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Front Cover: The cover artwork is a stylized photo by Steve Buffington. “An image of a Christian leader is the rope braking device used in repelling. If its integrity is compromised, your life could be in danger. However, a braking device that functions as its creator intended allows risks and activities unable to be experienced in any other way.”
TO SPEAK OR NOT TO SPEAK? 
1 CORINTHIANS 12 IDEOLOGY 
AND TONGUES IN 
ECCLESIAL LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT: Some North American Pentecostal churches require certain prospective leaders to provide evidence of having spoken in tongues (glossolalia) in order to be considered for leadership development and accession opportunities. This paper assesses this contemporary ecclesial leadership practice from a Pauline perspective by conducting a socio-rhetorical interpretation of the 1 Corinthians 12 pericope. This research uses Robbins’ (1996) ideological texture analysis as the exegetical method to control as best as possible for anachronism and ethnocentrism in seeking transferable Pauline leadership principles. The resulting principles from the 1 Corinthian 12 ideological texture analysis form a critique of the glossolalia prerequisite policy with respect to organizational leadership development. The paper concludes with recommending a minor adjustment to the policy to refocus on unity within the body, diverse encouragement and representation of the wider charismata, and alignment with Pauline leadership perspectives.

KEYWORDS: Glossolalia, Socio-Rhetorical, Pentecostal Leadership, Charismata
To Speak or Not to Speak? 1 Corinthians 12 Ideology and Tongues in Ecclesial Leadership

Paul's first recorded letter to the Corinthians contains a great deal of information regarding instructions on proper behavior in the early church. Much of Paul's rebukes and instructions are so embedded in the context of the first century Mediterranean world that modern exegesis can sometimes overlook subtle, yet important principles. It is for this reason that this research will use socio-rhetorical criticism to offer an analysis of the 1 Corinthians 12 pericope. The purpose of this research is to seek insight from Paul's perspective, as communicated in 1 Corinthians 12, on ecclesial leadership development and apply this to a contemporary Pentecostal leadership development practice. Due to its particular treatment of individuals’ interactive relationships within groups and attention to power variables in rhetoric, Robbins’ (1996) ideological texture is used to detect leadership principles from Paul's rhetoric. Specifically, this research seeks guidance from these 1 Corinthians 12 principles in order to contextually analyze the contemporary practice of requiring candidates for certain leadership positions to provide evidence of “speaking in tongues” (glossolalia) as proof that they have been baptized by the Holy Spirit.

IDEOLOGICAL TEXTURE

This method is a reliable way to examine ancient texts by attempting to recover the author’s original intentions in the relationship between his chosen rhetoric and various phenomena from outside the text (Robbins, 1996). Two of the common dangers to sound Biblical interpretation, namely ethnocentrism and anachronism, arise when the interpreter fails to consider the original author’s rhetorical intentions for the original audience (Duvall & Hays, 2012). It is with the particular intention to avoid these failures that the present study largely employs a social-scientific criticism approach to commenting on this pericope’s ideological texture.

PAULINE-CORINTHIAN SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TEXTURE

Corinth was a wealthy port city on a narrow strip of land with the Aegean Sea on one side and the Adriatic Sea on the other. Its geographic features enabled Corinth to develop into a major hub for trade, and the city maintained two major harbors. One harbor faced Asia, and the other faced Italy. These characteristics made Corinth into a cosmopolitan environment with many taverns and temples (Gundry, 2003). The city had two large theaters; one accommodated 20,000, the other 3,000, and its Isthmian Games were second in fame only to the Olympics (Gundry). Prostitution was rampant, and the Aphrodite temple had hundreds of sexual slaves (Glancy, 1998; Gundry). In fact, it is likely that all slave owners customarily retained sexual rights to their slaves (Glancy). The city’s geographic position and its affluence, abundance of taverns, entertainment, prostitution, and pagan gods (1 Cor 8:5; deSilva, 2004) contributed to extreme paganism, multiculturalism, and a diverse socioeconomic population distribution. Given the vices of the general population, it appears only natural that the pressure of these cultural problems might seep into the local church if unchecked.

