I prophesied over Rodney in a hotel foyer in Dubai (2010) on our way to a GFM Missions trip in Kenya and Uganda that he would write another book. Yes, God does speak, and yes, **it is time to prophesy!** This book will be a great blessing to those who seek to know more about this awesome gift." ~ *Dave Moger* (Paraparaumu, New Zealand).

"Dynamite has the power to move mountains, break hard rock to harvest earth's hidden treasure and demolish old buildings for new ones to be built. However, it also has the power to destroy, robbing what should be left and plundering what is not ours. Prophecy, when motivated out of love for people, has the power to move and change people's lives forever. It has the power to break through entrenched mind-sets, through the forces that have bound and held people captive. It breaks hard hearts, allowing God's treasure to be found and seen in man; it gives and doesn't take; it rebuilds and makes what is old new. But, like dynamite, when used by the untrained and/or not ministered in love, it can leave scars on people's lives, destroying instead of rebuilding. Sadly, all too often, when people hear of prophecy, they would rather stay away from it, and many pastors will not allow it because they fear the aftermath.

What we fear or don't understand doesn't make it wrong, nor does it mean we should leave it and not touch it. For over 20 years I have

been used by God to bring words of encouragement to people. I have also received words that have encouraged me, some of which I am now living in the fulfilment of. I have seen people's lives change because they know God has spoken to them; however I have also made mistakes.

As someone pastoring a church, I believe it is my responsibility to train and equip God's Body in their God-given gifts. Concerning prophecy, help to equip people to discover and develop who God has called them to be in and through this gift without fear, making a way for them to function as God intended His Body to function; a Body with many parts with different giftings; Romans 12:6 ~ ***“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.”***

I can't commend enough what Rodney does through The GFM Ministries, helping equip people in their giftings and restoring what the Church has often stayed clear of. Whatever your experience of the Gift of Prophecy, whether you are someone who is in the position to teach or someone sitting in the pews, then I encourage you to read this short book ***'It's Time To Prophecy!!'*** As the Apostle Paul says: ***“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant”*** (1 Corinthians 12:1). The Church cannot continue to make excuses. To quote Rodney: 'When we are ignorant or misinformed, we then misunderstand, neglect the function of, and the result is that we do not receive the benefits of that which was given to us by God!'

This book is practical and to the point, with clear Scriptural references and guidelines that help you understand this gift and the exercising

of it. It leaves you with no doubt of the importance it has in the Church/Body. Stop this gift from being practiced in your church, and your life, and you stop a mode in which God speaks to His people. Remember you are part of the Body of Christ; your Prophetic Gift is important to the health and function of God's Church/Body.”
 ~ **John Wilkie** (Minister, Hawera Presbyterian Church, New Zealand).

“My firm belief is that the New Testament Church will not fully fulfill its mandate and assignment without the Gift of Prophecy being fully operational in and through Holy Spirit-filled believers who have a strong desire to see the churches fully revived. When Peter the apostle prophesied about what he saw in Acts 2:16, **“But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel”** (KJV), he was saying the Church needs to recognize her God-given mission; that is to hear clearly from God the Father through prophecy, through dreams, visions, messages, impressions, as was prophesied to come by the Prophet Joel (Joel 2:26-32).

The Prophetic Gift facilitates us to see the future with hope and opportunity to work proactively towards building and equipping people and, in turn, the Church will be built up. Through my observations, the Church has become reactive to ‘the latest programme advertised in the media and through what others are saying and reporting’. This has resulted in a decline in the use of the gifts and a lukewarm Church.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially prophecy, open our hearts to hear and our eyes to see that which the Lord is doing and saying to His Church. When the Gift of Prophecy is in operation there is an excitement and an expectation about our Father's dream for us, as

we exhort each other to break out of the restrictions and limitations we often put on ourselves. We are encouraged in this book to give ourselves over to be used in the Prophetic Gifts and to be more open to the dynamics of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

It has been my privilege, while travelling and teaching with Rodney, to look back and see the many, many lives impacted and changed by the power of the Prophetic Gifts. My own life has been liberated and changed by the Prophetic Gift as I have embraced the Prophetic Gifts and teaching. There have been profound words of revelation spoken into my life through prophetic men and women that have had pivotal repercussions into what we do today. One such word God spoke to us in June 1995 out of Genesis 12:1: ***“Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you”*** (NIV). Blessed with hindsight, we can confirm that was God’s leading and direction for our lives and ministry. It took us from South Africa to New Zealand (where we now live).

This is a very timely book by Rodney and very clearly explains the benefits of the Gift of Prophecy to the individual (and to us all) to pursue and desire the Gift of Prophecy and to build, to stir and edify the Church to receive the Father’s voice for today. This book is a great encouragement for this generation of leaders to courageously steward the Gift of Prophecy within their churches, and in turn, receive the many benefits of the Gift of Prophecy.

I have ministered with Rodney since the year 1999 and have been on many ‘Equipping Weekends’ of ministry to local churches and conferences, as well as Prophetic Equipping Schools around the

world. I have observed Rodney has a clear passion to see the Body of Christ fully functional and restored in their God-given gifts. He has ministered for over 50 years, which fully qualifies him to speak with credibility and honour on this subject. We can fully welcome and trust Rodney in his commendation for us to develop our Prophetic Gifts in the days ahead as we press in to see the full restoration of the Gift of Prophecy and Ministry of Prophecy in the Body of Christ.

This is a book for encouraging, both novices and experienced ministries, to be eager to aspire with all excellence that to which God has called us into.” ~ **Leonard Buttner** (Founder/ Director, Eagle Ascend Ministries, Howick, Auckland, New Zealand) www.eagleascend.com

“One of the things I love about Rodney Francis is that his teaching is sensible, Biblical, and understandable and makes sense. In **‘It’s Time to Prophecy!!’** Rodney tells us why we should prophesy, how we can prophesy, the nature of prophecy and why God gave it to the Church. No frills, no fancies, no complicated jargon that gets you confused ~ just simple straight-forward Bible teaching.

