Faith is a spiritual gift. So is personal revelation. So is a testimony of Jesus Christ. And there are other spiritual gifts. We know too little about spiritual gifts. This is evident in our communications, and it is also evident in our failure to seek after and use spiritual gifts.

It is important to understand the relationship between spiritual gifts and the Spirit of Christ, manifestations of the Holy Ghost, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Moroni says that all spiritual gifts "come by the Spirit of Christ." (Moro. 10:17.) The Spirit of Christ "giveth light to every man that cometh into the world." (D&C 84:46.) It "is given to every man, that he may know good from evil." (Moro. 7:16.) By this means every son and daughter of God has "the light" to judge what is right, and to seek to "lay hold upon every good thing." (Moro. 7:18-19.) By this Spirit, all may seek to learn of God and to exercise faith in Him. Enlightened by this Spirit, all may seek spiritual gifts, which, Moroni says, "come unto every man severally, according as he will." (Moro. 10:17.)

While the Spirit of Christ is the means by which spiritual gifts are transmitted to men and women, such gifts come by the power of the Holy Ghost, as I will explain later.

The Holy Ghost testifies of Jesus Christ (see John 15:26; 1 Cor. 12:3; 1 Ne. 31:18) and leads us into all truth (see John 16:13; Moro. 10:4-5; D&C 45:57). We need to distinguish between a manifestation of the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

As men and women desire to believe, they develop faith in God. (See Alma 32:26-43.) When they have enough faith, they can receive a manifestation of the Holy Ghost. In unusual circumstances, to serve the purposes of God, such a manifestation might even include seeing heavenly beings. The Book of Mormon has such an account.

Ammon preached to the wicked King Lamoni. When the king believed and cried to the Lord for mercy, he fell to the earth as if he were dead. (See Alma 18:22-43.) After two days Lamoni's people were about to bury him, but the queen, hearing that Ammon was a prophet, called for him and asked him what she should do. Ammon told her the king would revive on the morrow. The queen believed him, and Ammon called her blessed because of her "exceeding faith." (Alma 19:10.)

When King Lamoni arose, he blessed the name of God and prophesied that the Redeemer would be born of a woman and would redeem all mankind who believed on His name. Afterwards, he and the queen and Ammon sank down, overpowered by the Spirit. After the people had assembled, the queen arose first. She "cried with a loud voice, saying: O blessed Jesus, who has saved me from an awful hell! O blessed God, have mercy on this people!" Ammon baptized King Lamoni, the queen and many of their people. (See Alma 19:12-35.)

Here we see the power and witness of the Holy Ghost poured out upon a woman and a man who had not yet been baptized. After they and their followers were converted by this witness, they were baptized and
received the gift of the Holy Ghost. Then, as the scripture records, "they became a righteous people" and "the Lord did begin to pour out his Spirit upon them." (Alma 19:35-36.)

In summary, the Spirit of Christ is given to all men and women that they may know good from evil, and manifestations of the Holy Ghost are given to lead earnest seekers to repentance and baptism. These are preparatory gifts. What we term spiritual gifts come next.

Spiritual gifts come to those who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost. As the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, the gifts of the Spirit "are obtained through that medium" [the Holy Ghost] and "cannot be enjoyed without the gift of the Holy Ghost. … The world in general can know nothing about them." (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938, pp. 243, 245; see also Elder Marion G. Romney in Conference Report, Apr. 1956, p. 72.)

The gift of the Holy Ghost is conferred on both men and women. So are spiritual gifts. As Elder Bruce R. McConkie declared in Nauvoo at the dedication of the Monument to Women: "Where spiritual things are concerned, as pertaining to all of the gifts of the Spirit, with reference to the receipt of revelation, the gaining of testimonies, and the seeing of visions, in all matters that pertain to godliness and holiness and which are brought to pass as a result of personal righteousness in all these things men and women stand in a position of absolute equality before the Lord. He is no respecter of persons nor of sexes, and he blesses those men and those women who seek him and serve him and keep his commandments." (Ensign, Jan. 1979, p. 61.)

Spiritual gifts do not come visibly, automatically, and immediately to all who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that most such gifts are "not visible to the natural vision, or understanding of man," and that it "require[s] time and circumstances to call these gifts into operation." (Teachings, pp. 244, 246.)