PREVIOUS EVENTS. Paul was unique, in that, he was at once a Roman citizen, a Hellenistic Jew, and a Christian. As such, he likely had a broad understanding of Mediterranean
culture and society. He had founded the Corinthian church upon his initial missionary visit, around 50 C.E. (deSilva, 2004). He was writing to the Corinthian congregation, approximately four to five years later, because Chloe’s people had recently informed him of a wide array of sinful problems the Corinthians had started developing (1 Cor 1:11). These problems were evaluated by Paul as divisions (1 Cor 1:10) and quarrels (1 Cor 1:11) and ranged from dividing each other based on their preference for Paul, Peter, Apollos, or Christ (1 Cor 1:12), boasting (1 Cor 1:29, 31; 4:7), refusing to discipline or deal with a man who had sex with his stepmother (1 Cor 5:1-13), filing lawsuits against one another (1 Cor 6:1-7), generally lacking sexual prudence and restraint (1 Cor 6:15-16), abusing the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11:17-34), and a handful of other vices. Much of the Corinthians’ problems stemmed from spiritual elitism (Horsley, 1977), which even led to them denying the promised resurrection from the dead (1 Cor 15:12; Horsley, 1978). The key reason for Paul’s address in chapters 12-14, however, is the Corinthians’ misuse of spiritual gifts, especially the elitism they displayed regarding particular gifts.

**POPULATION STRUCTURE.** The Corinthian church was most likely made up of less than 50 people (deSilva, 2004). Yet, it appeared to be relatively diverse along ethnic, economic, and sociopolitical lines. Priscilla and Aquila were local artisans and hosted a small gathering of the church body in their house (1 Cor 16:19). Stephanus, Chloe, and Crispus each were property owners (Acts 18:8; 1 Cor 1:16; Gundry, 2003). Gaius had a house large enough to fit the entire extended church in it (Rom 16:23). Erastus was the city treasurer (Rom 16:23; Witherington, 1995). The remaining majority of Corinthians were likely comprised of lower to lower-middle class (1 Cor 1:26; 7:20-24; 12:12; deSilva). Esler (1995) identified at least nine Corinthian Christians as upper class. Although many in the Corinthian congregation were Gentiles, as assumed by Paul’s rhetoric regarding prohibited meats that Jews typically would not have needed to hear (1 Cor 6:9-11; 8:7; 12:2), Jewish presence still existed in the church (Acts 18:7-8; Myrou, 1999). Crispus and his household were Jewish (Acts 18:8). Crispus and Sosthenes were synagogue leaders prior to conversion (Acts 18:8, 17). Aquila and Priscilla were also likely Jewish, as this was indicated as the reason Claudia expelled them from Rome (Acts 18:2). While the Corinthian church occasionally met altogether in one place (Rom 16:23), it was more usual for them to meet in smaller groups in a number of believers’ homes (deSilva). This brings up the issue of honor and pride.

**SOCIALIZATION AND CULTURE.** Honor was a major theme throughout ancient Mediterranean culture. The Corinthians were no exception and lived distinctively in a culture that highly valued honor and avoided shame at all costs (Thiselton, 2000; Witherington, 1995). To gain honor, a person needed to gain public attention, often to his or her accomplishments in a variety of things (Robbins, 1996; Witherington). Witherington asserts that this honor-shame cultural emphasis in Corinth was evidenced by the archaeological discoveries of self-promoting inscriptions throughout the Corinthian ruins. Another way the Christian Corinthians attempted to procure honorable status was to patronize philosophers and orators by opening their homes to them in hopes they would be able to boast about the fact that a traveling speaker stayed with them (deSilva, 2004; Martin, 1991). This cultural aspect resulted in the disputes over who was the greater teacher: Paul, Peter, or Apollos (1 Cor 1:11-13; 3:3-5). Such disputes enabled the Corinthians to antagonize each other, boasting of greater honor over those below them if anyone was able to secure the more favored of the teachers (deSilva). In addition to his status as an apostle, Paul was also a leather worker specializing in tent making (Acts 18:3). It was for this reason that Paul stayed with Aquila and Priscilla, for they too were tentmakers. This was customary in Mediterranean culture. Regarding
social stratification, horizontal community and reciprocity was routine and expected, while vertical community and reciprocity was much more complicated (Esler, 1995). Still, Paul’s decision to forgo wealthy patronage during his visits, willingly neglect to respect the Greco-Roman cultural expectation of dramatic oration, and maintain his status as a tradesman was significant, given the decrease in social status and shame he knew it would bring.

