

Edification, Exhortation, and Consolation in a Prophetic Context

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by

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Abstract

According to 1 Corinthians 14 and Ephesians 4, edifying one another is necessary for building Christ's body in love. Wayne Grudem, a notable theologian, stated that the gift of prophecy in the New Testament is "a human being reporting in merely human words something that God has brought to mind."¹ The researcher explored how and in what way people are affected by the words of prophecy in a New Testament context. Does the gift of prophecy in Christian music recordings from 2014 to 2024 provide consolation, edification, and exhortation to individuals identifying with Continuationists?

In examining songs containing prophetic contours, the researcher considered the lyrics or words sung and spoken during the musical performance that presented consolation, edification, and exhortation to the listener through the gift of prophecy, according to 1 Corinthians 14 and Ephesians 4, in the context of Wayne Grudem's definition of the New Testament prophets. Interviews with the listener, musical analyses, and a lyrical and spoken content survey underwent analysis using a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological approach. Data analysis produced the following themes: (a) the Office of the Prophet in the New Testament context, (b) enlightenment and spiritual uplift, and (c) the efficacy of Christian music in a prophetic construct. The practical implications include engaging worshipers in the gift of prophecy when the opportunity presents itself, educating worshipers on the gift of prophecy, and equipping worshipers when given the gift of prophecy. Whereas cessationists follow the cessation of certain spiritual gifts, continuationists can feel consoled, edified, and exhorted by hearing a word of prophecy.

¹ Wayne A. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, rev. ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000): 225.

Predictions about the effect of prophecy appear solvent and accede 1 Corinthians 14 and Ephesians 4.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This phenomenological qualitative study aimed to better understand the effects of spoken or sung prophecy in music among God’s people during Christian worship services or while listening to recorded worship music. Paul instructed the Corinthians in spiritual gifts to correct their worship practices (1 Corinthians 12:1–2). Grudem described the New Testament prophet as first a teacher (1 Corinthians 12:28) and then an edifier of the church (1 Corinthians 14:4) who shares Jesus Christ’s valid message.² Music is a way to console and uplift people with various afflictions³ and improve health and behavior. If congregants practice the continuation of spiritual gifts, specifically prophecy, they may experience more edification, exhortation, and consolation. Such congregations could positively affect the lives of individuals with afflictions who believe in practicing spiritual gifts, such as prophecy.

Statement of Problem

The problem is that the gift of prophecy in a worship service often validates the *prophet* rather than edifying, exhorting, or consoling the *individual* receiving the prophecy. Many prophets declare a prophecy is more likely to occur when one gives monetary gifts; others demand loud praise to God to deliver a message from God. Some individuals who call themselves prophets reveal something they know about someone in the audience but never

² Wayne A. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, rev. ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000), 225.

³ Coenie Calitz, “Healing Liturgy: The Role of Music and Singing” *Verbum et Ecclesia* 38, no. 1, (May 31, 2017); Gary E. McPherson and Graham F. Welch, ed., *Music and Music Education in People’s Lives: An Oxford Handbook of Music Education, Vol. 1* (Oxford University Press, 2018); Tim Dowley, “‘Give me that old time religion’: Gospel Music,” in *Christian Music: A Global History* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2018).

prophecy to a specific person. In such cases, the gift in practice is the gift of knowledge, not prophecy.

Purpose of Study

This hermeneutical phenomenological qualitative study explored the experiences of people who heard spoken or sung prophecy. The participants believed that the gift of prophecy is a means of edifying, exhorting, and consoling individuals, specifically in music, during Christian worship services or musical recordings. The researcher approached this study with epoché⁴; however, hermeneutic phenomenology provided the best understanding of the study. Understanding the effects of spoken or sung prophecy among applicable individuals in a musical setting during a Christian worship service or music recording between 2014 and 2023 involved observing individuals' experiences of consolation, edification, and exhortation during virtual interviews in the fall of 2023. The researcher expunged biases and reconstructed a philosophical, social construct through the groundwork of individuals' consolation, edification, and exhortation in the unity of Christ Jesus. This work included an exploration of whether the participants experienced consolation, edification, and exhortation when hearing sung or spoken prophecies during recorded worship songs or live worship gatherings.

Research Questions

RQ1: In a continuationist context, what is the experience among God's people of hearing the gift of prophecy spoken or sung in Christian worship services or Christian musical recordings?

⁴ *epoché* - the act of separating one's thought from any presuppositions, or phenomenological reduction. Edmund Husserl and W. R. Boyce Gibson, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013).

RQ2: Do individuals feel edified, exhorted, or comforted after hearing a word of prophecy?

RQ3: What are the contributing properties of the gift of prophecy according to Grudem's working definition in this research?

RQ4: What are the descriptive elements of manifestation?

RQ5: What is the result of the actions taken by individuals after listening to spoken or sung prophecy in music in Christian worship services or Christian music recordings?

Research Methodological Design

“Phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon.”⁵ In this study, the phenomenological design was the approach used to analyze the gift of prophecy's ability to console individuals. The researchers' prophetic phenomenon has been mixed with good and bad examples of what Paul describes prophecy to produce in 1 Corinthians 14. Although readers could learn from the researcher's lived experiences, the researcher interpreted the findings from a Biblical worldview and not based on what is deemed effective by prophetic practitioners today (e.g. some individuals find that doing exactly what the prophet says without weighing the prophecy against scripture to be effective, but this is not a biblical worldview). Hermeneutical phenomenological research consisted of analyzing and synthesizing the participants' lived experiences in the context of the gift of prophecy spoken or sung. The expectation was that the participants would experience edification, exhortation, and consolation upon hearing the gift of prophecy, spoken or sung.

⁵ John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2018), 75.

Proposed Instrumentation

A survey was the instrument used to better understand if the respondents felt consoled by prophecies. Interviews provided supporting data for the primary survey, with questionnaires used to qualify the participants. Observations took place at various worship services. Analyzing participants' experiences with the gift of prophecy included secondary sources limited to individuals who believe the gift of prophecy continues today. Multiple methods will be the method of choice.

Definition of Population

The population was Christians who believed that the gift of prophecy, spoken or sung, continues today. The participants lived in the Charlotte and Greensboro, North Carolina, areas.

Description of Research Sample and Sampling Technique

After selecting the congregations, the researcher used nonprobability sampling, including convenience and criterion sampling, to select participants. The study criteria were individuals who received the gift of prophecy, spoken or sung, in worship services or musical recordings. The participants attended places of worship selected by this researcher at appointed times.

Limitations of Sample as a Result of the Sampling Technique

The sample included individuals who have attended worship services in Charlotte or Greensboro, North Carolina. The researcher will use nonprobability sampling to target Christians who believe the gift of prophecy continues today. The study had a convenience sample, as the researcher lived in the same city and state as the participants. Rather than representing all Christians, the sample comprised Christians who believed the gift of prophecy continues today,

per Grudem's definition.⁶ The participants had witnessed or experienced the gift of prophecy, spoken or sung, in corporate worship settings.

Theoretical Perspective

Data interpretation occurred with a biblical worldview and social constructivism lens. This perspective enabled a focus on the Scripture experienced through the individuals' ontological preferences. Individuals will convey presuppositions on the function of prophecy from a biblical worldview based on personal experiences. The researcher and participants co-contrived an assumed inference of reality. The hermeneutic circle enabled challenging the epistemological beliefs of the participants and the researcher. The researcher sought Dasein,⁷ but axiological beliefs provided a space to value the participants' responses. A biblical worldview, social constructivism, the hermeneutic design, and interviews with the hermeneutic circle were the methods used to discover if the individuals felt edified, exhorted, or consoled after hearing words of prophecy.

Significance of Study

The significance of this study was its focus on the experience of individuals during or after hearing the gift of prophecy spoken or sung. The study addressed the participants' experience of prophecy and the results of their actions based on their experimental testimonies. The participants will have heard the gift of prophecy as defined by Grudem.⁸

⁶ Grudem defined prophecy as "telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind." Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1293.

⁷ Dasein means "being there." Katarzyna Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation: A Step-by-Step Guide* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2021), 32.

⁸ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1293.

Definition of Key Terms

Prophecy, according to Grudem, is “telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind.”⁹

Phenomenological research involves describing “the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon.”¹⁰ Therefore, a phenomenological dissertation focuses on the participant’s experience, not an idea, thought, or perception. Peoples stated, “Meaning-making is essential to phenomenological inquiry but only in the construct of experience. A phenomenological research study is used to answer the question, ‘What is it like to experience a certain phenomenon?’”¹¹

Hermeneutics involves translating the participants’ experiences “through the researcher by comparison and contrast of accounts with the accounts of other participants discussing their experiences of the same phenomenon.”¹² Peoples described Heidegger’s hermeneutic circle as essential in hermeneutics:

When you analyze data, there is an understanding of the whole (the entire transcript) and analyzing the whole as you read it, and then there is an understanding of parts (codes and themes). As you are analyzing data, you break down information into parts and then synthesize, and you look at the whole again (the entire transcript). That is the new understanding. And then as you move through it again in analysis, the parts make sense of the whole and the whole makes sense of the parts, and this hermeneutic circle continues until a new understanding emerges.¹³

⁹ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1293.

¹⁰ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 75.

¹¹ Peoples, *Phenomenological Dissertation*, Chapter 1, Section 2.

¹² *Ibid.*, Chapter 3, Section 1.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Chapter 2, Section 2.

Assumptions of the Study

According to 1 Corinthians 14:12, one should be “eager to possess spiritual gifts.”¹⁴ Paul wrote, “Strive to excel for the edification of the church.” Romans 12:6 suggests believers should “[prophecy] according to one’s faith.” The crux of this research will be 1 Corinthians 14:3: “But the one who prophesies speaks to people for edification, exhortation, and consolation.”

Delimitations

The sample will include individuals who believe that the gift of prophecy continues today. This delimitation will indicate the worship setting for the study because not all Christians practice or believe that the gift of prophecy, spoken or sung, continues today. The researcher will not visit congregations where the members do not believe the gift of prophecy, spoken or sung, continues today.

Limitations

A study limitation was the short time to visit congregations to collect data. Participants whose congregation resides at a remote location based in Michigan were interviewed via cell phone. The researcher was not able to read facial expressions. Some prophetic words may have more of an impact than others, depending on the situation. The researcher collected data from a remote congregation based in Michigan and congregations in Greensboro, North Carolina, where the members practiced spoken or sung prophecy. The researcher did not visit churches outside the selected regions due to travel time, finances, and work schedules; thus, the results do not apply to all Christian congregations where the members practiced spoken or sung prophecy.

¹⁴ New American Standard Bible (2020).

Qualifications of the Researcher

This researcher is a Ph.D. student in worship studies who has spent over 20 years preparing music for worship services, ranging from hymns and anthems to Gospel selections, contemporary praise, and worship music. Although this researcher experienced infant baptism in a Methodist congregation, he accepted Jesus Christ as his Redeemer in 2008 and was baptized by total immersion in 2009. Per the study's definition, the researcher serves as a musician in a church where the members identify as continuationists, congregants who practice the continuance of the gift of prophecy spoken and sung. The researcher is a godly, trustworthy leader who takes advantage of the opportunity to learn and commits to interpersonal collaboration. The researcher maintained the utmost respect when communicating with the participants and the dissertation committee.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

A goal of this study was to look beyond the argument between cessationists and continuationists and analyze whether individuals feel edified, exhorted, or consoled when they hear spoken or sung phrases containing prophetic words. Scholars have debated whether continuing or ceasing certain spiritual gifts could address issues such as social-emotional health, church sustainability, and theophany. This research centered on continuationists. This chapter presents cessationist and continuationist perspectives; the literature on the gift of prophecy and its properties; and the experiential effects on God’s people and prophecy in “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19). This literature review includes the research on cessationism; continuationism; and the properties of prophecy, specifically edification, exhortation, and consolation. The chapter also presents a historical perspective on prophecy, including prophecy through the lens of the antichrist. The review concludes with other strands of prophecy (e.g., word of wisdom and word of knowledge) that have impacted prophecy and prophetic practices today.

Cessationist Perspective

Various scholars have encouraged gift cessation. An established and well-cited author, John MacArthur is a credible and reliable source who supports the cessation of miraculous gifts. MacArthur defined *spiritual gifts* with the Greek word *pneumatikōn*, explaining, “*Pneuma* is ‘Spirit,’ and any time there is an *ikos* or *ika* or *ikōn* ending on a Greek word, it means ‘characterized by or controlled by.’”¹ Thus, MacArthur considered the gifts spiritual, not the

¹ John MacArthur, *Spiritual Gifts: 1 Corinthians 12*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 23.

individual practicing the gift.² “So, spiritual gifts are controlled by the Spirit, given by grace from God, used to serve the Body, and empowered by the Lord,” MacArthur continued.³ The author argued for the cessation of such gifts, discussing the outpouring of the Spirit in Joel 2:28. When a leader of the modern movement said, “‘You can’t deny this experience.’ [MacArthur] said, ‘When that experience occurs, do you always, without question, know it is of God? Be honest.’ ‘No.’ ‘Could it be Satan?’ ‘Yes.’ How can you tell the difference?’ He had no answer.”⁴ MacArthur argued for cessation, writing, “To acknowledge that point is to acknowledge the foundational premise on which cessationism is based. If apostleship ceased, it demonstrates that not everything that characterized the New Testament church still characterizes the church today. Moreover, it opens the door to the real possibility that some of the other gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12–14 have also ceased.”⁵

Schreiner defined cessationism as “the belief that certain spiritual gifts in the New Testament—namely the more miraculous gifts—have ceased.”⁶ Discussing how *spiritual gifts* occurred in the New Testament context but not today, the author highlighted two insufficient arguments for a proper cessationist’s powerful supportive stance: “Supernatural gifts will cease with the writing of the New Testament⁷ and Paul’s reference to “the perfect” in 1 Corinthians 13:8–10. Schreiner stated, “We have seen that some understand ‘the perfect’ to refer to spiritual

² MacArthur, *Spiritual Gifts*, 24.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 22.

⁵ John MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2013), Apple Books, last paragraph of Chapter 5.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Thomas Schreiner, *Spiritual Gifts: What They Are & Why They Matter* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2018), 148.

maturity, but it is scarcely evident that Christians are more mature post-canonically. It isn't clear, in other words, that we are more mature than Christians were in the first century.”⁸ The continuation of gifts until the perfect does not mean the gifts will cease but that something better will occur. In other words, the full manifestation of gifts occurs at the face-to-face encounter. Regarding the prophet Elijah, James said, “The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months” (James 5:13).

Continuationists and cessationists in the evangelical community recognize Grudem's work on New Testament prophecy. Bruce Compton, a professor of biblical languages and literature at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary in Allen Park, Michigan, argued that cessationists believe a new revelation from God is divine authority, with the proceeding words characterized as Scripture. However, one cannot add to the Scripture with a closed canon.⁹ According to Ephesians 2:20, “Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone.” Scripture is the basis of Compton's cessationist perspective. Compton considered Grudem's argument for apostolic and non-apostolic prophecy insufficient because if a prophecy is revelatory information from God, it is inerrant. Also, Compton considered the case for words coming from God as a message scripture.¹⁰ According to the professor, Grudem's argument for errancy in New Testament prophecy cannot be prophecy because, as written in 1 Corinthians 14:29, “Have two or three prophets speak, and have the others pass judgment.” Thus, if a prophet prophecies falsely, that prophet is a bad prophet. New

⁸ Schreiner, *Spiritual Gifts*, 149.

⁹ Bruce Compton, “The Continuation of New Testament Prophecy and a Closed Canon: Revisiting Wayne Grudem's Two Levels of NT Prophecy,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 22 (2017), 72.

¹⁰ Compton, “The Continuation,” 60–61.

Testament prophets have considered Agabus's prophecy in the context of errant prophecy. Compton analyzed the situation that causes Agabus's prophetic words to seem false. Like many, Compton argued that the Jews' actions resulted in Paul's deliverance to the Romans (Acts 21:30–33, 24:6, 26:21).¹¹

Continuationists' Perspective

Grudem viewed the time in which the perfect occurs as Jesus Christ's second coming for three reasons. First, Paul wrote, "But then, face to face." Grudem indicated that Carson reinterpreted the verse to read, "But when Christ returns, the imperfect will pass away,"¹² indicating that the second coming of Christ will involve fulfilling "that which we know and prophesy in part" (1 Corinthians 13:9). People are imperfect, as only one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is perfect. Second, Grudem pointed to Paul's thematic message of 1 Corinthians 13 and the essence of love: Love never ends.¹³ The message of God's unfailing love in 1 Corinthians 13:8 provides a significant, foundational understanding of spiritual gifts and gift manifestations. Third, Paul stated that the revealing of Jesus Christ further indicates that spiritual gifts will occur until Christ's second coming. Grudem cited Apostle Paul, who said, "You are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 7:7). Grudem codified the point by stating, "1 Corinthians 13:8–10, therefore, refers to the time of Christ's return and says that these spiritual gifts will last among believers until that time."¹⁴

¹¹ Compton, "The Continuation," 68.

¹² Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 70-72.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 72.

Grudem discussed the properties of prophecy, edification, exhortation, and consolation in 1 Corinthians 14:3, defining prophecy as “telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind.”¹⁵ This definition was based on the Old Testament prophets, who “were able to speak and write words that had absolute divine authority,”¹⁶ and his view of the authorities and prophets who recorded New Testament Scripture. The theologian wrote, “In the New Testament, there were also people who spoke and wrote God’s very words and had them recorded in Scripture, but we may be surprised to find that Jesus no longer calls them prophets but uses a new term, *apostles*.”¹⁷ Grudem highlighted the significance of using spiritual gifts according to 1 Peter 4:10, writing, “Many different Christians with diverse gifts can be the channels through which grace comes to us.”¹⁸ Reviewing the term “varied” in 1 Peter 4:10, Grudem discussed its Greek meaning of many facets or aspects, varied, and diverse.

This researcher used the term *prophecy* based on Grudem’s context and an example of the term through hermeneutics and philosophy. According to Grudem, *prophecy* and *prophet* did not indicate divine authority but were common terms “used by ordinary Christians who spoke not with absolute divine authority but simply to report something that God had laid on their hearts or brought to their minds.”¹⁹ Grudem argued that prophecy today does not equate to the Bible’s prophecies, where the prophetic word becomes Scripture.²⁰ However, revelation is

¹⁵ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1293.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1294.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1185.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1296.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1303.

something that God suddenly brings to the mind or heart.²¹ Grudem’s idea of prophecy developed from 1 Corinthians 14:30–31, in which Paul said, “But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, then the first one is to keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted.” Thus, “Prophecy occurs when a revelation from God is reported in the prophet’s own (merely human) words.”²²

Dutch teacher van Unnik emphasized the need for the practice of spiritual gifts.²³ The author did not misalign Paul’s teaching on the spiritual gifts as polemics like other contemporaries but believed that Paul encouraged the prophets and spiritual people to follow his pattern.²⁴ Van Unnik explored the text and Westernized thought while examining lexicographers’ and editors’ subjective interpretations of grammar and punctuation. Culturally, the teacher found discrepancies in the interpretation of Greek in the Biblical text. In suggesting that Paul wanted individuals to seek spiritual gifts earnestly, van Unnik inspired scholars to focus on the pericope of love.

John Jefferson Davis is a long-time professor of Gordon-Connell South Hamilton, the former president of the Evangelical Philosophical Society, and an expert in Christian ethics. Davis discussed continuationism and argued for the church members to find and practice spiritual gifts. About cessationists, he wrote,

It is quite possible to maintain—as they should be maintained—the vital Reformation principles of the primacy of biblical authority in the church (test all things by Scripture) and of the sufficiency of Scripture for all doctrines essential to salvation (2 Tim. 3:16), and yet at the same time to be more open to the reality of the supernatural and the

²¹ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1305.

²² *Ibid.*, 1306.

²³ Willem Cornelis van Unnik, “The Meaning of 1 Corinthians 12:31,” *Nocum Testamentum* 35 no. 2 (1993), 144.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 144.

freedom and sovereignty of God the Holy Spirit to manifest himself among his people as he wills (cf. 1 Cor 12:11 “the Spirit...gives...as he determines”).²⁵

Davis encouraged continuationists to reexamine certain practices according to Scripture:

In some popular expressions of charismatic worship, it seems that the “Spirit” is more a spirit of financial prosperity than a Spirit of holiness. The prophetic movement needs to remember that the Holy Spirit, not the prophet, is sovereign in how, when or if the power of God is manifested supernaturally. In many prophetic gatherings, the clear commands of Scripture to “test the spirits to see whether they are from God” (1 John 4:1) are routinely ignored or violated, as [is] the apostle’s admonition that in a meeting, when two or three prophets speak, “the others should weigh carefully [test, discern] what is said” (1 Cor. 14:29).²⁶

Sam Storms shared data points about validating spiritual gifts, although the data should not be the reason for spiritual gifts discourse. Storms writes, “I count no fewer than 155 biblical verses that explicitly mention, describe, regulate, or portray the exercise of spiritual gifts. In addition to this, there are no fewer than 65 verses that provide narrative illustrations of signs, wonders, and miracles in operation (mostly in the Book of Acts).”²⁷

Storms described a significant point about continuationism:

Yet there are a great many evangelical Christians who are happy to embrace the noun continuationist yet are admittedly functional cessationists. They concur that the New Testament nowhere teaches that certain gifts of a particular sort ceased with the passing of the apostolic age. But they neither pursue them nor pray for them nor practice them. Theologically speaking, they would agree with the conclusions in this book. However, when it comes to exercising the full range of spiritual gifts, equipping others to do so, and implementing these gifts in the day-to-day ministry of the local church, they look no different from those who believe such gifts died out centuries ago.²⁸

²⁵ John Jefferson Davis, *Worship and the Reality of God: An Evangelical Theology of Real Presence* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 198.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Sam Storms, *Understanding Spiritual Gifts: A Comprehensive Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Reflective, 2020), xv.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, xvii.

The distribution of spiritual gifts occurred at Pentecost. In Pentecostalism, this charismata release, and the Spirit were neither reversed nor withdrawn, contrasting cessationism stance.²⁹ In 1 Corinthians 12, the Apostle Paul taught the church of Corinth about spiritual gifts. Some scholars have suggested that certain spiritual gifts ceased when the apostles died or at the close of the canon; however, this view is not valid because Paul is not teaching about spiritual gifts solely to apostles in the letter to the Corinthians. Moreover, such letters circulated among all churches. Further investigation could provide a better understanding of the cessation of gifts with the apostles' death, although spiritual gifts did not begin with the apostles. Such gifts are manifestations of God's Spirit, which breathes life into existence, according to Genesis 2:7.

