



THE PURPOSE OF MINISTERIAL GIFTS ACCORDING TO EPHESIANS 4:11-13 AND THE CORRECTIVE MEASURES TO NAVIGATE MISUSED OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN SOME PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES WITHIN KADUNA METROPOLIS

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Abstract

This study examines the purpose of ministerial gifts according to Ephesians 4:11-13 and explores corrective measures for addressing the misuse of spiritual gifts in some Pentecostal churches within Kaduna Metropolis, Nigeria. The study adopts a qualitative research design, combining exegetical analysis of Ephesians 4:11-13 with qualitative interviews conducted among selected pastors, church leaders, and members of Pentecostal churches in Kaduna Metropolis. The study investigates how ministerial gifts are understood and practised and identifies ways in which their misuse affects Christian life and church ministry. The exegetical analysis reveals that Christ gives ministerial gifts to equip believers for ministry, build up the body of Christ, promote unity and knowledge of the Son of God, and lead believers towards spiritual maturity and conformity to Christ. However, interview findings indicate that some Pentecostal churches experience practices such as compulsory manifestation of gifts, commercialisation of prophetic services, sensationalism, personality-centred ministry, and manipulation of members through prophetic pronouncements. These practices undermine the biblical purpose of ministerial gifts and may encourage spiritual dependency, exploitation, fear, division, and distorted Christian discipleship. The study recommends systematic biblical and theological training, pastoral accountability, ethical guidelines for spiritual-gift practices, responsible church leadership, and continuous teaching on the biblical purpose of ministerial gifts. The study concludes that restoring the Christ-centred and service-oriented use of ministerial gifts is essential for promoting spiritual maturity, unity, accountability, and healthy Pentecostal ministry within Kaduna Metropolis.

Keywords: Ministerial Gifts; Ephesians 4:11-13; Misuse of Spiritual Gifts; Pentecostal Churches; Kaduna Metropolis.

Introduction

The phenomenon of Ministerial gifts has remained a central feature of Pentecostal theology and practice worldwide. In Kaduna Metropolis, Nigeria, Pentecostal churches have grown exponentially, accompanied by a corresponding emphasis on the manifestation of spiritual gifts such as prophecy, healing, tongues, and miraculous powers. However, this emphasis, while biblically rooted, has increasingly given rise to practices that deviate from the original purpose for which these gifts were given. The Apostle Paul, in Ephesians 4:11-13, provides one of the most systematic presentations of that purpose: equipping saints, building up the body, and attaining unity and maturity in Christ.

Despite this clear purpose, documented cases from Kaduna reveal mandatory manifestation, commercialization, and manipulation. In June 2025, the Kaduna State Chairman of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria publicly warned pastors against manipulating and defrauding congregants (Macaulay, 2025). In April 2022, a Kaduna-based pastor allegedly asked members to pay N310,000 each to be “prepared for the end of the world” (Abutu, 2022). These cases confirm that misused is a recognized problem within some Pentecostal church communities. This article undertakes an exposition of Ephesians 4:11-13 to recover the original purpose of spiritual gifts, examines the documented forms of abuse in Kaduna, compares these abuses with the biblical purpose, and proposes theological and pastoral responses and practical recommendations for navigating misused.

Theoretical Framework

This study employs three theoretical frameworks to analyse the Misused of Ministerial gifts in some Pentecostal churches in Kaduna Metropolis. The first is Commodification Theory (Religious Commodification), which scrutinizes how objects, services, or practices that are not traditionally economic goods are transformed into marketable goods. In religious contexts, commodification occurs when spiritual practices such as prayers, prophecies, healing sessions, and blessings become commodities exchanged for money. Marx (1867/1976, p. 125) argued that commodification alienates products from their human context and reduces them to exchange value rather than use value. In the Nigerian Pentecostal context, Afolabi and Ojo (2024, p. 112) argue that “God in religion has been converted into services and marketable product in the Nigerian public space,” a process fuelled by “massive socio-economic and political disorder” (Afolabi & Ojo, 2024, p. 113). Ngwoke (2024, p. 78) documents specific commodification practices including “prophetic extortion,” “seed-sowing schemes,” and the sale of anointing oils and miracle stickers. Commodification Theory is applied specifically to commercialization in this study, explaining how spiritual gifts that were intended as manifestations of grace have been changed into marketable products with price labels.