Not only does **‘It’s Time to Prophecy!!’** teach you to prophesy but it teaches how to weigh and test ‘Biblically’ the Prophetic Ministry: not to despise God’s Word but to honour His Word. Few ministers are prepared to share the benefit of their wisdom to raise up the coming generation. Rodney is a man that sees God, sees God’s people, sees the gifting of God in His people and then works under the influence of the Holy Spirit to release the people of God into their God-given destiny. Well done, Rodney, you have done it again.” ~ **Rev. Elaine Roberts** (World Mandate Ministries, Kettering, England) www.godsmandate.org/

“The printing of Rodney’s book, **‘It’s Time To Prophecy!!’** is a reflection upon his continuing passion to this subject of prophecy and its value among the believers of God, and upon and among the unbelievers. You only need to spend time with Rodney and you will soon discover how this gift has played a major part in where God has taken him, and to whom he has reached through this amazing gift from the Spirit of the Living God. It is exciting when we hear testimonies of God’s interventions through our simple obedience to His voice. One of Rodney’s repeated quotes is this: ‘Someone else’s miracle lies on the other side of our obedience.’

At a time when so many are avoiding and seemingly under-valuing not only this gift, but all of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Rodney continues to help us catch its importance in the establishment of the believers and the ongoing growth of God’s Kingdom. Rodney’s commitment to confront the fear of the excesses that has surrounded this gift in the past is greatly needed, but we need not only his challenge, but also his passion to allow God to use each of us in this gift. We need to have our ignorance confronted with the truth so that we may be able to embrace the amazing dynamic and effect of this gift ~ starting even now in our generation ~ to see the Spirit of God moving with power through His people. Imagine what would happen in our world if every Spirit-filled believer sought every day to be in a position where God could use them with prophetic revelation! The Kingdom of God would be with power! Rodney, what a great assignment you carry.” ~ **Ross Monk** (My Father’s House, Churton Park, Wellington, New Zealand).

“I have only been introduced to Rodney recently and not actually met him face to face as yet. However, the whole area of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit is something I believe the Holy Spirit is wanting to see restored to His Church in these days.

In the sixties, as the Charismatic Movement got going in New Zealand, the Church then didn't seem to have the maturity, love and ability to be able to take what was being revealed ~ to equip the Body of Christ to do the work of ministry as instructed in Ephesians 4:12. It seemed as if the truths of what the gifts were actually for was sadly outweighed by the outward experiences people were so fascinated with.

Rodney's teaching on Prophecy is both simple (which is something I need), Scriptural (which is essential), and practical. We are told to encourage each other day by day. What more encouragement would anyone get than to know that the God they trust in is giving them something personal, just for them. **'It's time to Prophecy!!'** contains sufficient keys to want me to desire to see this gift develop further for myself.” ~ *David Garratt* (Scripture in Song, Auckland, New Zealand) www.davidanddalegarratt.com

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

We live in exciting yet challenging days of the Kingdom of God! These are days when we need to be releasing more of the dynamic of the Holy Spirit out of our lives to minister healing and wholeness ~ spirit, soul and body ~ to the masses of needy people worldwide. So much more happens when we are available to God and allow His Words of Prophecy and Spiritual Gifts to flow out of our innermost beings. Spiritual Gifts operating through my life have opened up the world to me for ministry, as well as have enabled me to touch and impact thousands of lives by Holy Spirit revelation flowing through and out of me. My heart is that others will have the privilege of experiencing the same ~ even more ~ as a result of this book. “The best is yet to come!” ~ **Rodney W. Francis.**

It's time to Prophecy !!

By Rodney W. Francis

There is a great need today for a better understanding of the purpose of the Gift of Prophecy and all the Spiritual Gifts, so that we may be encouraged to allow them to operate more freely in our gatherings. It is quite amazing that so much of New Testament Christianity is either overlooked, or ignored, when it comes to things of the Holy Spirit. This book, therefore, is a serious attempt to raise the standard of credibility with regards to the Gift of Prophecy, as well as the other eight Gifts of the Holy Spirit (which are recorded in 1 Corinthians 12:1-11). They have been given by Jesus to the Church to build and establish the people of God, and to bring them to a place of spiritual maturity ~ something which cannot happen without them (the Spiritual Gifts) functioning freely and publicly. As I am an itinerant ministry, it has been my experience to minister in many different Christian Churches around the world. I have therefore been able to observe the place of Spiritual Gifts in those churches, and, sadly to say, they are virtually non-existent in most of them. In the clear light of what the Bible teaches on them, why is this so? Why are we ignoring what is a very important part of Christianity, as well as a very necessary

part that enables the Christians to come to spiritual maturity? As we progress through this book we shall see that that is the purpose for which Spiritual Gifts have been given to us by God, and why it is so important that they are allowed to operate and develop in our midst today. Yes, **it's time to prophesy!!**

Paul, in opening up his teachings on the subject, commences with: ***“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant”*** (1 Corinthians 12:1).

The word “ignorant” here means “not to know, to ignore (through disinclination), no discernment of.” Ignorance was a problem in Paul’s day, and it is even a greater one in the Church today. Ignorance is not knowing about a certain subject, or having the wrong information. The Amplified Bible uses the word **“misinformation.”**

The Living Bible puts it this way: ***“And now, brothers, I want to write about the special abilities the Holy Spirit gives to each of you, for I don’t want any misunderstanding about them.”***

There is something about the operation of the Gift of Prophecy and Spiritual Gifts that the enemy does not want God’s people to know. We pay a high price for the neglect of those things that God Himself has given to us. When we are ignorant or misinformed we then misunderstand, neglect the function of, and the result is that we do not receive the benefits of that which was given to us by God! So, let us look and see what the Scriptures have to say on them. And let us eliminate ignorance and wrong information on this wonderful aspect of New Testament Christianity!

The Manifestation Of The Holy Spirit Is For The Benefit Of All:

“The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all” (1 Corinthians 12:7).

“Let us consider a fuller meaning of this statement: ***“The manifestation*** (“a making known”- Bullinger’s; “to render apparent, appear, manifestly declare”- Strong’s) ***of the Spirit is given to each*** (“every”) ***one for the profit*** (“advantage”- Young’s; “be better for”- Strong’s) ***of all.***”

From the very outset of Paul’s teachings he declares that there are things that are made known for our advantage through the operation of prophecy and the Spiritual Gifts. We do not gain these advantages without the operation of such.

“The Holy Spirit displays God’s power through each of us as a means of helping the entire church” (TLB).

The Holy Spirit Manifests Himself In Nine Beautiful Gifts:

The nine Gifts of the Holy Spirit are named in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11, and they are: The Word of Wisdom, The Word of Knowledge, Faith, Gifts of Healings, The Working of Miracles, Prophecy, Discerning of Spirits (both good and evil), Different Kinds of Tongues, and the Interpretation of Tongues. These gifts are all operated through the Holy Spirit; they are the work of the Holy Spirit and He has distributed these wonderful gifts to every Holy Spirit-filled believer in Jesus Christ. Because they are given to us of God they are therefore a very important part of the Christian’s weaponry in the service of Jesus Christ.