Dojcin Zivadinovic is a professor of theology and religion at Weimer College who focused on the prophetic interpretation in Revelation. In 2015, Zivadinovic addressed John Wesley's perspective of spiritual gifts. During the 18th century, some church leaders followed Calvin's cessationist ideas on spiritual gifts, which indicated that the only contact between man and God was the Holy Scripture.³⁰ Anglican church leaders did not adopt Calvinist theology on spiritual gifts. Many Anglicans considered some laws of nature unexplainable, enabling miraculous activity.³¹ Lutherans expressed an openness to spiritual gifts at the time. Later, to counter overstimulated charisma, most Lutherans held ideals closely related to Calvin. In the mid-18th century, more prophetic gifts practices occurred after a Pietism revival. This

²⁹ Kelebogile T. Resane, "Cessationism and Continuationism: Pentecostal Trinitarianism Balances the Tension," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 43 no. 1, 2022, a2669.

³⁰ Dojcin Zivadinovic, "Wesley and Charisma: An Analysis of John Wesley 's View of Spiritual Gifts." *Andrews University Seminary Student Journal*, Vol. 1: no. 2 (2015), 54.

³¹ Zivadinovic, "Wesley and Charisma," 55.

outpouring eventually resulted in the Moravian church, whose practices influenced the Methodist church.³²

Wesley emphasized the need to center spiritual gifts use around the Christian heart. According to Wesley, gifts remain viable because individuals still need to become Christians. The issue of spiritual gifts is not their use but people's faith and worldly ways.³³ The author also discussed the prophetic revelations and special visions of Ann Thorn, a ministry member. Wesley's experiences with such gifts increased his curiosity, so he began testing and asking Thorn questions while she had visions.

Blaylock examined and defined prophecy through the lens of Earle E. Ellis, David Hill, Thomas W. Gillespie, Terrence Callan, and Grudem. Blaylock considered the five scholars and prophetic activity in Paul's and John's literature and other places in the New Testament. In addition, Blaylock considered the limited and full authority of prophetic contour, with the latter holding more weight for Blaylock. Blaylock addressed the character of prophetic activity with current research and presented the following definition of prophecy: "(1) a miraculous act of intelligible communication, (2) rooted in spontaneous, divine revelation, and (3) empowered by the Holy Spirit, which (4) results in words that can be attributed to any and all members of the Godhead and which therefore (5) must be received by those who hear or read them as absolutely binding and true."³⁴

³² Zivadinovic, "Wesley and Charisma," 57.

³³ *Ibid.*, 58.

³⁴ Richard M. Blaylock, "Towards a Definition of New Testament Prophecy," *Themelios* 44 no. 1 (2019), 60.

Properties of Prophecy

John Huckle holds a doctorate in Education and a master's in theology and attends a Pentecostal church in Leeds, England. Huckle highlighted the current use of prophecy among gathered Christians and investigated how parish members accessed and used the gift of prophecy in their congregations. The research presented statistical results, some relevant to this study. Church leaders encouraged personal prophecies in 57.9% of fellowships for edification.³⁵ However, this statistic fell to 26.3% when the prophecies were used to direct people. Huckle found that 64.7% of non-ministers/pastors, compared to 52.4% of ministers/pastors, said their fellowship members encouraged personal edification prophecies.³⁶ Applicable to this study, Huckle mentioned edification after hearing prophecy; however, the researcher did not include exhortation and consolation.

Huckle stated, "Preaching, on the other hand, has traditionally been the most common mode of communicating the Word of God in various churches. However, prophecy could be more prevalent in some churches, relegating the role of preaching."³⁷ In other words, prophecy involves more than reading and teaching the Scripture. However, this perspective does not present the Scripture as insufficient. The role of prophecy in relegating preaching is continuing God's voice on Earth: Although the canon has closed, God's voice remains forever.

³⁵ John Huckle, "The Contemporary Use of the Gift of Prophecy in Gatherings of Christians in Comparison with their Use in the 20th Century," *The Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 29, no. 1 (2009), 78.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 73.

Edification

The Spiritual Transcendence Index is developed to measure the spirituality of individuals. Larry Seidnitz et. al writes, We conceptualize spiritual transcendence as a subjective experience of the sacred that affects one's self-perception, feelings, goals, and ability to transcend difficulties.”³⁸ Hanna Byrd is a professor at Liberty University and has received several awards for her work on the impact of worship lyrics on spiritual edification. Byrd writes, “Spiritual transcendence will be highest in the integrated lyric group, as compared to the theological and emotion-only lyric groups, after controlling for pretest STI scores and positive and negative emotion ratings.”³⁹ Byrd reviewed integrated lyric positions and suggested additional study on how musical lyrics impact “believers through spiritual edification.”⁴⁰ The researcher emphasized edification and reviewed Pete Ward’s integrated argument, finding “there must be a balance of objective and subjective in worship, identifying the need for emotional expression, but also the use of the mind.”⁴¹

Akintola wrote, “All corporate worship services should be designed to be dialogical and participatory in nature so that each member may contribute meaningfully, thus providing an opportunity for all to be edified.”⁴² The author reiterated the importance of unity in corporate worship, stating, “Christian worship should follow laid down patterns not only to encourage

³⁸ Larry Seidnitz, Alexis D. Abernethy, Paul R. Duberstein, James S. Evinger, Theresa H. Chang, and Bar’Bara L. Lewis. “Development of the Spiritual Transcendence Index.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41, no. 3 (2002): 441.

³⁹ Hanna J. Byrd, “The Impact of Lyric Choices on Spiritual Transcendence,” DWS diss., Liberty University, 2019, 6.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁴¹ Pete Ward, *Selling Worship: How What We Sing Has Changed the Church* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2005).

⁴² Samuel O. Akintola, “Church Edification in 1 Corinthians 14:26–33 as the Goal of Congregational Worship,” *Practical Theology* 10 (2017), 124.

meaningful participation of all members but also to experience the anticipated divine favor.”⁴³ Akintola focused on the intent of corporate worship and its implications for participating believers as a response to God’s divine presence. Adding to the discussion, Davis imparted the reality of God’s glory by stating, “A liturgical structure of worship—including, ideally, [the] use of the lectionary readings and following the great events of the liturgical year—has the advantage of providing a biblical framework and context in which the Bible’s own voice may be heard with integrity.”⁴⁴ In other words, worship is for every believer.

Psalms 133 indicated, “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!” Commonality and unity are good for everyone. Likewise, spiritual gifts, specifically prophecy, are means of edifying the church; in contrast, the gift of tongues results only in the edification of the person speaking. Emphasizing commonality, Huckle said, “The current use of these gifts in the Church is important because ‘the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good’ (1 Cor 12:7), especially with prophecy, which ‘edifies the church (1 Cor 14:4).’”⁴⁵ Davis suggested inclusiveness in “the encouragement of the visual arts and a critical and appropriate use of electronic media” to blend ancient and modern worship models. Encouraging “the discovery and use of each member’s spiritual gifts,”⁴⁶ Davis addressed the “reality and presence of the Holy Spirit,” discussing the Holy Spirit as “(1) present in each believer, (2) present among the believers as a church, and (3) present above the assembly as the Shekinah Glory of God.”⁴⁷

⁴³ Akintola, “Church Edification,” 125.

⁴⁴ Davis, *Worship and the Reality*, 189.

⁴⁵ Huckle, “The Contemporary Use,” 73.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁴⁷ Davis, *Worship and the Reality*, 195.

Grudem addressed vital points about the church's purpose and responsibility to present new and growing Christians to the Lord. The theologian developed an overarching theme for nurture from Colossians 1:28, stating, "Our goal as a church must be to present to God every Christian 'mature in Christ' (Col. 1:28)."⁴⁸ Grudem wrote, "And he told the church at Ephesus that God gave the church gifted persons to equip the saints for the work of ministry, *for building up the body of Christ*, until we all attain the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:12–13)."⁴⁹ Grudem's words indicate that gifts will occur until all believers attain the unity of the faith; the purpose of the gifts is to upbuild and equip.

David Robinson is a professor of marketplace theology who directs the Master of Arts in Leadership, Theology, and Society program at Regent University. Robinson's ecological ethics studies are significant to this study on individuals experiencing edification, exhortation, and consolation when hearing a word of prophecy spoken or in a song. The professor explored experiences of hearing a spoken or sung word of prophecy, highlighting the identity and relationship between the church and individuals worshiping as the helm of prophetic contour.⁵⁰ According to Robinson, the goal of prophecy is "the prophetic word as charism is spoken by the community to the outsider, then the prophetic word as scripture is spoken by the outsider back into the community."⁵¹ The exchange of prophecy is a way to challenge those who do and do not

⁴⁸ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1064.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ David Robinson, "By the Lips of Foreigners': Disclosing the Church in 1 Corinthians 14:20–25," *Ecclesiology* 14, no. 3 (2018), 307.

⁵¹ Robinson, "By the Lips," 13.

believe and point the non-believers to Jesus Christ for the remission of sin, repentance, and redemption.⁵²

Exhortation

In *The Gift of Prophecy*, Grudem equated exhortation to encouragement. He defined encouragement by stating, “(Greek *paraklēsis*) can mean ‘comfort’ (from sorrow—Luke 2:25; 6:24; 2 Cor. 1:37) or “encouragement (to those who are discouraged—Rom. 15:4, 5; 2 Cor. 7:4,13)” or “exhortation or appeal (that is, an urging of someone to do something—2 Cor. 8:17; 1 Thess. 2:4 Heb. 12:5; 13:22).”⁵³ Further, “the value of prophecy was that it could speak to the needs of people’s hearts in a spontaneous, direct way.”⁵⁴

MacArthur argued that the pastor’s office, or preaching is the essential role of some “prophets.” He writes, “The New Testament prophetic gift (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10) primarily has to do with declaration, not revelation. The New Testament prophetic gift speaks to men for edification and exhortation and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3).”⁵⁵ MacArthur also stated, “In the early church before the New Testament was complete, certain prophets were used by God on occasion to exhort the church with messages inspired as the prophet spoke,”⁵⁶ which “was necessary to instruct the churches in matters that were not yet covered by Scripture. This revelatory aspect of prophecy was unique to the apostolic era.”⁵⁷ Although MacArthur considered the prophetic gift

⁵² Robinson, “By the Lips,” 319.

⁵³ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 127.

⁵⁴ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1311.

⁵⁵ MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, Chapter 3, Section 16.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Section 17.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

unique to the apostolic era, the information about exhorting the church reflects this Scripture passage and is relevant to this study.

Consolation

Knight argued that the purpose of prophecy is “building up, the encouraging and the consolation of the people of God.”⁵⁸ The author continued, “It is noteworthy that Paul says nothing here about prophecy being about ‘predicting’ future outcomes or being about ‘words of knowledge’ for individuals.”⁵⁹ The purpose of 1 Corinthians 14:31 is that all may learn and receive encouragement. Prophesying with love is essential to prophecy or any other spiritual gift, as Grudem explained: “To be “nothing” when one prophesies without love may refer either to the benefits to others or to the benefits to oneself. If it refers to the benefits to others, Paul would be saying that a prophet without love has no good effects (similar to the noisy gong or clanging cymbal in [1 Corinthians] 13:1, which are meaningless and disruptive).”⁶⁰

Bieringer presented the theology of the comforter and the comforted, considering the Prophet Isaiah’s cry for comfort⁶¹ as a setup for Apostle Paul’s theology of comfort in 2 Corinthians. About comfort, Bieringer said, “This leads Paul to the brink of developing a theology of comfort in the concrete experience of being relieved at the occasion of the good news of the Corinthians’ reaction to his letter of tears.”⁶²

⁵⁸ Chris Knight, “Prophecy and Preaching: Does What Paul Calls ‘Prophecy’ in 1 Corinthians 14 Include What We Would Today Call ‘Preaching’? *The Expository Times* 130, no. 2 (2018), 75.

⁵⁹ Knight, “Prophecy and Preaching, 75.

⁶⁰ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 130.

⁶¹ See Isaiah 40:1–2.

⁶² Reimund Bieringer, “The Comforted Comforter: The Meaning of παρακαλέω or παράκλησις Terminology in 2 Corinthians,” *HTS Theologese Studies/Theological Studies* 67 no. 1 (2011), 5.

Improving Social-Emotional Health According to 1 Corinthians 14

This study takes a closer look at individuals' edification, exhortation, and consolation after hearing a word of prophecy. The three terms, in tandem, relate dispensation of emotions one feels after hearing a word of prophecy spoken or sung. The following study looks at the impact of Australian Christians who attend services and the impact on one's well-being.

Although the quality of friendships is not captured, the researchers considered other variables like marriage and the effect on satisfaction. Michael Kortt et al. examined the dynamic between religious service attendance and life satisfaction. One of the results shows a “significant positive association between frequency of attendance at religious services and life satisfaction.”⁶³ Earlier in the research, Kortt et. al predict that attending religious services is subjective to higher levels of well-being. It was also noted that individuals who attend religious services have social networks, support structures, and frequent opportunities for social interactions.

Vishkin et al. research social health's impact when individuals receive cognitive reappraisal. Cognitive reappraisal is like the collective outcomes of the purpose of prophecy, edification, exhortation, and consolation. One important factor that Vishkin et al. found is the connection between the presence of a trusted individual. They also write on the importance of a community of believers, saying, “Whereas emotional reactions are shaped by the events that individuals experience, people can also actively contribute to their emotional experiences, through the process of emotion regulation.”⁶⁴ Vishkin et al. define emotional regulation as “Emotion regulation is a form of self-regulation, which involves changing one's current

⁶³ Michael A. Kortt, Brian Dollery, and Bligh Grant. "Religion and Life Satisfaction Down Under." *Journal of Happiness Studies* 16, no. 2 (04, 2015): 281.

⁶⁴ Allon Vishkin, Pazit Ben-Nun Bloom, and Maya Tamir. "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life: Religiosity, Emotion Regulation and Well-being in a Jewish and Christian Sample." *Journal of Happiness Studies* 20, no. 2 (02, 2019): 427-47.

emotional state into a desired emotional state.”⁶⁵ Vishikin et al. give the example of positive reappraisal of human suffering. In this case, Jesus Christ, who gave His life for the redemption of sin is reappraised throughout scripture, as in Revelation 19:10; “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

In 1 Corinthians 14:15-19, Paul elaborates on the difference between speaking in tongues and prophesying. He continues that speaking in tongues will not help unbelievers visit the church for the first time nor edify the body of Christ, especially without an interpretation. Therefore, Paul urges that we worship with the spirit and with one’s mind. In other words, Paul encourages believers to worship with cognition while allowing one to be led by the Holy Spirit. Dr. Samaria J. Colbert is a licensed Christian Therapist who does not compromise therapeutic strategies over Christian practices. Instead, Colbert supports behavioral therapy through a biblical lens. In her book *Christian Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*, Colbert interacts with the reader with a willingness to help other licensed mental health counselors, psychologists, Christian counselors, and Christian leaders to improve the mental health and stability of individuals under the sphere of one’s influence. Colbert says “mindfulness” is a methodology used in counseling communities to help individuals guard one’s heart, mind, and spirit. Colbert begins this method through the lens of 1 Corinthians 14:15, praying with the spirit and with the mind. Colbert advises avoiding mindfulness methodologies that are not rooted in the Bible. Staying away from such methodologies will not allow unmerited spirits to enter one’s vessel. Colbert writes that meditating on the Word of God is the first step to mindfulness. She states, “Remember faith comes by hearing and hearing the word of God. The more word you put in; the word will regulate you, put you in a place of balance, and help you to know what to do when you don’t

⁶⁵ Vishkin, "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life," 429.

know.”⁶⁶ Colbert is confident that after prayer, peace will come. She advises to begin prayer with rejoicing. She suggests starting with rejoicing, moderation which means gentleness or balance, then pray, after that, the peace will come.

Effects of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs on God’s People

This section reveals a gap in the literature on the gift of prophecy and the effects of prophecy. The impact of God’s people and prophecy through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs is a growing field of study. Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs and their effects on God’s people are essential in the analysis and context of worshipping God through singing. Joel White discussed Paul’s Christocentric approach, stating, “He seeks to establish a Christological consensus on the basis of the SC [The Song of Christ] and to gently prod the believers in Colossae to align their thoughts and actions with the implicit demands of the Song of Christ itself.”⁶⁷ White referred to songs as “The Song of Christ” because of their source. White focused on not the inspiration of the songs but rather “the source of these songs, and whether they have their origin in the Spirit.”⁶⁸

The effects of God’s people are realized through the people’s response. Chappell expounded on the call to worship, including God’s call in Psalms 100, in writing,

A Call to Worship typically is a few lines of Scripture (or a combination of Scripture texts) expressed by a minister or worship leader at the beginning of a church service. In Contemporary practice, a Call to Worship may be extemporized by the worship leader, presented by a choir, read responsively by the congregation, sung by a worship team, or

⁶⁶ Samaria M. Colbert, *Christian Cognitive Behavioral Therapy* (Greensboro, NC: Samaria M. Colbert, 2018), 218.

⁶⁷ Joel White, “The Paraenetic Use of ‘Spiritual Songs’ (Col. 3,16B) in Colossians,” *Biblica* 101, no. 1 (2020), 80.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

included in an opening song, but the goal does not vary for those who understand the significance of these moments.⁶⁹

In other words, a call to worship is a formal title used in many churches to invite congregants to worship Jesus Christ together. God's call to worship is an invitation and a command. Chapell explained that God does not call one to worship among friends, to hear a lecture, or to attend a concert. Instead, the call to worship is an invitation into ancient worship with all the company of heaven.⁷⁰

God's call to worship requires a response. Chapell said, "God reveals himself in Psalm 100: "Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us" (v. 3). This revelation of God as Lord and Creator immediately leads the psalmist to exhortations for further exaltation: "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name" (v. 4).⁷¹

Worshippers should respond to God's call to worship. Chapell stated, "Thus, the text should call the people to shout, sing, praise, bow, bless, or in some other way express their worship of God."⁷² Worship is participatory. God compels individuals to worship, and worshippers respond by lifting praise with their voices (spoken and sung), instruments, and dances.

Renowned theologian Packer wrote,

Perhaps it would not be wholly misleading to call charismatic worship romantic, concentrating on the expression of responsive attitudes and feelings, whereas the older liturgical style is classical, exalting God and uplifting worshippers by its majestic excellence of form. This is certainly true in hymnology, where the repetitive, slow-moving, sometimes incoherent style of charismatic hymns and choruses contrasts

⁶⁹ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 159.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 161.

⁷² *Ibid.*

strikingly with the more theologically and poetically accomplished words and brisker tunes of earlier days.⁷³

Packer compared evangelical revival with charismatic renewal as an extension of the Kingdom of Christ, stating, “The time-honored term since the seventeenth century has been revival. But because of its associations with certain types of preaching mission, of emotional piety, and public hysteria, this word presents difficulties to some, and one can understand charismatics and others with other programs preferring to talk of *renewal* instead.”⁷⁴ Packer discussed eight means overlapping the charismatic “renewal of the whole church.”⁷⁵ The scholar listed the means of charismatic renewal for the church, given the effect and impact of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs on God’s people:

1. Rediscovery of the living God and his Christ and the supernatural dimensions of Christian living through Spirit baptism or the Spirit’s “release”
2. Returning to the Bible as the inspired Word of God, to nourish one’s soul upon it
3. Habits of private and public devotion designed to bring the whole person, body, and soul into total, expectant dependence on the Holy Spirit (glossolalia comes in here)
4. A leisurely, participatory style of public praise and prayer
5. A use of spiritual gifts for ministry in the body of Christ by every member of Christ
6. Exploration of the possibilities of ministry through a communal lifestyle
7. An active commitment by this and other means to reach out to the needy in evangelism and service
8. A high level of expectancy that the hand of God will again and again be shown in striking providences (“miracles”), prophetic messages to this or that person, visions, supernatural healings, and similar manifestations.⁷⁶

Packer supported the continuation of spiritual gifts and the tools necessary for affecting and impacting God’s people toward a unity of faith.

⁷³ James I. Packer, *Keep in Step with The Spirit: Finding Fullness in Our Walk with God*, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2005). 195.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 195–96.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Effects of Prophecy through Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs

White explored three types of songs used for worship in the early church:⁷⁷ “a Song of Christ in [Col.] 1:15–20, a Song of Salvation in 2:14–15, and a Song of Blessing in 3:15a, 16a.

White analyzed psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, the power of songs, and Paul’s understanding of such, stating,

If our thesis is correct, it demonstrates that Paul was very aware of the emotive and persuasive power of song. Though he was not, as far as we know, himself a poet or songwriter, he seems to have understood that the songs the believers were singing in early Christian worship had the potential to motivate them to press on to live holy lives and that their affirmations could be put to good use in correcting problematic developments that threatened the cohesion of the community and the primacy of Christ in their midst.⁷⁸

Beale, a New Testament professor at Reformed Theological Seminary, conveyed the effects of prophecy through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in Colossians 3:16 by focusing on the subjective and objective genitives in worshipers’ hearts. The command in Verse 15 (“Let the peace of Christ, to which you were indeed called in one body, rule in your hearts, and be thankful”) indicates that Christ spoke directly through Paul (subjective genitives), and the command in Verse 16a (“Let the word of Christ richly dwell in you;” objective genitives), are a plenary genitive.⁷⁹ Beale analyzed subjective and objective genitives but preferred the subjective because, like Bieringer, the source of the words and the Scripture, as in Paul’s case, is Christ’s spirit.⁸⁰ Beale emphasized the interrelatedness of Christ, the word, and believers, with the

⁷⁷ White, “The Paraenetic Use,” 84.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁷⁹ G. K. Beale “Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19: Old Testament Psalms as the Word of Christ and Inspired by the Spirit.” *Criswell Theological Review* 17, no. 2 (2020), 4.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

nucleus being the temple,⁸¹ stating, “Christ’s presence dwells in his earthly temple community through his word.”⁸² Worship should be Christ- and God-centered. Worshippers can sing, “teaching and admonishing one another in song through Christ’s word by way of psalm-based material.”⁸³

Historical Prophecy

Examining some examples of prophecy through the Old Testament lens reveals their properties of prophecy. Patterns in 1 Corinthians 14:3 (edification, exhortation, consolation) occur throughout the prophetic contour in Old and New Testament Scripture. This study addressed the gift of prophecy through Grudem’s lens of “a human being reporting in merely human words something that God has brought to mind.”⁸⁴ Larkin noted that the three Old Testament prophets, Isaiah of the pre-exilic era, Daniel of the exilic era, and Zechariah of the post-exilic era, pointed to the work of Christ at Calvary.⁸⁵ Isaiah is the author of the servant songs in Isaiah 42:1–4, 49:1–6, 50:4–9, and 52:13–53:12.