BELIEF SYSTEMS AND IDEOLOGIES. The Corinthians’ surroundings significantly affected their belief systems and ideologies in the short time after Paul’s previous visit to them. The socioeconomic and cultural diversity of their population overcame their initial teachings upon conversion, as they split into the factions previously mentioned. In 1 Corinthians 12, the extent of this divisive environment is indicated by the obsession over certain spiritual gifts as being superior to others. Paul’s need to remind the church that they were all baptized into one body by one Spirit is evidence of this (1. Cor 12:13). It is evident that, especially when reading chapter 12 in the context of the larger, cohesive rhetorical strategy of chapters 12-14 (Patrick, 2004), the spiritual gift that some of the Corinthians were abusing was glossolalia. A number of ideological issues factor into how the Corinthians’ belief systems and ideologies contributed to this fallacy. Several competing interpretations will be examined in order to identify any common denominators and offer a possible explanation for the Corinthians’ behavior.

The significant cultural value placed on honor is a recurring theme for explaining the Corinthians’ chapter 12 problems. The general spirit of self-indulgent boasting and self-promotion caused the Corinthians to measure themselves using worldly standards instead of Christ’s (Grindheim, 2012). While some scholars have insisted that the world outside the Corinthian church would have seen glossolalia as strange, laughable behavior (Forbes, 1986), others have contended glossolalia very well might have signaled divine presence to outsiders (Chester, 2005). Reasons for why some might have perceived glossolalia as divine presence lie in ancient Greek traditions.

When prophetesses would deliver oracles in ancient Greek religious contexts, it was sometimes the case that they spoke erratically with ecstatic speech and “frenzied behavior” resembling madness (Chester, 2005). The Pythia at Delphi is used as such an example in writings of Plato and Plutarch (Chester; Witherington, 1995). Scholars in Chester’s school of thought suggest loose cultural linkages between social perceptions of oracle madness and Christian glossolalia. While this view is contested (Brookins, 2016; Forbes, 1986), the rhetorical and literary presence in Greco-Roman tradition of women “acting in madness” in the same literary sense as Paul’s discussion of glossolalia in 1 Corinthians 14, and evidenced by cult behavior surrounding Dionysus in Euripides recorded by Herodotus, Pausanias, and others, conveys a sense of the general cultural awareness of such behavior during this time and place (Chester; Engelsen, 1970; Theissen, 1987). Some scholars argue that the Corinthian Christians viewed the glossolalia gift as an indication of higher status, since glossolalia appeared to signal an individuals’ closeness and access to God (Chester; Horsley, 1976; Martin, 1991). This position is based on the premise that glossolalia served the middle to higher-class members’ desire for gaining and maintaining honor through public attention and self-promotion. Shogren (2005) contends that it was, in fact, the lower-class members who abused glossolalia as a means by which to elevate their honor and social status. Either way, both positions agree on the premise that glossolalia was seen by the Corinthian Christians as denoting higher-status, honor inducing behavior.
IDEOLOGY OF POWER IN PAUL’S DISCOURSE

Paul’s Corinthian rhetoric contains rich textures of power ideology. He takes a reformer approach to the Corinthian situation and exemplifies strong counterculture rhetoric throughout the letter (Naselli, 2018; Witherington, 1995). According to the socio-rhetorical interpretive approach, reformers suggest using supernaturally developed insights into the problems at hand to restore social organizations’ health and purpose (Robbins, 1996). Paul exhibited counterculture rhetoric by employing his reformist approach to reject the Corinthians’ culturally developed sins against God, themselves, and their organization, and he offers a constructive approach to repair their organizational failures (Robbins). In the 1 Corinthians 12 pericope, this is implicitly evidenced in the congregation’s factions and explicitly evidenced in Paul’s rhetoric of the multifaceted church body.

