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Email: africa@amani.org.au

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Fullness of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom: *The Qualifications of the Seven*

Wendy Helleman

University of Jos, Nigeria

This essay was originally presented for a regional conference (Northern Zone) of the Nigerian National Association of Biblical Studies (NABIS), February (2008), at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN) Bukuru, Plateau State, focused on "The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Powers in Christian Community." Although references in this paper therefore tend to that context, it is clear that the issue has wider application, and for that reason the original has been broadened to include the general African situation.

Introduction

While the Christian church throughout Africa is experiencing unprecedented growth, such growth does not come without bringing its own challenges. One of the most dynamic of African nations, Nigeria, is passing through a difficult phase in its history, characterised by deep corruption, ethnic-religious violence, and considerable tension between an irreversible trend to modernisation, or Westernisation, and return to aspects of traditional religion. Perhaps church growth itself is never trouble-free. But contemporary growth, largely led by missionary pastors who are striking out on their own and are not aligned with mainline denominations, brings with it a threat to the future of the church, since the mushrooming of independent groups does not bode well for unity in the body of Christ.

Church growth in much of Africa, and in Nigeria in particular, is associated with the Pentecostal movement and charismatic ministries, with groups who emphasise the role of the Holy Spirit and recognise signs of the Spirit's presence in the gift of tongues, healing and exorcism. In this respect new Christian groups focus on aspects of the faith which have been taken seriously by African Independent Churches, accenting the role of prophecy as well as healing, especially through rites of deliverance, and for possession by evil spirits.

It has often been pointed out that the world view assumed by the Old Testament is closer to that of Africa. On the issue of spiritual powers, however, the gospels present us with a world which Africans would recognise. Think for a moment of how often the healing miracles of Jesus involve casting out demonic spirits, and how often Paul in his letters refers to powers, dominions, rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms (as at Eph 1:21, or 3:10).

The present paper will address the question of leadership by focusing on a passage in Acts that presents the choice of the Seven, and Stephen in particular, as men who are gifted by the Holy Spirit and wisdom. It was a time when the early church was experiencing rapid growth, and just as in our time, numerous problems accompanied such expansion. A study of the Seven chosen will help us reflect on the kind of spiritual leader needed when the church is growing and also facing tough problems. The story of Stephen and the Seven is significant for its focus on wisdom as a special gift of the Holy Spirit for such a time as this.

The relevant passage from Acts 6-7, particularly 6:3-10, gives a striking description of Stephen as one of 'the Seven' chosen and commissioned to take responsibility for distribution to the needy, especially the widows among 'Hellenist' or Diaspora Jews recognised by their facility in the Greek language. Chief among the conditions for the choice of these seven is that they be full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom. Throughout the Scriptures the Holy Spirit is associated with the presence and the power of God. The OT speaks of the anointing of the Holy Spirit for kings like David, so they might be a blessing and function as saviours of their people (1 Sm 6:13). For the OT prophecy is the outstanding gift of the Holy Spirit. Other attributes are associated with the Spirit in the Scriptures or history of Christian thought, but wisdom is not usually prominent among them.

As for wisdom itself, in the OT it is connected with discernment and understanding, or with specific skills, and attributed especially to those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways. In the

NT, in the early church, and in patristic discussion of the Trinity, wisdom has typically been associated with Christ, as in 1 Cor 1:24, "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." Very few early Christian fathers followed Irenaeus (Haer. 3.24.2; also 4.7.4; 4.20.1, using Prv 3:19; 8:22ff.) and Theophilus (ad Autol. 1:7; 2:10; 15) in associating wisdom with the Holy Spirit (Prestige 1964, 87-89, and 91-92). This gives all the more incentive to study this account of Stephen and the Seven, hoping that we may discover a message for our own times when the work of the Holy Spirit is prominent, but we rarely hear of wisdom as a characteristic of those filled with the Spirit. It is my hope that a traditional African emphasis on wisdom and the need for wise rulers may be redeemed for the challenges of our time.