Christians believe Isaiah identified the servant in the fourth servant song with Jesus Christ, the Messiah.⁸⁶ McConville referenced several Scripture verses, indicating that, in Christian belief, the servant in Isaiah 52:13–53:12 is Jesus Christ.⁸⁷ In Matthew 8:17, a direct

⁸¹ Beale “Colossians 3:16,” 7.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁸⁴ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 225.

⁸⁵ Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth* (Glenside, PA: Fox Chase, 1918), 6–9.

⁸⁶ J. Gordon McConville, *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Prophets* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 26.

⁸⁷ McConville, *Exploring the Old Testament*, 26.

quote from Isaiah 53:4, Isaiah prophesied that the servant, the Messiah, would take people's illnesses and bear their diseases despite their lack of regard for Christ (Isaiah 53:3). McConville referenced John 12:37–40, where John quoted Isaiah 53:1 in its entirety: "Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Phillip guided the Ethiopian eunuch through Isaiah 53:7 in Acts 8:26–40. According to Acts 8:35, Phillip told the eunuch that Isaiah 53:7 was about Jesus Christ; he preached Jesus to and baptized the eunuch. Another reference was 1 Peter 2:18–25, which focused on Jesus's suffering to redeem humanity. The fourth servant song is a prophecy of Jesus's first coming and work on the cross. Next, Daniel provided an account of Jesus's work on Calvary.

Isaiah's servant song is a foreshadowing of Calvary and Jesus's work on the cross. American Paulist Priest and Biblical scholar Lawrence Boadt offered a centralistic view of the Scripture. Boadt wrote, "[The fourth servant song] is a remarkable passage because it suggests more clearly than anywhere else in the Old Testament that God accepts one individual's suffering to atone for the sins of others."⁸⁸ Moreover, Boadt discussed the pattern of edification, exhortation, and comfort:

Although Second Isaiah was thinking of the Babylonian exile and the return to Jerusalem and saw with deep reverence that God used Israel's sufferings as a witness and light to the world, the New Testament authors tapped their faith in Jesus to see the same God acting to redeem all nations by his suffering in fulfillment of what Israel had already been asked to do in part. What Israel nourishes in its community, Christ did for still others outside.⁸⁹

This researcher endorses Boadt's views on the fourth servant song and its foresight regarding the Messiah atoning for the world's sins. In the fourth servant song, the author subtly exhorted Israel

⁸⁸ Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1984), 428.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

after explaining that people will disregard, beat, and disengage with the Messiah, who will atone for their sins and transgressions.

When considering other references, one should heed the pattern of prophetic contour in this study. The main question is whether individuals feel edified, exhorted, or comforted when hearing a word of prophecy. In the servant song, the Prophet Isaiah follows the edification, exhortation, and comfort pattern. Isaiah reported that despite rampant sin and people's lack of regard for Christ (as Christians believe), the Messiah will sacrifice Himself for restoration, reconciliation, and redemption.

The Prophet Daniel prophesied about Jesus Christ at Calvary. Wenham et al. commented on the longevity of Daniel's desire for the people in Israel to stop sinning and restore the city and the temple.⁹⁰ Daniel 9:24–27 addresses the seventy-seven years ordained by God,⁹¹ indicating what should happen when people hear a word of prophecy. Daniel suggested that a prophetic word is a means of edifying, exhorting, and comforting individuals “to bring in everlasting righteousness.” In Romans 3:21–22, Paul reminds the Romans that the “righteousness of God has been revealed, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.” Paul said, “But it is the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe.” This prophetic word indicates that Jesus Christ's work on the cross provides comfort and encouragement for people to believe through faith. Verse 25 focuses on restoring and rebuilding Jerusalem until the Messiah, the Prince and the Anointed One, comes. The Anointed One is Jesus Christ. Wenham et al. indicated that Jesus's work on the cross “is hard to avoid the conclusion that the Anointed One is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, whose coming brings atonement and the end of guilt.” Verse 26

⁹⁰ Gordon Wenham et al., eds., *New Bible Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 759-60.

⁹¹ Wenham et al., *New Bible Commentary*, 759.

addressed the suffering of Christ, as shown in Mark 9:12 and Luke 24:26, when Christ explained that the prophets prophesied His suffering and His glory. Wenham et al. wrote, “Now that it was about to take place, his attention was directed to a more distant and loftier peak in the history of redemption. Even a new temple in a rebuilt city made by human hands could be destroyed; Daniel’s eyes were, therefore, to be fixed on a final temple, on one that would be beyond all desecration”⁹² (Matthew 21:1–5).

Church members, leaders, and scholars have referred to Zechariah 9:9 as the “Triumphal entry.” Theologian Vernon McGee, founder of the Open Door Church in Los Angeles, California, wrote, “The Lord Jesus came riding on the little animal of peace and came bringing peace at His first coming.”⁹³ However, McGee did not view the entry as triumphant; rather, Jesus is exiting.⁹⁴ McGee compared the entry to Caesar’s three-day parade upon his return from Gaul⁹⁵ and described Jesus’s entrance into Jerusalem as “meek and lowly.” In discussing Jesus’s heart and mission for humankind, Ortlund said, “Yes, we fail Christ as his disciples. But his advocacy on our behalf rises higher than our sins. His advocacy speaks louder than our failures. All is taken care of.”⁹⁶ The heart of Jesus Christ is the core of prophecy. Revelation 19:10 indicates, “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Therefore, Ortlund described Christ’s heart as “patient and moderation.” Christ’s Jerusalem entry (or exit) exemplifies His loving heart. McGee framed this exit by saying, “His entrance into Jerusalem was no one-way ticket but a

⁹² Wenham et al., *New Bible Commentary*, 760.

⁹³ J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible with Dr. J. Vernon McGee* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 955.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers*, Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020, 91.

round-trip ticket, and it was part of the program which led to His death, His resurrection, His ascension, His intercession, His coming at the Rapture, and finally His coming as King.”⁹⁷

McGee believed that Jesus did not make one entry but three, writing, “His final appearance before the nation was in His threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King.”⁹⁸ Christ’s manifestation of prophet, priest, and king is significant because, according to 1 Peter 1:10–11, the prophets could not distinguish between the first and second coming. However, the apostles recorded everything God told them to prophesy.

Prophetic contour may differ from revelation. Often, revelation is a term for prophecy, which is the unadulterated word of God (i.e., Scripture). Based on Larkin, this researcher suggests that prophetic contour and revelation differ. Writing about revelation and prophetic contour in *Dispensational Truth* in 1918, Larkin said,

As we have seen, “Bible Inspiration” is something totally different and unique from the inspiration of Poets, Writers, and Public Speakers. It is an inspiration in which the Exact Words of God Are Imparted to the Speaker or Writer by the Holy Spirit.

“Bible Revelation” is the disclosure to men of things that they otherwise could never know. Things hidden in the mind of God, such as His “Plan and Purpose in the Ages.” Bible Revelation ceased with the Book of Revelation. There has been no new revelation from God since then. When men today claim that they have received some new revelation, they must be classed as imposters.⁹⁹

This researcher agrees with Larkin’s words. Deuteronomy 4:2 and Revelation 22:18 indicate that one cannot add or take away from the Scripture. The continuation of gifts is not an infringement upon Deuteronomy 4:2 or Revelation 22:18. Grudem expounded on the phrase “a revelation is made” from 1 Corinthians 14:30–31.¹⁰⁰ The Greek word in the verse, *apokalypō*,

⁹⁷ McGee, *Thru the Bible*, 956.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Larkin, *Dispensational Truth*, 3–4.

¹⁰⁰ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1305.

broadly means *reveal*. Grudem argued that this broad sense of the term is not a revelation for adding scripture; instead, it aligns with the example of *reveal* in Philippians 3:15: “God will reveal.” Additionally, Grudem wrote, “But the New Testament elsewhere uses the terms reveal and revelation in this broader sense of communication from God that does not result in written scripture or words equal to the written Scripture in authority.”¹⁰¹

Schriener expressed a different view, writing, “The sole and final authority of Scripture is threatened if so-called prophets today give revelations which have the same authority as Scripture.”¹⁰² Individuals receive the gift of prophecy according to Romans 12:6, 1 Corinthians 12:10, 1 Corinthians 12:29, 1 Corinthians 14:1, and Ephesians 4:11 for edifying, exhorting, and comforting believers. In 1 Corinthians 14:3, Paul says, “But the one who prophesies speaks to people *for* edification, exhortation, and consolation.” Larkin believed that individuals who prophesy by telling people to leave their families or give the messenger their possessions are “imposters.” Such messages do not result in edification, exhortation, or comfort and do not align with the Scripture, with which a prophecy must align. Grudem stated, “Another indication of the value of prophecy was that it could speak to the needs of people’s hearts in a spontaneous, direct way.”¹⁰³ This researcher agrees with Grudem but emphasizes the need to correct hearts to align with the Scripture or supply abundance, which also aligns with Scripture (see 2 Timothy 2:25 and John 10:10). Prophetic contours of edification, exhortation, and consolation occur in prophetic writings about Calvary and Jesus Christ. However, there are more patterns in prophetic

¹⁰¹ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1305.

¹⁰² Schreiner, *Spiritual Gifts*, 160.

¹⁰³ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1311.

writings about events contrary to Christ's work on the cross: the antichrist through the lenses of Isaiah, Daniel, and Zechariah.

Prophetic Patterns through the Lens of The Antichrist

Grudem defined the antichrist as “the ‘man of lawlessness’ who will appear before the second coming of Christ and cause great suffering and persecution, only to be destroyed by Jesus. The term is also used to describe other figures who embody such an opposition to Christ and are precursors of the final antichrist.”¹⁰⁴

Isaiah 14:4–20 addresses the antichrist's rise and fall. Paul described the antichrist as the “man of lawlessness and the son of destruction” (2 Thessalonians 2:3). This prophetic message is a warning for people to remain in God so “that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us” (2 Thessalonians 2:2). Paul discussed the things to come about the antichrist but did not neglect current lawlessness, sin, and work of the son of destruction. There are similar messages. Theologian Thiselton stated, “In reception history, many church fathers embraced apocalyptic, except Tyconius, Jerome, and, generally, Augustine. It reached a peak in the run-up to around AD 1000. Many reformers and seventeenth-century writers firmly drew on it, and some ‘rediscovered’ it in the twentieth century.”¹⁰⁵ For example, reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin argued that the Pope was the antichrist.¹⁰⁶ Hilary of Poitiers was the first to name the pope the antichrist. Martin Luther, who initially wrote well of Pope Leo X, John Calvin, English Puritans, Increase and Cotton Mather,

¹⁰⁴ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1500.

¹⁰⁵ Anthony C. Thiselton, *1 & 2 Thessalonians: Through the Centuries* (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 212.

¹⁰⁶ Stephens Nichols, “Prophecy Makes Strange Bedfellows: On the History of Identifying the Antichrist,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44, no. 1 (2001), 79–83.

Joseph Mede, Jonathan Edwards, and J. Dwight named the Pope and others, such as Anglican bishops, the antichrist.¹⁰⁷

Collins identified the differences in apocalyptic writings, noting, “On a high level of abstraction, prophetic books, collections of oracles, and apocalypses function in similar ways; all seek to modify the cognitive and moral outlook of their audiences and to reinforce or change their behavior.”¹⁰⁸ There are prophetic patterns and themes among Old Testament prophets, including the antichrist. The goal of God’s message has been the same since Genesis 3:15: to reconcile His people to Him. This research presented patterns of prophecy according to 1 Corinthians 14:3: “But the one who prophesies speaks to people for edification, exhortation, and consolation.” Apostle Paul presented an alarming prophecy about the antichrist in 2 Thessalonians. However, Paul edified, exhorted, and consoled the Thessalonians throughout Chapters 2 and 3.

Paul first wrote about edification in 2 Thessalonians 2:8: “Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming.” In Verse 7, Paul noted that although the antichrist is a mystery, God did not leave the Thessalonian church clueless. The antichrist and individuals unsaved will perish at the breath of God “because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2:10). Paul exhorted believers in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, saying, “But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.” Paul also reminded believers of one of the callings in the gospel. An individual can sense the unity of

¹⁰⁷ Nichols, “Prophecy Makes Strange Bedfellows,” 79–83.

¹⁰⁸ Adela Yarbro Collins, “Apocalyptic Themes in Biblical Literature: A Journal of Bible and Theology,” *Interpretation* 53, no. 2 (1999), 117.

faith, a theme Paul used to edify the Thessalonians. Paul says, “So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.”

Yarbro Collins stated, “Like the author of Mark, these Christians probably saw the hand of God in the pending destruction of the Temple and city, which they viewed as retribution for the rejection of Jesus as Messiah.”¹⁰⁹ Still, Paul sought to comfort the church at the close of Chapter 2: “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word” (2 Thessalonians 2:16–17).

Word of Wisdom

The word of wisdom is a spiritual gift mentioned by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:8. The word of wisdom is closely related to the prophecy because it is a gift imparted by the Holy Spirit. Generally, wisdom is knowledge rightly applied. The relevancy of the word of wisdom and prophecy is vital when researching the gift of prophecy. According to Grudem, a prophecy is “a human being reporting in merely human words something that God has brought to mind.”¹¹⁰

Limited academic research has focused on the word of wisdom. However, the Bible has scriptural references and contexts for readers and hearers. Paul began his spiritual gifts teachings by writing, “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be unaware” (1 Corinthians 12:1). In other words, spiritual gifts remain relevant even after the foundational teaching of Jesus Christ. Paul advised the Corinthians to remain of one mind and

¹⁰⁹ Yarbro Collins, “Apocalyptic Themes,” 127.

¹¹⁰ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 225.

follow Jesus Christ so all people can come to salvation. Although one may boast with more wisdom, God gives all things. God's foolishness has more wisdom than earthly wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:25). God also knows the thoughts of the wise. Paul urged church members to work together, saying, "For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each person must be careful how he builds on it. For no one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:9–11).

Paul laid the foundation of Christ for the Corinthian and other churches but continued to teach believers about spiritual gifts.

There is no division in the body of Christ. According to 1 Corinthians 12:4, there are diverse gifts but the same spirit. This section focuses on the word of wisdom in 1 Corinthians 12:8: "For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit." Eastern culture and ideas suggest that the best understanding of this particular text is through experience. Paul said, "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of mankind, but on the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:2–5).

The focus of spiritual gifts is not the person operating with the spiritual gift. Instead, the focus is God's power at work in the heart of people receiving Christ. Paul indicated that believers do not speak the wisdom of this world. Paul said,

But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has

understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written: “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the human heart, All that God has prepared for those who love Him.” For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among people knows the thoughts of a person except the spirit of the person that is in him? So also the thoughts of God no one knows, except the Spirit of God. Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God. We also speak these things, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned. But the one who is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is discerned by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:7–16)

Solomon, son of David (a man after God’s heart), loved the Lord, as did his father. As a young king, Solomon prayed to God, saying, “So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, to discern between good and evil. For who is capable of judging this great people of Yours?” (1 Kings 3:9). God replied to Solomon, saying,

Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself a long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the lives of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice, behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you. (1 Kings 3:11–12)

God blessed Solomon with the other things he did not ask for, including wisdom.

Solomon demonstrated his wisdom in 1 Kings 3:16. In 1 Kings 3, two women in the sex trade come to King Solomon to claim a child. Both women birthed a child at the same time, but one overlaid her child, who died. This woman switched her dead child with the other woman’s living child. When the women brought the issue to King Solomon, he decreed to split the child into two halves. The woman with the living child could not bear to see her son die, so she said, “Pardon me, my Lord! Give her the living child, and by no means kill him!” (1 Kings 3:26). Solomon discerned to whom the baby boy belonged, siding with the mother who urged him not to kill the baby. In his discernment, Solomon exemplified James 3:17: “But the wisdom from

above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, free of hypocrisy.”

Word of Knowledge

The word of knowledge is independent but can occur interdependently with the gift of prophecy. Apprehending the context of the spiritual gift, the word of knowledge, as experienced and exemplified through a biblical worldview, requires the noesis of spiritual gifts, specifically the word of knowledge, functionality, and scope of spiritual practice. The Holy Spirit leads all believers, including continuationists and cessationists. Paul said, “Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, ‘Jesus is accursed;’ and no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:4). Explicitly, the Holy Spirit is the force who makes spiritual gifts essential, valid, and supernatural acts of God’s sovereignty. Levinson focused on the Greek interpretation of the word *pneuma*, its definitive use, the plurality of the term, and the Holy Spirit’s power of ability throughout 1 Corinthians.¹¹¹ Levinson noted that the Holy Spirit uses *dunamis* power to direct listeners to the cross. Levinson said,

Yet something more is at play in 1 Corinthians, where the Spirit inspires the content of Paul’s preaching: “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2). Paul is perfectly clear about the source of this message: he preaches what “God has revealed to us through the Spirit.” What has God revealed by the Spirit? The cross. The cross is what the rulers of this age cannot grasp. The cross is what lies at the heart of God. The cross is what the Spirit, which “comprehends what is truly God’s,” transforms into a powerful message. (2:8–11)¹¹²

Paul pointed individuals to Jesus Christ in 1 Corinthians 14:25, saying, “The secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.” Levinson and Grudem agreed that this passage indicates that God is a

¹¹¹ Jack Levinson, “The Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians,” *Interpretation* 72 no. 1 (2018), 29–32.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 31–32.

revealer. Levinson stated, “The Spirit reveals Christ crucified as well through study and learning. In 1 Cor 2:6–16, Paul portrayed the Spirit as a revealer (2:10–11) and teacher (2:12–13) who has intimate access to God’s deepest concerns.”¹¹³ The realization and teaching by the Holy Spirit can be knowledge. Paul told the Corinthian church, “And when I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come as someone superior in speaking ability or wisdom, as I proclaim to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:1–2). The objective is that individuals accept Jesus Christ and His redemption.

Grudem added to the discourse by quoting Moses in Deuteronomy 29:29: “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, so that we may follow the words of this Law.” The author wrote, “This verse reminds us that God has always taken the initiative in revealing things to us. He has decided what to reveal and what not to reveal.”¹¹⁴

The Holy Spirit gives every gift. During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told the people to ask in His name for the things they seek. Jesus is a giver of gifts to individuals who seek to use them in God’s kingdom. Jesus said, “So if you, despite being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” Further, Paul said, “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

Scriptural examples align with the word of knowledge in 1 Corinthians 12 and other verses throughout the Bible. In John 1:48, Jesus told Nathaniel, “Before Phillip called you, when

¹¹³ Levinson, “The Holy Spirit,” 32.

¹¹⁴ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 261.

you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” In John 4:15, Jesus had a word of knowledge for the woman at the well. Jesus revealed the woman’s life, revealing that He was the Messiah. Christ, with His word of knowledge, excited and urged the woman to share the testimony of Christ throughout the city. Jesus pointed the woman to the work of the cross, saying, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never be thirsty; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up to eternal life” (1 Corinthians 4:13–14).

In Acts 5, Peter shared a word of knowledge with Ananias and Sapphira regarding a parcel of land the couple sold. The couple did not give all the proceeds to the church but kept part of the earnings and lied to the Apostle Peter. As a result, they took their last breaths; the husband and then the wife died after testing the Spirit of the Lord. “At the hands of the apostles, many signs and wonders were taking place among the people” (Acts 5:12a). More importantly, “All the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number.”

Prophetic Substance

Exploring the essence of prophetic utterance as edification, exhortation, and consolation while ascertaining the content of prophecy is part of the hermeneutical core of prophecy, which is love (1 Corinthians 13). Edifying, encouraging, upbuilding, exhorting, appealing, urging, comforting, and consulting are terms used interchangeably to edify the church (1 Corinthians 14:4). Investigating the function of prophecy through edification, exhortation, and consolation could be a way to enlighten palpable speech activity. Grudem stated, “Every function of prophecy is also a function of several other activities, such as teaching, preaching, singing

‘psalms and hymns and spiritual songs’ and engaging in ordinary Christian conversation.”¹¹⁵

Prophecy today continues to be a means of edifying, exhorting, and consoling the church. However, does prophecy also occur for hearers to prosper? A few Scripture verses support the idea of prosperity in the sense of being with God, separate from destruction and defeat. Jesus, in His discourse of the Good Shepherd, said, “I come so that they would have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10b). It is not enough to have life; Jesus emphasized an abundance of life. However, the focus is salvation, as indicated in John 10:9. Additionally, an opportunity for a relationship with Jesus Christ in each verse precedes a prosperous gesture. In the Book of Revelation, John revealed that the promises to the seven churches are to “the tree of life” (Revelation 2:7), “the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10), “some hidden manna,” and “a white stone” (Revelation 2:17). The promises suggest a better future for individuals who remain faithful. Grudem wrote, “The book frequently takes the opportunity to comfort believers who are undergoing trouble or persecution by proclaiming the sovereign rule of God in history, the certainty of his final triumph over evil, and the preservation and ultimate triumph of God’s people with him.”¹¹⁶

To understand spiritual gifts, specifically prophecy, one must consider the totality of the Scripture, its sufficiency, and the foundation of prophecy in Jesus Christ. Revelation 19:9–10 supports the foundation of Bible prophecy. Wherein, testifying Jesus Christ is the foundation of what prophecy contends. Prophecy involves the Spirit of Jesus “telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind”¹¹⁷ spoken in a language individuals can understand for

¹¹⁵ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 127.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹¹⁷ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1293.

edification, exhortation, and consolation. The objective of prophecy is to build up of the church. Various speech activities could have the same result and be prophecies, such as prayer and praise. Grudem wrote, “In that case, if prayer or praise was prompted by revelation, and if it served also to edify the hearers, there would seem to be no reason why it could not have been called ‘prophecy’—perhaps ‘prophetic praise’ or ‘prophetic prayer.’” The essential elements would be that it be based on a revelation, be spoken publicly, and bring an edifying result.¹¹⁸ In other words, individuals must speak prophetic words. This researcher added sung prophecies based on the spirit of the testimony of Jesus Christ and the objective of edifying the church. A spoken or sung word is a way of “telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind”¹¹⁹ and thus could be a prophecy. For example, Zechariah, filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied through song about his son John, prophet of the Most High (Luke 1:67–79). Believers should “be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:18b–19). The *Interlinear Bible: Hebrew, Greek, and English* presented Verse 19b as “speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” The words *one to another* in the *New American Standard Bible* and *yourself* in the *Interlinear Bible* have the same Strong’s concordance number, 1438, meaning *oneself and others*. Grudem defined the Greek verb in verse 18b, “but be filled with the Spirit,” as “be continually filled.” The act of speaking/singing to oneself and others contributes to the continuous filling of the Holy Spirit. Grudem wrote, “He uses a present tense imperative verb that could more explicitly be translated, ‘Be continually being filled with the Holy Spirit,’ thus implying that this is something that should repeatedly be

¹¹⁸ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 137.

