

The Associated Gospel Churches, of which Chinese Gospel Church is a member, takes a cessationist position with respect to spiritual gifts. We believe that certain gifts such as speaking in tongues and the working of miracles are sign gifts that were used to validate the messengers of revelation (E.g., Moses, prophets, apostles) and that with the completion of the Canon of Scripture, the need for these gifts has ceased. Although it is still possible for God to bestow these gifts to accomplish His purposes today, they are rare and not to be the expected experience for believers.

Word of wisdom – “Word of wisdom” is only mentioned in 1 Cor. 12:8. Two interpretations: **1)** The ability to receive special revelation from the Holy Spirit to speak miraculous wisdom, especially in an important situation, **2)** The ability to speak a wise word in various situations (based on wisdom acquired in the course of life). E.g., an understanding of the gospel and Christian doctrines and the ability to explain their nature and design skillfully and with discernment (Acts 7:1-53, 23:1-11). The second interpretation is favoured as Paul’s list is to be representative of all gifts.

Word of knowledge – “Word of knowledge” is only mentioned in 1 Cor. 12:8. Two interpretations: **1)** The ability to receive special revelation from the Holy Spirit to give specific knowledge of a situation that could only be revealed supernaturally (Matt. 17:24-27, Acts 27:23-26), **2)** The ability to speak with knowledge about a situation (based on knowledge acquired from daily life). E.g., an understanding of the things of God and His word, i.e., prophecies, types, and histories of the OT (1 Cor. 2:13). The second interpretation is favoured as Paul’s list is to be representative of all gifts.

Faith – The special ability to trust God in the face of all circumstances (associated with miraculous operations), or a faith in divine power and promise that enables trust in God in any danger or difficulty in order to perform a duty or profess Christ (Matt. 14:22-33, George Mueller in 19thc England provided for thousands of orphans completely by prayer without asking for donations).

Healing – God’s healing power for a variety of different afflictions, given in extraordinary circumstances. E.g., Paul could heal others (Acts 14:8-10, 28:8) but not himself (2 Cor. 12:7-9) or Timothy (1 Tim. 5:23). This healing of the sick was most often performed either by the laying on of hands, anointing with oil, or with a bare word. It is a foretaste of the physical healing and perfect health that will be given when the kingdom of God comes in full.

Miracles – Acts of power where the Holy Spirit chooses to “override” the laws of nature to accomplish His purposes. These include divine deliverance from danger (Acts 5:19-20, 12:6-11), intervention in the physical world (1 Kings 17:1-16), judgment on enemies of the gospel (Acts 13:9-12), and victory over demonic opposition (Luke 10:17). As healing is listed as a separate gift, Paul was referring to other displays of God’s might in this context.

Prophecy – Divinely inspired speech or the telling forth of a message from the Lord in a particular situation, rather than a prediction of the future. It is given not as preaching but spontaneously as God brings it to mind (Acts 27:21-26, 1 Cor. 14:30-31). It can be a revelation from God reported in the prophet’s own words, which is not equal in authority to God’s words through the apostles or in Scripture.

Distinguishing between spirits – “The ability to distinguish between spirits” is only mentioned in 1 Cor. 12:10. It is the ability to differentiate between the influence of the Holy Spirit and of evil spirits in a person or to discern between genuine and counterfeit inspiration (Acts 16:16-18, 1 Tim. 4:1, 1 John 4:1-3). This gift is given for the spiritual warfare that takes place between Christians and demonic spirits as deception is one of their primary weapons (John 8:44, 2 Cor. 11:14).

Tongues – A prayer or praise spoken primarily to God where the uttered words are not understood by the speaker (1 Cor. 14:2, 28). The ability to speak by inspiration a language unknown to the speaker (Acts 2:1-13). When practiced in public worship, this gift must be paired with the gift of interpretation (1 Cor. 14:27-28). Speaking in tongues is not evidence of filling by the Holy Spirit.

Interpretation of tongues – The ability to reveal the meaning of something that was spoken in tongues. It allows the gift of tongues to be of benefit to others as they are enabled to understand and agree with the speaker’s words to God. It is God’s gift to make known what was previously hidden for the edification of the body (1 Cor. 14:5b).

Sources

1. Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*
2. Morris, Leon. *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*
3. <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-corinthians-12/>