The Need for the Appointment of Stephen and the Seven

Seven men were appointed to supervise fair distribution of gifts to the needy; Acts 2:44-45 shows us that the early believers shared a common purse, perhaps following on the example of the disciples when Jesus was with them (Jn 12:6; also Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35), but also following a pattern known in Judaism, with the well-known mandate to generosity in distributing alms for the poor (Mt 6:2-4). According to Acts 6:1, "In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food."

We note that this occurred at a time of incredible church growth. Thousands were coming to faith in Jesus, and the core leadership, namely the twelve apostles were unable to take care of all matters which called for their attention. Teaching and preaching the gospel was demanding enough, and remained their priority. The current crisis forced them to recognise the need to find responsible men to whom such tasks could be entrusted. Like Moses, when Jethro observed that he was wearing himself out in looking after the needs of the Israelites on his own (Ex 18:17-23; also Nm 11:17), the apostles needed to entrust to others capable of taking them on, the tasks which could be performed by them. In this way they would care more effectively for the needs of the body of believers.

This is an important principle for the success of ministry, even today. Can one person do it all? Some pastors, thinking that such is required, run a one-man show. But the Spirit gives different gifts. Numerous NT passages, like Rom 12:6-8 and 1 Cor 12:8-11, reflect on gifts given in the congregation, gifts of prophecy, serving, teaching, encouragement, contributing, or leadership. Sharing of tasks is vital to healthy congregational life. This issue needs some attention here because Acts 6 is often thought to mark the introduction of the office of deacon.

My concern in mentioning and examining the appointment of the Seven in terms of the institution of the diaconate is that the role of deacon in many of today's churches is seen as an office to take care of material needs, subordinate to offices taking care of spiritual needs. Suffice it to say that any such division of labour should not be read back into this very early period in the development of the church.

Indeed, the term used here, *διακονεῖν τραπέζαις* (Acts 6:2) is related to *διακονία*, and is also the etymological root of our word for the church office of deacon. Even so, as many commentators have realised, the passage does not give the exact precedent for the beginning of diaconal ministry, or the specific office of deacon in the church (as with the mention of deacons, *διακόνους*, in Phil 1:1). We recognise that when the apostles protest that they should focus on prayer and ministry of the word (*διακονία τοῦ λόγου*, Acts 6:4), they use the very same word (*διακονία*) which serves as root of the verb in verse two for 'service at tables' (*διακονεῖν*). In this usage we further recognise the apostles recalling the words of Jesus, that "the Son of Man did not come to be served (*διακονηθῆναι*), but to serve (*διακονῆσαι*), and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mk 10:45)," using the same verb, *διακονεῖν*. In response to the concern of the disciples as to who would be the greatest, Jesus had told them bluntly that the greatest is the one who serves, *διάκονος* (Mk 10:43). Clearly, we may read the Acts passage as showing that the disciples had learned something since their stay with Jesus.

So we come back to the question: just what exactly was the task of the Seven? The problem to be solved by their appointment was clearly, in the first place, the rather straightforward issue of supervision in the distribution of food, or other kinds of help given according to need. Theirs was the responsibility to see to it that the Greek speaking widows were not left out. Their assignment may have been somewhat broader, including the receipt of material or monetary gifts, and exchanging these for distribution to the needy, for the term διακονεῖν τραπέζαις may reflect financial transactions; the 'tables' (τραπέζαι) may refer to tables of money changers (as at Mt 21:12, and 25:27). In that sense the work of the Seven would be analogous to that of Judas among the disciples, a job for which maturity and accountability was needed, for we know Judas took advantage of the position for his own benefit. Responsibility for the common purse would be a business of trust, not to be given lightly (Williams 1990, 121).