¹¹⁹ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1293.

happening to Christians.”¹²⁰ Grudem continued that Christ empowers one to do the service of ministry, affecting “increased power for ministry and increased effectiveness and perhaps diversity in the use of spiritual gifts.”¹²¹ Colossians 3:16 focused on the singing of songs to the Lord: “Let the word of Christ richly dwell in you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

Prophecies spoken and sung, prophetic prayer, and prophetic praise still occur in many churches worldwide. Continuationists do not claim to speak the very words of God and add to Scripture due to a prophetic utterance. Although the Holy Spirit inspires the prophetic words, the words are not prophecies like the Old Testament and the New Testament, which comprise the canon of Scripture in the Holy Bible. Prophecy today is a means of edifying, building up, and improving individuals through instruction. Prophecy also involves exhorting, advising, encouraging, and urging hearers. In addition, prophecy may include consoling, comforting, and freeing individuals from pain, trouble, or anxiety.

Summary

Cessationists and continuationists have debated the continuation of certain spiritual gifts. Demonstration gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:5–10 include the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, healing, miracles, prophecy, and tongues. These groups have also argued about the ministerial offices and demonstrative gifts in Ephesians 4:11. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul described the properties of prophecy as edification, exhortation, and consolation. Demonstrations of

¹²⁰ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 962.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

prophecy today reflect the prophecy in the Old and New Testaments. However, modern prophecy and obedience to God's written and spoken words (Matthew 4:4) encourage people to become disciples of Jesus Christ and glorify God through edifying, exhorting, and consoling one another (1 Corinthians 14:22-33). According to Ephesians 5:18b–21, individuals filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ speak "to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, making melody with your hearts to the Lord." Grudem used Verse 19 to exemplify that the Holy Spirit can empower any person at any time because of the continual filling of the Holy Spirit.¹²²

This chapter covered three Old Testament Prophets from three eras: Isaiah of the pre-exilic era, Daniel of the exilic era, and Zechariah of the post-exilic era. Congruently, these prophets testified for the spirit of Jesus Christ and the redemption of Israel to God. God demonstrates sovereign power with authority to show His people the way to His righteousness. Further, Isaiah's servant songs included prophecies regarding Christ's crucifixion for the redemption of sin.

The word of knowledge and the word of wisdom are agents of prophecy. The word of wisdom, coupled with the word of knowledge, has the same behavior as the gift of prophecy. Individuals with the gift of knowledge divinely know something otherwise unknown. In many cases, the word of knowledge precedes a word of prophecy and a word of wisdom. Chapter Three presents the methodology used to explore the meaning of the participants' experience of edification, exhortation, or consolation when hearing a word of prophecy spoken or sung.

¹²² See Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 963. Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit on multiple occasions; Acts 2:4, Acts 4:8,31.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological qualitative study was to explore the experience of people who have experienced spoken or sung prophecy or believe that the gift of prophecy in music is a means of edifying, exhorting, and comforting in music during Christian worship services or music recordings. This chapter presents the methodology, study rationale, and researcher's role. Chapter Three includes the instrumentation, participants, biases, work relationships, and participant connections.

Rationale and Design

In this study, a hermeneutical phenomenological qualitative approach was suitable for exploring lived experiences of biblical interpretation, which continuationists believe is the continuation of spiritual gifts, specifically prophecy. This research included a preconception of prophecy based on the findings and teachings of Grudem. Heidegger understood interpretation as a spiral of constant revision,¹ which became the hermeneutic circle philosophy framework.² Peoples summarized the framework: "As I am interpreting something, I have a pre-understanding of the phenomenon, and as I get new information, there is a revision of that understanding."

The researcher considered bracketing or epoché of presuppositions about the experience of individuals responding to prophetic utterance. However, the researcher considered it suitable for Dasein. Heidegger's phenomenological framework will be the means of grounding this

¹ Katarzyna Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation: A Step-by-Step Guide*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2021), 33.

² Heidegger's hermeneutic philosophy is framed around the term Dasein. Meaning it is impossible to separate or what Husserl refers to as bracketing oneself from the world. One's biases and judgements are made known to the reader. Peoples, *How to Write*, 30–34.

research in lived experience and researcher foresight. As a continuationist, the researcher will Dasein in this study to recognize when prophetic worship moments enabled individuals to receive edification, encouragement, or comfort from words of prophecy.

Juxtaposing Husserl's phenomenological framework with Heidegger's, which the researcher wrestled with for several weeks, places the role of the researcher in a dissimilar disposition. The researcher considered Husserl's phenomenological framework and ideology of intentionality, which involves bracketing oneself in thinking (noesis) and in thought (noema) regarding the phenomenon's essence. However, the researcher considers the more present Dasein state of thinking more appropriate. The noematic process of intentionality will be the function of grounding noesis impetuses and cooperation with the biblical text for this study, 1 Corinthians 14:1, and noema.³ Husserl defined intentionality as "the of being a consciousness of something."⁴ Peoples described intentionality as "our awareness of something."⁵ In this study, the researcher will remain conscious and aware of the contextual matter in 1 Corinthians 14. However, the contextual matter will lack total meaning without a relationship with individual experience. Heidegger said, "To clarify the structure of truth, it is not enough simply to presuppose this relational totality, but we must go back and inquire into the context of Being which provides the support for this totality as such."⁶

Objectively, the researcher will explore the experience of people who have experienced spoken or sung and believe that the gift of prophecy is a means of edifying, exhorting, and

³ Husserl and Gibson, *Ideas*. 120

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Peoples, *How to Write*, 30.

⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: NY: Harper & Row, 1962), 259.

comforting, specifically in music during Christian worship services or music recordings. The hermeneutical phenomenological research method will be appropriate for this study.

Observations, interviews, surveys, and secondary research will be the means of exploring the collected data and the phenomenon.

The sampling method for selecting subjects will occur based on the researcher's location. This self-funded research will have a strict budget, and the researcher will have to put other duties and responsibilities on hold during the research. All selected subjects will identify as continuationists and practice spiritual gifts, specifically prophecy, for edification, exhortation, and comfort. All participants will attend churches, including Fresh Start Ministries Incorporated, where the researcher is a musician; Next Level Ministries; Revelation Life Empowerment Center; and Revival Culture Now. Participants will undergo observation for the effects of edification, exhortation, or comfort. The researcher will observe the subjects after determining a word of prophecy as sung or spoken during a worship service. After observing the worship service, the researcher will select individuals for interviews with the approval of the church leader for further data collection. The criteria for the samples listed as churches are above.

The individual sample subjects met the criteria of being recognized continuationists who had received or heard the gift of prophecy in services or live recordings played by the researcher. Selected participants will answer two questions: Do you believe you received or heard the gift of prophecy today? In the context of edification, exhortation, and comfort, how did the prophecy affect you?

Phenomenological researchers describe individuals' shared meaning of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon."⁷ Van Manen, an expert in phenomenology and

⁷ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 75.

research of the human experience, has a “soft, soulful, subtle, and sensitive”⁸ approach to the lived experience yet diligently and intently discloses hermeneutic phenomenology to the academy. Van Manen stated, “To do hermeneutic phenomenology is to attempt to accomplish the impossible: to construct a full interpretive description of some aspect of the lifeworld, and yet to remain aware that lived life is always more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal.”⁹

Van Manen provided insight into the hermeneutical phenomenological research approach, discussing methodology, methods, research methods, procedures, and techniques to describe the essence of a lived experience. According to van Manen, methodological means “the pursuit of knowledge.”¹⁰ Due to the absence of procedures and techniques, phenomenologists can create specific procedures and techniques, manifesting the essence of a study and finding its true meaning.¹¹ Phenomenology is “more likely as a question that requires clarification of its lived meaning.”¹² Thus, the purpose of this phenomenological research was not to solve, fix, or prove anything. This study included the validating circle of inquiry, where “phenomenological description is collected by lived experience, and recollects lived experience is validated by lived experience, and it validates lived experience.”¹³ Researchers use the phenomenological methodology to apply scholarship to unveil lived experiences.¹⁴ Phenomenologists do not define

⁸ Max van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 18.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 28.

¹¹ Ibid., 28–30.

¹² Ibid., 24.

¹³ Ibid., 27.

¹⁴ Ibid.

experiences in categories, lists, hard data, or astute analysis, instead selecting or inventing appropriate research methods, techniques, and procedures for a particular problem or question.¹⁵ Methodology (*logos*; Λόγος) is the philosophical framework or the pursuit of knowledge,¹⁶ and the method is the “way” or mode of inquiry.¹⁷ Heidegger described λόγος as discourse, which enables something to be seen, and the thing seen “makes manifest what it is talking about, and thus makes this accessible to the other party.”¹⁸ Heidegger stated, “When fully concrete, discoursing (letting something be seen) has the character of speaking [Sprechens]—vocal proclamation in words.”¹⁹ According to Heidegger, phenomenology “informs us of the ‘how’ with which what is to be treated in this science gets exhibited and handled.”²⁰ The ὁδός²¹ for this framework included Creswell and Poth’s four major information types: “interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual materials.”²²

Protection of Human Subjects

All participants in this study were protected under the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) and Internal Review Board (IRB) approval.²³ The IRB’s mission is to protect the rights and welfare of all human subjects in research. Per FDA regulations, this researcher completed

¹⁵ van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, 30.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 56.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 59.

²¹ A way, road. Usage: a way, road, journey, path.

²² Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 160.

²³ John W. Creswell and David J. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2018), 91.

the IRB process for conducting research. John and David Creswell wrote, “As a researcher, you will need to file an application with the IRB that contains procedures and information about participants so that the committee can review the extent to which you place participants at risk in your study.”²⁴ The IRB indicated that this research did not reasonably present the subjects with a risk of criminal or civil liability or damage to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation. The participants were adults (18 and older) capable of providing research consent and voluntarily took part in this study. Participants received preliminary information about the research to ensure they understood its purpose. This study included survey and interview procedures regarding visual and audio recordings and public behavior observations. The results and data remain confidential, with the participants receiving pseudonyms for their testimonies and experiences.

Ethics

Researchers must address ethical issues that could occur at any stage of the research process. This researcher will protect the human subjects by completing the IRB process and receiving approval (see the Appendix). The footnotes and bibliography support the tireless work and research foundation for this study. Data discovery may have ethical issues if a researcher is unclear with participants or abuses data sites, such as offices. Researchers can avoid ethical issues by using the interview questions as worded in the IRB submission. Creswell and Creswell developed a table with ethical issues and solutions for researchers.²⁵ For guidance, this researcher presents some of the issues and solutions with respect to the academy, research, and

²⁴ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 91.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 89–90.

human science. Researchers should avoid using sites under their complete control or supervision. During interviews, Creswell and Creswell advised researchers to “avoid leading questions. Withhold sharing personal impressions. Avoid disclosing sensitive information. Involve participants as collaborators.”²⁶ During the data analysis process, a researcher could side with the participants. Researchers should report positive and negative findings, include different perspectives, and use pseudonyms to protect all human subjects.

Researcher Role

This researcher sought to identify whether people experience edification, exhortation, and comfort after receiving or hearing words of prophecy and better understand what happens to participants’ emotional intelligence. The researcher was responsible for conducting, transcribing, coding, and interpreting interviews. The goal was to develop trust with participants so they could be the best versions of themselves. There was time for reflection while transcribing, codifying, and interpreting the interviews. In phenomenological studies, reflexivity is essential to capture the most complete lived experiences of the participants from conversational interviews. Essentially, the researcher remained himself with Dasein as the framework of ideology and competence. Heidegger stated, “In that with which we concern ourselves environmentally, the Others are encountered as what they are; they are what they do [sie sind das, was sie betreiben].”²⁷ Thus, this researcher conducted interviews and analyzed surveys so the participants’ actions could emerge through dialect and responses. The researcher reflected, asked

²⁶ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 89–90.

²⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 163.

questions, collected data, analyzed data, reported the results, and presented ideas for future studies.

Participants

Study participants did not have an affiliation with a specific denomination. Participants could have ranged from pastors, teachers, deacons, missionaries, and lay members to musicians.

The sample population met the following criteria:

- 18 years or older
- Believe the gift of prophecy continues today
- Have received a word of prophecy during the observed worship gathering or recording

The participants were adults capable of providing research consent. The study did not include cessationists because they do not believe a person can receive a word of prophecy.

Fifteen participants were sufficient to achieve saturation. The recruitment document and consent form will include the participant criteria. Contact with participants occurred via personal email, USPS mail, and telephone. The researcher obtained permission to post recruitment flyers in public areas, such as community bulletin boards, and private locations, including universities and businesses.

Instrumentation

This study included observations, interviews, follow-up interviews, audio recordings, and journaling. The researcher asked the preliminary interview questions in the following order:

1. Do you believe the gift of prophecy continues today? Please explain.

2. Do you agree with the following statement on what a prophetic word is based on?
 “Telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind.”²⁸
3. Have you ever given a prophetic word?
4. Do you feel that people are built up, encouraged, or comforted when you give a prophetic word?
5. In this question, comfort means “freedom from pain, trouble, or anxiety.” In your experience, have you felt comforted when hearing a prophetic word?
6. In this question, exhorted means to advise, encourage, or urge. In your experience, do you feel exhorted when hearing a prophetic word?
7. In this question, edified means to build up or improve through instruction. In your experience, have you felt edified when hearing a prophetic word?
8. What evidence do you have of feeling built up, encouraged, or comforted? What is your prophetic engagement testimony?
9. What do you plan to do, or what did you do after hearing your prophetic word?
10. Did you have to perform a deed (e.g., praise God with a shout, a dance, or give monetarily) for your prophecy to manifest?

Collection Methods

The researcher’s goal was “to understand the world in which [the participants] live and work.”²⁹ Therefore, social constructivism was a useful approach for shaping a formal document that reflects the participants’ lived experiences to answer the following research questions:

²⁸ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1293.

²⁹ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 34.

RQ1: In a continuationist context, what is the experience among God’s people of hearing the gift of prophecy spoken or sung in Christian worship services or Christian musical recordings?

RQ2: Do individuals feel edified, exhorted, or comforted after hearing a word of prophecy?

RQ3: What are the contributing properties of the gift of prophecy according to Grudem’s working definition in this research?

RQ4: What are the descriptive elements of manifestation?

RQ5: What is the result of the actions taken by individuals after listening to spoken or sung prophecy in music in Christian worship services or Christian music recordings?

Data collection included worship services, listening examples, and interview questions. The discovery (preferred to the collection) of data is essential in any study. Scholars have described the coding process as indispensable in hermeneutic phenomenological studies. Saldaña underscored the significance of coding as the practice of discovery, a continual probe for meaning beyond the surface of intentionality and the obvious.³⁰ Saldaña stated, “I advocate that qualitative codes are essence-capturing and essential elements of the research story that, when clustered together according to similarity and regularity (i.e., a pattern), actively facilitate the development of categories and thus the analysis of their connections.”³¹

³⁰ “Rarely is the first pass or first cycle of coding data perfectly attempted. The second cycle (and possibly the third and fourth, etc.) of recoding further manages, filters, highlights, and focuses the salient features of the qualitative data record for generating categories, themes, and concepts, grasping meaning, and/or building theory.” Jonny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, 2021), 12.

³¹ Saldaña, *Coding Manual*, 13.

Procedures

The study commenced with IRB approval. Participant selection occurred at several sites familiar to the researcher, including Fresh Start Ministries; Revelation Life Empowerment Center; Revival Now Global, Greensboro, North Carolina; and Next Level Ministries of Charlotte, North Carolina. Each site underwent observation in person or through virtual worship, with the researcher taking notes during and after worship. All notes remain on a locked device accessible only to the researcher. Participant recruitment for conversational interviews occurred after observing the worship services. The researcher conducted the interviews privately so no one could interrupt and compromise the participants' protection.

Coding the participants' lived experiences from the interviews included reflection periods between interviews and journaling. Participant experiences were essential in this research. The researcher will obtain and explore the information to extract each participant's lived experience with diligence and Heidegger's hermeneutic circle.

Interviews

Interviews contributed to the data discovery as participants shared their lived experiences of the phenomenon. The researcher conducted this study with due diligence and sincerity regarding the essence of true meaning with Creswell and Proth's philosophical assumptions and interpretive framework in the hermeneutical context between the epistemological, philosophical assumption juxtaposed with social constructivism.³² Using Dasein, the researcher will report the knowledge and research findings as evidence, not personal beliefs. Heidegger stated, "That which can be established, and which seeks to be established, is not what gets called in and to

³² Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 34–35.

each particular Dasein from an existential standpoint but is rather what belongs to the existential condition for the possibility of its factual-existential potentiality-for-Being.”³³

The researcher conducted van Manen’s “conversational interview, writing of descriptions, formulation of questions, conversational interview, rewriting of descriptions, and reformulation of descriptions.”³⁴ The researcher continuously examined himself even to the essence of the experience. Each interview question focused on a single event or moment. According to van Manen, “It is helpful to keep the question focused on a single and concrete moment that the experience was lived through or took place.”³⁵ Instead of aligning with quality phenomenological interview questions, the interview questions followed van Manen’s pattern.³⁶ Can you recall the most recent prophecy you received? Was it your pastor, a prophet of your church, a friend, or someone you did not know? Do you have a routine for receiving prophecies (e.g., discerning the person’s spirit, recording with a device, writing down what they said)? How did the experience of receiving a prophecy make you feel? What were your thoughts? Does anyone else know what your prophecy is? Did you tell them, or did they hear it as well? Did you do something different after the prophecy was given? Has the prophecy manifested? Have you ever had a prophecy that did not manifest?³⁷

³³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 325.

³⁴ Doris Fuster Guillen, “Qualitative Research: Hermeneutical Phenomenological Method,” *Propósitos y Representaciones* 7, no. 1 (2019): 225.

³⁵ Max van Manen, *Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2016), 299.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 299.

³⁷ To show or demonstrate.

Data Analysis Methods

Heidegger's approach to the phenomenon of *Dasein's being* is ontologically temporal between here and now. Data analysis in hermeneutical phenomenological studies is explication,³⁸ which Hycner defined as "an investigation of the constituents of a phenomenon while always keeping the context of the whole." Data analysis followed a six-step process, beginning with reading, reviewing, and redacting interview transcripts. The researcher removed verbal pauses (e.g., um, uh, well, you know) to develop a meaningful and succinct storyline. A complete reading of the transcript was a way to verify a clear, correct, engaging, direct, and readable story for each participant. Step 2 was creating preliminary meaning units, with final meaning units developed in Step 3. According to Peoples, a meaning unit is allocating a piece of data that reveals a feature or trait of the phenomenon being investigated."³⁹ Steps 2 and 3 included developing themes. In phenomenological research, developed themes are most relevant to the researcher's experience based on the participants' accounts. Researchers have referred to this method as coding. Saldaña stated, "Coding is a heuristic (from the Greek, *heuriskein*, meaning 'to discover'), an exploratory problem-solving technique without specific formulas or algorithms to follow."⁴⁰ The author continued, "I advocate that qualitative codes are essence-capturing and essential elements of the research story that, when clustered together according to similarity and regularity (i.e., a pattern), actively facilitate the development of categories and thus analysis of their connections."⁴¹ Coding was continuous and spread across the course of the study.

³⁸ Peoples, *How to Write*, 57.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁴⁰ Saldaña, *Coding Manual*, 12.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

Precoding included illuminating the evidence deemed essential to the researcher. This process involved sitting with the evidence, reviewing field notes, linking data, and recalling moments enhanced by the subjects/participants. The first coding cycle was elemental coding, as the researcher sought the main idea of themes developed from the research questions. The second cycle of coding had an exploratory methodology. The researcher's goal was to curate the participants' lived experiences from the interviews, field notes, and analytic summaries.

A portion of the data analysis matures in narratives developing in the code. Peoples described two types of narratives: situated and general. Situated narratives are a "reiterat[ion] [of] each participant's story."⁴² In situated narratives, the researcher pre-coded the meaning of the narratives. General narratives from the participants' interviews were sorted into three categories: most (saturated), many (50%), and some (unsaturated).⁴³ Step 6 involved uniting the participant themes. The researcher pulled away from the participant narratives to construct themes that linked all the participants'⁴⁴ narratives into a general description.

Conclusion

Hermeneutical phenomenology was the design used to explore the lived experience of individuals who have received a prophecy through word or song with a biblical interpretation. This design enabled the researcher to discern whether the participants felt edified, exhorted, or comforted after hearing a prophecy. Chapter Three presented the research questions and the study design. The data collection process will begin with recruiting and interviewing

⁴² Peoples, *How to Write*, 61.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

participants. The chapter also presented the role of the researcher, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis.

Chapter Four: Findings

Chapter Four presents the research findings in the context of a hermeneutical phenomenological philosophy. The researcher discusses the process of data collection and analysis and explains narratives developed during the coding process. Details on the coding cycle include sources, descriptions, applications, examples, analysis, and notes.¹ Finally, there is a comparison between this study's results and the literature.

Participant Demographics

Table 1 shows the sample's demographics. Participant ages ranged from 26–61 years. Of the fifteen participants, twelve were male and three were female.² The participants' roles in their church reflect the depth of the response expected by the researcher.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Participant	Age	Gender	Pastoral role in the Church
Participant 1	30	Male	No
Participant 2	38	Female	Yes
Participant 3	38	Male	Yes
Participant 4	33	Male	No
Participant 5	48	Female	No

¹ Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researcher*, 87.

² The researcher was not aware of the number of male and female participants as this was not of any significance. However, the researcher acknowledges the male participants outnumber the female participants three to one. This imbalance ratio is due in part to the researcher not producing any recruiting information. Instead, all participants were friends, constituents, or word-of-mouth referrals. The male and female ratio has no bearing of testimony to the research questions and should not be considered as a significant analytical finding, data point, or reflective material, wherein data is considered for the purposes of a conclusion of any type.

Participant	Age	Gender	Pastoral role in the Church
Participant 6	49	Male	Yes
Participant 7	61	Male	Yes
Participant 8	55	Male	Yes
Participant 9	31	Male	Yes
Participant 10	24	Male	Yes
Participant 11	33	Male	No
Participant 12	31	Male	Yes
Participant 13	47	Male	No
Participant 14	44	Female	No
Participant 15	26	Male	No

The researcher contacted potential participants directly by phone or in person. After asking the candidate to verify their belief in the continuation of prophecy, the researcher obtained the participant's availability and scheduled the interview. Participants 13 and 14 were married and wanted to be interviewed together; thus, there were only fourteen interviews. The researcher originally asked Participant 13 (husband) to participate, as this is the relationship, but he insisted that Participant 14 (wife) would add value to the interview.