POWER RANKINGS. As previously mentioned, certain members were placing too much importance on glossolalia within church activities. This was done in large part to secure greater honor and status in competition with other people or groups within the church. To respond to this, Paul utilized a distinctly Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition spanning from 1 Corinthians 12-14 (Patrick, 2004). The chapter 12 pericope specifically displays Paul’s strategy to reverse the power dynamics of status that the Corinthians had developed. While some scholars attempt to categorize the gifts listed here (Mayhue, 2014; Thielson, 2000; Unnik, 1993), most reject the logic that Paul intends to rank them in importance (Dodson, 2011; Fee, 1980; Unnik; Witherington, 1995) and instead emphasize the charismata as collectively necessary for ecclesial functionality (West, 2015). Indeed, the exact moment one receives the power to exercise a spiritual gift and how frequently thereafter the Holy Spirit chooses to further empower that person with the same gift is, itself, a challenging debate (Blankenhorn, 2014). It is noteworthy that, of the two times in this pericope that Paul lists spiritual gifts, glossolalia is mentioned next to last and last, respectively (1 Cor 12:10, 28). In the first occurrence, the only gift listed after glossolalia is the ability to interpret glossolalia (1 Cor 12:10). Holding these to be firm, universal rankings of importance would be antithetical to Paul’s rhetorical purpose, namely, his assertion of the mutual benefits and interdependency of each of the gifts to the whole church (1. Cor 12: 7, 11, 20). However, if Paul’s ordering was intentional, it would appear to serve the rhetorical purpose of challenging the very rankings the Corinthians had erroneously developed in his absence. They had valued glossolalia highly, a gift that was largely an inward, individually edifying practice, whereas Paul later reflected that gifts that served others were essentially more useful for the whole body (1 Cor 14:1-4). The ideology of power rhetoric behind these two lists is further brought into focus with Paul’s metaphor of human anatomy.

LACK OF HAND-EYE COORDINATION. From 1 Corinthians 12:12-30, Paul illustrated an extended metaphor, linking the interdependency of individual human body parts with the gifts of the Spirit and certain roles in church organization. According to ancient Greco-Roman tradition and its emphasis on hierarchy, status, and honor, persons of lower status were required to yield to those of higher status (Martin, 1991; Witherington, 1995). As the various factions within the Corinthian church vied for the power that came from honorable status, they grew away from God’s order for ecclesial organization. Paul’s way of challenging this was to use rhetoric they would understand. Witherington highlighted the fact that, when Paul had one body part speaking to another (1 Cor 12:15), he was actually utilizing a popular fable of the time that stressed no one body part is without use. Thielson (2000) found that Paul’s metaphor had several other similarities in Greco-Roman culture, including in writings by Plato and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, serving as a
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sociopolitical rhetorical *topos*. In Paul’s case, he delivered the metaphor in such a way that unity, diversity, and interdependency were stressed as necessary to achieve full bodily function. In other words, Paul rejected the notion that any single member or gift was more or less important than another. In fact, Paul went as far as to remind the Corinthians that God had orchestrated the specific, intentional placement and purpose of each body part (1 Cor 12:18). Implicit in Paul’s rhetoric is the notion that any who choose to reorder or rank in any way the various gifts of the Spirit directly criticize God’s handiwork.

**IDEOLOGY INTERPRETATION**

Having attempted to reveal various ideological textures of the Pauline-Corinthian world and having discussed the ideologies of power reflected in Paul’s rhetoric to the Corinthians, several timeless principles stand out. The Christian church should never devolve into factions that compete with one another for attention, status, or power of any sort, using spiritual gifts as the dividing line. Church members and groups must not concern themselves with their perceived social status, especially by exercising any of the spiritual gifts as the socially accepted indication of such status (Naselli, 2018; Witherington, 1995). Paul went to great extent to rebuke and reverse the apparent ranking structure (Martin, 1991) the Corinthians had developed for the gifts God had given them. Implicit in the ideological texture of this behavior is the emphasis on gaining honor, often through self-promotional means, that pervaded the Corinthians’ culture (West, 2015). Just as the Corinthians had fought over allegiances to particular apostles to compete for honors (1. Cor 1:12), they had also competed for honor within the subculture of the Christian church by boastfully overemphasizing certain spiritual gifts. Therefore, the same principle applies today. No force of social or cultural values should influence how Christians understand and exercise spiritual gifts. As Paul timelessly stated, there is one Holy Spirit who baptizes all Christians into a singular body (1 Cor 12:13). Elevating any spiritual gift above another while neglecting to exercise the gifts to contribute to the full functioning of the entire body is tantamount to criticizing the Holy Spirit’s design for ministry.