I repeat: ***“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit*** (“gain, benefit, advantage”) ***of all”*** (1 Corinthians 12:7). Spiritual Gifts functioning have a specific purpose of releasing to us spiritual benefits to enable us to fulfil more of the purposes of God which can be received no other way. When we fail to function in the Spiritual Gifts we are “robbing” others of these benefits. We cannot afford to be like this.

The Holy Spirit Is Truth And He Reveals The Truth To Us:

The Holy Spirit is our Helper, Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who comes to live within us and to lead and guide us into all truth (John 14:12-17). He manifests (“reveals”) Himself to all who love Him and keep His commandments (John 14:21). He is our Teacher to teach us all things and to bring to our remembrance what Jesus has said (John 14:26). He, the Holy Spirit, testifies of Jesus (John 15:26); His work is to ***“convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment,”*** to guide us into all truth, and to reveal to us things to come (John 16:7-15). Much of the Ministry of the Holy Spirit takes place when His Spiritual Gifts and the Gift of Prophecy are allowed to function amongst the believers. We shall see this as we progress on through the Scriptures.

The Holy Spirit lives within us NOW! The Spiritual Gifts are in the Holy Spirit Who is in us NOW! We all have need to learn how to release these Gifts of the Holy Spirit out of our innermost beings more and more.

Prophecy Is One Proof That The Holy Spirit Has Come!

“But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy . . .’” (Acts 2:16-18).

It is interesting to note that Peter, in quoting from Joel, places double emphasis upon us prophesying than Joel did. Peter leaves us in no doubt that prophesying is one of the evidences of being filled with the Holy Spirit. The evidence of speaking in other tongues is but one sign of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling; prophecy and power (“dunamis”) should also be evident (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).

Why do we not believe and pursue these Scriptural principles?

Love Is The Key:

LOVE. Love is the key to releasing and exercising these Spiritual Gifts. Without love we are nothing (“profitless”) (1 Corinthians 13). But God is LOVE and He lives within us ~ inside us 24 hours of the day ~ and we need to make ourselves available to Him for His service! That love is demonstrated by our willingness to be used of the Lord to allow the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself through us because of our love for the people, so that they can profit from such inspired utterances and actions.

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”

“If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I knew all the mysteries of the future and knew everything about everything, but didn't love others, what good would I be?” (1 Corinthians 13:2, NLT).

The Christian desire should be to do the utmost good for our Brothers and Sisters in Christ, and the best way we can do that is for us to be available to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to speak and act through us to impart spiritual things into their lives. We need to remember that we are first and foremost spirit beings and our inheritance is to be able to impart spiritual truth (revelation) into the lives of others. That is the purpose of the Spiritual Gifts; they are the Christians' “tools of the trade” to enable us to adequately represent the Living Christ here on earth through the same Holy Spirit that raised Him from the dead! (Romans 8:9-11). Look again at those nine Spiritual Gifts. Are there any that we do not need today? The answer is “No” (especially when we understand their purpose). They are for the building up and maturing of the Church! Nothing else can take their place.

They are given by God ~ they are God's idea, and if they are God's idea, then they are very important for us to lay a hold of today.

We Are Told To Focus On The Gift Of Prophecy:

“Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy” (1 Corinthians 14:1).

This verse and statement puts together in a nutshell Paul’s teachings of 1 Corinthians 12 and 13, which are the foundation for what he goes on to teach in 1 Corinthians 14. Here we are told that we should especially desire to prophesy.

We are to specifically focus on exercising that gift!

The word “desire” is a strong one in that it speaks of an “earnestness” when it comes to exercising the Spiritual Gifts (see also 1 Corinthians 12:31). “Desire” means “to have warmth of feeling for, covet (earnestly), (have) desire, (move with) envy, be jealous over, (be) zealous or zealously affect” (Strong’s). To be “earnest” means to be “(1) Serious in mind or intention. (2) Showing or characterised by sincerity of intention. (3) Demanding or receiving serious attention” (Collins Dictionary). When we put those two words together ~ “earnestly desire” we have a strong exhortation to pursue the subject matter at hand, i.e. (Prophecy and the Spiritual Gifts) as being extremely important for us to be functioning in. Note that **we** are the ones who have to ***“desire to prophesy”*** . . . to ***“earnestly desire”*** the best gifts! The desire has to be strong because there are so many things (within us and outside of us) that would seek to stop us from gaining the benefits of flowing in these Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual Gifts do not “automatically function” ~ they are to be sought after, given over to, pursued, until such time as we are able to work together with the Holy Spirit’s Gifts to bring about His plans and purposes in the lives of people today. That “earnest desire” has to be stronger than any

and every reason or excuse we may have as to why we are not functioning in Spiritual Gifts.

As long as we have an excuse we will not flow with or co-operate with the Holy Spirit to bring about the necessary “edification and exhortation and comfort” to others (1 Corinthians 14:3).

What Is The Gift Of Prophecy?

SOME DEFINITIONS:

As mentioned earlier, prophecy is one of the nine Gifts (manifestations) of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:1-11). These gifts should always be exercised under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Prophecy is the bringing forth of an anointed word under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit ~ or ~ it is a prophetic declaration while under divine influence. It is a revelation of the mind of God TO an individual Christian for the assembled believers (or a particular believer or person). Here is how some others describe it:

“It is a Spirit-birthed word, supernatural in its origin and inspiration, but presented using the normal language of the individual who is speaking” (Pastor Trevor Chandler, Brisbane, Australia).

“The Gift of Prophecy is the special ability that God gives to members of the Body of Christ to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to His gathered people, a group among them or any one of His people individually, through a divinely anointed utterance” (David Pytches in his book, “Come Holy Spirit”).

“It is sharing God’s heart, desires and intent” (Bill Hamon, USA).

“Prophecy is attacking, stimulating and provoking. It is designed to put a sharp edge onto our relationship with God, in terms of how we live our lives and handle truth” (Graham Cook in his book, “Developing Your Prophetic Gifting”).

Prophecy Edifies, Exhorts And Comforts The Body Of Christ:

“He who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men” (1 Corinthians 14:3).