Data Collection

Data collection occurred by interviews by Zoom, telephone, or in person with thirteen individuals and one couple. Nine participants preferred to complete the interview via Zoom for convenience. Two participants completed the interview via phone and three face-to-face: one in a library conference room and two in a church office (separate locations). All interviews were

recorded (face-to-face and phone via a smartphone voice recorder app, Zoom using the platform's *record* feature) and downloaded onto the researcher's locked device. The interviews ranged from twenty-five to forty-five minutes. Participants were treated with respect and dignity before, during, and after the interviews.

Participant Interviews

This section presents the participants' lived experiences with the word of prophecy, spoken or sung during a Christian worship service or Christian music recording. The interview locations, participant demographics, and each participant's role in their church appear, labeled with identifiers instead of names. The first six interviews began with questions and then proceeded to a recorded worship song or worship service attended by the interviewer and the participant. In two recorded services, the interviewer did not attend in person or virtually; however, the participant had been present and experienced the gift of prophecy during the worship service.

Participant 1

Participant 1 was a thirty-year-old male who enjoyed acting and singing in productions, including musicals and ministry events. Married with one child, he was a praise and worship leader with the music ministry at his church but did not hold an office in ministry like mentioned in Ephesians 4:11. The participant was early for rehearsal and took the interview in his car via Zoom. He had experienced the gift of prophecy many times over the years; however, he had not experienced giving or telling a prophetic word. Participant 1 believed a prophetic word could occur in any place or location with an atmosphere conducive to such. His experiences with prophecy made him feel edified, exhorted, and consoled. Generally, he felt edified when receiving a prophetic word, and he felt like God was looking out for him. Participant 1

experienced increased comfort levels in his walk with God, prayer life, meditation, and getting closer or deeper into the Holy Bible.

Participant 1 shared his testimony with a prophecy he had recently received. In 2021, he was in a space where he felt the need to say “yes” to everyone asking for his time and resources. He knew some of the individuals were not acting like his friends, but he continued to help. As he allowed people to use him, he felt a wear and tear on his mental and physical well-being. Participant 1 expressed feeling relieved of stress and burden after receiving a word of prophecy from a guest prophet. The prophetic word he received spoke about deciding to separate from certain people within the ministry where he served. Doing so would relieve Participant 1 of stress, burden, and toxic relationships. Some of the people did not mature as Participant 1 did, and he made the difficult choice to disconnect. The prophet spoke to Participant 1’s family as he received a word of knowledge about a “little light-skinned girl,” depending on Participant 1’s “Yes Lord.” The prophet stated, “Providing for your family will never be a problem as long as you stay in the ‘Yes Lord.’”

Participant 1 continued to explain his sense of edification, exhortation, and consolation. A second video of Participant 1 being prophesied to was played and discussed. Although the prophets differed, the second prophecy was an extension of the first. Participant 1’s interview was integral to the findings, as the quality of prophetic words received in both scenarios was specific, measurable, accountable, relevant, and timely.

Participant 2

Participant 2 was a thirty-eight-year-old single female with the title of Prophetess who attended the same church as the researcher. The interview occurred via Zoom from both parties’ respective home offices. The interview was briefly interrupted due to a phone call she had to

take, but it resumed immediately afterward. Surprisingly, many of Participant 2's answers seemed short and to the point. She had experienced the gift of prophecy as a congregant and in a career ministerial role. She believed prophecy was overlooked in the Church and concurred that the gift of prophecy offered edification, exhortation, and consolation to the body of Christ. Participant 2 argued that individuals must work³ toward their prophecy being fulfilled. Their actions must first align with scripture, and then they must "be willing to war for that word in prayer and sacrifice." Prayers must continue the word that was received. Participant 2 identified a process, an action, and internal work in working with one's prayers and said people should prophesy only what God instructs. She believed that individuals can prophesy from what she referred to as "the soulish⁴ realm." Prophecy should only come from the heart of God. Prophecy from the soulish realm gets people off track and causes much confusion in a person's life.

There was a recording played from a service Participant 2 attended (the interviewer had attended via Facebook Live). She recalled finding edification, exhortation, and consolation in the prophecy in the recorded worship service. She felt as if the prophetic word during the recording encouraged people who felt defeated.

Participant 3

Participant 3 was a thirty-eight-year-old single man who worked as a music teacher and had lived as a missionary for several years. The interview took place in a private room at the

³ When Participant 2 referred to "work toward their prophecy being filled," they meant a person could not simply wait around without doing any work. A person must do their part. Duane Litfin, author of "'To Fulfill All Righteousness': What did Jesus Mean?" says the first words of Jesus in Matthew 3:15 are difficult for many scholars to explain and raise many questions. Jesus says, "Allow it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Relative to the comment on work toward prophecy, Jesus sought John, who was already doing the work of baptizing people, so that John could indeed fulfill prophecy and baptize Jesus.

⁴ "Soulish realm" means from a person's intuition. The thoughts and agenda of an individual. This would be a prophecy that is not from God, not something God has spontaneously put on the mind of an individual.

public library. Participant 3 had experienced prophecy and believed the gift of prophecy continues today. He found comfort in knowing the will of God for his life. He emphasized obedience,⁵ explaining that the Hebrew meaning of *obedience* is to hear intelligently. Participant 3 agreed that the words coming out of the mouth⁶ of the Lord do not add to the canon of scripture.

Participant 3 spoke about exhortation as a gift one exercises and gives to others. He referenced a young lady who participated in ministry with him as a missionary and the exponential practice of the gift of exhortation in her life. He remembered feeling encouraged hearing her exhortations or powerful words of scripture. Participant 3 spoke about exhortation in the likeness of declaring boldly, wherein the dynamic of the delivery is a *fortissimo*. The translation of *fortissimo* is *very loud*, but its meanings also include *very full* or *very strong*. *Fortissimo* is more closely aligned with excitement or belting tone and energy in speech. Moments of exhortation reminded Participant 3 of his one-on-one time with God, reading scripture, and meditating on the word of God; he recalled the location and what he was doing when being exhorted. Exhortation encouraged Participant 3 to continue walking by faith. Expressing his edification when hearing a word of prophecy, he spoke about the edification that comes from hearing the preached word of God.

⁵ In terms of whom or what Participant 3 is obeying rests in the fact that he believes the gift of prophecy continues today. It may be challenging for a person to obey a prophetic word if the person is a cessationist.

⁶ This particular scripture, Revelation 3:22, is first mentioned in Deuteronomy 8:3. God reminds Israel that he led them out of bondage and fed them an unknown food, manna from Heaven, for forty years. The purpose of humbling the Israelites and feeding them manna was to make them “understand that man shall not live on bread alone, but man shall live on everything that comes out of the mouth of the LORD” (Deuteronomy 8:3). Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 in Matthew 4:4. In this text, Jesus completes a forty-day fast, after which He is tempted by the devil. Jesus responds, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes out of the mouth of God.’”

After viewing a recorded clip of a praise team leader operating in the prophetic (i.e., providing the gift of prophecy in song during worship), Participant 3 expressed feeling edification, exhortation, and comfort while listening and watching the recording. He felt the urge to join in worship but withheld to avoid interrupting the interview.

Participant 4

Participant 4 was a thirty-three-year-old single male with one child from a prior marriage. The participant was training to be an elder in his church. He is a music teacher but mostly enjoys singing classical music as a bass or baritone. Based on other ongoing spiritual gifts, the participant believed that the gift of prophecy continues today. Participant 4 disagreed with the statement that prophecy is “telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind.”⁷ He believed that prophecy was not always spontaneous because one could wait for the best timing to reveal a prophecy to an individual. Participant 4’s experience with the word of prophecy and the inaccuracy of the prophetic word he received made him feel discomfort when hearing a word of prophecy. He was cautious of who spoke words over his life. However, he felt exhorted when hearing a prophetic word of prophecy. Participant 4 expressed feeling nervous about prophecy shared from the pulpit. He felt he could better manage⁸ the word of prophecy when it came through conversation.

Participant 4 felt edified when hearing a prophetic word, especially when it aligned with his current situation and his present thoughts. He felt there must be a commitment to the word he

⁷ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1293.

⁸ Participant 4 is cautious of what people say and do while speaking from the pulpit. He contends that some individuals usurp authority while other individuals allow individuals speaking from the pulpit, mainly pastors and preachers, to act as though their words are like the sufficiency of scripture. Participant 4 thinks that someone speaking a prophetic word over his life is more appropriate if there is a healthy relationship between the two individuals.

receives (or accepts), and he should be more intentional about the prophetic words he accepts.

Participant 4 said that performing a deed or giving monetarily is ridiculous; there is no verse of scripture to support these types of actions. The participant continued, “Giving monetarily, to my knowledge, has nothing to do with the prophecy that you’re about to receive.”

During the latter portion of the interview, Participant 4 heard the gift of prophecy through a recorded song by Jonathan Ferguson titled “What Heaven Does.” Although he felt the song was charismatic, he experienced no comfort in the song. He did, however, feel exhorted and edified while listening. Participant 4 questioned prophecy when people were disingenuous about the delivery of the prophetic word. He believed that if God had a prophetic word for someone, He would give the deliverer of the prophetic word the appropriate mode of delivery.

Participant 5

Participant 5, a forty-seven-year-old female with two children, loved to dance. She was a lay member of the church, where the interviewer served as the pianist. Participant 5 believed the gift of prophecy continues today based on prophetic history. She believed the scripture is prophecy, and that scripture is alive today. Participant 5 experienced prophecy through the word of God but not through “telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind.”⁹ Participant 5 has experienced comfort, exhortation, and edification when hearing a word of prophecy. Upon hearing a word of prophecy, Participant 5 felt the need to build her faith in pursuit of the prophetic word received. She did not perform a deed for a prophetic word to manifest; she grew her faith by reading the scriptures.

⁹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1293.

Participant 5 and the interviewer had been at a service together when the pastor wanted to speak on something prophetically. The prophecy was on acceleration and the inability to keep up. The pastor said the entire message was a prophecy, but for the sake of time, the interviewer stopped the recording during the speaker's introduction. Participant 5 felt comfort, exhortation, and edification during the prophetic word and again emphasized activating her faith.

Participant 6

Participant 6 was a forty-nine-year-old married male with four children. He and his wife were recent empty nesters who enjoyed spending time with their grown children. He was a pastor in the United Methodist Church, where he was an elder. Participant 6 believed that the gift of prophecy continues today. He did not think that prophetic words must be spontaneous. After listening to the prophetic word through a musical recording, Participant 6 analyzed the words from a spiritual perspective, calling attention to the words "ride the wave of your glory."¹⁰ He found comfort in accessing what the artist Psalmist Raine said was in the wave of glory. However, the participant thought about the actual wave and its ability to take an individual where they may not want to go. He asked, "Am I willing to ride the wave that God has for me?" Participant 6 found comfort in knowing that if the work can be done, he can allow God to take him where he should be. He felt the exhortation in the recorded song through the encouragement to ride the wave of God's glory. Participant 6 sensed the encouragement of people in the live

¹⁰ This phrase is repeated throughout the prophetic worship recording. The interviewee emphasized this significance to illustrate "riding an actual wave." Scriptural examples are vast, and many scholars agree that one cannot pinpoint God's glory because the glory is through every word in scripture. Glory, in this context, is borrowed from the well-known author, Bob Sorge. Habakkuk 2:14, Haggai 2:7, and Isaiah 40:5 give a glimpse of God's glory in this context. Sorge wrote that glory is "the action of God whereby He takes of His Glory which is eternally existent in heaven, pushes through the veil that separates natural and spiritual realities, and reveals within the parameters of our time and space the splendor of His magnificent beauty and splendor." Bob Sorge, *Glory When Heaven Invades Earth: Gain a Renewed Vision for the Highest Goal of Worship* (Kansas City: Oasis House, 2000), 11.

recording but had deeper thoughts about his willingness to let go of things to ride God's wave of glory, as shared in the song. He experienced riding God's wave in his early twenties but did not believe he could make the same sacrifices now because he was more stable with a home, adult children, and other responsibilities, including his wife's career. He was encouraged by the song's words but felt a more present need to be grounded. Participant 6 experienced edification in the prophetic song because he knew what God could do: God could perform again what He had already done.

Participant 7

Participant 7 was a sixty-three-year-old married male with one adult child. He served as pastor and founder at his church in North Carolina. His mission was to help individuals in economic education and advancement. Participant 7 enjoyed playing golf. At this point in the process, the interviewer realized the questions had become redundant and switched the order of the remaining interview questions. Instead of asking the interview questions first and playing a recorded worship song or service, the interviewer played the recording of the worship song or service and then asked the questions. The interview was interrupted twice, once while playing the recording and again during the interview questions.

Participant 7 believed that the gift of prophecy continues today. He believed that if someone has the gift of prophecy, the words will rise and spew out. The participant felt that God was using all the gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers—to build up the Church.

Participant 7 listened to a recording of a worship service that he and the interviewer had attended in January 2023. During the recording, a listener hears a prophetic word being spoken upon Participant 7 and his wife. The participant answered "yes" to the first question about

comfort but quickly clarified that he does not look for a prophet to confirm what the Lord is speaking to him. If he respected the person, then he would allow them to speak over him, but he does not look or wait for the moment. He explained that for thirty years, it was his desire for a prophet to speak over or confirm him. Now he is in a season where he says he can get a word¹¹ for himself. The interviewer paused; this was not the expected answer.¹² Participant 7 felt the word had comfort, exhortation, and edification. He reminded the interviewer several times that he was not looking for someone to prophesy to him. The participant quoted 1 Thessalonians 5:12 in part when he said, “Know them that labor among you.” The full verse reads, “But we ask you, brothers and sisters, to recognize those who diligently labor among you and are in leadership over you in the Lord and give you instruction” (1 Thessalonians 5:12). Participant 7 shared a few stories about some of the people in ministry whom he respected. He continued to return to his belief that prophecy should agree with what God has already told the individual, saying, “If I want accuracy, I better be able to receive accuracy in my prayer time and my consecration and my walk with God and listening to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. I don’t need somebody to come from Philly and say, this is what God wants you to do, and I’m clueless as to what his will is for my life.”

Participant 8

Participant 8 was a fifty-five-year-old married male with a host of grandchildren. The servant leader of a congregation, he enjoyed spending time with his family outside of work.

¹¹ This is a reference to the word that comes from the mouth of God as derived or revealed through scripture reading. See Ephesians 6:17-18.

¹² Knowing Participant 7 as a continuationist, and the answer of yes to the questions leading to the question at hand, the interviewer anticipated an elaboration of how one may operate the gift of prophecy in congruency with 1 Corinthians 14. However, the participant seemed to be at a greater level of maturity in terms of his ministerial needs and desires.

Participant 8 believed the gift of prophecy continues today because of his experience with scripture. He saw no place in scripture saying that the gift had ceased. An assertion was that scripture supports individuals receiving words of knowledge and words of wisdom. Participant 8 found support for the continuation of gifts in the following passages: 1 Corinthians 14:1; 12:10, 29; 1 Thessalonians 5:20; Ephesians 4:11–12. He provided Strong’s interpretation of the Greek word *doma* followed by a brief breakdown on the giver of spiritual gifts. Romans 12 are gifts given by God; 1 Corinthians 14 are the gifts are given by the Holy Spirit; and in Ephesians 4:11, the gifts are given by Jesus Christ.

Evidencing 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Corinthians 12, Paul identified spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5 Verses 10 and 29 spoke about not despising prophecy in Verse 20. *Doma* gifts spoken in Ephesians 4:11–12 showed the writer that he gave gifts until individuals come to the unity of the stature of Christ. Participant 8 translated *doma* gifts from the Greek using Strong’s perspective, distinguishing between *doma* gifts and *charismata*. The gifts of Romans 12 are the gifts God gives, the gifts of 1 Corinthians are given by the Holy Spirit, and in Ephesians 4, the gifts are given by Jesus. *Doma* gifts refer to the character of the gift, which proves Christ’s general character. The *Doma* gifts are given to impart the fullness of Christ and to build the body of Christ.

Participant 8 believed that “prophecy is divinely inspired, an anointed utterance.” He continued, “[Prophecy] is a supernatural proclamation in a known language. It is a manifestation of spirit according to 1 Corinthians 12:7 It is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit and not of the intellect.¹³ According to 1 Corinthians 14:31, a person may have possessed and operated by all who have the infilling of the Holy Spirit.”

¹³ In other words, prophecy is not based on the knowledge or strategic skill of the individual.

After listening to a recorded clip of a prophecy at his church, a service attended by the interviewer and interviewee, the interviewer posed questions on consolation (comfort), exhortation, and edification. Generally, Participant 8 felt comforted and reassured when hearing the word of prophecy, which affirmed things that were spoken to him concerning his ministry. Participant 8 expressed feeling exhorted after hearing the word of prophecy. He explained that consolation and exhortation have similarities when a person comes alongside. He added, “It’s really the compound nature of the word, and the first portion being *para*, meaning *side of*.” Participant 8 believed that the prophecy speaker was sent to “come alongside” and cheer him on, spur him on, and stir him up.

Participant 8 replied, “Most definitely” to the question about being edified. He distinguished between being built up from depression and being built up from the point of flourishing. Participant 8 connected more with the latter. He spent some time listening to the recording while taking notes. Afterward, he realized the prayer targets¹⁴ and began to ask God for wisdom and strategy. He explained that prophecy was told by a human being¹⁵ speaking the prophecy in part (1 Corinthians 13:9–12). Participant 8 knew from experience and 1 Corinthians 13:9–12 that the prophetic word is given only in part; he must seek the Lord for the remaining parts and details. He stated that the proper protocol for prophesying is making the 1 Corinthians 13:9 statement for the individuals receiving a prophecy; otherwise, one would assume that everyone is aware and knowledgeable of 1 Corinthians 13:9–12.

¹⁴ The prayer targets were developed by the participant after listening to the sermon and taking notes.

¹⁵ Scholars, such as Sam Storms and Wayne Grudem assert “the New Testament gift of prophecy is of a lesser authority than that which we see in the Old Testament. It often comes as a mixture of infallible divine revelation and human, potentially fallible interpretation and application.” See Sam Storms, *Understanding Spiritual Gifts: A Comprehensive Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Reflective, 2020), 172. See also Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1988, 2000), 69.

Participant 8's message was that the highest form of prophecy is the prophecy of scripture, with the office of a prophet, the gift of prophecy, and the spirit of prophecy following.¹⁶ In his final remarks, Participant 8 said he had taught more about prophetic ministry since the 2020 election due to the amount of prophetic malpractice he witnessed.

Participant 9

Participant 9 was a thirty-one-year-old male who was married with one child. During the pandemic, he and his wife founded a church that is thriving and full of energetic people hungry for Jesus Christ. The interview and recording took place via Zoom during the interviewer's work break. The participant spoke via a hands-free Bluetooth device while driving. Although the interview conditions were less than ideal, the interviewee seemed to be fully engaged with the interviewer for the duration of the interview. Participant 9 eventually parked the car and devoted his full attention to the interview.

Participant 9 agreed with Grudem's definition of prophecy as "telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind." The participant believed that prophecy correlated to the holy scriptures. He felt comforted after hearing the prophetic word, feeling the presence of God as the prophetic ministry continued. He also felt encouraged during the prophetic ministry because he viewed riding the wave of glory as never-ending. It is the wave of glory that urges him to continue pursuing God. Participant 9 differentiated prophetic ministry from leadership and personal ministry perspectives. He said that the prophetic direction he gives as a leader of his church may contain a thought process; however, the prophetic words are not spontaneous but well-considered before he instructs his church. Prophetic ministry is spontaneous in other

¹⁶ The office of Prophet: Ephesians 4:11; the gift of prophecy: 1 Corinthians 12; the spirit of prophecy: 1 Corinthians 14.

instances, such as giving personal ministry to individuals who may pursue the altar or God delivering a word to an individual. Participant 9 asserted that one cannot be a pastor without also being a prophet. He believed God provided insight¹⁷ into the future of his church. The ability to see makes shepherds who they are. Sheep cannot always see by themselves, “so they need a shepherd to help navigate them through green pastures.”

Participant 10

Participant 10 was a twenty-four-year-old single male and the son of a pastor who leads a large congregation. The telephone interview was recorded with a computer voice-recording program. The participant agreed in part with Grudem’s quote about prophecy: “telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind.” Participant 10 felt that a word could be spontaneous because it comes from the word of God. In addition, even though a word may seem spontaneous, the words are already established. He continued that God is the Alpha and the Omega: He finished the ending before He formed the beginning. God knew us before we were formed in our mother’s womb. Participant 10 said, “The absence of evidence isn’t the evidence of absence.” Listening to a recording of prophetic worship by Psalmist Raine, Participant 10 did not feel comfort; he felt something he could not find the words for. During the wait for words to describe what he felt instead of comfort, Participant 10 spoke about the prominence of the phrase “ride the wave of your glory.” He said the Bible was clear about the weightiness of glory. A common Old Testament use of the word *kabod* means the weighty glory of God.¹⁸

¹⁷ Insight is the same.

¹⁸ *Kabod* from Strong’s H3513 glory, honor, glorious, abundance. Exodus 16:7.

Participant 10 decided on “satisfaction” to describe his feelings while listening to the recording. He felt edified during the prophetic song. The interviewer explained the wave and its relation to water, emphasizing the river of life written in Revelation 22. Right away, Participant 10 began to utter other scriptures ascribing to water, life, refreshing, and restoring, as written in Psalms 23. According to the participant, a person who prophesies may not know the importance of what they are saying and all the information connected with the word of prophecy. However, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead provides blessings for individuals who hear the prophetic word. Participant 10 said Jesus’s glory was salvation. When the participant was asked if he had to perform a deed like giving monetarily or dancing, his response was that of sowing a seed. He explained the parable of the sower, according to Matthew 13, and said it depends on the prophetic word. He provided examples of sowers responding to the instruction of a prophetic word in 1 Kings 17:7–16 and Luke 21:1–4.

Participant 11

Participant 11 was a thirty-three-year-old married male who ran a successful business with his wife. They were active in the local church, serving at every opportunity they were available. Participant 11 believed that the gift of prophecy continues today. The interviewer played a worship recording of the participant being prophesied to during a service both attended in 2021. Participant 11 was in awe, and all he could do was praise the Lord. The participant felt comforted hearing the prophetic word. He had been working a nine-to-five job he disliked. Knowing that God was about to fund the vision that Participant 11 was working on brought about joy and comfort. Asked if he felt the same level of comfort today that he felt during the prophetic word, he answered “yes,” because the word manifested, and he had not experienced any lack. Additionally, the participant had not needed to use any of his money for the business

since it began more than two years ago. The participant felt exhorted and edified because the prophet said his tithes and offerings would increase.¹⁹ Participant 11 said the prophecy also made him realize he needed to ensure he was tithing correctly. Tithing was one of the things he did after receiving the word. He wrote down everything with illustrations to make the vision plain, as in Habakkuk 2:2. Participant 11 did not have to perform a deed to make his prophecy happen. As the interview ended, he recalled receiving other prophecies at other churches that confirmed the first, with the combined prophecies creating a story.

