

Spiritual Gifts, Spiritual Persons, Spiritually-Gifted Persons or Spiritual Things or Spiritual Matters? A Comparative Study of the Translation of Tw'n Pneumatikw'n in 1 Corinthians 12:1a in Some Ghanaian Translations of the New Testament

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ABSTRACT

The exact meaning of tw'n pneumatikw'n in 1 Corinthians 12:1a has given cause to much unabated debate among scholars. Many translations and commentaries view it as “spiritual gifts”, “spiritual people”, “spiritual gifted people” and “spirituality.” This paper argues that tw'n pneumatikw'n in 1 Corinthians 12:1a may be translated creatively as “spiritual matters or spiritual things.” This translation is based on the grammar, syntax and content of 1 Corinthians 12:1 where tw'n pneumatikw'n is rendering it as spiritual matters or spiritual things; and is supported by the Akuapem-Twi Full Bible (BFBS 1871 and fully revised by UBS 1964), and the Asante-Twi Full Bible (UBS 1964) rendition of, tw'n pneumatikw'n as ‘that pertaining to the spirit/spiritual matters’, with ‘gifts’ in square brackets within the text.

Introduction

Scholars have unanimously agreed that tw'n pneumatikw'n in 1 Corinthians 12:1 is either the neuter or masculine gender of the adjective spiritual and so could be translated “spiritual things”, “spiritual people”, or “spiritual gifted people.” In 14:1 it is definitely neuter, but “things” may include both “people” and “spiritual gifts.” The term probably reflects the

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prideful way the Corinthians leaders referred to themselves (10:1). This is so because in Greek grammar, the three genders have the ending w/n in the genitive plural. This is always constant. Perhaps that may account for the reason why there are variations in the translation of tw'n pneumatikw'n in 1 Corinthians 12:1a. In this paper, consideration is given to some scholars' views on tw'n pneumatikw'n, an exegesis of 1Corinthians 12:1-3; and since the author is an Asante, the translation of the phrase in the Asante-Twi Bible also compared with that of the Akuapem-Twi and other Ghanaian mother tongue translations of the text; and a suggestion made as to how tw'n pneumatikw'n in 1 Corinthians 12:1 should be rendered in Asante tongue Bible. The paper also discusses the theological implication of translating tw'n pneumatikw'n as spiritual matters or spiritual things, and makes gives some concluding remarks.

1. Some scholars views on tw'n pneumatikw'n

Some scholars say tw'n pneumatikw'n means 'spiritual gifts'.³ Those who have discussed tw'n pneumatikw'n as 'spiritual gifts' have as their basis, Paul's use of the neutral plural ta pneumatikav, in chapter 14:1, where it refers primarily to prophecy and tongues and to the general argument that deals basically with the manifestation of gifts in the church and not with individual spirituality. Those proponents have joined tw'n pneumatikw'n to its parallels carismavtwn 'gifts of grace' in 1 Corinthians 12:4, and ta pneumatikav, in chapter 14:1. Thus, their view is based on clues from the entire context of 1 Corinthians 12-14.

Many scholars argue, then, that the corresponding genitive plural tw'n pneumatikw'n should be taken in a neuter rather than masculine sense as a reference to "spiritual gifts". They draw attention to 1Corinthians 14:1 where the accusative neuter ta pneumatikav is employed with reference to those spiritual things (in addition to love) which Paul's addressees are being exhorted to desire earnestly (zhloute). The ability to prophesy should thereby be of high priority: de ina profhtuvhte= "especially that you may prophesy". It is further argued in relation to the immediate context of

² Graig Blomberg, *The NIV Application Commentary of 1 Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 243.

³ H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary Hermenia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999), 910.