The scriptures tell us that we should desire and zealously seek spiritual gifts. (See D&C 46:8; 1 Cor. 12:31; 1 Cor. 14:1, 11.) We are also told that some will receive one gift and some will receive another. (See D&C 46:11; 1 Cor. 12; Moro. 10:8-18.) In every case, the receipt of spiritual gifts is predicated upon faith, obedience, and personal righteousness. (See Bruce R. McConkie, A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985, p. 367.)

Spiritual gifts are evidently among the "signs [that] shall follow them that believe." (Mark 16:17; see also McConkie, p. 366.)

We are commanded not to seek for signs to develop our faith (see Matt. 12:39; D&C 63:12), for "faith cometh not by signs" (D&C 63:9). But when we have faith, repent, and are born of water and the Spirit, and when we love and serve God with all our hearts, we are eligible to receive spiritual gifts. We may then, as Paul taught, "covet earnestly [which means fervently desire] the best gifts." (1 Cor. 12:31; see also D&C 46:8.)

When we believe and seek spiritual gifts to benefit others "and not for a sign" (D&C 46:9), we are told that signs will follow. "Behold, … signs follow those that believe. Yea, signs come by faith, not by the will of men, nor as they please, but by the will of God. Yea, signs come by faith, unto mighty works." (D&C 63:9-11.) The Holy Ghost "maketh manifest unto the children of men, according to their faith." (Jarom 1:4.)

Let us consider some of these spiritual gifts.

Faith is a gift of the Spirit. (See Moro. 10:11; 1 Cor. 12:9.) As Alma taught, this gift takes root in our hearts as hope and, nurtured as a seedling, will eventually flower as knowledge and bear the fruit of eternal life. (See Alma 32:26-43.)
Another familiar spiritual gift is the gift of testimony. "To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He was crucified for the sins of the world." (D&C 46:13; see also Moro. 10:7; 1 Cor. 12:3.) Many Latter-day Saints have this gift.

Others have a related gift, as shown by these two verses in section 46 of the Doctrine and Covenants: "To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. . . . To others it is given to believe on their words, that they also might have eternal life if they continue faithful." (D&C 46:13-14.)

Where it is given to some to know and to others to believe on their words, those who know must be responsible for sharing their testimonies. Only in this way can they give those who have the gift of believing on their words something to lean upon as they, too, move toward eternal life.

The relationship between these gifts illustrates the purpose for which all spiritual gifts are given: "And all these gifts come from God, for the benefit of the children of God." (D&C 46:26) Spiritual gifts are given to members of the Church "that all may be profited thereby." (D&C 46:12; see also D&C 46:9; Moro. 10:8.) The same principle is evident in Paul's teachings in 1 Corinthians 12. Here spiritual gifts are likened to the various parts of the body, each performing its own function and each serving the entire "body of Christ." (1 Cor. 12:27.)

We must take care never to misuse spiritual gifts. As the Prophet Joseph Smith taught, when spiritual gifts "are applied to that which God does not intend, they prove an injury, a snare and a curse instead of a blessing." (Teachings, p. 248.)

Another spiritual gift is the gift of "teach[ing] the word of knowledge by the same Spirit." (Moro. 10:10; see also Alma 9:21; D&C 46:18.) Many of us have received this gift, and we have all been blessed by its exercise.

The spiritual gift referred to as the "word of wisdom" (see D&C 46:17; Moro. 10:9; 1 Cor 12:8) has been explained as the wise application of knowledge. I would call this judgment. This is a precious gift for any field of knowledge, but judgment in applying spiritual knowledge is a quality of eternal worth.

To others are given the gifts of speaking with tongues or interpreting tongues. (See D&C 46:24-25; Moro. 10:15-16; 1 Cor. 12:10.) These two gifts should always be manifest together because the purpose of spiritual gifts having to do with communication is to edify the people of God. (See Marion G. Romney in Conference Report, Apr. 1956, p. 71.) If a person spoke in tongues without someone to interpret, there would be no edification. This is why the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that members should not "speak in tongues except there be an interpreter present." (Teachings, p. 247; see also 1 Cor. 14:28.)

To others is given the gift of [page 70] "faith to be healed." (D&C 46:19.) Most of us know persons who have been healed miraculously. Many of these Healings are attributable, at least in part, to their gift of faith to be healed.