Participant 12

Participant 12 was a thirty-one-year-old single male who loved and enjoyed learning about God. The participant was fired up and ready to speak. He began talking and delving into the topic before the interviewer could take care of introductory items and begin the recording. Although Participant 12 did not disagree that prophecy is “telling something God has spontaneously brought to mind,” he believed the statement and any other type of definition placed the ability of God in a box. Participant 12 said prophetic utterance can come through anything God desires to use. During the conversational interview, he shared that the prophetic worship did not affect him in any way. He said the prophetic song could be for someone else or someone needing comfort, exhortation, and edification.

Participant 12 spoke to the judgment of prophecy. He suggested judging whether a prophecy is for one’s life, not if a prophetic word is from God. The interviewer supported the participant, adding 1 Thessalonians 5:20–22, which says, “Do not utterly reject prophecies, but examine everything; hold firmly to that which is good, abstain from every form of evil.”

¹⁹ This is a practical statement. His tithes would increase because his income would increase. Based on Malachi 3:10, “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse.”

Participant 12 testified to hearing prophesies he did not receive. He added, “Everything we do we have to do it in faith and not in being judgmental. Bring everything back to God.” Participant 12 and the interviewer mentioned the term *homologeō* meaning *to say the same thing as another*—in other words, to confess the word of God is to prophesy. The participant said, “Whatever words one receives for their life is their prophecy,” adding that whatever one meditates on is the area where one will have success (Joshua 1:8). Participant 12 reiterated that the scripture tells individuals to pray for the gift of prophecy. Prophecy comes in different levels, sets, and ways; there is more than one way to prophesy.

Participants 13 and 14

This interview was the most unique, with a forty-seven-year-old husband (Participant 13) and a forty-four-year-old wife (Participant 14) taking part together. The two met while Participant 13 lived in Ethiopia, where Participant 14 was born and raised. The participants had moved to the United States, where they worked as continuing educators. Obtaining the perspectives of different cultures was highly intriguing. Participant 14 was knowledgeable of both traditional Eastern Orthodox Ethiopian worship, which is the oldest Christian church in the world, and her church, which is considered nontraditional modern worship.

Both participants believed the gift of prophecy continues today. Although Participant 14 felt comfort from the prophetic song, the soothing was due to the scripture on which the song was based, Psalm 24. The music did not have any effect. The participant explained that her East African culture related more to the vocal aspect of the song, especially the lyrics. Participant 14’s church used instruments from the Orthodox church, like an American “praise band”; the

Orthodox church used sacred instruments for worship. In other words, instruments (e.g., begna²⁰ and tsnatsil) used in the Orthodox church are used only for worship. Lyrics in the music of the Orthodox church derive from biblical verses and the Christian experience. Participant 14 stressed that she does not listen to the music of the Orthodox church because it does not align with her faith. Her church's songs are based on biblical scriptures.

Participant 13 had a difficult time finding comfort in the recording. He did not hear the prophecy as his wife had through the scripture. Participant 14 wanted to answer the question about exhortation, but she felt limited due to the language difference. She could hear the music and the English words, but when it came to spirituality, her original language was how she related most to God. She added that she prays and worships in Amharic, her native language. Participant 13 did not feel exhorted during the song; his perspective was more analytical. He was also careful to allow only certain words of prophets prophesying blessings to penetrate his being. The same was true for edification. The couple did not connect with the music²¹ beyond the scripture for Participant 14, and Participant 13 did not sense anything due to remaining cautious of his spirit man.

Participant 15

Participant 15 was a twenty-six-year-old single male who enjoyed shopping and photography and believed that the gift of prophecy continues today. He agreed that prophecy is “telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind” and points people in the direction they should go. Participant 15 found comfort in the prophecy but experienced some

²⁰ Begna: a harp-like instrument; the oldest of instruments.

²¹ The musical styles matter for engaging the emotions of an individual. Edification, exhortation, and consolation are emotional traits.

discomfort because of it. He lost some friends unexpectedly, which brought feelings of discomfort. However, he felt that validation was part of the prophecy as well. Participant 15 felt exhorted and edified after hearing the recording of the prophecy and described feeling full and satisfied.

Findings

This section addresses the findings of the five guiding research questions.

RQ1: From a continuationist context, what is the experience among God's people having heard the gift of prophecy spoken or sung in a Christian worship service or Christian musical recording?

RQ2: Do individuals feel edified, exhorted, or comforted after hearing a word of prophecy?

RQ3: What are the contributing properties of the gift of prophecy according to Grudem's working definition in this research?

RQ4: What are the descriptive elements of manifestation?

RQ5: What is the result of the actions taken by individuals after listening to spoken or sung prophecy in music in Christian worship services or Christian music recordings?

Each participant contributed their experiences to answer the research questions. The interview questions assisted the researcher in unveiling the participants' lived experiences, capturing the quintessence of edification, exhortation, and consolation to individuals who received prophecy, spoken or sung. The researcher was present when some participants received a word of prophecy; other participants listened to a prophecy in a musical recording during the interview.

All participants had experienced the gift of prophecy spoken or sung in a Christian worship service or Christian musical recording. Each participant responded to the interview questions about their experiences, which aligned with the research questions. The findings, though relevant and viable, were limited in the full sense of the activity of spiritual giftings, the demonstration of God's power, and, specifically, the participants' experiences. The interview data related to the edification, exhortation, and consolation within participants after hearing a word of prophecy spoken or sung. Participants reported different experiences based on their level of training and competence surrounding prophecy and prophetic words and utterances. Participants with more experience with prophecy and the language surrounding the study of prophecy spoke from the perspective of a teacher rather than an interviewee. A teacher may provide greater depth and insight into the topic, often in less time. Participants speaking with the purport of a teacher did not relate to the prophetic experience the same as participants who did not speak as if they were teachers or experts on the subject.

Research Question 1

Participants' experiences varied in frequency, approach, depth, and application. The frequency of prophetic encounters varied, but many of the participants encountered prophetic contour regularly. Participants who encountered prophecy regularly interacted with the researcher differently during the interviews than participants who did not. Participants who received frequent prophetic contours provided explicit examples of how prophecy is part of the timeline of life. The participants often mentioned the ways in which God had blessed them or their desire to be closer to God, read more scripture, and apply scripture to their daily lives. Although many participants experienced prophecy frequently and reaped the benefits, others remained cautious, yielding a prosperity gospel and consuming "power" that may portray a

person who prophesies. For example, Participant 4 was careful of the words used in the song and how they interacted with his knowledge of heaven. Participant 4 listened to “What Heaven Does” by Jonathan Ferguson, which included the following lyrics:

*This is how heaven sounds
This is how heaven feels
This is what heaven does
Heaven’s here
And if you do what heaven does
He will release.*

Participant 4 disagreed that heaven sounded the way the recording portrayed it. He said, “We make assumptions about what happens in heaven, in terms of what it actually looks like, but we don’t really know if that’s what it looks like. We don’t really know if that’s what it sounds like.” Participants 12, 13, and 14 remained more distant from the music. Although Participant 12 presented himself as knowledgeable of the gift of prophecy, he did not take well to the semi-structured interview process, speaking and almost lecturing the interviewer before the conversation began. Participant 12 wanted to teach about the gift of prophecy rather than experience it through the prophetic musical recording. His responses began relating to the questions less. Participants 13 and 14 were culturally disconnected. The music waves and language differences placed a wedge between the couple and the prophetic musical recording. Participant 1 said he had been prophesied to many times over the years. He felt God was looking out for him on higher levels and that prophecy had prepared him for the unknown.

Research Question 2

Edification

Most of the participants experienced edification when hearing a prophetic word spoken or sung during a worship service or recording. Most felt empowered or encouraged to engage more

deeply in their personal Bible study. Participant 12 was the only one to report no edification during the interview. He stated, “No, I can’t say I have [experienced it], but I don’t believe that means it doesn’t edify others. What edifies one might not edify somebody else.”

A main component of edification was assessing the state of one’s life and seeing where God can make improvements according to one’s faith. Participants who elaborated on feeling edified expressed the strength to continue and do more. In some cases, when participants were recipients of personalized prophecy, the prophetic word indicated that more was to come for the participant. In experiences of prophetic words generalized for believers who hear the prophetic word, speakers impart strength, and listeners receive it. While hearing the prophetic word through song, Participant 6 drew strength from his memory. Speaking about the central lyric—“ride the wave of your glory”—Participant 6 referenced an actual wave and its ability to take one on a journey of highs, lows, and unexpected events. He spoke about his move from the District of Columbia to North Carolina and his faith in God during that move. He compared the move to a more recent situation where he and his wife said they would trust God but did not allow God to do what He said He would do. Although Participant 6 did not want to let go and allow God to perform as He promised, he was reminded, “If He did it before, He can do it again.” God made provision in the lives of Participant 6 and his family when they moved to North Carolina, and the participant believed that God could provide for his family again.

Exhortation

Psalm 46: “God is our refuge and strength, a very ready help in trouble.” God is a very ready help. Participants who received a direct word of prophecy could sense the availability of God’s help. Participant 8 explained God’s help, defining exhortation and consolation as someone coming alongside. It is a combination word where the first portion means *para*, to come

alongside. The remaining portion of the word, *klētos*, means to summon or invite. In the general sense, Strong indicated that *paraklētos* is “Christ, in his exaltation at God’s right hand, pleading with God the Father for the pardon of our sins.” Paraklētos is often found as Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit (e.g., John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). Participant 8 said the speaker came alongside to spur him on or stir him up. This seemed to be true for most participants. Participants felt encouraged that God had confirmed a prophetic word to advise, encourage, or urge the participants and improve their livelihoods. The words Participant 2 heard during the live service in which she participated encouraged her to claim victory instead of defeat. Participant 3 increased his faith; Participants 5 and 15 felt encouragement to keep going.

Participant 7’s response was the most unique, as he said, “Exhortation and encouragement [were] great.” Participant 7 was at a season where he wanted to stay encouraged instead of having to be encouraged or edified by someone else to do God’s will. He wanted to encourage himself in the Lord, like David in 1 Samuel 30:6: “David encouraged himself in the Lord his God” (King James Version). David showed a pattern of encouraging himself in times of trouble. The theme of David’s encouragement is refuge in God through prayer and praise. In Psalm 34, David wrote, “I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.” David continued in Line 8, “Taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!” When the Philistines seized David in Gath, David prayed, “When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. In God whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid” (Psalm 56:3–4). When Saul sent men to kill David, David prayed, “Because of his strength I will watch for You, For God is my refuge. My God in His faithfulness will meet me; God will let me look triumphantly upon my enemies” (Psalm 59:9–10). Another example of David encouraging himself in the Lord occurred when he was in the wilderness of Judah. David

said, “Because Your favor is better than life, my lips will praise You. So I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul is satisfied as with fat and fatness, and my mouth offers praises with joyful lips” (Psalm 63:3–5).

Participants 13 and 14, a married couple, had difficulty answering the questions because of language and cultural barriers. Whereas Participant 14 stressed the lyrics during worship, Participant 13, a musician, felt the worship through a musical lens. Participant 14, a native of Ethiopia, was concerned she had no connection with the recorded worship of prophecy in song because she practiced her faith and religion in Amharic. Participant 13 sensed worship through music. Like his wife, Participant 13 did not feel exhorted.

Consolation

Many participants felt comforted when hearing a prophetic word spoken or sung during a live or recorded worship service. Participants experienced an increase in their walk with God. Some spoke about wanting something more from God, strongly desiring God’s presence and love. Participants who experienced some type of bondage, pain, or anxiety wanted more of God and to be set free from anything that resulted in spiritual captivity. Participants who experienced comfort expressed how God looked out for them and did not forget about them. All participants felt seen and heard by God. Participant 1 revealed that he was grateful and would continue the work through the next generation, teaching and training others about how he remained faithful to God, and God continued looking out for him and his family. Some participants felt comfort in God’s presence. Participant 8 said, “He [God] is still committed to doing what He said He would do. It’s reassuring when God speaks directly or through others.” Participant 10 had difficulty finding the words to describe his feelings; rather than comfort, he felt something indescribable. Rejecting excitement, joy, or edification, he reported a positive feeling centered on satisfaction.

The participant explained the difference between anointing and glory. He related to the lyrics “ride the wave of your glory” because his spiritual Father teaches him about the glory coming in waves. Participant 9 shared similar testimony about waves being continuous or back-to-back. His comfort is in God’s glory²² being in the now and its expected return in other worship settings.

Participants 4 and 12 did not feel comfort from the recorded worship service. Although Participant 12 did not explain, Participant 4 said trust was an issue with prophecy. Participant 4’s previous experience with prophetic contour led him to doubt prophetic words and the agenda of the person presenting the prophetic word. Participant 4 would rather receive a prophetic word through conversation than from a person with a microphone. He also believed that prophecy should align with his current way of life. He said, “If someone were to prophesy to me and say, ‘You’re going to be a dancer, and you’re going to be known all around the world,’ I’m like, ‘No, I’m not number one. I don’t dance. I have incredible anxiety around dancing, and I don’t even look to really learn to dance. So, in that regard, yes, that would make me anxious for sure.”

Participant 6 also spoke about anxiety but in a different way. The participant felt comfort knowing that God spoke through his pastor, someone he admired, loved, and trusted. However, he experienced anxiety about living out the prophetic word. Participant 6 believed that what he saw in the natural was a manifestation of the spirit. He spoke of the central line of the prophetic song, “Ride the wave of your glory”: “All of the things that the psalmist says is in the wave is

²² Glory: According to Strong’s dictionary there are over twelve Old Testament transliterations and many different usages of the term glory. In this instance, the participant speaks of the version *hālāl* (H1984), meaning to praise, boast, shine a light upon, be worthy of praise, and act in undignified praise to God.

Philippe Paul-Luc Viguier’s book provides examples and explanations of God’s glory. He writes, “God’s glory is the ever-increasing revelation of His essence and purposes, displayed through His word, His works, and His felt presence, which calls for the receiver’s unity and reflection, and tells of His incomparable goodness, beauty, and praiseworthiness as perfect King, Savior, Judge, and Creator, and of the unequalled reputation attached to His name.” *The Glory of God: A Biblical Theology*.

very comforting” (i.e., freedom restoration, refreshing, victory, prosperity, and healing three to four times). He also understood that riding a wave could take people to undesirable places, and he may become uncomfortable riding the wave with someone else when the wave separates the two. Through the presented challenges of riding a wave and the anxiety centered around living out the prophetic word, Participant 6 was comforted in riding the wave because of his love for water and because he knew God would perform as He had in the past.

Research Question 3

When asked if they agreed with Grudem’s statement of prophecy—“telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind”—participants’ answers varied. Some disagreed with the notion that prophecy is always spontaneous. Participant 4 said, “A lot of times when someone receives what is to be called a prophetic word today, it aligns with something that they’ve already experienced.” Participant 6 took a similar position when discussing the person delivering the prophetic word. He spoke of a timeframe the prophet may spend praying or wrestling with God. According to Participant 4, prophecy may not be spontaneous because prophecy should relate to a person’s experience. According to Participant 6, the person giving the prophecy may have thought and prayed about the delivery with God over time.

Other participants were divided on prophecy being spontaneous for more elaborate reasons. Participant 10 mentioned that prophecy could be written in the scriptures. Participants 3 and 10 spoke to God’s *logos*, or written word, and the *rhema*, or the spoken word of God, which is the spontaneous utterance of prophecy. Participant 10 said, “Whatever prophecy God gives, it has already been established.” Although some things seem spontaneous to the hearer, they may not be spontaneous words, as in Ephesians 1: “[God] predestined us to adoption as sons and daughters through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the

praise of the glory of His grace, with which He favored us in the Beloved [Jesus Christ]” (Ephesians 1:5–6). Participant 10 continued with the latter portion of Revelation 19:10: “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Participant 12 spoke to the sovereignty of God by saying, “I mean, that’s the thing. You can’t put God in a box no matter what gift he used because it could come anyway, however God chooses.”

Research Question 4

All participants in this study believed that the gift of prophecy continues. Belief is an essential element of manifestation. Participants believed according to 1 Corinthians 14:3, “But the one who prophesies speaks to people for edification, exhortation, and consolation.” The researcher asked each participant, “Did you have to perform a deed, for example, praise God with a shout, a dance, or give monetarily for your prophecy to manifest?” Most participants believed in the principle of sowing and reaping as an element of manifestation. Elements of manifestation presented themselves when Participant 9 developed his position on performing a deed to receive a word of prophecy. The participant applied biblical principles, like those presented in Genesis 8:22, which he called “immutable laws.” He described immutable laws as “just God laws that rule and govern the earth in some way, shape, or form.” Participant 9 added, “I sow out of principle, not off of an actual word. I sow off of my own conviction and understanding and revelation and knowing that God has spoken a thing, and I want to come in agreement with what God has spoken. And so, as a result, I give in agreement. I’m not giving because this is what is required in order for it to happen. It’s going to happen regardless. If God said it, it’s going to happen.” Participant 10 expressed similar sentiments, identifying sowing and reaping as an essential element of the manifestation of a word of prophecy. Participant 10 said that Jesus taught that the parable of the sower and the reaper is the greatest (John 4:36–39). The

participant continued, “You can sow your time. You can sow your energy. You can sow your money. You can sow your heart. You can sow your eyes. You can sow almost anything. And you’re going to reap what you sow.” Participants who believed in sowing and reaping spoke with an emotional fervor, exuding expectation, faith, and a desire to excel in the church (1 Corinthians 14:12b).

Some participants believed their faith was enough for prophecy to manifest; others believed God would manifest a prophecy without the participants performing deeds or giving monetarily, a manifestation of the Spirit according to 1 Corinthians 12:7. Participant 8 discussed a seven-step progression for receiving any type of spiritual word: (1) condemnation, conviction, or information; (2) illumination; (3) inspiration; (4) revelation; (5) possession; (6) impartation; and (7) manifestation. Participant 8 explained:

In general, it can take the form of a level of condemnation or conviction or information at the onset, but the person needs to be trained to move from that place to a place of illumination. Where the Spirit of God starts to give them insight on what they’re supposed to do. Then you want to move from the place of illumination to inspiration, where you are inspired to act upon. You’re not just a hearer, but the doer of the word. You’re taking that word in, and you’re allowing the word to work on you, and that’ll move you to a place of revelation. That’s where you get great insight and understanding. You begin to carry it, there’s an uncovering and unveiling. Because you carry it, that word as a possession, the revelational aspect, you have it now, you’re able to impart it, and you can only impart what you carry. But you want to even go beyond that to a place of manifestation, which is the seventh form. That’s like where the word becomes flesh, you live it, and it’s not something that you have to read from a notebook. It just comes out of you. You exude it because you have become married to that word, to that message.

Participant 6 extended the seven steps by examining the speaker’s lifestyle. Participant 7 examined the word for accuracy and relevancy concerning his life. Participants 1 and 15 believed that one must do the work required within the prophecy as an element of manifestation; this is typically work instructed during the prophetic word. Receivers should put in the work that is reasonable and ordinary within the market frame. Participant 1 had to separate himself from certain people and learn and practice Spanish (with the help of his wife). Participant 15 was also

told to separate himself and not worry about people laughing and ridiculing him. He paraphrased James 4:17, “In the same way, faith also, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself,” by saying, “Faith without works is dead.”

Research Question 5

Participants 1, 7, 11, and 15 received personal prophecies, and Participants 2, 5, and 8 heard a general prophecy—in other words, the prophetic word was for everyone listening to the service. Participants 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 14 listened to one of the selected prophetic recordings the researcher arranged during the interview. Although the selection of recordings was predetermined, the researcher allowed the Holy Spirit to guide which song to play for each participant. Participant 3 was the only one to hear Kendall McDowell in a live worship recording, during which he physically lifted his hands to receive the prophetic word. Participants 4, 12, 13, and 14 heard “Open Door” by Jonathan Ferguson. The prophetic contour of “Open Door” is the line, “And if you do what heaven does, He [God] will release.” Later, the song proclaims that “He will release signs and miracles.” Participant 13 felt edification, exhortation, and consolation through the song “Open Door,” whose lyrics were quotes from scripture: “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; And the King of glory shall come in. Who is the King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory” (Psalm 24:7–10, King James Bible). Participants 4 and 12 did not feel edified, exhorted, or consoled while listening to the recorded worship song. Participant 12 explained that he was not going through anything at the moment that would make him need edification, exhortation, or consolation. Participant 12 expressed that just because he did not feel edified, exhorted, or consoled did not mean someone else would not.

Participants 4 and 14 raised concerns about the prophetic word in the song “What Heaven Does,” whose lyrics declared, “This is how heaven sounds, this is how heaven feels, this is what heaven does, heaven’s here.” Participant 4 questioned the clarity of how heaven sounds and feels and what it does, noting that there was no declarative scripture to describe the essence of heaven. Therefore, according to this prophetic song, Participant 4 did not have the heart posture²³ to receive the prophecy. Participants 4 and 14 shared similar remarks about the music apart from the lyrics. Participant 4 was a singer (bass), and Participant 14 was a woodwind player (primary tenor saxophone). The two participants discussed the business of the music and how it gives the music urgency. Participant 4 thought the delivery of the song, in its entirety, should match the level of intensity of the song’s context. Participant 14 was so cautious of the prophetic word being about prosperity that he did not receive the song in a way that he could respond.

Participants 6, 9, and 10 heard “Ride the Wave, Part 2” by Psalmist Raine. All three participants responded to the “wave of glory” lyrics, sharing similar experiences of God’s glory. Each was moved to engage with the glory of God²⁴ on a greater level in ministry and in their personal lives. Participants 6, 9, and 10 found edification, exhortation, and consolation during the worship recording and felt encouraged to continue working in ministry. The three participants believed that people must continue in faith, allowing God to direct their paths. Participant 6 spoke about a prophecy he received early in his ministry. His prophetic process took over a decade, beginning when he was given a word at fifteen. It took Participant 6 ten years to fulfill the prophecy of

²³ To put it another way, the participant could not receive the prophetic word because his ethos or prevailing tendency is to question prophecy with the idea of it being about something that he possibly doesn’t accept. However, the participant says that he believes in prophecy because of 1 Corinthians 14.