The second framework is Spiritual Gifts Misused Theory, established by Johnson and VanVonderen (1991, p. 23), who define spiritual gifts Misused as “the misuse of a position of spiritual authority to control, manipulate, or exploit others for personal gain.” The theory recognizes several characteristic features of spiritually abusive systems: leaders claim to speak for God, making disagreement equal to disobedience to God (Johnson & VanVonderen, 1991, p. 56); Misused systems create unwritten rules compulsory through guilt and manipulation; and leaders use shame to control members, making them feel spiritually inadequate if they question authority

(Johnson & VanVonderen, 1991, p. 89). The theory also explains how spiritual Gifts Misused creates dependency and separates victims from outside support (Johnson & VanVonderen, 1991, p. 102). Orogun and Pillay (2021, p. 5) document how Neo-Pentecostal leaders in Nigeria exercise “overbearing authority and influence over their members,” using claimed supernatural gifts to create “dependency and unquestioning devotion.” In Kaduna, the case of Pastor Nelson Foni, who claimed divine revelation to control a victim’s financial decision and extract N1.7 million, exemplifies Spiritual Abuse Theory (Naija News, 2022). This theory is applied specifically to manipulation and mandatory manifestation.

The third framework is Rational Choice Theory (Religious Economy Theory), which argues that religious behaviour is rational and can be analysed using economic concepts such as supply, demand, competition, and consumer choice. Stark and Finke (2000, p. 36) define the religious economy as “all of the religious activity going on in any society: a market of current and potential followers, a set of organizations seeking to attract or retain followers, and the religious culture offered by the organizations.” Iannaccone (1995, p. 6) argues that religious diversity leads to increased religious participation because competition forces religious organizations to become more responsive to consumer demands. In Nigeria’s deregulated religious market, pastors must differentiate their “products” through spectacular claims and specialized spiritual services. Ngwoke (2024, p. 5) documents how some Pentecostal leaders “promise miracles for money to create dependency” classic supplier-induced demand. Rational Choice Theory explains why commercialization flourishes and why members, facing real problems such as infertility, unemployment, and sickness, rationally choose to pay for spiritual services despite the risk of manipulation.

The application of these three frameworks is integrated. Commodification Theory explains commercialization. Spiritual Abuse Theory explains manipulation and mandatory manifestation. Rational Choice Theory explains the religious market dynamics that enable and incentivize both. Together, they provide a comprehensive analytical structure for examining the abuse of spiritual gifts in some Pentecostal churches in Kaduna Metropolis.

Conceptual Clarification

The term “spiritual gifts” derives from the Greek word *charismata*, referring to manifestations of divine grace bestowed upon believers (Dunn, 1975, p. 207). Fee (1994, p. 35) argues that *charismata* refers specifically to manifestations of the Spirit that build up the church. This study adopts Fee’s narrower definition because it aligns with Ephesians 4:12, where gifts are given “for building up the body of Christ.” Three specific forms of Misused of Spiritual gifts are examined. The first is manifestation. The pressure placed on believers to publicly display a spiritual gift regardless of whether they have genuinely received one. Paul explicitly states that the Spirit distributes gifts “to each one individually as He wills” (1 Corinthians 12:11), yet Lar (2023, p. 7) documents how some Kaduna churches measure spiritual maturity by the ability to speak in tongues, creating an environment where non-manifesting members are marginalized.

The second form of misused is commercialization – demanding money in exchange for claimed spiritual gifts. Ngwoke (2024, p. 78) defines “prophetic extortion” as pastors charging fees for prophecies, prayers, and healing sessions, turning grace into commodities. The New Testament provides a clear precedent against this in Acts 8:18-24, where Peter rebukes Simon the Sorcerer:



“May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money” (Acts 8:20).

The third form of Misused is manipulation, using claimed prophetic authority to control members’ personal decisions under threat of divine punishment. Johnson and VanVonderen (1991, p. 56) describe Misusing systems where “the leader claims to speak for God, making disagreement equivalent to disobedience to God.” In Kaduna, a pastor was arraigned for duping a congregant of N1.7 million after claiming God revealed her daughter would study abroad (Naija News, 2022). Pentecostalism is defined as a movement emphasizing the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts (Anderson, 2004, p. 14), with Kaduna’s proliferation occurring “in questionable places like cinema halls, schools, hotels” (Lar, 2023, p. 5).