Here we are clearly told of some of the advantages that we receive when people are prophesying in our midst. We are ***“edified”*** or “built up, confirmed”; “1. improvement, instruction, or enlightenment, especially when morally or spiritually uplifting. 2. the act of edifying or state of being edified” (Collins). We are ***“exhorted”*** to “come closer to Jesus, a calling near (by invitation)” (Bullinger’s); “to urge or persuade (someone) earnestly; advise strongly” (Collins). We are ***“comforted”*** (“a consolation, solace” - Young’s; “to call for; every kind of speaking to, which is meant to produce a particular effect, e.g. exhortation, encouragement, comfort, etc.” - Bullinger’s; “1. a state of ease or wellbeing. 2. relief from affliction, grief, etc. 3. a person, thing, or event that brings solace or ease. 4. obsolete, support. 5. something that affords physical ease and relaxation. 6. to ease the pain of, soothe, cheer. 7. to bring physical ease to . . . to strengthen very much” (Collins). Here we see that the Gift of Prophecy functioning has a very positive effect of ministering into the lives of the hearers.

When we prophesy we are ministering to people “Spirit to spirit” and therefore it accomplishes very different results to natural encouragement, etc.

It is clear from Scripture that prophesying is meant to be an ongoing, regular part of Christian gatherings. If you look at 1 Corinthians 14:6 you will see that when we meet together there should be a sharing of revelation, knowledge, prophecies and teaching. We need all these to be coming forth as it enhances our spiritual growth. The Scriptures then go on and teach us of the importance of being very clear in what we are saying in these gatherings, so the people are not left in doubt as to what is being spoken. If we “*make an uncertain sound*” (verse 8), no one responds in an active and positive way. When that happens, whatever is spoken is lost, wasted, and therefore becomes unproductive.

When we look at 1 Corinthians 14:12, we are challenged to be zealous (“eager”) for the Spiritual Gifts to be operating through us. We should all be strongly desiring the gifts to be functioning in and through our lives “*for the edification (building up) of the church.*” The Amplified Bible puts it this way: “. . . *since you are so eager and ambitious to possess spiritual endowments and manifestations of the (Holy) Spirit, [concentrate on] striving to excel and to abound [in them] in ways that will build up the church.*”

What are we being encouraged to do? We are being encouraged to be so zealous of Spiritual Gifts functioning through us that we actually should be desiring to be the very best at exercising them! Why do I say this? Because the word “excel” here means “1. to be superior to (another or others); surpass; 2. To be outstandingly good or proficient” (Collins). This has nothing to do with being proud, but rather knowing and understanding that the purpose of the Spiritual Gifts being exercised through us will build up the people of God like nothing else can (no wonder the enemy does not want them to be coming to the fore in these days)! **I have been in Holy Spirit-filled circles for over 50 years and I have never yet heard any sermons preached**

or Leaders exhorting their people to be the best in the church at exercising Spiritual Gifts! So, we need to ask ourselves:

What importance do I place on Spiritual Gifts operating today?

How desirous am I to exercise Spiritual Gifts?

Do I honestly seek to be the best at exercising Spiritual Gifts in the gatherings I attend? (It is important that we fellowship amongst people where the Spiritual Gifts are allowed to operate.)

What do I need to do in order to be more available to the Holy Spirit?

What do I need to do to build up God's people more and more?

Do I sincerely and really want to be the best at exercising Spiritual Gifts?

The matter of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in general, and in particular the Gift of Prophecy, is not to be approached with a half-hearted attitude. We have to cultivate a strong desire to build up the Body of Christ through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit! Why? Because we so love the Body that we want to be used by God to do the utmost good to it, and we now see that the best way to build the Body is through a genuine outworking of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit from our own life. **We need to learn, to excel, to super abound at doing this ~ in LOVE!** It is God's method of maturing us all.

It's time to prophesy!

On different occasions in meetings the Holy Spirit has told me to go and lay my hands on someone in the gathering and they would prophesy. When I have obeyed the Lord and done that, that person then begins to prophesy. Sometimes it is a total unknown person,

and some times it is someone I know (and I knew they had never prophesied before). My natural thinking will try and “create havoc” in me and tell me that laying my hands on a person will not make any difference. But it does, and I have seen a number of people released into prophesying as a result. The Holy Spirit knows better than we do, and it often takes someone to “activate” or “release” the anointing so things can happen to the glory of God.

I remember conducting an outdoor open-air crusade in Port Vila, Vanuatu, a number of years back. There were approximately 1,200 people in attendance. At the end of my preaching the Holy Spirit said to me, “Release the people to prophesy.” Well, that was a new thing in that kind of environment, as far as I was concerned. But I obeyed the Lord, spoke it out, and the next thing a very prominent well-known doctor started prophesying (I understand for the first time). This was followed by a number of others prophesying throughout that crowd. It was wonderful.

On another occasion in Vanuatu we held a meeting under a tree. To my amazement about 80 people turned up. The Holy Spirit said to release people to prophesy, so I did and more than ten people prophesied!

He Who Prophesies Edifies The Church:

“ . . . **He who prophesies** (“to foretell events, divine, speak under inspiration, exercise the prophetic office; prophesy” - Strong’s; “to speak forth, in declaration, warning or exhortation, as directed by the Spirit of God” - Bullinger’s) **edifies** (“to build, construct; to build

up, establish ~ like building a house” - Bullinger’s *the church*” (“In the New Testament ‘the church’ denotes the redeemed community in its two-fold aspect. 1. The entire community of all who are called by and to Christ out of the world, the Church universal; 2. Every Church in which the character of the Church as a whole is seen in miniature” - Bullinger’s) (1 Corinthians 14:4).

Notice here how the Church gets built ~ through the Gift of Prophecy!

Through Holy Spirit-filled believers exercising the Gifts of the Holy Spirit!

I wonder why we are not taught these things more?

Prophesying Is For Believers (And The Conviction Of Unbelievers):

Prophesying is for those who believe (1 Corinthians 14:22). There is so much to be gained when we value and give room for the Gift of Prophecy to come forth. It is for the believers benefit that this gift be allowed to function. Prophecy also has the impact ~ when everyone is prophesying ~ of bringing strong conviction into the hearts of any unbelievers that are present. I have personally seen evidence of this on two occasions. There is something that happens in the spirit realm when believers are flowing in the Gift of Prophecy. Let the Scripture speak:

“But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you” (1 Corinthians 14:24-25).