**CONTEMPORARY PENTECOSTAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICE**

Many different interpretations of this pericope exist, which leads to as many different practical applications in the contemporary church body. This study focuses on one specific application as it relates to leadership development within certain North American groups of the Pentecostal denomination. Specifically, some Pentecostal churches require prospective leaders seeking credentialed ministry positions to provide evidence that they have performed *glossolalia*. This requirement is supposed to indicate to church leadership that candidates have been baptized in the Holy Spirit (Jacobsen, 2006; Macchia, 1998a; Wacker, 2009). According to this interpretation espoused by major Pentecostal organizations such as the Assemblies of God (AG) and the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC), this baptism is vital for prospective leaders because it endows them with “power for life and service” (Assemblies of God, 2018). Organizations such as the IPHC maintain that, since the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, God will not fill it in the sense of the Pentecostal Spirit baptism until the temple is perfectly clean (IPHC, 2018). These contemporary Pentecostal organizations maintain that the baptism in the Spirit is a separate event subsequent to conversion (Assemblies of God; IPHC; Macchia). Thus, a member may be a believer,
be saved, and be baptized into the body of Christ, yet be unable to develop as a leader in certain capacities within his or her church if he or she cannot provide proof of Spirit baptism with the only accepted evidence of such baptism being *glossolalia*.

### APPLYING IDEOLOGICAL TEXTURE FINDINGS TO CONTEMPORARY LEADERSHIP

It is not the intent of this research to engage in a denominational debate over the fundamental theology of the gift of *glossolalia*, nor does this research intend to offer additional support for or against its general use in ministry. The debate over the nature of Spirit baptism and its effects is far from nearing consensus after many well-meaning, thoroughly methodical researchers have approached the topic (Atkinson, 2011; Connolly, 2007; Dunn, 1977, 1993; Jacobsen, 2006; Macchia, 1996, 1998ab; Menzies, 1994; Mitchell, 1993; Nel, 2017). In fact, even quite a few of the early and founding members of the Pentecostal movement stemming from the Azusa street revival could not agree on the topic and divided the movement (Creech, 1996). Instead, this research is confined to the scope of applying principles gleaned from the ideological texture of 1 Corinthians 12 to the contemporary leadership practice outlined above for developing tomorrow’s Christian leaders.

A number of Pentecostal denominations and churches do not necessarily share the view of *glossolalia* outlined above. Thus, the 1 Corinthians 12 principles discussed here will be applied to the analysis of only those Pentecostal denominations that use *glossolalia* as a prerequisite for positions of leadership.

### BAPTISM

One area in which the *glossolalia* prerequisite policy outlined above conflicts with ideological texture within 1 Corinthians 12 is in the assertion that there may be two separate, consecutive baptisms. This notion appears to contradict Paul’s rhetorical purpose. In 1 Corinthians 12:13, Paul added to his point in the preceding verse (1 Cor 12:12), which drew the Corinthians’ focus to unity, by reminding them they had been baptized by one Spirit into one body. The fact that Paul used the singular baptism concept to modify his statement of each Corinthian’s metaphorical likeness to individual body parts which, taken together in unity, comprise the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12, 27), must refer to the sense of the baptism in which the Corinthians repented, turned to Christ, and came to be identified as Holy Spirit-indwelling Christians. Alternatively, this could also be referring to the moment of conversion, when, upon receiving Christ, the believer is united to the body of Christ by the indwelling of the Spirit (Witherington, 1995; Yoon, 2013). Each of these views highlight the fact that, in 1 Corinthians 12:13, Paul used past tense wording to describe the baptism that united every Christian into the body, which should imply this event was a singular occurrence.