Another spiritual gift is "faith to heal." (D&C 46:20; see also Moro. 10:11; 1 Cor. 12:9; Teachings, p. 224-25.) This gift has an obvious relationship to priesthood administration to the sick. It has additional significance as well, since both men and women can pray for and exercise faith that a loved one will be healed. The Apostle James taught the early Saints: "Pray for one another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16.)

The Bible tells us that if there are any sick among us we should "call for the elders of the Church" who should pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord, "and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." (James 5:14-15.) Similarly, the Doctrine and Covenants states that the elders shall be called to "pray for and lay their hands upon [the sick] in the name of the Lord, and he that hath faith . . . to be healed, and is not appointed unto death, shall be healed." (D&C 42:44, 48.)
These scriptures obviously refer to administrations to the sick by those who hold the priesthood, but they also stress the importance of faith in the performance and receipt of that priesthood function.

The mingling of priesthood powers and spiritual gifts is also evident in another spiritual gift. "And again, to some is given the working of miracles." (D&C 46:21; see also Moro. 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:10.)

Miracles are obviously worked through the power of the priesthood, but the prayer of faith is also at work. The great sermon on faith in the twelfth chapter of Ether states: "For if there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them." (Ether 12:12.) The working of miracles is described as a spiritual gift.

Since spiritual gifts come by the power of the Holy Ghost, and the gift of the Holy Ghost comes by the laying on of hands by those holding the priesthood, the priesthood is always a factor in spiritual gifts. But spiritual gifts obviously bless the lives of those who do not themselves hold the priesthood.

Moroni speaks of the spiritual gift of " beholding of angels and ministering spirits." (Moro. 10:14.) Alma and Amaleki both list this among the various gifts of the Spirit. (See Alma 9:21; Omni 1:25.) Mary had such an experience when she was visited by the angel who told her that she was to become the mother of the Son of God. (See Luke 1:26-38.)

A more familiar gift of the Spirit is personal revelation. Alma described the universal character of this spiritual gift: "And now, he imparteth his word by angels unto men, yea, not only men but women also. Now this is not all; little children do have words given unto them many times, which confound the wise and the learned." (Alma 32:23.)

There is a choice example of personal revelation in the twenty-fifth chapter of Genesis. When Rebekah was carrying the twins Jacob and Esau, "the children struggled together within her." The scripture says she was troubled at this and so "she went to enquire of the Lord." (Gen. 25:22.) Here we see a major principle of revelation. It usually comes in response to earnest prayer. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matt. 7:7.)

In this instance the Lord spoke to Rebekah, saying: "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." (Gen. 25:23.) Though she was the wife of a prophet and patriarch, Rebekah inquired of the Lord and the Lord instructed her directly on a matter of great personal concern to her, to the children she would bear, and to generations unborn. After recounting this incident, Elder Bruce R. McConkie concluded: "The Lord gives revelation to women who pray to him in faith." (New Era, May 1978, p. 36.)

Another spiritual gift is the gift of prophecy. "And to others it is given to prophesy." (D&C 46:22; see also Moro. 10:13; 1 Cor. 12:10, 1 Cor. 14:1.)

The Bible has many references to women who had or will have the gift of prophecy. One of the clearest of these is from the sermon Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost. Relying on a prophecy from the Old Testament (see Joel 2:28-29), he declared:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

"And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in [page 71] those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy." (Acts 2:17-18.)
The Book of Acts states that four daughters of Phillip were blessed with the gift of prophecy. (See Acts 21:8-9.) One of the two mortal witnesses of the divinity of the infant Jesus was the aged woman, Anna. She was a holy woman who "departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." (Luke 2:37.) When Anna saw the infant Jesus in the temple, she gave thanks to the Lord and "spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." (Luke 2:38.) This is a classic illustration of prophetic testimony and utterance.

The Inspired Translation of the Old Testament contains a prophetic utterance by our first mother, Eve. (See JST Gen. 4:11; Moses 5:11; see also references to prophecy by other women in Num. 12:2; Judg. 4:4.)

How can a woman have the gift of prophecy when she does not hold the priesthood? That question has confused some, because the nouns prophecy and prophet and their variations, such as the adjective prophetic and the verb prophesy, are used in several different senses.