1Corinthians 12 that pneumatikwn (1Cor 12:1) and carismmvtwn (1Co 12:4) are being used interchangeably to refer to one and the same phenomena, namely: “spiritual gifts”. Metz has accordingly commented that even if *cavrisma* which is the common New Testament term for “gifts” does not feature in 1 Corinthians 12:1, pneumatikw'n can be correctly interpreted to mean “spiritual gifts” since the entire context of 1 Corinthians deals with subject.⁴

Metz along with many other scholars unfortunately overlooked the dynamic rhetoric of 1 Corinthians 12:1-3 which is actually focused on persons rather than “gifts” parse.⁵ According to Ekem, in considering the logical flow of Paul’s argumentation, it is more convincing to picture 1Cor 12:1-3 as rhetorical block focusing on an elitist group of self-styled pneumatikoiv whose claims and behavior Paul alludes to, in order to establish a case in 1 Corinthians 12:4ff.⁶

Others including John David Kwamena Ekem is of the view that tw'n pneumatikw'n should be rendered as ‘spiritual persons.’⁷ His position is based on the problem in the Corinthian church where the conflict with Paul is not simply over spiritual gifts as such but over the significance of the gift of tongues for ‘spiritual life’. He supports his claim with an exegesis of the concept in First Corinthians. In chapter 2, Paul contrasts the fusikoj anqrwpoj ‘natural/unspiritual person’ (2:14) with the pneumatikoj ‘spiritual person’ (2:15). He says, whereas the fusikoj anqrwpoj neither receives or understands the endowments of the Spirit of God because they are pneumatikw' avnakrivnontai ‘spiritually discerned’ (2:14), the pneumatikoj ‘spiritual person’ (2:15) is able to discern all things. In chapter 3:1 he laments that he could not address members of the Corinthian church as pneumatikoj ‘spiritual’ ‘because of their immaturity. In chapter 14 he discusses the subject of orderliness/propriety in Christian worship, and

⁴ R. F. Collins, *Showing the Spirit. A Theological Exposition of 1Corinthians 12-14*. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 447.

⁵ D. S. Metz, 1968. *1Corinthians: Beacon Bible Commentary*. Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1968), 423.

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ John David Kwamena Ekem, “Spiritual Gifts or Spiritual persons? 1 Corinthians 12:1a,” Revisited. *Neotestamenica: Journal of the New Testament Society of South Africa*. Vol 38 (2004): 54-74.

challenges his readers that the pneumatikoj 'spiritual person' will acknowledge that what he is writing is a command of the Lord.

It is important to state the contribution of Jonathan Kuwornu-Adjaottor in this discussion. If *tw'n pneumatikw'n* can be translated as 'spiritual gifts' (neuter), 'spiritual men'(masculine), 'spiritual women' (feminine), 'spiritual persons' (inclusive language), and give reasons to justify the translations, then it is possible to do a creative translation of 1 Corinthians 12:1, interpreting *tw'n pneumatikw'n* as both 'spiritual gifts' and 'spiritual persons'. This double but creative translation reads: 'Now concerning spiritually-gifted persons, brethren...' According to Kuwornu-Adjaottor, this translation is possible because, spiritual gifts are meaningless unless they manifest in the lives of persons. On the other hand, a person cannot be addressed as spiritual unless he or she possesses and manifests spiritual gifts. The translation is supported by the content of 1Corinthians 12:1-3 where Paul is alluding to the claims of an elitist group of self-styled *oiv pneumatikoi* 'spiritual persons' in order to establish a case for 1 Corinthians 12:4ff which is on *cavrismata* 'gifts of grace'.⁸

Other scholars' including Olagunju believes that *pneumatikoj* in this chapter is used with more restricted reference to spiritual gifts and it is synonymous to *cavrismata*. *Pneumatikoj* is a favourite term for many of the Corinthian believers but Paul brought in *cavrismata* in this context to educate the *pneumatikoj* on the need to understand the operations of the Spirit. However, some scholars think that Paul brought in *cavrismata* as an apostolic corrective to replace an already misused word (*pneumatikoi*).⁹ Paul wants the *pneumatikoi* to realize that the manifestations of God's presence on an individual members of the community of faith is unmerited gifts of God's grace; it is God who works in the individuals, the treasure is God's not his, therefore, believers should not remain unaware of this operation or remain ignorant about these manifestations.

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Jonathan Kuwornu-Adjaottor, "Spiritual Gifts, Spiritual persons, or Spiritually-Gifted Persons"? A Creative Translation of *tw'n pneumatikw'n* in 1Corinthians 12:1a, *Neotestamenica Journal of the New Testament Society of South Africa.*: 46. 2 (2012):260-273.

⁹ Olugbenga Olagunju, "Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 12:1-11." *America Journal of Biblical Theology*. Vol 12 no 43 (2011):6.