In other words, Paul’s rhetoric is consistent with the event of a person’s induction into the body of Christ and initial indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Olajide, 2008). While believers are often “filled” (*pimplēmi*) with the Holy Spirit to be empowered for specific types of service (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9-11), Scriptures do not include any command for believers to be “baptized” (*baptizō*) in the Holy Spirit. As Thiselton (2000) added, arguing for a separate baptism in which some believers are set apart into a distinct group from an existing body of Christians undermines Paul’s status-leveling ideological rhetoric. In fact, suggesting separate baptisms reintroduces the divisive categorizations Paul was correcting in the Corinthian church in the first place (1 Cor 1:10-12;
Martin, 1991; Thiselton). Popular contemporary Pentecostal rhetoric sometimes even refers to
groups in which glossolalia activity is present as “Holy Ghost circles” (Wacker, 2009, p. 38). Indeed,
the tradition has often held that churches that do not display flourishing charismata in this manner
must not have an authentic presence of the Holy Spirit (Rybarczyk, 2007). Recalling the ideological
texture of 1 Corinthians 12, one of the overarching principles was the importance of unity and
avoiding any type of factions that stem from different valuations of spiritual conditions.

HOLINESS STATUS

Another implication within the glossolalia policy under examination here that is in conflict
with Paul’s ideological texture is the belief that one of the reasons some people have yet to receive
the Spirit baptism is because they are not yet pure enough. As the IPHC maintains, Christians’
odies are the temples of the Holy Spirit; however, the Holy Spirit will only fill the temple as long as
there is clean room for the filling, and spiritual garbage has been removed (IPHC, 2018). Speaking
on behalf of the Pentecostal tradition, Macchia (1998a) suggests a believer does not actually need to
immediately perform glossolalia to provide evidence of Spirit baptism. However, he adds that these
types of believers have not yet been baptized in the Spirit with the “full manifestation” granted in
the “biblical pattern” (Macchia). By itself, this does not appear to be out of line with Scriptures.
Although Jesus himself indicated God would give us the Spirit if His people simply ask (Mt 7:11; Lk
11:11-13), Christians also need to daily die to themselves in order to keep walking forward in the
newness of life in Christ (Mt 10:38; Mk 8:35; Lk 9:23; Jn 12:24; Rom 6:3; 8:13; 12:1; Gal 5:24).

However, a problem arises when a Christian organization states that the only evidence of
ever having been filled (or “baptized” in this case, as many within the Pentecostal tradition use the
two terms interchangeably) is the physical manifestation of glossolalia. This policy places the gift of
glossolalia in a hierarchical position relative to other gifts and establishes it as a sign of what is
essentially the degree of a believer’s holiness. This also appears to run afoul of the 1 Corinthians 12
principle that no spiritual gift ought to be used as a type of status indication. The spiritual gifts are
intended for empowering Christian service and living and for growing and developing Christ’s body
(DeVries, 2016; West, 2015). Moreover, this devalues the fact that the Holy Spirit’s choice to dwell
within the believer upon conversion and salvation is the ultimately supreme and long promised gift.

GLOSSOLALIA AND BAPTISM

As previously mentioned, the ideological texture of 1 Corinthians 12 reveals principles that
conflict with contemporary ecclesial leadership practices that utilize one or more spiritual gifts to
indicate the status of a believer’s holiness, purity, status in the local church community, or the
spiritual health of her relationship with God in general. If the contemporary Pentecostal sense of the
term “baptism in the Spirit” is held to be indicative of a believer’s readiness to receive the filling, and
the believer is made ready by an emptying of spiritual obstacles such as sin, then choosing to enact
the policy that glossolalia is the only initial evidence of the Spirit baptism makes glossolalia a de facto
indicator of believers’ spiritual status. This merits further discussion in light of Pauline ideologically
textured rhetoric, since he goes to such great extent throughout the context of 1 Corinthians 12-14
to lower the level of emphasis the church had placed on glossolalia. As with many of the topics
discussed in this research, the greater body of Christ that is the church today is far from consensus
on these doctrines.