When we hear the word prophet in our day, we are accustomed to thinking of the prophet. These words signify him who holds the prophetic office and is sustained as the prophet, seer, and revelator. The priesthood offices and powers exercised by the President of the Church are unique. As we learn in the Doctrine and Covenants, it is given to him to have "all the gifts of God which he bestows upon the head of the church." (D&C 107:92; see also D&C 46:29; D&C 50:26-28.)

The spiritual gift of prophecy is quite different. As we read in the Book of Revelation, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev. 19:10.) The Prophet Joseph Smith relied on this scripture in teaching that "every other man who has the testimony of Jesus" is a prophet. (Teachings, p. 119.) Similarly, the Apostle Paul states that "he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." (1 Cor. 14:3.) Thus, in the sense used in speaking of spiritual gifts, a prophet is one who testifies of Jesus Christ, teaches God's word, and exhorts God's people. In its scriptural sense, to prophesy means much more than to predict the future.

The scriptures often use the word prophet and its derivatives in the broad sense of one who teaches and testifies of God. When the prophet Moses was asked to forbid two men who "prophesied in the camp," he refused, expressing the wish "that all the Lord's people were prophets." (Num. 11:26, 29.) The Apostle Paul taught that Christians should "desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." (1 Cor. 14:1.) The Book of Mormon describes various times in which there were many prophets. (See 1 Ne. 1:4; W of M 1:16-18.) In our day, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith declared that "all members of the Church should seek for the gift of prophecy, for their own guidance, which is the spirit by which the word of the Lord is understood and his purpose made known." (Church History and Modern Revelation, 3 vols., Salt Lake City, Deseret Book Co., 1953, 1:201.)

It is important for us to understand the distinction between a prophet, who has the spiritual gift of prophecy, and the prophet, who has the prophetic office.

Some who have had the gift of prophecy have forgotten this distinction. Miriam, who is referred to as a prophetess (see Num. 12:2), and Aaron, who was a priest, disagreed with one of the decisions of the prophet, Moses. The Bible describes how they "spake against Moses." (Num. 12:1.) Moses, who the scriptures say was "meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12: 3), may not have been able to hold his own in a debate with this rebellious priest and prophetess. But the Lord was aware of the circumstance and came into the controversy on the side of his prophet. The Bible tells us how the Lord "came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle." (Num. 12:5.) He rebuked and punished Miriam and Aaron for speaking against his prophet.

It is vital for us to honor the distinction between the prophetic gift and the prophetic office, between a prophet and the prophet.

Other gifts of the Spirit are associated with the exercise of the keys or power of the priesthood.
First, the Doctrine and Covenants says, "unto some it may be given to have all those gifts, that there may be a head, in order that every member may be profited thereby." (D&C 46:29.)

Second, we read in this same source: "And unto the bishop of the church, and unto such as God shall appoint and ordain to watch over the church and to be elders unto the church, are to have it given unto them to discern all those gifts lest there shall be any among you professing and yet be not of God." (D&C 46:27; see also 1 Cor. 12:10.)

This power of discernment is essential if we are to distinguish between genuine spiritual gifts and the counterfeits Satan seeks to use to deceive men and women and thwart the work of God. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "Nothing is a greater injury to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit when they think they have the spirit of God." (Teachings, p. 205.) He also taught that "no man nor sect of men without the regular constituted authorities, the Priesthood and discerning of spirits, can tell true from false spirits." (Teachings, p. 213.)

Satan-inspired and man-made counterfeits of spiritual gifts have been present throughout our religious history. This is evident from the enchantments wrought by Pharaoh's sorcerers and magicians (see Ex. 7:11, 22; Ex. 8:7), and from Isaiah's warnings against "wizards that peep, and that mutter" and "them that have familiar spirits" [page 72] (Isa. 8:19). The Savior warned against false Christs and false prophets who "shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch, that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect … according to the covenant." (JS--H 1:22.) The Apostle John said, "Try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 Jn. 4:1.)

Just a few months after the Church was organized, Hiram Page, one of the earliest members, was receiving revelations through a seer stone. The Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith to tell Hiram Page privately that "those things which he has written from that stone are not of me and that Satan deceiveth him." (D&C 28:11.) The receipt of revelation had not been "appointed unto" Hiram Page, the Lord explained, "neither shall anything by appointed unto any of this church contrary to the church covenants. For all things must be done in order, and by common consent in the church, by the prayer of faith." (D&C 28:12-13.)