The Ministerial of Spiritual Gifts in Ephesians 4:11-13

Ephesians 4:11-13 states: “And He Himself gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” The passage is situated within the ethical section of Ephesians, following the exhortation to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (4:1-6). The quotation of Psalm 68:18 in verses 8-10 establishes that Christ’s ascension is the basis for giving gifts to the church (Arnold, 2010, p. 245). The distributive construction “some as...some as...some as...some as” indicates that Christ gave different individuals to serve in different capacities, not that every believer receives every gift (Arnold, 2010, p. 248). This grammatical observation directly challenges mandatory manifestation, which assumes that every believer must display the same spectacular gifts.

Lexical analysis of key terms reveals the purpose of spiritual gifts. The term “apostles” (apostoloi) refers to “sent ones” who function as the foundation of the church (O’Brien, 1999, p. 300). “Prophets” (prophētai) are forth-tellers who receive revelations for edification, exhortation, and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3). “Evangelists” (euangelistai) are proclaimers of good news. “Pastors” (poimenes) are shepherds who lead, feed, and care for the flock. “Teachers” (didaskaloi) instruct in the doctrines of the faith. The Greek construction connecting “pastors and teachers” suggests one office with two functions: the pastor who teaches (Wuest, 1973, p. 89). This ties pastoral authority to the ministry of teaching Scripture rather than to claimed prophetic revelations. The key purpose terms are equally significant. “Equipping” (katartismos) means preparing, fitting, or restoring something for its intended use. In medical contexts, it described setting a broken bone; in military contexts, fitting out a ship for battle (Arnold, 2010, p. 249). “Edification” (oikodomē) literally means building or construction and refers to the spiritual growth and strengthening of the church. “Unity” (henotēs) refers to the state of being one, grounded in the oneness of God (Lincoln, 1990, p. 253). “Fullness” (plērōma) refers to completeness, that which fills—the complete expression of Christ’s character and authority in his church (Arnold, 2010, p. 254). The goal is “a mature man” (teleios anēr)—spiritual maturity and Christlike character, not sinless perfection. The singular “man” is collective, referring to the church as a corporate entity (Lincoln, 1990, p. 253). This collective interpretation challenges the individualistic focus of mandatory manifestation.

Grammatically, the passage consists of one main clause (verse 11) followed by a series of purpose clauses (verses 12-13). The purpose clauses form a chain: Christ gave the fivefold ministry for equipping; equipping leads to works of service; works of service lead to building up the body; and this continues until unity, knowledge, and maturity are attained (Arnold, 2010, p. 250). The subjunctive verb “we all attain” (katantēsōmen) with “until” (mechri) indicates a future goal not yet fully realized (Lincoln, 1990, p. 250). The fivefold ministry is a means to an end, not an end in itself. The purpose of spiritual gifts is not the perpetuation of apostolic or prophetic offices but the maturity of the entire church. This exegesis establishes that the biblical purpose of Ministerial gifts is equipping the saints for works of service, building up the body of Christ, and attaining unity, knowledge of the Son of God, and the fullness of Christ. This exegesis provides the biblical standard against which abuse is measured.

Forms of Abuse in Some Churches

Empirical research has documented three forms of abuse of Ministerial gifts in Pentecostal churches in Kaduna Metropolis: mandatory manifestation, commercialization, and manipulation.

The first form is mandatory manifestation, which refers to the pressure placed on believers to publicly display a spiritual gift regardless of whether they have genuinely received one. In Pentecostal theology, manifestation is typically viewed as a positive evidence of the Spirit’s presence (Warrington, 2008, p. 67). However, this study uses “manifestation” differently to describe coercive pressure. Paul explicitly states that the Spirit distributes gifts “to each one individually as He wills” (1 Corinthians 12:11). When churches teach that a believer who does not manifest a gift is spiritually incomplete, they invert Paul’s teaching. Lar (2023, p. 7) documents how some Kaduna churches measure spiritual maturity by the ability to speak in tongues, creating an environment where non-manifesting members are marginalized. Oyetade (2020, p. 481) quotes Donald Gee, a recognized leader of the worldwide Pentecostal movement, who declares that “it is therefore incorrect, even from the Pentecostal point of view, to demand that all believers have the permanent gift of tongues. The permanent gift is only granted to some believers, as Paul indicates in 1 Corinthians 12:30” (Oyetade, 2020, p. 481). This pressure produces harmful consequences. Some believers’ fake manifestations to avoid embarrassment or social exclusion, pretending to speak in tongues or claiming prophecies they have not received. Others experience spiritual anxiety, doubting their salvation or relationship with God because they cannot produce the expected manifestations.