Most interpreters believe that the term *tw'n pneumatikw'n* denotes spiritual gifts (from Tertullian, Novatian, and Cyril of Jerusalem to Conzelmann, Senft, and Lang).¹⁰ Scrage notes that the masculine may embrace the Corinthians' meaning, while the neuter reflects Paul's preference to substitute *carismata*.¹¹ What favours the translation of the verse is the usage in 1 Corinthians 14:1 where Paul used the word with an imperatival force be zealous for "ta pneumatikav.¹² On the contrary, the usage in 1 Coringthins 2:15; 3:1 and 14:37 favours the masculine noun where Paul referred to persons as spiritual people. Ben Witherington III observes that this rendering in 1 Corinthinas 14:37 "If anyone thinks he or she is pneumatikoj" that is spiritual may reflect the problems in Corinthian church since the conflict is not over spiritual manifestations parse but over the significance of tongue speaking for spiritual life.¹³ But from the context of 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, the issue of tongue does not arise; the spiritual people (*pneumatikoi*) need to be educated about the operations of the Spirit that is manifested during worship.¹⁴

Ervin is of the view that since *tw'n pneumatikw'n* in 1 Corinthians 12:1 agrees in grammar, syntax and content with *carismavtwn* 'gifts' (12:4), *diakoniwn* 'ministries/services' (12:5) and *evnerghmavtwn* ('workings' (12:6), and since 'gifts' and 'services' are all 'manifestations' of the Spirit, "manifestation represent a viable solution to the problem of 1 Corinthians 12:1. What Ervin means here is that *tw'n pneumatikwn* in 1 Corinthians 12:1 should be translated 'spiritual manifestations'. His view is not only based on Greek grammar and syntax, but also on a contextual hermeneutics of the pericope.¹⁵

¹⁰ H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary Hermenia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999), 910.

¹¹ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: William B. Ferdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 910.

¹² R. S. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of Saint Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1937), 490.

¹³ Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthian* (Grand Rapids: The Paternoster Press, 1975), 257

¹⁴ Olagunju, "Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 12:1-11,"(2011): 12.

¹⁵ H. M. Ervin, *Spirit Baptism: A Biblical Investigation*. (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 96.

Paul's use of *tw'n pneumatikw'n* in 1 Corinthians 12:1 should then be regarded as a rhetorical tool aimed precisely at those who presumed to have been so spiritual (being given over to excessive ecstasy) that they deviated from the true framework in which spiritual gifts should be exercised in the Church.¹⁶ Paul uses the word *pneumatikoj* and *charismata* interchangeably and at times used it synonymously. When the translation follows the root word "pneuma" it stresses the spiritual nature or sources of a particular ability hence, the translation "now concerning the spiritual things" which refers primarily to the manifestation of the Spirit. But when it follows the root *carij* the emphasis shifted to the gift of grace and the translation now concerns the spiritual gifts."¹⁷

Fee has also come out with another interesting proposal that instead of debating the gender of *tneumatikwn*, attention should rather be devoted to Paul's immediate and overall concern, namely the determination of the Holy Spirit's activity. Fee suggests accordingly that, Paul "uses charismata for the specific manifestations of the Spirit's activity... When the emphasis is on the manifestation, the "gift" as such, Paul speaks of *charismata*; when the emphasis is on the Spirit, he speaks of *pneumatika*."¹⁸

According to Collins, if the genitive plural *tneumatikw'n* in 12:1 is to be understood as a reference to "the things of the Spirit" and linked to its accusative plural counterpart in 1 Corinthians 14:1, it would also be quite plausible to argue for an inclusive reference to persons in whom these spiritual manifestations are actively at work. This would be more in keeping with the rhetorics of 1 Cor 12:1-3 which appears to be a "double-edged sword" aimed at human channels of spiritual phenomena.¹⁹

Orr and Walther have interestingly conceded, in their Anchor Bible translation notes on 1 Cor 12 that is possible to interpret *tw'n pneumatikw'n*

¹⁶ Ekem, "Spiritual Gifts or Spiritual persons? 1 Corinthians 12:1a," Revisited. *Neotestamentica*: 65.

¹⁷ Eduard Schweitzer, "The Spirit of Power: The Uniformity and Diversity of the Concept of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament," *Interpretation* 64 (July 1952): 259-278.