A good understanding of the problem which gives rise to the story of Stephen is crucial to the correct understanding of the sequel. The appointment of the Seven comes as the response to a specific problem arising in the congregation, where widows among the Greek-speaking Jews were not receiving their due share in the daily distribution and sharing of provisions. We may assume from Luke's presentation of the issue that the number of these Hellenist widows was not small. What was the source of grumbling? What was the real issue between 'Ἑλληνιστῶν' or Greek Jews, and 'Ἑβραίους' or Hebrew Jews? We note that the ones doing the grumbling (Acts 6:1) were not the widows themselves, but others of the group to which they belonged, who felt slighted because 'their' widows were short-changed. What might explain this neglect of Greek-speaking Jews? Was it a problem of language and/or culture (the two are usually closely associated), as an initial reading might suggest, and misunderstanding due to difference of language? Was it somehow a question of interpretation of the laws (for charity, or for diet?) handed down from Moses? Was it a matter of lifestyle? Was it a question of incipient distinction and friction within the church between Palestine Jews and those from the Diaspora? Did this event mark the introduction into the church of the issue of 'Hellenisation'?

We know that in general the relationship between Jews living in Palestine and those from the Diaspora was not without tension. The 'Hellenisation' of the Jews, whether in Judaea or the Diaspora has been the object of research and discussion for some years (Helleman 1994, 429-454). 'Hellenisers' were an issue long before the time of the early church. The significant factors take us back to the third century BC, the period of Ptolemies and Seleucids, when issues of language led to the translation of the OT as Septuagint (LXX) (Bruce 1969, 125). In Palestine the issue of Hellenisation as a crisis in adopting foreign cultural patterns, came to a head with demands of the Syrian Seleucid Antiochus IV (175 BC), who went beyond earlier attempts to impose Greek ways in matters of culture and education (like Greek sports events), and forbade aspects central to Jewish religion, like circumcision. Jews were horrified to see the Torah burned. In this way the introduction of Hellenisation became a deadly threat, aimed at the heart of true Judaism and observance of Torah: keeping the Sabbath, avoidance of pork, temple worship and strict monotheism. The Seleucid measures provoked a strong reaction: the rebellion under the Maccabees who managed to initiate almost a century of independence for the Jews under Hasmonean rulers (141-63 BC).

These events did much to encourage Jewish nationalism, and support the Jews in strict adherence to the Law of Moses (or Torah). The Pharisees gained in importance at this time, for in their explanation of the Law for the people they added many specific injunctions in the process, as 'a hedge around Torah' to avoid unwitting disobedience. We also know that from this time Palestinian Jews began to look down on Diaspora Jews for not keeping the law as fully. Although we know that Diaspora Jews throughout the Hellenistic or Roman empires were insistent on circumcision and other distinctives of Judaism as mentioned above, they were of necessity more relaxed in their observance of aspects of the Mosaic laws, especially celebration of the festivals and involvement in sacrifice, given the distance from the temple in Jerusalem. It may be for this reason also that Diaspora Jews were more inclined to use allegorical interpretation of the Pentateuch, such as we find with Philo of Alexandria, rather than strict literal interpretation.

In self-defence the Diaspora Jews, on the other hand, would have recognised a certain pride and arrogance on the part of the Palestine Jews, and might well have said (with Jesus in Mt 23:1-4, and Paul in Rom 2) that by prescribing laws these Jews were imposing on others burdens which they themselves could not keep perfectly. We do know from the story of Peter and Cornelius in subsequent chapters (Acts 10:11) that issues of table fellowship would present a considerable challenge for the Apostles themselves. Those of the group later termed the 'Circumcision Party' among Judaeo-Christians would demand that new Christians adhere also to the law of Moses, especially in diet and sexual norms. Even after the Jerusalem Council, Palestinian Jewish Christians continued to observe the Jewish traditional ceremonies and rituals. And Jews looked down on Christians who had converted as Gentiles, and did not also observe the laws of Moses. We cannot ignore the friction soon to arise over the issues of 'Hellenisation', as it provides the context for the story of Stephen and is also about to shape the story of Paul. If the matter is not stated explicitly in Acts 6, it may be that the issue was self-evident for the original readers.