The second form of abuse is commercialization, which refers to the practice of demanding money or material compensation in exchange for the exercise of claimed spiritual gifts. Ngwoke (2024, p. 78) defines “prophetic extortion” as pastors charging fees for prophecies, prayers, and healing sessions, turning grace into commodities. Afolabi and Ojo (2024, p. 112) argue that “God in religion has been converted into services and marketable product in the Nigerian public space.”

The New Testament provides a clear precedent against this in Acts 8:18-24, where Peter rebukes Simon the Sorcerer: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money” (Acts 8:20). Bruce (1984, p. 189) comments that “the attempt to purchase spiritual power with money reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of grace.” Documented cases from Nigeria include a participant who paid N50,000 for anointing oil with no result, another who paid N1.5 million for prayers for childbearing with no result, and another who gave N750,000 for

prayers (Ngwoke, 2024, pp. 85-86). The case of Pastor Nuah Abraham in Kaduna, who allegedly asked members to pay N310,000 each to be “prepared for the end of the world,” represents extreme commodification (Abutu, 2022). This commercialization exploits the poor, undermines genuine faith, and brings reproach to the name of Christ.

The third form of abuse is manipulation, which refers to the use of claimed prophetic or apostolic authority to control members’ personal decisions, often accompanied by threats of divine punishment for non-compliance. Johnson and VanVonderen (1991, p. 56) describe manipulative systems as those where “the leader claims to speak for God, making disagreement equivalent to disobedience to God.” This dynamic is amplified in Pentecostal contexts where prophets and pastors are believed to possess supernatural gifts of revelation, including words of knowledge, prophetic visions, and direct divine communication. When a pastor claims, “God told me that you must marry this person,” or “The Lord revealed that you should leave your job and join this ministry,” the member faces an impossible choice: obey the pastor and surrender personal autonomy, or disobey and risk divine judgment. Orogun and Pillay (2021, p. 5) document how Neo-Pentecostal leaders exercise “overbearing authority and influence over their members,” using claimed supernatural gifts to create “dependency and unquestioning devotion.” In Kaduna, Pastor Nelson Foni was arraigned for giving fake prophecy and duping a congregant of N1.7 million (Naija News, 2022). Matthew (2025, p. 4) found that “some of the neo Pentecostal prophets...are using prophecy as an ambience of extortion and commercialization.” The abuse of prophecy has led to “collapse of marriages, destruction of families, and separation of friendships to untimely death” (Matthew, 2025, p. 6). A University of Pretoria study (2022, p. 7) found “unaccountability, fraudulent fundraising styles, sales of miracles and healings, personalisation of the churches as family businesses, and abuse of spiritual authority.”

Research specific to Kaduna Metropolis is significant. Ashafa, Wuam, and Aloko (2025, p. 6) identify three periods of Pentecostal development in Kaduna: early expansion (1970-1985), consolidation and diversification (1986-2000), and proliferation and commercialization (2001-2020). Lar (2023, p. 5) documents that the proliferation of Pentecostal churches in Kaduna State has occurred “in questionable places like cinema halls, schools, hotels, and places previously demonized as abodes of sin such as brothels.” The study notes that this growth has been accompanied by “sexual scandals, fake prophecy and fake miracles all aimed at exploiting the spiritual sensibilities of members” (Lar, 2023, p. 7). The Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) in Kaduna has attempted to address these abuses, with Chairman Apostle Emmanuel Bako warning pastors against exploitation (Macaulay, 2025), rolling out a database for pastors (Vanguard, 2023), and suspending clerics for extortion (Premium Times, 2023).