¹⁸ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 576.

¹⁹ Collins, *Showing the Spirit. A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14*, 447.

(12:1) as a reference to “persons” rather than “gifts”, since the “discussion²⁰ that follows is concerned with persons as much as the gifts they received” Although the rendering, “Now with reference to the spiritual gifts”, appears in their main text, this concession is undoubtedly a pointer to the ambiguity characterizing τῶν πνευματικῶν, which can be taken as an ambiguous phrase²¹ with a grammatically indeterminate gender. If 1Cor 12:4 and 14:1 would seem to zero in on spiritual gifts, it could also be argued that 12:1-3, 7-30 as well as the entire chapters 13 and 14 affirm the compartment/ character expected of groups and individuals in whom such gifts are manifested.

3. An exegesis of 1Corinthians 12:1:1-3

1. Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.
2. You know that when *you were* pagans, you were led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led.
3. 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.

As we have seen, Paul hardly flatters the Corinthians when he indicates in verse 1 that he is writing to remedy their ignorance on the matter of spirituality. The word *gifts* has been supplied by the translators, as indicated by the fact that “*gifts*” is in italics. Literally, Paul is writing, **“Now concerning spirituals, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.”** In other words, οἱ πνευματικοὶ “spirituals” should not be ignorant about spiritual matters or spiritual things. The word rendered “spiritual gifts” here is not the same word which is rendered “gifts” in verse 4.

The word **“spirituals”** in verse 1 is a rendering of a word whose root (*pneuma*) refers to the spiritual realm. The problem is that the particular term found in verse 1 represents both the neuter and the masculine genders. If the term is understood as masculine in gender, Paul is referring to “spiritual people.” If the term is really neuter, Paul is referring to “spiritual ”

²⁰ F. William Orr and James Arthur Walther, *The Anchor Bible 1 Corinthians: A New Translation Introduction with a Study of the Life of Paul, Notes, and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc, 1979), 276.

²¹ *ibid*

things” or “spiritual *gifts*.” In 1 Corinthians 2:15; 3:1, and 14:37, Paul uses the term in the masculine gender, and thus we understand “spiritual” to describe people. In 1 Corinthians 14:1, the term is used as a neuter and thus is rendered “spiritual *gifts*.”

It would seem we are being forced to decide between one or the other, the masculine gender or the neuter gender. I am not alone in contending that the two senses may be combined and that we are not being forced to choose one and reject the other.²² In First Corinthians pneumatikoi is used fifteen times in adjectival or substantival form²³ and in 1 Corinthians 12:1 it is used as parallel usage introducing the issue of the spiritual ones within the Corinthian church who were gifted. Paul’s use of τῶν pneumatikῶν in 1 Corinthians 12:1 should then be regarded as a rhetorical tool aimed precisely at those who presumed to have been so spiritual being given over to excessive ecstasy that they deviated from the true spiritual matters.

Pneumatikoj is a favourite term for many of the Corinthian believers but Paul brought in *cavriasmata* in this context to educate the Pneumatikoj on the need to understand the operations of the Spirit, however, some scholars think that Paul brought in *cavriasmata* as an apostolic corrective to replace an already misused word (pneumatikoi). Paul’s desire is to educate the pneumatic in Corinthian church on how to properly handle the things of the spirit, knowing their background and need for him to properly educate them on spiritual matters.²⁴

Paul is introducing the subject of spiritual gifts. The term “spirituals” emphasizes the source of the spiritual gifts given to Christians. The root word *charisma*, employed in verses 4 and following, emphasizes the fact that gifts are manifestations of divine grace, sovereignly bestowed and not obtained on the basis of merit. The Corinthians supposed that certain spiritual gifts are the evidence of superior spirituality, while the absence of these gifts is a proof of spiritual inferiority.

²² Deffinbaugh, Bob. “Spirituality and Spiritual Gifts - Part 1 (1 Cor. 12:1-3)” Accessed 19/12/12.

²³ Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peacebody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 153.

²⁴ Olagunju “Exegesis of 1Corinthians 12:1-11,” (2011): 12.