Here we learn that Satan gives revelations to deceive the children of men and that our protection is in following the order of the Church on who should receive revelation for what subject. In this, both men and women have equal responsibility to follow the duly ordained leaders of the church who have the obligation to lead and, on occasion, to correct.

Early in the second year of the Church, the Lord revealed that "there are many spirits which are false spirits, which have gone forth in the earth, deceiving the world." (D&C 50:2.) The revelation on spiritual gifts tells the elders who were going forth on missions to be righteous and prayerful "that ye may not be seduced by evil spirits, or doctrines of devils, or the commandments of men; for some are of men, and others of devils." (D&C 46:7.)

Other revelations give instructions that help priesthood leaders discern the spirits and avoid being deceived. Thus, in section 52 of the Doctrine and Covenants we read that "he that speaketh, whose spirit is contrite, whose language is meek and edifieth, the same is of God if he obey mine ordinances." (D&C 52:16.) In contrast, "he that is overcome and bringeth not forth fruits, even according to this pattern, is not of me." (D&C 52:18.)

The Prophet's instruction that a person should not speak in tongues unless there was someone to interpret is an application of this principle. As the Lord said: "That which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness." (D&C 50:23; see also D&C 50:30-35; Teachings, pp. 203-4.)

I have spoken of many different spiritual gifts. I have pointed out that these gifts come by the power of the Holy Ghost and that they are available to every member of the Church, male and female.
We should seek after spiritual gifts. They can lead us to God. They can shield us from the power of the adversary. They can compensate for our inadequacies and repair our imperfections. Almost a century ago President George Q. Cannon of the First Presidency taught the Saints:

"If any of us are imperfect, it is our duty to pray for the gift that will make us perfect. ... No man ought to say, 'Oh, I cannot help this; it is my nature.' He is not justified in it, for the reason that God has promised to give strength to correct these things, and to give gifts that will eradicate them. If a man lacks wisdom, it is his duty to ask God for wisdom. The same with everything else. That is the design of God concerning His Church. He wants His Saints to be perfected in the truth. For this purpose He gives these gifts, and bestows them upon those who seek after them, in order that they may be a perfect people upon the face of the earth." (Millennial Star, Apr. 1894, p. 260.)

I saw that principle in action in the home in which I was raised. Having lost her husband, my widowed mother was incomplete. How she prayed for what she needed to fulfill her responsibility to raise her three small children! She was seeking, she was worthy, and she was blessed! Her prayers were answered in many ways, including the receipt of spiritual gifts. She had many, but the ones that stand out in my memory are the gifts of faith, testimony, and wisdom. She was a mighty woman in Zion, a great example of a scripture she loved to quote--Lehi's promise to his son Jacob that God "shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain." (2 Ne. 2:2.)

I testify to the truth of what I have taught. I testify of Jesus Christ, our Savior, whose blood has atoned for repented sins and whose resurrection has broken the bands of death for all. The gospel was restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith, whose successor, President Ezra Taft Benson, is God's prophet today.
A spiritual gift is a God-given ability, distributed to individual Christians by the Holy Spirit that allows him/her to work through their lives to help the church execute its mission on earth. 2. What is the difference between spiritual gifts and natural talents? Spiritual gifts are spiritual abilities to do certain things. Natural talents are often the vehicle through which spiritual gifts can be used. For example, a Christian vocalist may have the spiritual gift of evangelism being expressed through the vehicle of musical talent. The spiritual gifts listed below are found in three passages: Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 28-30, and Ephesians 4:11. The Gift of Administration. The Greek word for the spiritual gift of administration is kubernesis. This is a unique term that refers to a shipmaster or captain. The literal meaning is to steer, or to rule or govern. Spiritual gifts are not innate, natural talents, like an ear for music or the ability to draw, but rather they are empowerments that the Holy Spirit gives to a believer to minister to the body in ways that were not possible by mere natural effort apart from the Holy Spirit. Spiritual gifts are empowerments for building up the church and extending the Kingdom of God. In 1 Corinthians 14, the Apostle Paul instructs this congregation on the function of spiritual gifts. He repeats several times that they are to strengthen or build up the church.