Exegetical Analysis of Ephesians 4:11-13 verse by verse

This section presents a detailed exegetical analysis of Ephesians 4:11-13, the passage that serves as the theological foundation for this study. Unlike the previous section, which surveyed what scholars have written about spiritual gifts across the New Testament, this section analyses the specific text of Ephesians 4:11-13 directly. The analysis proceeds in ten parts. First, verse by verse of Ephesians 4:11-13 its exegesis and its examination of the authorship and date of Ephesians, a matter of scholarly debate that affects how the passage is interpreted. Second, it surveys the historical background of the Ephesian church to understand the original context of Paul's (or the author's) instructions. Third, it analyses the literary context of Ephesians 4:11-13 within the

structure of the letter. Fourth, it presents an English translation of the passage. Fifth, it conducts a grammatical analysis of the key clauses. Sixth, it provides a detailed lexical analysis of nine key terms: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, equipping, edification, unity, and fullness. This exegesis establishes the biblical purpose of spiritual gifts, against which the abuses documented in Kaduna will be measured in subsequent this is verse by verse. Let's delve into Ephesians 4:11-13, analysing the Greek text alongside the English translation, followed by an exegesis of each verse of Ephesians 4:11-13.

Verse 11: Greek: "Καὶ αὐτός ἔδωκε τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους"

English: *"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,"*

Exegesis. In this verse, Paul emphasizes that Christ is the one who gives spiritual gifts to the church. Here, he lists five specific roles or offices within the church: apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers. Each role has a unique function in the body of Christ. The apostles were foundational figures who spread the gospel and established churches. Prophets provided revelation and guidance. Evangelists focused on spreading the gospel message to those outside the faith. Shepherds (or pastors) cared for the flock, and teachers were responsible for instructing and grounding believers in the faith. The diversity of roles highlights the multifaceted nature of ministry and the need for various gifts within the church community.

Verse 12: Greek: "πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ"

English: *"to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,"*

Exegesis: This verse explains the purpose of the roles mentioned in the previous verse. The primary goal of these leaders is to equip the saints (the believers) for ministry. The emphasis on "equipping" indicates a process of training and preparation that empowers believers to engage in service. The phrase "work of ministry" suggests that every believer has a role in the church, not just those in leadership positions. Furthermore, the purpose of this ministry is the "building up" of the body of Christ, which refers to the church community. This underscores the communal nature of Christian faith, where growth and maturity happen collectively.

Verse 13: Greek: "μέχρις ἃν ἔλθωμεν ἐν ἐνότητι τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ"

English: *"until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."*

Exegesis: In this verse, Paul sets a goal for the church: attaining unity in faith and knowledge of Christ. The term "unity" suggests a harmonious relationship among believers, grounded in shared beliefs and understanding. The phrase "knowledge of the Son of God" indicates a deep, relational understanding of Christ, which fosters spiritual growth. The reference to "mature manhood" implies that believers are to grow into a fully developed state, reflecting Christ's character and qualities. "The measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" points to the ultimate standard for Christian maturity, which is Christ himself. This verse encapsulates the vision of the church as a unified body that collectively grows in faith and reflects the likeness of Christ. In Ephesians 4:11-

13, Paul articulates the structure and purpose of church leadership. He emphasizes that Christ equips believers through various roles to engage in ministry, aiming for collective growth and maturity in faith. This passage calls the church to unity and highlights the importance of each member in contributing to the health and development of the body of Christ. Through these verses, we see the intentional design of God for the church's functioning and the transformative journey of believers towards Christlikeness.

Contradictions Between Practice and Biblical Purpose

The comparison between the documented misused and the purpose outlined in Ephesians 4:11-13 reveals significant contradictions. The first contradiction is between mandatory manifestation and equipping. The biblical purpose of gifts is equipping the saints for works of service (Ephesians 4:12). Equipping prepares believers for ministry. Mandatory manifestation, by contrast, pressures believers to display spectacular gifts regardless of whether they have genuinely received them.

This pressure does not equip believers; it creates anxiety, fakery, and spiritual elitism. The biblical goal is the maturity of the entire church (Ephesians 4:13). The goal of mandatory manifestation is individual performance. Paul explicitly states that the Spirit distributes gifts “to each one individually as He wills” (1 Corinthians 12:11). Mandatory manifestation overrides the Spirit’s sovereign distribution. When churches teach that a believer who does not manifest a gift is spiritually incomplete, they invert Paul’s teaching, turning divine enablement into a human requirement.