In verse 2, Paul reminds those relatively new believers in Corinth who think they are so spiritual that in the past, they had been led astray to dumb idols. In saying that the Corinthians had been “led astray to dumb idols,” Paul implies that the Corinthians had experienced the effects of evil spirits in their former pagan worship.²⁵

Verse 3 is necessary in the light of verses 1 and 2. Since the Corinthians are naive, ignorant of all that they should know concerning spiritual matters, Paul must “make known” to them a test by which the Holy Spirit is distinguished from all other “spirits.” This led to the next verse where Christological test for manifestation of the spirit is the proclamation of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The burning desire of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus is Paul’s overall criterion of genuineness in this matter of

spirituality.²⁶ It is important to notice that Paul’s emphasis here is upon “speech.” He has already referred to the idols of the Corinthians’ past as “*dumb idols*” (verse 2). Now he speaks about speech, the speech of worshipers. Ordinary speech is not primarily in view here, but inspired utterance, speech made under the controlling influence of a spirit. This is specifically indicated in the case of one who speaks “by (or in—note the marginal note in verse 3 of the NASB) the Spirit of God.” In other words, it is the Spirit of God, speaking through a person, who is incapable of saying, “Jesus is accursed.” On the other hand, Bob believes Paul says that, a person speaking under demonic control is incapable of saying, “Jesus is Lord.” Nowhere in the gospels does a demon-possessed person say this. The demons reluctantly acknowledge that Jesus is the “Son of God,” or the “Holy One of God,” but not that He is Lord. Even when commanded to come out of a possessed person, the demons seem to resist and rebel to the last moment (see Mark 1:23-26).

Ekem on the other hand says “Paul avoids, to a very large extent, the terminology of the pneumatics and rather employs the concept of “gifts of grace” of the Spirit. This is in order to draw the Corinthians away from their extremist views on spiritual manifestations, and to clearly show the divine-gift character of the Spirit’s operations in the Church, which are so

²⁵ Frank E. Gabelein, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary with the New International Version: Romans through Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 261.

²⁶ Ibid, 194.

diverse that they cannot be confined merely to glossolalia and prophecy. It is for this very reason that the confession of Jesus as Lord is clearly spelt out as essential vehicle through which the Spirit operates.²⁷

3. The translation of 1 Corinthians 12:1 in some Ghanaian mother-tongue Bibles²⁸

In this section, we shall look at some translations of 1 Corinthians 12:1 – the focus of the tw'n pneumatikw'n debate – in the Ghanaian context, through various translations. I am an Ashanti so I will start from the translations in my mother-tongue, before looking at the other Ghanaian mother-tongues I can understand.

*TwerεKronkron (Asante-Twi Full Bible)*²⁹

Na deε εfa honhom fam[akyεdeε] ho deε, anuanum, mempεε sε mede

²⁷ (Ekem, 2004, 62).

²⁸ The term, mother-tongue Bibles means the translation of the Bible into such languages into which people are born and nurtured. Mother-tongue Bibles give Ghanaians/Africans the opportunity to interpret Scripture from their own worldview. The Bible translation agencies in Ghana are the Bible Society of Ghana (BSG), The International Bible Society (IBS), and The Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT). The Bible Society of Ghana (BSG) has translated and published the full Bible in eight (8) Ghanaian mother-tongues – Asante-Twi, Akuapem-Twi, Gā, Mfante, Ewe, Dangme, Dagbanli, and Nzema. The New Testament has been translated into Esahie and Dagaare. The Old Testament translation projects in these languages are ongoing. Revision projects on some of the older versions are underway. The Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) has translated and published the Bible in five (5) Northern Ghanaian mother-tongues – Konkomba, Tampulma, Bimboba, Farefare and Chumburung – and the New Testament in twenty-five (25) languages. The International Bible Society (IBS) has also translated and published the full Bible in one (1) Ghanaian language -Ewe, and the New Testament in three languages – Akuapem-Twi, Asante-Twi, and Dangme. (J. E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, “The Practice of Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics in Some Ghanaian Communities: A Case Study of the Phrase bny ys'r'l (Deut. 32:8)” *Journal of Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutic, Volume 1 No.*

I (2015), 136.).

²⁹ Twerε Kronkron, Accra: Bible Society of Ghana/United Bible Societies, 1964.

biribiara mesie mo. [And regarding that which pertains to the spiritual [gifts]]”brothers, I do not want to hide anything from you].

