

so that a common objective can be achieved.

Let me give an example to illustrate this passage of scripture. Consider the bee, which is a social animal. Within the bee colony there is a division of labor and vocations. The worker bee builds the hive and collects nectar for the making of honey. The queen bee lays eggs for the continuation of the species, and the drone fertilizes the eggs. If either group neglects its duty, the colony will not survive. Because the functions are complementary – and this is really essential– the whole can function effectively.

Another example: In the realm of economics and trade, the world has become one big global village. Countries with a diversity of cultures are now forming trade blocks in order to be able to negotiate conditions of trade and commerce. Individually, the countries will not be able to survive. We see that with the European Union, with CARICOM [Caribbean Community and Common Market], and with other trade pacts. In the same way, the Christian world is challenged to

employ strategies which draw on different partners and the different roles they can play, in order to become victorious in the war against evil.

Paul, in Romans 12:4-8, likens the church to the parts of the human body. What a beautiful analogy! Each member of the body has a specific function, but they all must work together for the whole to function satisfactorily. The church represents the body of Christ; its unity is a necessary requirement for its existence. A house divided can not stand.

The leadership of the church should be endowed with gifts that will make them effective leaders. Jesus called twelve men to become his coworkers. They came from various walks of life and had different vocations. But the Holy Spirit was upon them and they were able to perform many tasks. "Go ye into all the world," the master instructs them.

As Quakers, we have to look to global partnerships for our survival. We may need to go beyond our borders to help others

with leadership training, so their small Quaker community may survive. We must use the gifts that are given to us for the enrichment of the kingdom of God. Some of our peoples are crying out for help with leadership training and development in the struggle to survive. "Who will go for us? Here am I Lord, send me." Helping others to help themselves is a beautiful way of demonstrating the diverse gifts that are given to us. Our stewardship of those gifts is about our caring for the gifts. These gifts should be used to nurture lives to come into the wisdom of God. And the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

The diversity of gifts within the church should not be taken as a privilege, but as a responsibility to create opportunities for spreading the gospel. Paul says, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."

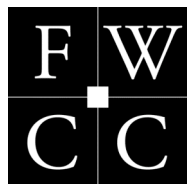
Whatever gifts we have, we will never lose them if we lose ourselves for others. Service that cares for others is the truest test of how we cherish the gifts of the spirit. *"Having then gifts that differ*

according to the grace given to us, let us use them." (Romans 12:6)

The extraordinary plan of God is executed by ordinary people. We are unique individuals, but as Christians we are indispensable parts of the body of Christ. ◇

About the Author

Horace Hall was born to Quaker parents in Jamaica. He received his primary and secondary education in schools established by Friends. He and his siblings were brought up in the church and became involved in the activities of the local meeting. Currently, he is the pastor of the local meeting at Seaside and presiding clerk of Jamaica Yearly Meeting. He is a medical doctor with a successful private practice in family medicine. He and his wife Sharon have a son and daughter.



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TO EACH IS GIVEN THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT FOR THE COMMON GOOD. (1 COR. 12: 7)

Horace Hall
Jamaica Yearly Meeting.

Presented during morning worship,
Friday March 17, 2006.
Annual Meeting of
FWCC Section of the Americas,
Chiquimula, Guatemala, C.A.

Addressing the theme of this Annual Meeting I want to focus on the two aspects of this text: first, on the manifestation of the spirit, and secondly, on the common good.

The manifestations of the spirit are *gifts* of the Holy Spirit; they are given, not earned. And these they are: words of wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, teaching, prophesying, the gift of discernment and the gift of tongues. While they are diverse gifts, they are given by the same spirit. And this diversity of gifts works towards the common good,