To help us get a fuller meaning of what is being said here, let us break the meanings down further: **“But if all prophesy** (“one who speaks forth openly before any one, a proclaimer of a divine message; among the heathen, an interpreter of the oracle . . . the usage of the word is clear; it signifies one on whom the Spirit of God rested; one to whom and through whom God speaks; one to whom God makes known His mysteries. Hence, it means, one to whom God reveals His truth and through whom He speaks” - Bullinger’s), **and an unbeliever** (“not confident, mistrustful, faithless” - Bullinger’s) **or an uninformed** (Greek is “idiotes” meaning “a private person, i.e. (by implication) an ignominious ~ idiot: ignorant, rude, unlearned” - Strong’s) **person comes in, he is convicted** (“convicted, reprov’d, rebuked” - Strong’s) **by all, he is convicted** (“scrutinized, i.e. by implication investigated, interrogated, discerned, judged” - Strong’s) **by all. And thus the secrets** (“that which is concealed or hidden”) **of his heart are revealed** (“apparent, visible, conspicuous” - Bullinger’s); **and so, falling down on his face, he will worship** (“to fawn or crouch to, i.e. (literally or figuratively) prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore): worship” - Strong’s) **God and report that God is truly among you.”**

We need to take time to meditate upon what is being said here. Why is it that the encouragement of believers to prophesy is virtually non-existent today? **The role of leaders in Christianity is to encourage and exhort the people to be all that God has called them to be.** And He has called us to prophesy forth what He tells us! Prophesying is more than preaching. It is speaking forth under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit those things He wants spoken at that particular point in time.

Every Holy Spirit-filled believer should desire to see the Lord so working in our midst that unbelievers can be convicted as a result of our obedience to God.

Prophesying is a key!

We Can All Prophecy ~ Every One Of Us!

“For you can (“may, to be able” - Greek word is “dunamai” - Young’s; “to be able or possible: be able, can do, be of power” - Strong’s) **all prophecy** (“speak under inspiration, exercise the prophetic office” - Strong’s) **one by one, that all may learn** (“to be informed, to understand” - Bullinger’s) **and all may be encouraged** (“comforted, exhorted, be of good courage! Take courage! Cheer up! Take heart! Feel confidence! Be in good spirits! Be animated!” - Bullinger’s)” (1 Corinthians 14:31).

Prophecy inspires us in our spirits to rise up and be all that God has called us to be.

Prophecy flows out of us as we understand that the Holy Spirit within us is God’s anointing to release His Spiritual Gifts, and especially the Gift of Prophecy.

The Bible is very clear: we can or may all prophecy! The hold-up is on our side, not God’s!

“In this way all who have the gift of prophecy can speak, one after the other, and everyone will learn and be encouraged and helped” (TLB).

We Have Control Of Our Actions:

“And the spirits of the prophets are subject (“under obedience, put under, subdue unto, be (put) in subjection (to, under), submit self unto” - Strong’s) *to the prophets*” (1 Corinthians 14:32).

“Remember that a person who has a message from God has the power to stop himself or wait his turn” (TLB).

We Need To Be Really Earnest About Prophesying:

“Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly (“to be zealous toward, to be eager for” - Bullinger’s) *to prophesy*” (1 Corinthians 14:39).

Notice in 1 Corinthians 12:31; 1 Corinthians 14:1, 31 and 39 that **we are the ones who are to pursue prophecy, to desire earnestly, crave, be zealous for this gift, so that we can be used of God to build and establish the Church.** It doesn’t “just happen” ~ we must give ourselves to seeking to exercise the gift!

How desirous are you to prophesy?

Is your desire strong enough?

What are you doing about it?

We Prophecy According To Our Faith:

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith” (Romans 12:6).

We have already learnt that we can all prophesy, and therefore we should make sure that this gift is functioning in our lives. Let us encourage one another to always be in a place of availability with God that He can speak (prophesy) through us any time He wishes.

“Having gifts (faculties, talents, qualities) that differ according to the grace given us, let us use them: [He whose gift is] prophecy, [let him prophesy] according to the proportion of his faith” (Amplified Bible).

It is according to our faith, so may our faith be strong!

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).

This verse is telling us that we receive faith by the hearing of the “rhema” or “now word” of God ~ that which comes to us from the Holy Spirit and inspires us to say or do what He is asking of us. Obedience to that word includes the operation of the Spiritual Gifts and our speaking words of prophecy to others.

Prophecies Inspire And Strengthen Us:

“Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets (the Greek is “prophetes” meaning “a New Testament prophet, foreteller, an inspired speaker” - Strong’s) ***also, exhorted*** (“to call to one, call near, call for; every kind of speaking to which is meant to produce a particular effect, e.g. exhortation, comfort, encouragement” - Bullinger’s) ***and strengthened*** (“to confirm fully” - Young’s; “to support further, i.e. re-establish” - Strong’s; “to make to lean on, to strengthen upon, establish” - Bullinger’s) ***the brethren with many words”*** (Acts 15:32).

Through prophesying Judas and Silas were inspiring the people to keep close to the Lord and to know who they were in Him.

A Serious Challenge Regarding Prophecies:

“Do not quench (“put out, extinguish, as a light or fire; to damp, hinder, repress” - Bullinger’s) **the Spirit. Do not despise** (“to think nothing of, set at nought” - Young’s; “to make utterly nothing of, i.e. despise; contemptible, least esteemed” - Strong’s; “to set out at nought, treat as contemptible” - Bullinger’s) **prophecies** (the Greek word is “propheteia” meaning “a speaking forth, prophetic declarations, exhortations, warnings, uttered by the prophets while under divine influence, and referring either to the past, present, or future” - Bullinger’s). **Test** (“to assay, to make trial of, put to the proof, examine; hence, to examine and judge of; prove by test; approve on trial” - Bullinger’s) **all things; hold fast** (“firmly”) **what is good**” (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21).

The place of prophesying and prophecies is important enough for Scripture to warn us how we should re-act to and treat them. We must not be guilty of hindering, extinguishing or despising them, but to make sure we test them and so gain the benefits of that which is good. Our attitude to prophecies and prophesying needs to also be in line with the exhortation of Scripture. Here is what some other translations say on these verses:

“Do not put out the Spirit’s fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil” (NIV).

“Do not smother the Holy Spirit. Do not scoff at those who prophesy . . .” (TLB).

“Do not restrain the Holy Spirit; do not despise inspired messages . . .” (GNB).

“Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt . . .” (Jerusalem Bible).

Why do the Scriptures use such strong wording?

We are very much the losers when we do not hold and respect prophesying and the operation of the Spiritual Gifts.

God has given them to us to profit thereby!

Let us be sure we co-operate with God on these matters.