TwerɛKronkron [Asante-Twi NT&Psalms] ³⁰

Me nuanom, merebɛkyerɛ mo nsem a ɛfa Honhom Kronkron akyɛdɛɛ no mu. Anuanom, mepɛ sɛ mohunu mu nokorɛ [My brothers and sisters, I am going to teach you matters concerning the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Brothers and sisters, I want you to know the truth in regard to this very issue].³¹

Kyerɛw Kronkron [Akuapem-Twi Full Bible] ³²

Na nea ɛfa honhon fam[akyɛdɛɛ] ho de, anuanum, memɛsɛ me kora mo so. [And regarding that which pertains to the spiritual [gifts], brethren, I do not want to hide the facts from you].

Nkwa Asem [Akuapem-Twi New Testament and Psalms]

Me nuanom, merebɛ kyerɛmo nsem a ɛfa Honhom Kronkron akyɛdɛɛ no mu. anuanum, mepɛsɛ mohunu mu nokorɛ. [My brothers and sisters, I am going to teach you matters concerning the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Brothers and sisters, I want you to know the truth in regard to this very issue].³³

Nwoma Kronkron [Fante Full Bible] ³⁴

Na sunsum mu akyɛdze ho dze, enuanon, memɛpɛdɛ homyɛ ho atam. [And in regard to gifts that are spiritual, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant].

Ahyâmu Fofor No Mu Nwoma [Fanti New Testament Interconfessional Rev. Ed.] ³⁵

Na, enuanom, mennkâpâ dâ sunsum mu akyâdze ho asâm yâ biribi a hom nnyim. [So, brothers and sisters, things concerning spiritual gifts are things you know].

³⁰ *Twerɛ Kronkron*, 1964.

³¹ *Apam Fofro Ne Nwom* (Asante-Twi New Testament and Psalms), Accra: International Bible Society, 1998.

³² *Kyerɛw Kronkron*, 1964.

³³ *Kyerɛw Kronkron*, 2012.

³⁴ *Nwoma Kronkron*, Accra: Bible Society of Ghana/United Bible Societies.

³⁵ *Ahyâmu Fofor No Mu Nwoma*, Bungay, Suffolk: United Bible Societies, 1982.

4. How is tw'n pneumatikw'n rendered in the Ghanaian mother-tongue translations?

A closer look at the Ghanaian mother tongue translations of the text quoted above reveal four different ways in which tw'n pneumatikw'n in 1 Corinthians 12:1 has been translated. The Ewe Full Bible (UBS 1931), the Ewe New Testament (BSG 1990), the Fante Bible (UBS *Nwoma Kronkron*, Accra: Bible Society of Ghana/United Bible Societies. *Ahyâmu Fofor No Mu Nwoma*, Bungay, Suffolk: United Bible Societies, 1982.1948), and the Fante New Testament (UBS 1982, Interconfessional Revised Edition) render tw'n pneumatikw'n as 'spiritual gifts', following some of the English translations such as the *King James Version*, *Revised Standard Version*, *New Revised Standard Version*, and *NewInternational Version*. The Asante-Twi New Testament and Psalms (IBS 1988), the Akuapem-Twi New Testament and Psalms (IBS 1997), the Dangme Full Bible (BSG/UBS 1999), translate tw'n pneumatikw'n as 'gifts of the Holy Spirit'. This rendering is in line with some English paraphrases such as the Good News Bible and Living Bible. The Gã Full Bible (BFBS 1907), the Gã New Testament with orthographic changes (BSG/UBS1977), the Dangme New Testament (BSG/UBS 1977), and the Gã Full Bible (BSG, 2006 Revised Edition) translate tw'n pneumatikw'n as 'spiritual things/phenomena', in line with the Greek text (Kuwornu-Adjaottor 2012), taking tw'n pneumatikw'n as neuter noun, thus, 'broadening the scope of interpretation' (Ekem 2004,71). The Akuapem-Twi Full Bible (BFBS 1871 and fully revised by UBS 1964), and the Asante-Twi Full Bible (UBS 1964), tw'n pneumatikw'n as 'that pertaining to the spirit/spiritual matters', with 'gifts' in square brackets within the text. With this rendition, one can say that the first translators/revisers recognised the difficulty posed by the Greek text. Also, it can be deduced that the 'gifts' [*akyede/akyedeε*] have been put in square brackets to show that the issue was not completely resolved at the time of revision.