²⁴ In other words, 1 Corinthians 10 is a glimpse of how the Israelites engaged in God’s glory but not to God’s satisfaction. God’s glory is his ways, characteristics, laws, statutes, and written and spoken words. Some Israelites engaged with God’s word by performing and completing acts, but many also engaged in sinful acts that displeased God.

being a pastor. He felt some pain as he watched others finish their journeys to the pastoral role, but he remained steadfast to the word spoken into his life to become a pastor. On a journey through the process, Participant 10 added, “It [prophecy] builds a person up to be a suitable dwelling place for God.” In other words, people are disciplined and sanctify themselves in preparation to serve God’s kingdom. Participant 10 said, “A lot of people think that ‘Oh, I got a prophetic word. God is just going to do everything He said he is going to do.’ But the Bible says that faith without works is dead. ‘Believe in my prophets, and so shall you prosper’ [2 Chronicles 20:20]. But He also talks about to co-labor or to labor together with God. ... It’s about co-laboring with God in obedience.”

The participants who received direct prophecies felt edification, exhortation, and consolation. They were more excited than the participants who listened to a recorded worship service. Participants 1, 11, and 15 were currently living in the fulfillment of the prophecy given to them. The participants’ obedience resulted in a successful manifestation of the prophetic word spoken into their lives. Participants were willing to obey the prophetic word and acted in agreement by doing what was asked. Participant 7 did not agree with the word of knowledge spoken over his life, which he said was inaccurate; as a result, he had difficulty receiving the remaining prophecy.

Summary

This study was an exploration of the experiences of people to whom prophecy is spoken or sung. Individuals who believe the gift of prophecy continues today participated in this study to discuss whether they felt edification, exhortation, and consolation during a Christian worship service or music recording. However, despite a belief in the continuation of all spiritual gifts, not all participants openly accepted the demonstration of the gift of prophecy as it is presented in

many worship spaces today. Some participants preferred prophetic spokespersons to adapt the delivery to the receiver. Participants believed 1 Corinthians 14: “Pursue love, yet earnestly desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy” (Verse 1); “But the one who prophesies speaks to people for edification, exhortation, and consolation” (Verse 3); and “But the one who prophesies edifies the church” (Verse 4b). Participants gave credence to scripture, but they felt individuals would be more likely to accept prophecy spoken into their lives if the speaker used a tailored approach. Other participants suggested critically examining a prophetic spokesperson’s life before allowing the individual to speak into their life. A couple of participants did not feel any emotional attachment to the prophetic words of direct prophecy or a recorded worship experience. These participants decided not to connect to the prophetic words they received. Some participants did not accept the prophetic words because of 1 Thessalonians 5:12 and 1 Thessalonians 5:21; others received prophetic words according to a balanced view of prophecy in a scriptural context, including the same scriptures of those who believed the gift continues but were opposed to the acceptance of the prophetic words on one’s life (1 Corinthians 12:1, 14:1; Ephesians 4:11).

Chapter Five: Discussion

In this chapter, the researcher discusses conclusions of edification, exhortation, and consolation with the literature review. A connection is made between the themes and the theoretical framework. The researcher's Dasein is an essential component of the methodology and discussed in this chapter in tandem with the participant's results. An examination of his preconceived knowledge of the phenomena followed by a brief discussion of the hermeneutic circle and how the researcher's understandings are revised as he analyzes the data and participant's experiences. Finally, the researcher provides evidence to support this research's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Relating to the Literature

The research results presented in chapter four are a novelty to this field of study. At the onset, this research offers a phenomenology in which hermeneutic stances and aesthetic judgments must consider the continuation of prophecy and other spiritual gifts for today. The Holy Bible remains the final authority and the Holy Spirit a comforter and guide for spiritual and natural progression and succession. This research is novel in terms of academic prowess, the pursuit of a theoretical process, and the engagement of the hermeneutic circle, but it is not a new entity. While MacArthur is making a case for the cessation of Spiritual gifts, the research presented in chapter two suggests that MacArthur is also making a case for the continuation of gifts, writing, "So, spiritual gifts are controlled by the Spirit, given by grace from God, used to serve the Body, and empowered by the Lord." Individuals who believe that prophecy continues are sure the Holy Spirit empowers one to operate the gift God gives one according to the gifting of our Father, God, in Luke 11:13. Although this research interviewed individuals who believe

prophecy continues, it does not measure one's faith. This research coveted the edified, exhorted, and consoled feelings of participants. 1 Corinthians 14:3 states, "But the one who prophesies speaks to the people for edification, exhortation, and consolation." Most participants of this study felt edified, exhorted, and consoled when hearing a word of prophecy. However, some participants look for prophecy to come forth from scripture. Huckle, in this literature review, writes, "Preaching, on the other hand, has traditionally been the most common mode of communicating the Word of God in various churches. However, prophecy could be more prevalent in some churches, relegating the role of preaching."¹ Huckle emphasizes the importance of preaching scripture and having more prophecy in some churches, through the scripture. That means exegeting the text so that it speaks life into the hearers and doers of scripture. This study highlights individuals who believe prophecy continues because individuals who do not believe prophecy continues may not be privileged to witness such an act. The preaching of scripture that Huckle mentions explicates the issues participants faced with delivering prophecy during the interview. All prophecy should be confirmed by scripture. Participant 8 says that "prophecy should correlate with scripture." In other words, while God will spontaneously give a word to someone for someone else, that word must have a mutual relationship and depend on scripture to be both accurate and performed according to 1 Corinthians 14. Some participants are more critical than others and often fail to perform 1 Thessalonians 5:19. Participant 4 spoke about what Heaven sounds like, which may differ from the prophetic song he listened to during the interview, which would not be a good thing for that participant. Still, he fails to discuss when the song says, "If you do what heaven does, He will release," 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 says, "Do not quench the Spirit, do not utterly reject

¹ Huckle, "The Contemporary use of the Gift of Prophecy," 73.

prophecies, but examine everything; hold firmly to that which is good, abstain from every form of evil.” In practice, this scripture will help individuals be critical of what’s good or bad in a prophecy and continue walking in many more blessings by being receptive to words of prophecy. Proverbs 10:22 says “It is the blessing of the Lord that makes rich, And He adds no sorrow to it.” In other words, the blessing of the Lord is our greatest wealth. The Lord wants His people to have things. Considerably, Job was a very wealthy man before Satan tested Job’s loyalty to God. Job lost everything, yet he remained faithful to God. Job says, “Though He slay me, I will hope in Him. Nevertheless, I will argue my ways before Him” (Job 13:15) Circumstantially, in Job 38-41, God rebuked Job due to the lack of worship in the heart. In the end, God gave Job a double portion of what he had before Satan tried to destroy him. Many scholars believe there are more scriptures on obtaining wealth than any other subject in the Bible. Proximally, humans cannot guarantee anything; More importantly, God is sovereign, and His word does not return void. Deuteronomy 28 is a reminder of the abundance or guarantee for being in the will of God; Everything one does will be blessed. Below the state-of-mind is considered upon what is sought in order to obtain an understanding of one’s Dasein.

The scripture encourages one to try Him [God]. Malachi 3:10-12 is about having a delightful land of fruit, full vines, and blessings from God that overflow. God blessed Abraham in every way when he was an old man. Abraham became very rich in cattle, silver, and gold (Genesis 13:2). Isaac was blessed with a harvest of grain more than one hundred times what was sown. Isaac became richer and richer with large flocks of sheep, goats, herds of cattle, and many servants (Genesis 26:12-15). David was blessed with strength and skill in battle (Psalm 144:1). Jacob left home with a walking stick and was blessed with two armies. God blessed Jacob by multiplying his descendants until they numbered more than the sands on a shore; too many to

count (Genesis 3:10-12). Failing to examine prophetic words may result in uncomfortable consequences. Many scholars mention that prophets often prophesied warnings or “bad” things in the Old Testament scriptures. Perspectival, prophecy seems bad when one is not living according to God’s will or based upon how the prophet or person prophesying² being used delivers that prophetic word. In 1 Samuel 15:22-23, Samuel rebukes Saul because of his disobedience to God’s word. Saul chooses to please the people around him and not obey the word of God. Samuel informs Saul that God spoke to him concerning the decision and says, “Behold, to obey is better than a sacrifice, And to pay attention is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as reprehensible as the sin of divination. And insubordination is as reprehensible as false religion and idolatry.” Ultimately, then, my point is to demonstrate that “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). In John 6:48, Jesus declares that He is the bread of life. Partaking in Jesus’ bread, which is also his flesh, gives one eternal life, and one must heed the voice of God which is sharper than a two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). Therefore, the sword demonstrates authority, power, and wonder with his mouth. Revelation 2:16 describes the sword as “the sword of My mouth.” Like Samuel explains the importance of obedience to the voice of God concerning Saul’s response to a word of prophecy. Jesus explains the same to the tempter that came to him in the wilderness. Jesus’ response is different than Saul’s because Jesus depends on the word that came from God and not on his ability. Saul’s ability is to make rational decisions to rule the people, which he did but not without displeasing God due to his lack of obedience to the Rhema word. Jesus’ ability is without limits, however, his obedience to God is unwavering and this is what God honors.

² Anyone can prophesy because God is sovereign. Everyone may not hold the office of prophet, like everyone is not a teacher (Ephesians 4:11).

Samuel met Saul with a word of knowledge as described in the literature review, acknowledging that Saul disobeyed the word of the Lord. Congruently, with Grudem and Levison, whom the researcher cited in the literature review, “The secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you” (1 Corinthians 14:25). Prophecy points people back to the cross, and in Saul’s case, back to God. Grudem, as highlighted earlier, writes, “Every function of prophecy is also a function of several other activities, such as teaching, preaching, singing ‘psalms and hymns and spiritual songs’ [Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16] and engaging in ordinary Christian conversation.”³ When individuals dismiss prophecy for any logic outside of it being evil, according to 1 Thessalonians 5:22, one is excluded from obtaining all that God has according to His plan for one’s life. The participants in this study that received God’s prophetic word, otherwise written in the Bible, reported blessings from God as such. Other participants who chose not to receive the prophetic words had nothing to report. Prophecy edifies, exhorts, and comforts.

The experience of participants and prophecy in this research showed that participants welcomed prophetic ministry when demonstrated with fidelity, honesty, purity of heart, humility, and love. In other words, welcoming the participant, or generally, a call to worship prepares the heart of worshipers to receive of the Lord, be it word, song, or God’s love through any spiritual gift or service. Chapell, mentioned in the literature review section, “Effects of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs on God’s People,” In Contemporary practice, a Call to Worship may be extemporized by the worship leader, presented by a choir, read responsively by the congregation, sung by a worship team, or included in an opening song, but the goal does not vary for those who

³ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 127.

understand the significance of these moments.”⁴ The researcher expected some participants to undergo an emotional experience of prophecy spoken or sung. No participants discussed an emotional phenomenon. However, the terms, edification, exhortation, and consolation are emotional words. A future study would look at engaging the senses and mind for a deeper captivation and interdependence of spiritual gifts concerning prophecy and participants’ consciousness of edification, exhortation, and consolation. As mentioned above, the call to worship affects how individuals worship and receive; more than a motivational jarring. The effect of any call to worship draws one closer to the consciousness of God’s kingdom and out of worldly sentiment. In this study, most participants felt edified, exhorted, and consoled, but there is another level and greater understanding of the three properties of prophecy for a greater translation or elocution of prophetic ministry. The literature review explores the idea that the effect of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs is significant on individuals because of their natural ability to arouse one’s emotions. White’s use of the term “Song of Christ,” also referred to as “Song of the Lord,” and “Worship Flow,” often shortened to “flow” in many worship spaces, contains a measure of prophetic *précis*. For example, some participants listened to “Ride the Wave, Part 2” by Psalmist Raine. Participants felt the glory of God while listening to the song and received the prophetic words of what was in the Wave of God’s glory. The literature review states that it is “the source of these songs, and whether they have their origin in the Spirit.”⁵ The mind allows one to think about the lyrics and how they repeat. Once a person receives the lyrics as good, the Holy Spirit will begin guiding and comforting. In the essence of prophecy, the Holy Spirit brings about edification, exhortation, and consolation. Participant 12 speaks about not

⁴ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 161.

⁵ White, “The Paraenetic Use of ‘Spiritual Songs,’” 70.

feeling edified, exhorted or consoled during the interview because he was not in need of edification, exhortation, or consolation. The stance that Participant 12 takes portray him to be receptive to the gift of prophecy, circumstantially, but in this context, Participant 12 seemed to want to teach the subject. Therefore, Participant 12 could not receive any words from the Lord. Other participants who listened to the same Song of the Lord were blessed by the song and it increased their faith. In other words, the song, with its prophetic subjection, edified some participants willing to receive and did not edify participants not willing to receive.

Looking back at the literature review, White recognizes the following scriptures as different types of Songs of the Lord: “a Song of Christ in [Colossians] 1:15-20, a Song of Salvation in 2:14-15, and a Song of Blessing in 3:15-16. The release of such songs during worship invites the Holy Spirit to manifest in the lives of believers and individuals willing to accept the majestic sovereignty of God’s power through spiritual giftings, like the gift of prophecy discussed in this study. Experiencing prophetic worship through song is a phenomenal experience for participants who accepted the word of prophecy over their lives. Most of the participants completed the interview process using a cellular or computer device within the confines of their own space. Hebrews 10:23-25 declares, “Let’s hold firmly to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let’s consider how to encourage one another in love and good deeds, not abandoning our own meeting together, as is the habit of some people, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” In other words, being faithful and committed to one another in love and fellowship is good for Christians and stirs the spirit of Christ within each individual participant, preventing sin, strife, and unbelief. Fellowship also allows for individuals to encourage and love one another. It is

through the love of fellow Christians that the gift of prophecy manifests itself, through Christ, via spiritual gifts (prophecy), to edify, exhort, and console one another.

Scripture-based prophecy and its interconnectedness to participants 4, 13, and 14 have validity because the scriptures testify Christ, and so should any word of prophecy, spoken or sung. Revelation 19:10 says that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Participants 4, 13, and 14 show hesitance with the acceptance of prophecy. The participants did, however, receive the scripture correlating the song lyrics, eliciting prophecy. The Participants’ reactions to prophecy sung in “Open Door” by Jonathan Ferguson, are founded on previous encounters with prophecy. That is prophetic moments as displayed in scripture where God prepares people for times ahead through warnings, signs, or otherwise, prophetic moments when the goals of individuals prophesying were to raise an offering for their lifestyle, and other abuses of prophecy understood but not mentioned verbatim during interviews. Individuals desire being edified, exhorted, and consoled but not at the expense of misuse and abuse of authority. In the literature review, Beale distinguishes subjective genitives, words spoken by Christ, and objective genitives, words spoken about Christ to convey that Christian songs tell of Christ’s spirit, and it is ambiguously, Christ himself, speaking through one’s song. However, some scholars contend that the very words of Christ, when spoken through human vessels, are indeed scriptural text. While one’s argument for the mouthpiece of God is scripture, many scholars today also contend to be led by the spirit, Christ’s spirit, which is the Holy Spirit; this would be deemed contradictory for individuals confessing for a cessation of only some spiritual gifts. Looking back at the literature review, Compton deems a new revelation from God as divine authority. This research found participants did not argue that revelation, or spoken and sung prophecy, was necessarily a new revelation. Participant 9 spoke to this directly when he wrote, “Prophecy

should correlate with scripture.” Participant 10 says, “Whatever prophecy God gives, it has already been established.” In other words, the prophetic words may seem new to individuals hearing them, but the prophetic words are not new on the earth, and according to Revelation 19:10 prophetic words, are the spirit of Christ. The Bible is clear about not adding nor subtracting words from the Bible, and none of the participants said the prophetic words should be evaluated and considered for a later addition to the Bible; to do so would be sinful.

Connecting with the Theoretical Framework

This research sought to convey the expressions or feelings through lived experiences of individuals for edification exhortation, and consolation after hearing a word of prophecy spoken or sung. The theoretical framework in this research rationale and design is deduced from Heidegger’s *Being and Time*. The researcher considered his and the participant’s *Dasein* from a biblical worldview while extrapolating philosophical ideas, and their expressions, delineating the participants’ lived experiences using the spiral methodology. The aim has been to cipher the participants’ feelings of edification, exhortation, and consolation through conversational interviews and observation. All the participants in this study believe that spiritual gifts continue and are for today. However, not all participants felt edification, exhortation, and consolation during the research process. It is understood that research captures a moment in time that represents, in the general sense, the greater sample size, population, or characteristics of the whole of entities.

Heidegger explains time as “the negative unity of Being-outside-of-itself, is likewise something simply abstract, ideal. It is that Being which, in that it is, is not, and which, in that it is

not, is: it is intuited becoming.”⁶ Heidegger corroborates “intuited becoming”, to quote a song from the hymnal, “time is filled with swift transition.”⁷ The song, like Heidegger, understood that time is not still and is forever changing. Heidegger adds “The Being of Time is the ‘now.’ Every ‘now’ however, either ‘now’ is-no-longer, or now is-not-yet.”⁸ Cessationist’s argument, for the point of maturity in Christ, as Schreiner contends, Christians are more advanced than times before.⁹ However, this point in time, according to Heidegger, also posits a time which has not yet. Schreiner, as Heidegger puts it, is “to retain the ‘on that former occasion’ and to retain it by making it present, signifies that in saying ‘now’ one is open for the later—that is, of the ‘now-not-yet.’ Heidegger is saying that this source of time awaits based on the past time. He continues, “To await the ‘then’ by making it present, means that in saying ‘now’ one is open for the horizon of the later—that is, of the ‘now-not-yet.’” Therefore, Schreiner is like *Befindlichkeit*, uncanny, not home, or in search to ‘find oneself;’ in the sense that fear as a “mode of state-of-mind” consumes his theological supposition. In this case, Schreiner, like other cessationists, within the discourse, or as Heidegger asserts, *logos* of spiritual things appears as *Fürchten für sie*¹⁰, a fear for others. Educators, pastors, and some other leaders bear this type of fear. However, “such a possibility has been ruled out already because the Other, for whom we fear, need not fear at all on his part.”¹¹ The uncertainty of finding which spiritual gifts to eradicate makes a case towards

⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 483.

⁷ Gospel song, “Hold to God’s Unchanging Hand,” Jennie B. Wilson, 1906.

⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 483; see also 476.

⁹ Schreiner, *Spiritual Gifts*, 148.

¹⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 181. This type is defined as concerned with another. To fear for.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

the “now,” which Heidegger refers to as “now” present at hand.¹² Present at hand, that which is not yet. The present-at-hand is ever approaching and not yet.

All understanding is accompanied by a state-of-mind.¹³ Heidegger continues, “But the state-of-mind that can hold open the utter and constant threat to itself arising from Dasein’s ownmost individualized Being, is anxiety.”¹⁴ Schreiner’s Dasein fear as a mode of state-of-mind and some participants’ Dasein Being there as understanding emerge similarly, but are a different ‘Being-in.’ Schreiner’s Dasein is Being in cessationism, to which his discourse or logos leads to a belief that the gift of prophecy does not continue in the world today. Some participant’s Dasein is Being in continuationism, to which his discourse or logos leads to a belief that the gift of prophecy continues today, but it doesn’t mean one has to accept every prophetic utterance. Moreover, Dasein does not rule out the possibility. On the contrary, “Dasein is in every case what it can be, and in the way in which it is its possibility.”¹⁵ Possibility presents itself here, which represents some participant’s individualized Being is anxiety. Phenomenally, participants whose Being there is anxiety have good and bad experiences with the gift of prophecy. However, one’s logos, God’s written word in this sense, proves that the gift of prophecy remains necessary for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God. Logos, in an attempt to develop the idea that understanding is essential to one’s Dasein, referenced in tandem with discourse, meaning is twofold. Logos is “to make manifest what one is ‘talking about’ in one’s discourse,”¹⁶ and Logos is the word of God. Yet some readers may challenge the view that “because ‘truth’ has this

¹² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 100.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 310.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.

meaning, and because the λόγος is a definite mode of letting something be seen, the λόγος is just not the kind of thing that can be considered as the primary ‘locus’ of truth.”¹⁷ Many people believe the Bible to be an infallible word of truth. John 1:1 declares that the “Word was God.” John continues to extol the deity of Jesus saying, “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory” (John 1:14a). Perhaps, while obtaining the knowledge to contend one’s faith, a worldly approach, through education alone and no spiritual experience, dispenses a worldly application of scripture about spiritual gifts. Heidegger writes, “If discourse, as the Articulation of the intelligibility of the “there,” is a primordial existential of disclosedness, and if disclosedness is primarily constituted by Being-in-the-world, then discourse too must have essentially a kind of Being which is specifically worldly.”¹⁸ He continues that discourses interaction with Being is communication, talking, assertions, and information when he writes, “Communication is never anything like a conveying of experiences, such as opinions or wishes, from the interior of one subject into the interior of another”¹⁹ Phenomenally, in this research, participants are observed, asked questions, and shared their experiences through interviews and observation. Some participants attempted to share information, but unbeknownst to those parties, it was deemed unnecessary at times. Heidegger writes, “Discoursing or talking is the way in which we articulate ‘significantly’ the intelligibility of Being-in-the-world.”²⁰ Cessationists have an advantage here, with the intelligibility of discourse for the cessation of spiritual gifts. This is not to say that continuationist are not intelligent. On the contrary, continuationist function at the

¹⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 57.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 205.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 205.

Being-in-the-world state-of-mind and beyond. It seems, at the experience of some participants, cessationists have the intellect, the exegetical prowess, and the 'fear as a mode of state-of-mind' to direct Christians to Jesus Christ, but said group stops at the natural and do not extend into the spiritual realm. In 1 Corinthians, the Apostle Paul writes from Being, fear as a mode of state-of-mind, with the goal of teaching and directing individuals to spiritual things. So then, cessationists have limitations when guided by the Holy Spirit, at the very least, the possibility presents itself as such. Heidegger writes, "Dasein is in every case what it can be, and in the way in which it is its possibility."²¹ For individuals who believe the gift of prophecy ceased, ontologically sides with the possibility of λόγος not performing as it should. Moreover, the discourse by cessationists and the eisegesis of prophecy one contends is henceforth null in void. For λόγος cannot object itself less the believer of scripture rejects God's word as absolute truth. Theoretically, the Being of Dasein = Care = temporality = existing = authentically = anticipatory resoluteness = projecting oneself upon one's own Being-guilty = Ready-for=anxiety. This process then cycles back to anticipatory resoluteness, which is authenticity.²² Heidegger continues, "In this, Dasein understands itself with regard to its potentiality-for-Being, and it does so in such a manner that it will go right under the eyes of Death in order thus to take over in its thrownness, that entity which it is itself, and to take it over wholly."²³ In other words, eager to flee one situation, Dasein finds itself. In the case of cessationists, proximally, when certain spiritual gifts are difficult to contextualize, explain, quantify, or apprehend, one finds thrownness in the cessation of gifts. On the contrary, individuals that believe logos as the locus of truth need not

²¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 183.

²² *Ibid.*, 183.