The second contradiction is between commercialization and building up. The biblical purpose of gifts is building up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12). Building up strengthens the church through mutual service. Commercialization, by contrast, exploits members for financial gain. It does not build up the church; it tears it down by creating division between those who can pay and those who cannot. The New Testament provides a clear precedent against commercialization in Acts 8:18-24, where Peter rebukes Simon the Sorcerer: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money” (Acts 8:20). Bruce (1984, p. 189) comments that “the attempt to purchase spiritual power with money reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of grace.” Commercialization treats grace as a commodity, contradicting the free gift of God. When pastors demand payment for prophecies, they transform grace into commerce and turn the pastor from a servant into a merchant.

The third contradiction is between manipulation and unity. The biblical purpose of gifts is unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God (Ephesians 4:13). Unity promotes oneness among believers. Manipulation, by contrast, creates dependency, fear, and division. When pastors use prophetic threats to control members, they fragment the body of Christ. The biblical goal is that “we all attain to the unity of the faith” (Ephesians 4:13). Manipulation isolates members, making them dependent on the pastor rather than united with the wider church. Johnson and VanVonderen (1991, p. 102) describe how abusive leaders discourage members from seeking counsel outside the church, creating dependency and isolation. This isolation prevents the unity Paul describes. The case of Pastor Nelson Foni, who claimed divine revelation to control a victim’s financial decision and extract N1.7 million, exemplifies this manipulation (Naija News, 2022). These contradictions demonstrate that the Misused of Ministerial gifts is not a minor ethical lapse but a fundamental departure from the purpose articulated in Ephesians 4:11-13.

Theological and Pastoral Responses to Abuse

The exegetical findings from Ephesians 4:11-13 and the documented forms of abuse point toward four theological and pastoral responses that provide the framework for addressing abuse and restoring spiritual gifts to their true purpose. These responses are grounded in Scripture and theology, explaining how the biblical text speaks to the problem.

The first response is the recovery of equipping as the purpose of gifts. Paul's chain of purpose demonstrates that the fivefold ministry exists to equip the saints for works of service, not to perform ministry for them. When pastors understand themselves as equippers rather than performers, the focus shifts from spectacular displays to preparing others for ministry. This recovery challenges the hierarchical model that underlies commercialization, manipulation, and mandatory manifestation. The recovery of equipping requires a fundamental reorientation of pastoral ministry: pastors must ask, "Am I equipping others to minister, or am I performing ministry myself?" This response directly addresses mandatory manifestation by shifting the focus from individual performance to corporate preparation.

The second response is the restoration of accountability structures. Abuse flourishes where accountability structures are weak or non-existent. Restoration requires denominational oversight, congregational accountability, financial transparency, and legal accountability. The PFN's efforts to create a database of pastors (Vanguard, 2023) and to discipline pastors who abuse their authority (Premium Times, 2023) represent steps in the right direction, but these efforts must be strengthened and extended to independent churches that operate outside denominational structures.

Every church should have an elder board that can question pastoral decisions and review financial practices. This response directly addresses commercialization and manipulation by removing the secrecy that enables abuse.

The third response is the role of discernment and testing of prophecies. Paul's instruction to "test everything" (1 Thessalonians 5:21) and the Johannine command to "test the spirits" (1 John 4:1) establish that discernment and testing are essential functions of the church. The restoration of testing requires education of church members about biblical criteria for evaluating prophecies, establishment of prophetic review committees within local churches, rejection of prophecies that demand money or obedience to the prophet rather than to Christ, and public correction of false prophets. As Keener (2019) argues, "all prophecy must be evaluated (1 Cor 14:29). We know in part and we prophesy in part (13:9), so we must evaluate both prophecy and teaching based on what God has already revealed." Scripture, he notes, "is the canon—the true measuring stick for all claims to revelation." This response directly addresses manipulation by empowering members to question and test prophetic claims.