5. A creative translation of 1 Corinthians 12:1

If tw'n pneumatikw'n can be translated as 'spiritual gifts' (neuter), 'spiritual men' (masculine), 'spiritual women' (feminine), 'spiritual persons' (inclusive language), and give reasons to justify the translations, then it is possible to do a creative translation of 1 Corinthians 12:1, interpreting tw'n

pneumatikw'n as spiritual matters or spiritual things. This double but creative translation reads: 'And regarding that which pertains to the spiritual matters, brothers...'. This translation is based on the grammar, syntax and content of 1 Corinthians 12:1 where tw'n pneumatikw'n is rendering as spiritual matters or spiritual things.

Again, this translation is supported by The Akuapem-Twi Full Bible (BFBS 1871 and fully revised by UBS 1964), and the Asante-Twi Full Bible (UBS 1964), render tw'n pneumatikw'n as 'that pertaining to the spirit/spiritual matters', with 'gifts' in square brackets within the text.

6. How should tw'n pneumatikw'n be rendered in the Asante mother-tongue translations of 1Corinthians 12:1a?

In the light of the discussion above, I translate 1 Corinthians 12:1 into Asante -Twi, my mother tongue as follows: *Na deε efa honhom fam nnoama ho deε, anuanum, mempεε sε monnya ho nimdeε.* {And regarding that which pertains to the spiritual matters, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant}.

7. Theological implication of translating tw'n pneumatikw'n as 'spiritual matters or spiritual things' for Asante Christians

Translating tw'n pneumatikw'n in 1Corinthians 12:1 as *honhom fam nnoama* "spiritual matters or spiritual things" will shape perspective of Asante Christians who have been indoctrinated to believe that tw'n pneumatikw'n is restricted to only "spiritual gifts' (neuter), "spiritual people' (masculine), "spiritually gifted person' (inclusive language). Since a person's life is shaped by whatever information he receives, majority of the Ashanti Christians have given much attention only to the charismata. Meanwhile tw'n pneumatikw'n as spiritual matters or spiritual things seems to denote the whole range of activities, attitudes, experiences, etc, which ultimately depend on and derive from the Spirit and which draw their significance from the Spirit – in contrast to the merely material, or to those activities, attitudes, etc, which derive from the flesh and draw their significance from the merely physical world (Dunn 1986, 707). This usage is attested to once in Romans; six times in 1 Corinthians; once in Ephesians; and once in Galatians.

This translation will broaden the horizon of Ashanti Christians to pay attention to matters of great concern to God in their endeavours.

Conclusion

This paper has have argued that *tw'n pneumatikw'n* in 1Corinthians 12:1a may be translated as spiritual things or spiritual matters. The reasons for such creative translation are firstly, the phrase “*tw'n pneumatikw'n*” in verse 1 is either the neuter or masculine gender of the adjective spiritual and so could be translated “spiritual things”, “spiritual people”, or “spiritual gifted people.” In 14:1 it is definitely neuter, but “things” may include both “people” and “spiritual gifts.” This translation is based on the grammar, syntax and content of 1 Corinthians 12:1 where *tw'n pneumatikw'n* is rendering as spiritual matters or spiritual things. Secondly, Paul hardly flatters the Corinthians when he indicates in verse 1 that he is writing to remedy their ignorance on the matter of spirituality. The word *gifts* has been supplied by the translators, as indicated by the fact that “*gifts*” is in italics. Literally, Paul is writing, “Now concerning spirituals, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.” The word rendered “spiritual *gifts*” here is not the same word which is rendered “**gifts**” in verse 4. Paul’s desire in the context is to educate the Corinthian church on how to properly handle the things of the spirit, knowing their background and need for him to properly educate them on spiritual matters. This translation is vehemently supported by The Akuapem-Twi Full Bible (BFBS 1871 and fully revised by UBS 1964), and the Asante-Twi Full Bible (UBS 1964), render *tw'n pneumatikw'n* as ‘that pertaining to the spirit/spiritual matters’, with ‘gifts’ in square brackets within the text.

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