THEOLOGY OF LEADERSHIP JOURNAL
The, at times, contentious diversity of views on the subject serves as one indication of the difficulty in perfectly interpreting the meaning of these texts. The early Pentecostals initially claimed the tongues speech that accompanied Spirit baptism resembled the Acts 2 account in which the gift resulted in believers speaking in previously unlearned, intelligible, human languages (Creech, 1996; Wacker, 2009). This form of the tongues gift (xenolalia or xenoglossia) was thought to empower early Pentecostals for global ministry by enabling them to communicate directly with foreign peoples and without needing to learn their languages (Creech; Wacker; Walters, 2010). However, when missionaries became discouraged that this was not the case, Pentecostal leaders revisited the theology and determined that the languages they were speaking were actually angelic, referring to 1 Corinthians 13:1, and maintained that only God and possibly someone with the gift of interpretation could understand (Creech; Wacker). Some provide convincing arguments that Paul’s rhetoric of angel languages was hyperbole and that all tongues speech in the New Testament was xenolalia (Busenitz, 2014). Others maintain different uses of both xenolalia and glossolalia exist in the New Testament while providing convincing arguments that linking 1 Corinthians glossolalia forms to the Acts 2 account of xenolalia upon Spirit baptism has no Scriptural or exegetical basis (Nel, 2017; Witherington, 2015). Even prominent Pentecostal research at times concedes that sound exegesis of Paul’s letter to the Corinthians limits the ways Luke-Acts can be interpreted (Macchia, 1996). Lyons (2016) offers a convincing argument that the Scriptural record of Holy Spirit baptisms contains nothing normative regarding the combination of water baptism, laying on of hands, and glossolalia and that the only normative variables were that (1) all accounts were corporate, (2) every believer present received the Spirit, and (3) each account included the Word of God being shared and received by wide new groups of people. As the discussion on glossolalia and Spirit baptism spanning back more than a century shows, division abounds. Since no instructions or commands to screen potential leaders by verifying their baptismal status with glossolalia exist in Scripture, the issue is far from clear, and the issue divides Christians into factions, it conflicts with the principles in Paul’s 1 Corinthians 12 rhetoric.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

The ideological texture of 1 Corinthians 12 shows Paul’s effort to reverse the Corinthians’ status indicators, disengage spiritual gifts from being used as indications of status, and emphasize the interdependent nature of all positions and all gifts for positively developing the church. This pericope does not necessarily provide positive criteria for identifying or vetting leaders. However, it does limit the ways potential leaders may be identified and vetted. It seems clear from Paul’s rhetoric that none of the spiritual gifts ought to be used to indicate spiritual status or spiritual potential. Nor does indisputable evidence exist that a distinctly separate baptism experience is a prerequisite for Christian leadership. Perhaps observable evidence of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) might be a more fitting indication. Additionally, the Romans 12 motivational gifts may serve as a positive indicator of how candidates may fit into specific types of job positions (Dellavecchio & Winston, 2004; Winston, 2009). Nevertheless, establishing glossolalia as a prerequisite for ecclesial leadership positions is unsupported by this pericope and might also have unintended consequences.

One unintended consequence is that any church using this prerequisite may miss out on developing strong potential leaders who might have a wealth of other skills and talents. In keeping with Paul’s rhetoric, the Holy Spirit bestows a variety of gifts on Christians to achieve the ultimate goal of growing Christ’s kingdom by a variety of diverse ways (West, 2015). A person may be called
to be a pastor and also have the supernatural gift of healing. Another person may be called to be a pastor and have the supernatural gift of discernment. Another might have the ability to interpret glossolalia or xenolalia. Many gifts are bestowed upon many different types of believers. Dodson (2011) offered a new, unique perspective that suggests the Pentecostal movement ought to reintegrate equal attention to other charisms and consider how the Spirit is working in non-Pentecostal churches as well. God's pneumatika is inefficiently used in churches that would not welcome the leadership of the other parts if they have not also demonstrated glossolalia when the Holy Spirit has not elected to impart that particular gift on those people. This practice could have erosive effects on an organization's human capital and create an undesirably homogeneous body. Jesus, Joseph, Moses, Sampson, David, Solomon, and many others never used the gift of glossolalia. Yet, each of them was empowered with the Holy Spirit to perform great, historical acts of leadership. Of course, some might say these accounts were prior to Acts 2. However, hundreds of other Christ-loving men and women have faithfully served and led countless others to Christ since the New Testament was canonized. It is possible that the likes of Adoniram Judson, David Livingstone, Eric Liddell, and Billy Graham would never have achieved what they did if their respective organizations practiced the leadership prerequisite discussed here. This harrowing thought brings up the next, and last, implications of this leadership practice.

