

**EVALUATING THE USE OF SPIRITUAL GIFT
AS A STRATEGY FOR CHURCH GROWTH**

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by

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ABSTRACT

Church Growth has become a concept in Christian thinking and theology for ^{the} ~~some~~ ^{past} years now. ~~But church growth~~ ^{It} is not just a concept. ~~It is~~ ^{but} a real practical issue that is of great concern in a world of declining spiritual value and evidently unproductive harvest. One of the strategies proposed for making churches to grow is the use of spiritual gifts. This project therefore ~~has examined~~ from the paradigm that spiritual gifts when properly understood and utilized have an inherent capability to cause a church to grow.

Chapter one introduces us into the need for church growth, the present problem of decline in the church, aims and objective of this study, scope and delimitation. Key terms such as spiritual growth and church are then defined.

Chapter two deals with literature review. This covers a biblical survey of spiritual gifts and church growth followed by a historical survey of the same, right from the New Testament era to the modern era. Montanism and the Azusa Street revival are used as historical case study to establish the relationship between spiritual gifts and church growth.

In Chapter three the major role players in church growth are identified. Principles of church growth and the relationship between church growth, missions and revivals are also discussed. The chapter also list the inventory of spiritual gifts going further to establish their purpose and usage. The Pentecostal/charismatic movement is then used as a modern case study to establish the connection between spiritual gift and church growth.

Chapter four discusses spiritual gift as a strategy for church growth with adaptation to Nigerian Baptist Convention churches. Some cautionary notes ended the chapter as a guide against over assumption and faulty utilisation.

Chapter five concluded the project with a summary of what has been discussed so far and gave some recommendations that could make this research work useable.

5.2 Recommendation

It is in the light of the foregoing that the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. The work of C. Peter Wagner on Spiritual gifts and church growth and on laity liberation should be well studied by pastors and members alike. His inventory or directory of spiritual gifts is a lofty idea for all ministers. Each should develop one for his church or adopt that of Wagner. Developing a Spiritual Gift questionnaire¹²⁹ would also help each minister to identify who has what gift in his congregation.
2. The National Church Growth Conference organized by the Global missions Board of the Convention at Camp young Ede and other Centres around the nation should be well publicized and pastors should be well mobilized to attend. The last conference was quite refreshing to this writer and it was part if the resources for this project work.
3. It will be helpful to introduce a course “Signs and Wonders and Church Growth” in the Nigerian Baptist Theological Institutions. This is the description of the course title MC510¹³⁰ at Fuller Theological Seminary which has been of great help to several graduates of the institution as testified to. Though there is a minimester course on Pneumatology and Pentecostalism in NBTS, a little more needs to be done to expose trainees to the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit.
4. The convention should seek to interpret biblically and theologically some of the manifestations of the spirit gift at our convention-in-session meeting,

¹²⁹ Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts can Help Your Church Grow*, 236-252.

evangelistic rallies, revivals programmes and even the Seminary chapel (e.t.c.), so that sceptics could be convinced and all of us could flow together in the tide of the revival that is not just sweeping through the Baptist denomination but the whole body of Christ around the world.