The fourth response is the priority of love over spectacular manifestations. The placement of 1 Corinthians 13 between chapters 12 and 14 indicates that love is the essential context for the exercise of gifts. Without love, prophecy, tongues, and knowledge are "nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:2). The abuse documented in Kaduna—commercialization, manipulation, mandatory manifestation is fundamentally loveless. The restoration of love as the priority means that the exercise of spiritual gifts is evaluated not by their spectacular nature but by whether they edify,

serve, and build up the body. Love is patient, kind, not jealous, not arrogant, not self-seeking, not easily angered (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). Orogun (2020, p. 10) concludes that “the causes of Pentecostal capitalism, ranging from greed to selfishness are founded on ‘lack of love’ towards the sheep.” The recovery of love as the priority requires a cultural shift in Pentecostal churches: from performance to service, from spectacle to substance, from hierarchy to community. This response directly addresses all three forms of abuse by reorienting the motivation for exercising spiritual gifts from self-interest to service.

Recommendations for Navigating Abuse

Based on the theological and pastoral responses outlined above, the following practical recommendations are offered for pastors, church leaders, denominational bodies, and believers.

1. Establish Equipping Ministries. Pastors should establish intentional equipping ministries that train members for works of service. This includes developing training programs for member ministry, delegating ministry responsibilities, and creating leadership pipelines that empower rather than control. Church leaders should evaluate their ministry by whether members are being equipped to serve, not by whether the pastor is performing all ministry. This recommendation directly counters mandatory manifestation by shifting focus from performance to preparation.

2. Strengthen Accountability Structures. Every church should have an elder board with the authority to question pastoral decisions, review financial practices, and provide oversight. Denominational bodies should strengthen their oversight mechanisms and extend them to independent churches where possible. The PFN should continue its efforts to create a pastor database (Vanguard, 2023) and should expand its disciplinary procedures to more effectively address abuse. Churches should also implement transparent financial reporting and regular external audits. This recommendation directly counters commercialization and manipulation by removing the secrecy that enables abuse.

3. Educate Members on Prophetic Testing. Church leaders should provide regular education to members on biblical criteria for evaluating prophecies. This can include quarterly seminars, small group studies, and accessible written resources. Churches should establish prophetic review committees that can evaluate prophetic claims and provide guidance to members. Leaders should publicly correct false prophets and reject prophecies that demand money, demand obedience to the prophet rather than to Christ, or contradict Scripture. This recommendation directly counters manipulation by empowering members to question and test prophetic claims.

Conclusion

The verdict of this article is clear: the abuse of spiritual gifts in some Pentecostal churches constitutes a fundamental departure from the purpose articulated in Ephesians 4:11-13. Mandatory manifestation, commercialization, and manipulation are not merely excesses or unfortunate by-products of Pentecostal vitality; they are direct contradictions of Paul’s teaching that gifts are for equipping saints, building up the body, and attaining the fullness of Christ. The exegetical analysis has demonstrated that the purpose of spiritual gifts is equipping saints, building up the body, and attaining unity, knowledge, and the fullness of Christ. The empirical evidence has documented that mandatory manifestation, commercialization, and manipulation are prevalent in some Pentecostal churches in Kaduna Metropolis. The comparison has revealed significant contradictions:



mandatory manifestation contradicts equipping, commercialization contradicts building up, and manipulation contradicts unity. The theological and pastoral responses and practical recommendations provided in this article offer a biblical framework for correcting abuse and restoring spiritual gifts to their true purpose.

The implications for Pentecostal churches are urgent and inescapable. When pastors demand payment for prophecies, they transform grace into commerce. When they threaten divine punishment for disobedience, they weaponize spiritual authority. When they pressure every believer to display spectacular gifts, they override the Spirit's sovereign distribution. The biblical corrective is not less Pentecostalism but more: a return to equipping, accountability, testing, and above all, love. The recovery of the biblical purpose of gifts as equipping, building up, and attaining the fullness of Christ is essential for restoring the integrity of Pentecostal witness. The responsibility now rests with pastors, church leaders, and denominational bodies to implement these recommendations and restore spiritual gifts to their true purpose. Future research must extend to other Nigerian cities, conduct longitudinal studies on victim impact, and evaluate the effectiveness of PFN regulatory mechanisms. The abuse of spiritual gifts is not faithful Pentecostalism but a departure from it. The recovery of equipping, accountability, testing, and love is the path to restoring spiritual gifts to their God-intended purpose.



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