Some Major Reasons For Personal Prophecies:

“This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies (“propheteia” meaning “a speaking forth, prophetic declarations, exhortations, warnings, uttered by the prophets while under divine influence, and referring either to the past, present, or future” - Bullinger’s) *previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare* (“to serve in a military campaign; to contend with carnal inclinations” - Strong’s; “to serve in war; then, to wage war; be a soldier” - Bullinger’s), *having faith* (the Greek word is “pistis” meaning “persuasion, i.e. credence; conviction of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God; especially reliance upon Christ for

salvation: assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity” - Strong’s; “firm persuasion, the conviction which is based upon hearing, not upon sight, or knowledge; a firmly relying confidence in what we hear from God in His Word” - Bullinger’s) **and a good conscience** (“a knowing with one’s self, consciousness; the being one’s own witness; the testimony to one’s own conduct borne by consciousness, especially the consciousness man has of himself in his relation to God, manifesting itself in the form of a self-testimony. Consequently it is the effect and result of faith, for a man’s conscience will never condemn that which he believes to be right, and vice versa: hence the only conscience worth having is that which springs from ‘*a faith unfeigned*’ - see 1 Timothy 1:5” - Bullinger’s), **which some having rejected** (“1. to refuse to accept, acknowledge, use, believe, etc. 2. to throw out as useless or worthless; discard” - Collins), **concerning the faith** (“pistis”) **have suffered shipwreck** (“partial or total destruction, ruin”), **of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered** (“give over to” - Young’s) **to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme** (“1. to show contempt or disrespect for God, especially in speech. 2. to utter profanities, curses, or impious expressions” - Collins)” (1 Timothy 1:18-20).

“Timothy, my son, here are my instructions for you, based on the prophetic words spoken about you earlier. May they give you the confidence to fight well in the Lord’s battles. Cling tightly to your faith in Christ, and always keep your conscience clear. For some people have deliberately violated their consciences; as a result, their faith has been shipwrecked. Hymenaeus and Alexander are two examples of this. I turned them over to Satan so they would learn not to blaspheme God” (NLT).

“Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme” (NIV).

Here we are warned about the dangers of belittling and despising the Prophetic Ministry. It is sad but true that many Christians do not speak highly of the Prophetic Ministry. And they have negative stories to back up what they say. But that does not mean that there is not a better and more genuine realm of Prophetic Ministry. Most have never functioned in them and so are ignorant of the principles and ways by which these wonderful gifts operate. We should know that because the true Gifts of the Holy Spirit are powerful and life-changing for many, the enemy is going to sow his “seeds of doubts” in the minds of God’s people. In some places where I have travelled in the world, the Leaders of whole Church Movements (unfortunately mainly Pentecostal) do not want their people functioning in Spiritual Gifts. They do not trust their people enough to hear from God and to bring forth genuine manifestations of the Spiritual Gifts. Other Leaders are so insecure that they will not allow anyone else to step out in public ministry of the Holy Spirit in case others start looking to them rather than the Leaders (quite pathetic really).

God will not allow people to get away with obstructing His purposes in the lives of those who want to obey God. Paul very clearly exhorted Timothy to remember the Prophetic Words that had been prophesied over his life, so that by them he could fight the good fight of faith, holding on to faith with a good and clear conscience. These are some of the benefits of the Gift of Prophecy. We neglect them to our own peril.

Guard Against Neglect:

“Do not neglect (“to be careless of: make light of, neglect, be negligent, not regard” - Strong’s) **the gift** (the Greek word is “charisma” meaning “grace, favour, kindness” - Young’s) **that is in you, which was given** (“presented freely and unforced” - Bullinger’s) **to you by prophecy** (“propheteia”) **with the laying on of the hands of the eldership**” (1 Timothy 4:14).

Neglect takes place when we do not see something as being important enough to pursue.

Whatever God gives us has to be seen as being very important.

Spiritual Gifts operating are very important.

We neglect them to our own loss.

We Are To Give Ourselves To True Prophetic Words:

“Meditate (“to be careful, take care” - Young’s; “to care for, take care for anything, so as to be able to perform it” - Bullinger’s) **on these things** (that which was given to us by prophecy- verse 14); **give yourself entirely** (“1. completely, totally, or entirely. 2. without exception; exclusively” - Collins) **to them, that your progress** (“a cutting down of impediments that are in one’s way; hence, progress, a going forward, advancement” - Bullinger’s) **may be evident** (“be visible, open to sight” - Bullinger’s) **to all**” (1 Timothy 4:15).

“Do not neglect the gift which is in you, [that special inward endowment] which was directly imparted to you [by the Holy Spirit] by prophetic utterance when the elders laid their hands upon you [at your ordination]. Practice and cultivate and meditate upon these duties; throw yourself wholly into them [as your ministry], so that your progress may be evident to everybody” (1 Timothy 4:14-15, AMP.).

“Be sure to use the abilities God has given you through his prophets when the elders of the church laid their hands upon your head. Put these abilities to work; throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone may notice your improvement and progress” (TLB).

“Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all” (NASU).

Prophecies over our lives enable us to make progress in the purposes of God.

We need to be the recipients of prophetic utterances, as well as being available to God to prophesy into other people’s lives.

It is all about making spiritual progress!

I remember one time when I was attending a Pastors Conference: I arrived early for the meeting and, as I walked into the large auditorium, I said to the Lord: “I would love You to speak to me today.” Immediately the Lord spoke back to me and said: “If you

want Me to speak to you today, then go and sit over on that side of the auditorium.” So I went and sat where the Holy Spirit told me. But when the other Pastors and their wives came into the meeting they all sat on the opposite side of the auditorium. I was sitting there by myself, seeking to obey what God said to me. Some of my friends came over and tried to persuade me to go and sit with them on the other side. When I politely declined, some pressured me to go by saying, “Oh, are you too ‘high and mighty’ to come and sit with us?” etc. By the time the meeting started I was still sitting by myself on the opposite side to where nearly everyone else was sitting. The preacher that day was Peter Morrow (now deceased), a genuine prophetic ministry. He had not long launched into his message, when suddenly he stopped speaking, pointed at me, asked me to stand up and then began prophesying into my spirit these words: “My son, God has not finished with you yet. I’m telling you today that the day is coming when you will travel up and down New Zealand and to the nations of the world, sharing the word that God has placed within your heart . . .” and words to that effect. At the time a number of those present did not really believe what was said, but I can tell you that today I am living in the power and reality of that prophetic word. I now travel up and down New Zealand and to other nations of the world, imparting to and impacting thousands of lives by the Holy Spirit and His Spiritual Gifts operating out of my life. It has been my joy to see and hear thousands of people function in Spiritual Gifts for the first time in their lives! God is good!