²³ *Ibid.*, 434.

explain the supernatural. Supernatural entities, therefore, obtain a Dasein relative to individuals who believe according to scripture. This research finds that most participants feel edified, exhorted, and consoled after hearing a word of prophecy spoken or sung. In the essentiality of the “believe first then receive” complex, Heidegger confers, “Every inquiry is a seek [Suchen]. Every seeking gets guided beforehand by what is sought.”²⁴

The hermeneutical aspect of this research, the exposition of prophecy and its effect on individuals who believe this spiritual gift continues today, and its continual use to build one another as the church, relies on the foundation of scripture. A concise exegesis of the biblical text, which has laid the foundation for God redeeming humankind back to Him, forges the truth in exposition through the experience of individuals who believe prophecy continues today. The research is not an attempt at eisegesis of the participant’s experiences with biblical text. All the participants understand and have read scriptures teaching on spiritual gifts as such. Individual experiences convey an example of how the gift of prophecy is used in some parishes.

Hermeneutically, this research is an exegetical approach using a phenomenological methodology to show the edification, exhortation, and consolation individuals become conscious of when hearing prophetic utterances. Interpretively, individuals mostly feel according to 1 Corinthians 14:3. Close observation reveals that participants with no sense of edification, exhortation, or consolation sought something more than what the researcher presented as the moderator of the interview process. First individuals must believe that such a phenomenon is capable, although possible without belief due to God’s sovereignty. God can interrupt His natural laws to perform a miracle in anyone’s life. Doing so brings edification, exhortation, and comfort to individuals who experience such a phenomenon.

²⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 434.

Questions, debates, belief and unbelief, discussions, scholarly reviews, and hermeneutic complexities are often considered when canvassing prophetic content about the church. A more concrete approach to the context of prophecy begins and ends with scripture. Earlier we discussed the eisegesis of scripture as manipulating a text so that it proves one's point. Here, we place our focus on the exegesis of scriptural text so that proper interpretation proceeds the revelation or declaration of interpretation.

First, 2 Peter 1:19-21, "And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture becomes a matter of someone's interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." Here Peter refers to the moment with Jesus on the holy mountain where Jesus is transfigured, "shining like the sun" (Matthew 17:2) and appearing with Moses and Elijah. God spoke from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him" (Matthew 17:5)! Peter's testimony clarifies how scripture is interpreted. Genuine disciples of Christ with the gift of prophecy do not interpret based on one's experience but based on the locus of truth, the Bible. Quoting scripture is the same as quoting God. This is what makes the scriptures prophetic. Concurrently, assessing the research presented here, quoting 1 Corinthians 14: 3 "But the one who prophesies speaks to people for edification, exhortation, and consolation" quotes God's purpose for prophecy. Moreover, quoting 1 Corinthians 13:8a-10, "Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away with;" continuing at verse 9, "for we know in part and prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away with," does not end prophecy. Instead, as we discussed earlier, the time in reference has not come, according to

verse 10, when it says, “But when the perfect comes.” There is but one perfect being, Jesus Christ. When Christ comes, people who do not believe that He is the Son of God will perish. So the cessation of prophecy or other certain spiritual gifts will cease at the point of death. The point of death is the second coming. For believers, this point, the second coming is not death, but life eternal. At which point one clings to 1 Corinthians 13:9.

Prophecy consists of God’s nature, God’s being, and God’s will. It is the will of God for individuals who have the gift of prophecy to prophesy. Romans 12 says that one should submit one’s body to God as a living sacrifice, prove the will of God, have sound judgement, and act as one body although each one is a different member of the body. The Bible says that “every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:16). The will of God is made known whenever participants experience edification, exhortation, and consolation after hearing a word of prophecy. Individuals are edified or encouraged through prophecy to motivate them to come out of sin, as a warning to do something different for the sake of the individual to perform the work of Christ with more efficiency, and to help spread the gospel of Jesus Christ with boldness.

This research observed the phenomenon of individuals who believe the gift of prophecy continues for edification, exhortation, and consolation. Individual experience contains validity and provides a realization and truth to circumstances. However, scripture is greater than experience. Peter’s experience with Jesus being transfigured on the mount gives credence to why Peter says “the prophetic word is made more sure.” The more sure word is greater than the experience of the transfiguration. Again, reading scripture is reading God’s very words. According to Matthew 4:4 “It is written: Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes out of the mouth of God.” God has spoken in the written word, in the formulation of

the scripture, and just as God spoke to men and women to bring forth his words of instruction in warnings, preparatory, and blessings alike in times of old, God continues to speak today. Both cessationists and continuationists groups describe moments of being led by the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is the voice of the Lord, including His unction upon, guidance, and His still small voice. Psalm 12:6, David declares “The words of the Lord are pure words.” God watches over His word to perform it (Jeremiah 1:12; Ezekiel 12:25; Isaiah 55:11). God has outlined in His word for prophecy to edify, exhort, and console. Therefore, it would behoove individuals to move aside and allow the Holy Spirit to perform its perfect work. Simon, who is called Peter, spoke some words to men in Joppa. As Peter spoke, the Holy Spirit fell upon the men. Peter says that he remembers the words of the Lord saying, “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 11:16). Peter continues, “Therefore, if God gave them the same gift as He also gave to us after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could stand in God’s way” (Acts 11:17).

Participants in this research phenomenally shared the same experience as the men that Peter spoke to in Acts 11:17. Participants who allowed God to move experienced edification, exhortation, and consolation. In both instances, the Holy Spirit fell upon the individuals to receive what God had in store. “But Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold firmly to our confidence and the boast of our hope” (Hebrews 3:6). God wants to speak to individuals who are willing to receive.²⁵

²⁵ See also Hebrews 3:7-11.

Revising Conceptual Assumptions

RQ1: From a continuationist context, what is the experience among God's people having heard the gift of prophecy spoken or sung in a Christian worship service or Christian musical recording?

At the onset of this research, the researcher presumed that all participants would experience edification, exhortation, and consolation. Although most participants experienced one or more of the prophetic outcomes (e.g. edification, exhortation, consolation), Participant 12 did not experience any of the prophetic outcomes. After reviewing participants 4 and 6 interviews, the researcher realized a connection between how one receives a word of prophecy based on one's perception or idea, and when one receives a word of prophecy through the interpretation of scripture or exegetically. On one hand, the participant is reliant on the account of self and how one feels during the delivery and reception of a prophetic word. On the other hand, the participant relies solely on scripture alone. If prophecy is an extension of one's faith, the capacity that one has for a prophetic word is predicated on the amount of scripture near-at-hand. Therefore, faith is increased at the hearing of the word of Christ.²⁶ This theological principle is found in the book of Romans. Paul places a burden on God's people to have a zeal for God. Paul then connotes that one's zeal must not accrue according to knowledge but of faith. It is written, "so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6). Paul's aim in this passage is to provide yet another opportunity for Jews to become the righteousness of God by believing in their heart and confessing with their mouth the gospel message of Jesus Christ. In essence, Paul sought to edify, exhort, and console the Jews and their faith. The Jews had heard the word of Christ preached by a sent messenger of Christ. Therefore it was not the

²⁶ Romans 10:14.

message of Christ that led to the Jew's unbelief of certain spiritual gifts, for the edification, exhortation, and consolation of individuals is the fault of people and not of any scripture. Jesus strengthens this thought when He says, "It is not for you to know periods of time or appointed times which the Father has set by His own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you: and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:7). Likewise, considering the continuous work of ministry, Jesus began to do and teach.²⁷

The passage from Acts 1:7, spoken by Christ, presents an argument for steadfast work in ministry until Christ's return. One is unaware of the dispensation in which Jesus begins restoring Israel. Jesus says, one will not know periods of time, appointed times, which is the authority of the Father. This is important because God's distribution of authority, including dominion over all the animals of the earth, power to heal, over all the power of the enemy, and over making disciples, the authority for periods of times and appointed times is the responsibility of the Father. Some participants are accustomed to how the spirit of Christ operates within a worship setting containing prophetic practice. Other participants are uncomfortable with practicing prophecy in a worship setting, thereby rejecting supernatural activity (e.g. prophecy) during worship.

The power that God the Father uses in creation is known as Kratos power or the demonstration of His will in the Earth. Ephesians 1 sheds light on the kratos power of God with limitations to individuals that believe. Paul postures his prayer so that individuals may be enlightened to know God's beckoning, one's inheritance as saints, and "the boundless greatness of His power toward us who believe." Paul continues that the strength of His might was also

²⁷ Acts 1:1.

given to Christ when He raised Him from the dead. Paul closes this letter in the same way, speaking about the strength and might of God the Father. Paul urges to “be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might” (Ephesians 6:10). One finds strength and might in God.

RQ2: Do individuals feel edified, exhorted, or comforted after hearing a word of prophecy?

Based on the results, individuals who understand the context of prophecy and other spiritual gifts emote to the fact that Christ Jesus is holy and exalted, and His power is shown through the lives of His believers. The individual experience is essential to one’s prophetic exposure, expectance, and evolution of belief in God’s miraculous power. Moreover, hearing the preached word of God increases one’s faith.²⁸ God’s omnipotence referenced in Isaiah 55:11 renders the Exousia of God’s authority to do his will. Therefore, did God predestine His believers to hear and do that which is heard throughout scripture, unto the glory of Him who called one to redemption and for the edification of the saints. Unabating, an increase of faith within a believer is sustaining for a work of ministry beyond the realm of one’s natural ability to reckon the omnipotence of God through scripture and “every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). When believers are exposed to the relevancy of scripture-at-hand, Matthew 4:4 in this instance, a more sure word of prophecy (2 Peter 1:19) compels believers to walk in the fullness of God’s gifts and ultimately the Spirit of Christ. Peter explains it this way in 2 Peter 1:20, “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture becomes a matter of someone’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” In context, Peter explains earlier in the chapter that God’s divine power has granted us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true

²⁸ Romans 10:17.

knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence” (2 Peter 1:3). Therefore, through the testimony of Jesus, individuals receive prophetic words to edify, exhort, and console to draw one to God’s redemptive power. Upon the testimony of Christ Jesus, individuals become aware of the power of God. Christ’s work of the cross paid the ultimate price, the redemption of sin, and brought one back into the righteousness of God the Father. This is why Revelation 10:10 says, “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Paul’s reliance on Christ’s spirit and demonstration of power reveals a more pressing issue for believers of prophecy, bringing emotions that affect one’s life. Paul quotes Isaiah 64:4 as he proclaims through the Spirit of Christ and not by human wisdom. People must rely on the Spirit of Christ and not merely human knowledge to function in the gifts given by God for the testimony of Christ to those who will hear. This research question asked if one feels edified, exhorted, or consoled. This is an emotional question based on feelings; feelings erupted based on the schemata of prophecy, a reliance on Christ’s spirit to sustain the righteousness of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ because of a prophetic encounter. This type of worship experience is and should be emotional. The state of welfare in 1 Corinthians 14:3 exhibits a need for social-emotional health awareness and its relationship with believers and one’s daily walk with Christ for the fullness of God through faith. The belief in being born again in Jesus Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection, the washing away of sin through water baptism, and the testimony of the Spirit of Christ, one overcomes the world, “and this is the victory that has overcome the world: faith” (1 John 5).

Faith in what is unknown but revealed and demonstrated through the Spirit, as in Acts 1:8 exhibits God, glorified. The power demonstrated in Acts 1:8 is the Greek word *dynamis*. *Dynamis* power is often translated as an ability or power of God given to believers after

receiving the Holy Spirit. After hearing a prophetic word, this discussion of feeling edification, exhortation, and consolation is centered around faith that God can do the impossible. God will do what one asks of Him as heirs and being the righteousness of God; “All things are possible for the one who believes” (Mark 9:23). Whatever one asks of the Father in Jesus’ name is done unto the glorification of God the Father. One of the most challenging things among the participants who did not feel edification, exhortation, and consolation was one’s willingness to allow God to dictate one’s life over personal desires and anyone else in one’s life. Participant 4 explains that if someone prophesied that he would be a dancer, he would immediately excuse them as false prophets. Participant 12 simply couldn’t listen long enough to receive anything from the music recording. Weighing a prophetic word and simply dismissing it based on its ramifications and limitations is convoluted because of the divine nature of where prophecy is derived. 1 John 4:1-3 reminds one to test the spirits. However, this testing is two-fold, one, every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; two, every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God.” In 1 Thessalonians 5:19, Paul explains a way to receive prophecy by not utterly rejecting it. However, he says to examine it, hold the good, throw away the bad, and abstain from every form of evil. On the contrary, the participants who received edification, exhortation, and consolation were expecting to feel as such. In other words, the conversation surrounding prophecy indicated a want and need for prophecy to encourage one another in Christ Jesus.

RQ3: According to Grudem's working definition in this research, what are the contributing properties of the gift of prophecy?

Grudem’s definition of prophecy addresses a spontaneous function of prophecy. Participants didn’t always agree that spontaneity is the sole property of prophecy. Of the

definitions presented during the interviews, two definitions stand out. One participant believed that “prophecy is divinely inspired, an anointed utterance; a supernatural proclamation in a known language; It is a manifestation of [the] spirit according to 1 Corinthians 12:7; It is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit and not of the intellect. According to 1 Corinthians 14:31, a person may have possessed and operated by all who have the infilling of the Holy Spirit.”²⁹ Worshipers who identify with this definition generally agree with the spontaneity of prophecy, wherein a prophetic word is not something humans can think of but comes from God in a moment for a specific time. Worshippers connect with scripture as the Logos, or written word of God, and Rhema, the spontaneous word of God. Believers who state that spontaneous prophecy is conformable to the written word of God tend to seek God in other areas outside of the walls of the worship service. Some believers listen for the voice of God, the Holy Spirit, to provide instruction for one’s daily life. One concern that presents itself in the findings relates to one’s Western way of thought, training, and tenet. Some scholars explain the scriptures through comprehension, a lens that explores thoughts of philosophy, rhetoric, and literature but limits itself to the thoughts and experiences of others. On the other hand, some scholars’ explanations of scripture are one’s own experience, engaging with one’s audience on a personal magnitude rather than a general or public strength. The connection between emotionalism and prophecy is viewed as an indicator that individuals experience the effect of prophecy in one’s life. The universal law of cause and effect in this sense further shows how 1 Corinthians 14:3 manifests itself through the individuals who experience prophecy. The cause, prophecy, affects individuals who believe in feeling edification, exhortation, and consolation. The cause and effect in 1 Corinthians 14:3 renders emotionalism as the desired outcome. Therefore, emotionalism is

²⁹ Participant 8.

appropriate because edification, exhortation, and consolation, in tandem with a message from God, affect one's emotions. Edification words build up, encourage, or improve through instruction. Exhortation words advise, urge, or encourage individuals. Consolation words emote freedom from pain, trouble, or anxiety. Considering the purpose of prophecy outlined by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:3, prophecy builds up the church by affecting one's mindset, outlook, state of being, and social-emotional awareness. This research sought to convey the participants' meaning of prophecy through a social constructivist lens. Some of the participants are afraid to demonstrate emotion during worship. One participant explained that there was a barrier with the language as well as the instruments creating the music. The Amharic worshiper could not connect to the lyrics nor the music, which did not allow her to emote during worship as she would if listening to worship in Amharic with familiar instruments of the Amharic church. Worshippers emote regularly during worship, but when someone grabs the mic and speaks or sings directly to or over someone, the worshiper uses caution and ponders the words spoken or sung. Worshippers are aware of the scripture that enables one to examine the words spoken; they also expressed the use of caution to receive prophecy because the words delivered contain prosperity. One participant seemed worried that prophecies are not all roses and that there are too many blessings and not enough warnings in the prophetic words of some Prophets and people who prophesy. Musically, other worshippers can feel edification, exhortation, and consolation from the song's lyrics. Earlier, participant 14 explored jazz improvisation as equivalent to prophetic utterance through song. One practices various musical lines, licks, riffs, and transcriptions as part of learning the jazz language. Likewise, one reads scripture, books, and devotionals to draw closer to God and to share the information learned while seeking God's kingdom. In both instances, while performing the show the musician rehearsed for, musicians

feel a spiritual presence in one's aura. Similarly, when a speaker delivers a prepared message to a group or audience, some speakers have experienced the Lord leading in a direction different from what was prepared. In both cases, individuals have experienced audience members boasting about the feelings of edification, exhortation, and consolation during the performances.

Worshippers should feel free in worship. Free to express oneself through emotions, free to allow the music to penetrate one's consciousness, and free to hear the scriptures while learning, growing, and improving. Freedom in worship does not diminish what 1 Thessalonians 5:21 teaches about examining prophecy. On the contrary, this freedom in worship is about balance, allowing one to emote during worship and worship in part, according to 1 Thessalonians 5:19-20, while holding verse 21 within view. Seeking God over getting something from God is a difference described by Participant 12. He explained that worshipers should desire God's will for one's life according to faith. He continues that some worshipers desire to get something from God, which requires no faith.

The second definition develops from Participant 10 quoting various passages and thoughts of scripture, stating that "God is the Alpha and the Omega; The Bible talks about how Jesus, literally God, took him through everything he was going to go through before he ever went through it, before the earth's foundation, before human beings were ever created. God has clarified that He has already planned out the victory; the strategy of everything."³⁰

RQ4: What are the descriptive elements of manifestation?

The research showed that belief is an element of the manifestation of prophecy. 1 Corinthians 14:3, edification, exhortation, and consolation present themselves for some participants when worshipers attend worship gatherings to seek God's will for one's life. Some

³⁰ Participant 12.

participants believe that manifestation results from the principle or law of seed time and harvest. Participants who believe that sowing a financial gift unto God positions one to receive the word spoken of or sung over one's life. Other participants deny the principle of sowing after hearing a word for manifestation. Some Participants do not feel a connection between prophecy and giving money. Other participants speak about God's revelation in a way that illudes the thought of human subjects because God cannot be placed in a "box" and humans should focus more on doing the will of God rather than wondering if He will perform one's request. Participant 12 explains that God can choose to manifest any way He chooses.

Manifestation is also discussed in a way that depends on how a believer has shaped one's mind. Participants tend to speak of manifestation in a way that emerges from a thought, word, and deed complex. Wherein the mind, body, and spirit align or do not align with God's logos and His supreme will for one's life. The idea that prophecy manifests on its own was a concern for some participants. Some participants believe that once a prophecy is spoken or sung into one's life, part of the prophecy's manifestation is the duty of the believer or the one to whom the prophecy is spoken or sung. This notion says that the hearer of the prophecy should, in essence, seek out the manifestation of the prophecy. It is the idea that the believer aligns oneself with the logos word so that the prophecy spoken or sung can in turn agree with how one aligns with the word of God. The descriptive elements of manifestation and the result of the actions one takes work in tandem to do the work of God according to His mighty acts.

RQ5: What is the result of the actions taken by individuals after listening to spoken or sung prophecy in music in Christian worship services or Christian music recordings?

All participants agree that prophecy must align with scripture however, not all participants agree that the receiver of prophecy has work to complete before the manifestation of

prophecy. This complex topic of the work or actions one is required to do, and the manifestation of prophecy varied by participant. Some participants argue that scripture says that “faith also, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself (James 2:17),” highlighting that the reception of prophecy is according to faith, therefore, if one desires a prophetic word to manifest, one must also enact upon the given word. Some participants refer to prophecies of warnings. However, the same principle applied, where God required an action from the receivers of the prophetic words of warnings. In this case, the thing people are warned of would be withheld. One participant says that God provides instructions in prophecy, and if He does not provide instructions, God wants one to seek Him more. Participant 10 believes that open manifestations of God’s raw power happen in the realm of God’s glory. He explains that God looks beyond spiritual giftings and the anointing into His glory. Glory is explained in the works of Peter, Moses, and Jesus.

Limitations

Some participants listened to “What Heaven Does” by Jonathan Ferguson or “Wave of Glory pt. 2” by Psalmist Raine, while others were observed during a live worship service where the researcher was also present. Worshipers were not observed under the same circumstances. The researcher was given a limited view of cultural, language, and ethnic diversity. Most of the worshipers were African American; one worshiper was African. This research studied the subjective lived experiences of individuals who felt edified, exhorted, or consoled after experiencing prophecy. Therefore, the research did not include a control group. The phenomenological nature of this research did not allow for a portion of this study to be unchanged as participants experience prophecy. Unlike research experiments where a control group remains unchanged or unaffected throughout the experiment, the research presented here

only includes the participant's individual experiences. This research used a sample that included 15 participants, a small sample.

Recommendations for Future Research

This phenomenological qualitative study better understands the effects of spoken or sung prophecy in music among God's people during Christian worship services or while listening to recorded worship music. However, being in one setting provides another vantage point for worshippers experiencing prophecy under the same worship setting. When worshipers are observed in the same setting together, each participant to the same prophetic words delivered during that worship service. Although it is recommended that worshipers be observed in the same worship service, some factors will remain, as whether worshipers are listening to a music recording or being prophesied to during a separate service, as in the research presented here. Revisiting the research methodology for individuals feeling edification, exhortation, and consolation with a control group would add a layer of validity and reliability to the participant's experiences. A larger sample would appeal more to mixed methods research design.

Conclusion

This research sought to reveal if participants feel edified, exhorted, and consoled after hearing a word of prophecy. The working definition of prophecy in this research states, "Telling something that God spontaneously brings to mind" by theologian Wayne Grudem. According to 1 Corinthians 14:3 prophecy should edify, exhort, and comfort as this edifies the church. 1 Corinthians 14:3 says that prophecy is one of the greater gifts and that one should desire it for the edification of the church. In the statement of problem, the research realized the need for the purpose of prophecy and its function to a body of believers. The problem was that prophecy was sometimes used to validate or confirm a prophet rather than edify the believer. The research

uncovered a range of emotions concerning the believer receiving the prophetic word. Some believers understand that prophecy continues according to scripture but remain cautious about prophecies that contain a prosperity-only lens. Other participants felt God's presence while listening to the recorded prophetic word. Such participants ascribe to continually seeking God's voice, waiting for the next moment for God to speak. Still, other participants received prophecy, weighed the good and the bad, kept the good, and threw away the bad portions. These participants understand that although prophecy comes from God, the vessel being used to deliver the prophetic word is not perfect and therefore subject to error.

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Appendix A

Date: 10-30-2024

IRB #: IRB-FY23-24-285

Title: Comfort, Edification, and Exhortation within a Prophetic Context

Creation Date: 8-17-2023

End Date:

Status: **Approved**

Principal Investigator: Dorester Alexander

Review Board: Research Ethics Office

Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Exempt	Decision	Exempt
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Key Study Contacts

Member	Lori Danielson	Role	Co-Principal Investigator	Contact	[REDACTED]
Member	Dorester Alexander	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	[REDACTED]
Member	Dorester Alexander	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	[REDACTED]