With the decision that 'seven men' be chosen, probably along the lines of a Jewish custom to choose a board of seven (Marshall 1980, 126), the Apostles immediately give the qualifications for these men: that they be known or witnessed (μαρτυρουμένους) as being 'full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom'. The actual choice of the particular men is not made by the apostles, but left to the congregation. The men to be chosen must be well-known, or we might say, of good repute. It is noteworthy that the apostles say nothing here about race, ethnic identity, or even the social class from which these men are to be chosen. They only insist that they be trustworthy and approved by the congregation, an important condition indeed, as we also know from conditions later given for choosing a bishop/overseer (1 Tm 3:2-7, ἐπίσκοπος). Although we do not know how the actual decision was made, we know that the Apostles gave their blessing on the seven chosen, commissioning them by the laying on of hands (Marshall 1980, 127; see also 1 Tm 5:22; Nm 27:18, 23; also Dt 34:9), just as they did with the appointment of missionaries like Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13:2-3). And we know that this decision was blessed. Luke tells us it resulted in further growth (Acts 6:7).

The amazing feature of the sequel is that the specific problem which gave rise to the choice of the Seven, the concern over the widows among the 'Hellenists', is not mentioned again. Does Luke assume that these seven men were capable, and handled the problem well, so that no further comment was needed? Did they do such a good job that there was no need to speak of neglect of widows again? Or should we assume that the story of Stephen is itself an answer to the real and underlying question posed by the situation; and that the answer is given in a format rather different from what we may have expected? It is time to turn more specifically to the story of Stephen himself as the most well-known representative of the Seven.

Stephen

Stephen has a special place among the early believers and among the Seven. His name is first among those chosen and the rest of chapters six and seven focus on his story. But who is Stephen? What do we know about him? He has a Greek name, as do the other seven men chosen. All seven, evidently, were Hellenised Jews, or Jews from the Diaspora. Although Luke is not explicit on the matter, we may assume from the names alone that the choice of the Seven, as well as the choice of Stephen reflects a desire on the part of the church to maintain unity in the early congregation, and to keep Hellenist, or Diaspora Jews and Palestinian Jews together. Only one of the Seven, Nicolas, is specifically noted as a convert to Judaism, a proselyte (proseluton Antiochea, 6.5). Perhaps we may then assume that the other six were of Jewish descent, or ethnic Jews. Indeed, the story of Stephen appears to mark an increase of believers among the 'Hellenist' Jews, for we hear of Stephen interacting with adherents of the Synagogue of Freedmen (Libertinoi), a Latin-based title referring to former slaves who have returned to Jerusalem, coming from North Africa (Cyrene, Alexandria), and from Asia Minor, especially Cilicia in the Roman empire (Acts 6:9). Because of

their experience with enslavement, they may have maintained a special attachment to Jerusalem as 'mother' city.

These Diaspora Jews cannot refute Stephen's claims, his presentation of the Word of God (Acts 6:7) reinforced by signs and wonders (Acts 6:8); they end up accusing him falsely of blasphemy against Moses and against God (Acts 6:12), against the holy place (Jerusalem and the temple), the law (Acts 6:13), and against the customs handed down from Moses (Acts 6:14). An analysis of Stephen's speech in self-defence would take us beyond the scope of the present discussion, but we do note that his presentation may be understood as a reflection of his prior training, perhaps with Jesus himself; there are clear echoes of Jesus' own words on the temple and apocalyptic pronouncements (Mt 24). Church tradition claimed that Stephen was one of the seventy sent out by Jesus himself (Lk 10:1ff.). Acts 7 presents him as an eloquent evangelist and preacher, so effective that he spearheaded a period of intense persecution of the community. He himself became its first martyr.