Some of you may ask, “Why the need to sit in a certain place; can’t God speak to us anywhere?” I have thought about that often. I believe God was testing my desire to see how much I really wanted Him to talk to me. His ways are higher than our ways. Our love for

Jesus is tested by our obedience to what He asks of us. All I know is that I am very glad I obeyed and was not persuaded by my friends to go and sit somewhere else! I personally believe that if I had yielded to my friends' desires, that I would not have received that prophecy that day.

We Are To Take Heed To Ourselves And To The (Prophetic) Teaching:

“Take heed (“pay attention to” - Strong’s) **to yourself and to the doctrine** (“teaching, especially the substance or result of teaching” - Bullinger’s). **Continue in them, for in doing this you will save** (“to make sound, to save, preserve safe from danger, loss, or destruction. In a Christian sense, to save from death and judgment, (as the consequence of sin) and to bring in all positive blessing in the place of condemnation. To save from the penalty of death and destruction, (not merely to make happy) but to bestow everlasting life as a result of resurrection” - Bullinger’s) **both yourself and those who hear** (“to hear, to have the faculty of hearing; to perceive with the ears; to give ear, listen to hear, i.e. to learn by hearing; be informed” - Bullinger’s) **you”** (1 Timothy 4:16).

Every time we read about prophetic utterances in the Bible, it is all about our benefitting as a result.

It is about making us better witnesses of the New Covenant Gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit and His wonderful gifts!

We Are To Stir Up The Gift Of God:

“Therefore I remind you to stir up (“rekindle, light up again” - Bullinger’s) the gift (“charisma”) of God which is in you through the laying on of hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:6-7).

“This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline” (NLT).

“For this reason I remind you to keep alive the gift that God gave you when I laid my hands on you. For the Spirit that God has given us does not make us timid; instead, His Spirit fills us with power, love, and self-control” (Today’s English Version).

According to 1 Timothy 4:14, that gift is given through prophecy, and we need to stir it up . . . fan into flames . . . keep it alive . . . continually!

True Prophecy Does Not Come By The Will Of Man, But God:

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved (“carried”) by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:20-21).

“For no prophecy recorded in Scripture was ever thought up by the prophet himself. It was the Holy Spirit within these godly men who gave them true messages from God” (TLB).

True prophecy will always be confirmed by the principal of Scripture. It will always exalt Jesus Christ.

The Testimony Of Jesus Is The Spirit Of Prophecy:

“. . . Worship God! For the testimony (“a bearing witness, certifying; a testimony that informs as well as corroborates; that which any one witnesses or states concerning any person or thing” - Bullinger’s) *of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy* (“propheteia”)” (Revelation 19:10).

“Worship God. For the essence of prophecy is to give a clear witness for Jesus” (NLT).

“The witness of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (The Message).

When the presence of Jesus is in our midst then the Spirit of Prophecy will be in operation. People will speak forth inspired words from the Holy Spirit, encouraging us to know that God is at work within us, exhorting us to rise up and fulfil all that God has for us, letting us know He loves and cares for us, etc. There will be an evidence that the Living Jesus still speaks today by His Holy Spirit Who resides inside every Holy Spirit-filled believer ~ and those believers will be speaking forth the now, present tense “rhema” word of the Lord to **“edify, exhort and comfort”** those present. Hallelujah! We all need this kind of Holy Spirit edification!

When Prophetic Words come forth, we are to discern their accuracy, credibility, truthfulness, source, etc., so we can separate the truth from any human thoughts. Spiritual Gifts in operation help us to raise the discernment level amongst the believers ~ and there certainly is a great need right now for more discernment in the midst of God's people.

The Early Church Had Great Respect For The Prophetic:

“Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant . . .” (Acts 13:1-5).

The Prophetic Ministry functioning through the prophet gifting enabled Barnabas and Saul to receive a “now” word of the call and purpose of God for them to go beyond the places that they had ministered in up to that time. The respect and acceptance of the prophetic was such that Barnabas and Saul were immediately released and sent on their way. They did not have to wait until endless committee or elders meetings decided whether it was God or not. They knew how to discern the voice of God and, knowing that it was

indeed God speaking through the voice of the prophets, they were released with their blessings to go and fulfil the call of God.

The voice of God through prophecies and prophets is essentially simple. Jean and I had our first overseas mission as a direct result of a prophet calling us out of a meeting and prophesying that God was sending us to the Fiji Islands. He gave us a sign that we would step foot in the Fiji Islands before the end of that year (the word was given to us in April 1966). He also gave us a contact of a Pastor in Fiji, who, he said, would open all the doors for us. So we wrote to that Pastor and he replied and told us that we were not needed there! We didn't know what to do next. At that point Jean's mother wrote to some missionaries in Fiji that they knew and told them we were available. They replied that they had been praying for God to send a couple to relieve a missionary in Sigatoka who was going on furlough and would we come. God wanted us to be working with a different church movement than the original one, so the door was closed in order that the right one would be opened to us. Cutting a long story short, we responded and did go to Fiji, arriving on 29th December (thus fulfilling his ~ the prophet's ~ sign that we would step foot in Fiji before the end of that year).

We stayed in the Fiji Islands for six months and God used that time to really train us for the ministry. For the first two-and-a-half months we had a programme of 23 meetings per week! That really threw me into "the deep end" and I learned to rely on the Holy Spirit to lead and guide me (I didn't have enough sermons in me for such a schedule ~ I ran out in the first week)! God taught us faith principles and gave us a heart for the Fiji Islands and the peoples of other nations. He also instilled into us principles that were to help set us up for what

the Lord had ahead for The GFM Ministry. Our faith really began to grow more than ever after that time in those Islands.

One happening in Fiji that really challenged and helped our faith grow occurred one night. We were awakened from our sleep by a knock on the church door (where we were living). A lady who we recognized was a woman of faith was standing there with her 17-year-old son (who was weeping). He had a large boil on his shin with an ingrown head which would not burst. It was very painful. She said to us that God had spoken to her that if she brought her son to us for prayer that, after we prayed ~ within the next half-an-hour ~ we would watch the head of the boil turn around, the skin burst and pus would run down his leg. I can tell you that being dragged out of bed in the night for such a situation did not actually have me full of faith! But I believed the Sister's word enough to pray for her son. After we prayed we sat and watched a miracle take place before our eyes. We literally saw the head of the boil move and turn, splitting the skin open in the process, allowing the pus to run freely down the boy's leg. Sister Elizabeth had heard rightly from the Lord, and through her faith and obedience we saw a miracle take place. The Gift of Faith is one of the Spiritual Gifts, and what a difference it makes when we allow Spiritual Gifts to function.