Establishing the performance of glossolalia as a prerequisite to certain types of ecclesial leadership may unintentionally incentivize inauthentic manifestations. God is calling and rising up leaders around the world to fulfill His purposes. If a person is called to serve in ministry within a Pentecostal church, that person will eventually (if he or she does not already know) come to understand that he or she must demonstrate the Holy Spirit baptism with glossolalia before he or she can fulfill what he or she understands to be God’s calling. The power of the psychological need of individuals to signal to their peer groups, leaders, and organizations that they are “one of them” is tremendous (Bulbulia & Sosis, 2011; Lynn, 2013). Not to mention, a person with a genuine calling feels the pull of God to step up and become a leader. Whether intentional or not, these forces have the potential to produce counterfeit manifestations if this is simply not a gift the Holy Spirit deems necessary for a particular person to have. On another level, the overemphasis on glossolalia can too easily encourage believers to seek the gift rather than the Gift Giver. Each of these run against the ideological thrust of Paul’s 1 Corinthians 12 rhetoric.

CONCLUSION

This paper set out to examine and reveal ideological textures of 1 Corinthians 12 to shed light on the practice of some streams within the Pentecostal movement of requiring candidates for certain leadership positions to provide evidence of glossolalia. This author does not pretend to have answered the difficult aspects of the deeper theological questions of the Holy Spirit baptism or of the Pentecostal tradition’s link between 1 Corinthians 12-14 and Acts 2 accounts. That debate will be ongoing for quite some time among scholars far more qualified than this author. Nor does this research intend to side with any particular denomination’s views. This research is limited in several ways. This discussion only focused on one chapter in 1 Corinthians. Besides the widely accepted notion that the rhetoric of this chapter is more complete when analyzed in the context of the chapters 12-14 literary model, many other pericopes throughout Scripture can help to shed a brighter light on the deeper questions posed here. Additionally, this research observed only one
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socio-rhetorical texture of the pericope under examination. Future research should utilize other
textual analyses on the remaining pericopes that deal with this issue as an ecclesial leadership topic.
Finally, this research is limited in scope to avoid prescribing detailed alternatives to leadership
identification and development. Future research should also consider using the Romans 12
motivational gifts (Dellavecchio & Winston, 2004; Winston, 2009) along with the research cited here
in order to develop alternative models for leadership candidate identification and leadership
development to meet the diverse and unique needs of individual church bodies.

The intent of this research is to contribute to the existing discussion by exploring how the
ideological texture of Paul’s words to the Corinthians informs our understanding of ecclesial
leadership development within the contemporary Pentecostal tradition. As part of that attempt, it
was necessary to touch on the more difficult theological questions, if only to highlight the depth of
that difficulty and the profound lack of consensus in order to indicate the conflict that comes with
overemphasizing glossolalia in ecclesial leadership development policy. Given these findings, it is
recommended Pentecostal leaders reexamine the traditional Pentecostal approach to leadership
development. Removing glossolalia from ecclesial leadership prerequisites should open up the
organization to a much wider possibility of diverse leadership personalities, talents, and charismata.
Making this change does not necessitate a full reversal of the Pentecostal theology of Holy Spirit
baptism. Approaches that merely remove a degree of focus on glossolalia to accepted leadership
positions would be a positive, productive change. Such an adjustment would seem to agree with the
ideological texture of 1 Corinthians 12 more and encourage a more diverse representation of the
broader charismata in both ecclesial leadership and followership.

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