Stephen's defence may well have had a decisive impact on Paul, whose work will dominate the book from chapter thirteen on. While initially it provoked Paul's participation in a fierce persecution (Acts 8:1), Stephen's understanding of Judaism, the law, the temple and the role of Christ will find clear echoes in Paul's later teachings. Is it possible that Luke has mentioned Stephen first as an prelude to Paul, who is to be the 'apostle to the Gentiles', and real hero of this book of Acts?

Stephen's Qualification: 'full of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom'

We learn much about Stephen from a series of descriptive phrases applied to him in these chapter. We may certainly assume that the couplet given with the apostles' qualifications for the seven as being ἄνδρας ἐξ ὑμῶν μαρτυρουμένους ἑπτὰ, πλήρεις πνεύματος καὶ σοφίας, 'seven men from among you who are reputed to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom' (Acts 6:3), applies to Stephen par excellence; these conditions provide the basis for the choice of the Seven. With Stephen's name first on the list, we may assume that he was outstanding in this regard. This is evident also from recurrence of the phrase applied to Stephen himself in Acts 6:5 and Acts 6:10, and Acts 7:55. We begin our study of the two qualifications by taking the two terms separately, before looking at how these qualifications might be regarded jointly.

'Full of the Holy Spirit'

The first of these conditions is the least problematic. Throughout Acts Luke emphasises the presence of the Spirit as distinctive of the Christian community, its source of power and joy, and of miracles of healing, its guidance in evangelism, in making decisions and choosing leaders. Acts begins with the feast of Pentecost, the outpouring of the Spirit, when the Counsellor promised by Jesus made his presence known by flames of fire. From this time on the Apostles carry out their work full of the Holy Spirit, (ἐπλήσθησαν πάντες πνεύματος ἁγίου, Acts 2:4), as a holy inspiration to speak effectively, evident already in Peter's sermon, his interpretation of Jesus' life, death and resurrection (Acts 2:14-36). In that preaching we note fulfilment of Jesus' own promise, that the Holy Spirit would bring his words to remembrance, and give words and wisdom that none of their adversaries could resist (Jn 14:26; Lk 21:12-15).

Some commentators differentiate fullness of Spirit (as in Acts 6:3, using the adjective πλήρεις), from being filled with the Spirit, as in Acts 4:8 (using the participle), "then Peter, filled (πλησθεὶς) with the Spirit, said...", or the verb ἐπλήσθησαν in Acts 4:31 or 5:17 (Williams 1990, 118). The verbal form represents the fullness (of the Spirit) in specific events, like the inspiration of speech, as with the tongues of fire which indicated the filling by the Holy Spirit (γλῶσσαι ὡσεὶ πυρὸς καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐφ' ἓνα ἕκαστον αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν πάντες πνεύματος ἁγίου Acts 2:3-4, ; see also Acts 13:52, ἐπληροῦντο). Grammatically, the adjective πλήρεις expressing 'fullness' in Acts 6:3 indicates a state, or condition, and may point to an aspect of a person's character or condition, or an ongoing state of possession by the Spirit and endowment with spiritual gifts, as also Jesus himself, full of the Holy Spirit (πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου) was led by the Spirit into the desert (Lk 4:1). Use of the verb ἐπληροῦντο, on the other hand, as in Acts 13:52, may refer to

a more temporary possession, as also in Acts 2:2-4, "Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled (ἐπλήρωσεν) the whole house where they were sitting." Yet we note that the net effect is the same. Those 'filled with the Spirit' act or speak according to the leading of the Spirit. As part of the community which follows Christ and enjoys the presence of his Spirit, they demonstrate that Spirit in what they do and say. Fullness of spirit, as ongoing effective possession by the Spirit, would certainly be needed so that the men appointed would have the gift to administer the fund.