In more recent times I was ministering in the Auckland region of New Zealand. As I was preaching, the Holy Spirit pointed out to me a shy, young Samoan lady, telling me that she could sing prophetically the song of the Lord and that I was to immediately release her to do that. So I stopped preaching and asked the young lady if she could sing. Shyly she responded that she could not sing. But someone else in the meeting spoke out and said she could sing. So I explained to her that the Lord told me that He wanted her to sing in the Spirit the

Song of the Lord to bless and minister to people in that way. I then told her she could start right now. So we waited and within just a few minutes that young lady began to sing out in public a brand new Prophetic Song for the first time in her life. It was beautiful and tears were flowing from some of those present. Something was released in her by the Holy Spirit, and as soon as she had finished singing that song she then stepped out and began giving Words of Knowledge to several people in the meeting. The Holy Spirit knows what is right and how people can be released to function much more effectively. He just needs more Christians who will believe Him enough to obey what He says and so use us to release others into the things of the Lord.

A Huge Responsibility:

When we consider the Biblical emphasis placed upon the Gift of Prophecy and the Spiritual Gifts ~ and their need to be functioning amongst the believers today ~ it puts a huge responsibility upon Christian leaders to be able to lead their people into the outworking of these God-given Gifts. That means that Christian leaders need to know and understand the importance of the Gifts so that they can teach, guide and release their people to function. I have learned that we leaders have to “create an environment” for the Gifts to operate. If we do not make the opportunities and make time for the Gifts to operate, it simply does not happen; the “programme of service” will quench the operation of the Holy Spirit and His Gifts. When we see what the benefits of the Spiritual Gifts are, we should all desire to make room for them to function. In reality, when they are functioning, it is God speaking to His people (and/or unbelievers, whatever the case may be). As I have said earlier, there is no room for making

excuses when it comes to obeying the Scriptures on the New Covenant operation of Church. Those Gifts are the ministry and operation of the Blessed Holy Spirit of God to bring us to maturity. We neglect them to our own peril.

Far too often we hear reasons for not allowing people to function in the Gifts such as: “People get it wrong”; “The words become judgmental”; “The person prophesying thinks he/she is an Old Testament prophet”; “It takes up too much time in the meetings,” etc. The answer to these reasonings is that Christian leaders need to teach the Scriptural principles on the Prophetic Ministry, i.e. The voice of God, Prophesying, Spiritual Gifts, and then lead by example in such a way that the people know they are able to step out in their seeking to obey God and deliver whatever He tells them. The motivation for all Christian ministry/service has to be LOVE. When we genuinely love one another, then there is no way that we are going to say or do things in public gatherings that will put others down, speak judgmental things over them, etc. Those functioning in the Spiritual Gifts must always retain a teachable spirit, as we need to learn how to develop these Giftings more and more in a positive and accurate way. This cannot happen if no opportunities are given for people to function. As leaders we also need to verbally speak out to the people that we do want them to function in the Spiritual Gifts and to prophesy, as we do desire to hear from God and be obedient to what He says to us.

For leaders to be able to trust their people to function in the Spiritual Gifts in public gatherings, it means they (the leaders) have to be very secure in who they are as a man or woman of God. Leaders have to take “risks” and allow the people to make some mistakes, and then be able to lovingly and wisely teach them a better way. My experience

has taught me that, when needed, most “correction” can be done privately, without the need for any public rebukes coming from the leaders (when rebuking is done in public it closes down every introverted type of Christian, and most of the extroverts as well. The result of that is a total “shutting down” of prophesying and the other Gifts of the Holy Spirit).

Let us not allow any negative “happenings” of the past to rob us of gaining the wonderful benefits of the Holy Spirit Ministry and His Gifts that are available to God’s people today. Prophesying and the operation of Spiritual Gifts are God’s idea. They are not something that man has made up. When God gives anything to His people it is always for our benefit, our good. Let us, with open and hungry hearts, “earnestly desire” the best Gifts so that we can build up the Body of Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. So many desperately need what the Holy Spirit wants to give them through His precious ministries.

Let the Scriptures be repeated:

“Earnestly desire the best gifts . . .” (1 Corinthians 12:31).

“Pursue love, and desire Spiritual Gifts, but especially that you may prophesy” . . . “He who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men” . . . “He who prophesies edifies the church. I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification” (1 Corinthians 14:1, 3-5).

“For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn (“understand”) and all may be encouraged” (1 Corinthians 14:31).

“Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues” (1 Corinthians 14:39).

“Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21).

“This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck” (1 Timothy 1:18-19).

“Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all” (1 Timothy 4:14-15).

“Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:6-7).

“Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10b).

In closing, may the following guide prove to be very helpful to you as you discern any Prophetic Words given over your life:

Seven Ways To Judge Prophecy:

- 1 **By their fruits you shall know them.**(Matthew 7:16-18, 20).

- 2 **Does it glorify Christ?**
(John 16:14; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 1 John 4:1-2).

- 3 **Does it agree with the Scriptures?** (Isaiah 8:20).

- 4 **Are their prophecies fulfilled?** (Deuteronomy 18:22).

- 5 **Some prophecies are not of God even though they may come to pass. The benchmark remains that all prophecies should exalt the Lord Jesus. Is the prophecy disjointed or confused? True prophecy is line upon line and precept upon precept.** (Isaiah 28:13).

- 6 **Do the prophecies produce liberty or bondage?** (Romans 8:15).

- 7 **All believers have an unction (anointing) within them that tells them when something is wrong. Prophecies should witness with our spirit.** (1 John 2:20, 27).

Why Is Prophecy Important?

There are five reasons why prophecy is so important in the local church:

- 1 **It brings life. Prophecy brought life to the valley of dry bones.** (Ezekiel 37:1-4).

- 2 **It gives spiritual vision. The Bible says, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” The Lord gives vision through the prophetic word.** (Proverbs 29:13, 18).

- 3 **It edifies, exhorts, and comforts.** (1 Corinthians 14:3).

- 4 **It brings revival and restoration. True prophecy brings restoration and revival.** (Acts 2:16-18).

- 5 **It guides you to your right position in Christ. Prophecy is used by God to direct you where you need to go.** (Acts 13:1-3).

~ Thanks to Jack Deere for the above 12 points.

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