The Holy Spirit in the Scriptures

In the OT the Spirit of God is symbolised by breath, wind, a dove, the finger of God, or fire. Already at the creation (Gn 1:2), God's spirit represented a sustaining agent of life (see also Pss. 33:6; 104:30; 147:15-18). And throughout the OT the Holy Spirit was noted for inspiration of prophecy (Ellwell 2001, 568-573). Hopes for the messianic age included a new spirit of prophecy. Ezekiel associates coming of a new covenant with the presence of God's spirit (Ez 37:14), "I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken"; see also Ez 37:26-28, and Jer. 31:31-33. And Isaiah's prophetic words (61:1-2), "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor," are clearly echoed in Jesus' words (Lk 4:18), "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed."

In the NT, Jesus took up his ministry in the power of the Spirit (recalling Is 42:1; also seen from Lk 4:14: "Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit"). He presented himself as one anointed for power over evil, but also to suffer, as Jesus himself recognised with the words (of Mk 10:45), "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Jesus would himself ascend to heaven, but promised the Holy Spirit to his followers as Comforter and Counsellor (παράκλητος), especially in Jn 14:16-17, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you." The Holy Spirit would guide the disciples into truth (as in Jn 16:13-14; see also Jn 15:26-27; Acts 1:2), and help them remember his words (Jn 14:26), "But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

The Holy Spirit is presented as a person, as at Acts 5:3 where Peter asks Ananias how he could have lied to the Holy Spirit? The presence of the Spirit is known from signs like the blowing of a mighty wind, flames of fire and speaking in tongues (Acts 2:2-4). In the NT the Holy Spirit is presented as God's gift (Jn 3:34), but also the giver of gifts, whether of tongues, prophecy, healing and prayer (Acts 19:1-6; 1 Thes 5:19; Eph 2:18; Rom 8:26). Paul explains in 1 Cor 12:4-11, "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit." And these gifts are given to believers for building the church (Eph 4:3-4; Rom. 14:17).

Our brief excursus on the role of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures gives the important context for Stephen as he is described, 'full of the Holy Spirit'. This helps us particularly to understand his gifts as revealed in Acts, in healing, preaching and prophecy, and his deep insight into the meaning of the Scriptures, which may well evidence the Spirit's reminding him of Jesus' own teaching.

Stephen: 'Full of Wisdom'

Assuming that the story of Stephen points to the office of deacon, commentators have specified the type of wisdom indicated here as a practical one, meaning that the Seven would handle money and resources wisely. Scholarly discussion of Biblical wisdom also accents the Israelites as having no patience with speculative, abstract wisdom. Accordingly, the wisdom of Stephen would certainly not be the wisdom of an intellectual, or speculative variety! But we need to ask whether the distinction between practical and theoretical wisdom is relevant here.

Stephen is presented as a worker of signs and miracles, and especially eloquent in defending the new faith in Jesus. The role of wisdom gets repeated attention in Acts 6:3; 6:10; 7:10; and again

in 7:22. In both 6:3 and 6:10 it is mentioned in combination with the Spirit. Is Luke thinking of a wisdom inspired by the Holy Spirit? Does 'fullness of wisdom' mean that Stephen had the 'gift of wisdom' or the 'spirit of wisdom', as Joshua is described (Nm 27:16-20; see Marshall 1980, 126-127), and also Joseph, or Daniel (Helleman 2007, 62-91)? From the opening mention of 'Hellenists' and 'Hebrews', and our understanding of the pressing need for which these men are appointed, it is certainly possible that ethnicity, language and cultural factors contributed to the problem for which the seven were appointed, in which case we also need to think of wisdom as it might support their handling of that issue.

Wisdom in the Scriptures

The meaning of wisdom is not as self-evident or well-known as the role of the Holy Spirit, so it is useful to give a brief summary of wisdom as an important theme in the Scriptures. The OT discussion of wisdom indeed emphasised its role not in theoretical but in practical matters, as a condition of success, giving the ability to do what is right, and get desired results. But we need to begin with wisdom as an attribute of God, and one that God gives to his creatures as he pleases, as Job recognised (Jb 12:13), "To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his." Similarly Dn 2:20, "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. ... He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning." But like Daniel (Dn 2:22), Job realized that God's wisdom is inscrutable (Jb 28:12-21). Prv 2:6 affirms wisdom as the gift of God to those who seek it, "For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding"; similarly, Eccl 2:26, "To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness." Human wisdom is a gift from God given for human skill, as in the building of the tabernacle, for which God himself gave wisdom to men like Bezaleel of the tribe of Judah (Ex 28:3; and 31:2-3, 6).

Human wisdom, as such, is often at odds with divine wisdom, especially when it comes with cunning or crafty words (2 Sm 13:3). Indeed, wisdom which has no respect for God is doomed to failure and punishment, as in Prv 12:2, "A good man obtains favour from the Lord, but the Lord condemns a crafty man." When the OT term 'wisdom' represents insight and understanding, it calls for following God's ways. Insight is closely linked with obedience, as in Jer 9:23-24, "This is what the Lord says: 'Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight.'" While purely human wisdom leads to grief, divine wisdom leads one on the path to the good life (1 Cor 1:19-20; Ellwell 2001, 1278).

As king, Solomon was renowned for his wisdom, shown in discernment and fair judgement; this was an answer to his own prayer at the beginning of his rule (1 Kgs 3:9-12), "So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" (see also 1 Kgs. 3:28, and 4:29). There is some evidence that in Israel, as at the royal courts in Egypt and Babylon, a professional band of wise men or women were consulted on important matters; we detect that in Jeremiah's reference to the counsel of the wise (Jer 18:18), and reference to the wise men of Edom (Ob 8), or wise woman of Tekoa (2 Sm 14:2). Yet the sages were often found wanting, and the Israelites recognised their need for a messianic king, the wonderful counselor, who would judge without favouritism, as in Is 9:6, or 11:2: "The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him, the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."

Wisdom literature places a different accent on wisdom, for it emphasises the fear of God, and humility in keeping his commandments; Job 28:27 cautions, "The fear of the Lord that is wisdom" (see also Prv 9:10, or Ps. 111:10). Similarly, Dt 4:6: "Observe them (the laws) carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations." Prv 1:7 tells us, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline." If wisdom belongs rightfully to God, then the practice of wisdom must respect God above all. But we also find an accent on God's creation of the universe as a work of wisdom, as in Prv 3:19, "By wisdom the Lord laid

the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place"; similarly, Ps 104.24, "How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all." This is the context in which we also find wisdom personified, as in Prv 8:22, anticipated in Prv 1:20-33, where Lady Wisdom is presented as calling aloud in the streets of Jerusalem. Wisdom's affirmation of her presence at the creation is well-known (Prv 8:22ff.), even though her specific role (as 'craftsman') has presented many challenges for interpretation: "The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old ... Then I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence" (Prv 8:22, 30). With these words Lady Wisdom gives her credentials, for she is not to be ignored.

With respect to the NT presentation we note that wisdom is closely associated, if not actually embodied in Christ. From youth Jesus is said to have grown in wisdom; Luke 2:40 tells us, "And the child ... was filled with wisdom"; he also "grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men" (Lk 2:52; see also Mt 13:54, and Mk 6:2). Jesus consciously presented himself in terms of wisdom: "The Queen of the South will rise at the judgement with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here" (Mt 12:42); see also Mt 11:19, "wisdom is proved right by her actions", and Lk 7:35, as well as Lk 11:31.

Paul develops this theme in what may be called 'wisdom Christology', speaking of Christ, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3). This wisdom Christology is dynamic, taking us right back to the creation, as in Col 1:15-16, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him." Indeed, Christ is the wisdom of God: "but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24).

Thus Christ is also the source of the wisdom of his followers, as Paul affirms in 1 Cor 1:30: "Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God"; see also Jas 1:5, and 2 Pt 3:15. Leaders need that wisdom (as we know from Acts 6:3), but it is just as important for all believers, as Paul presents the prayer that "God fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding" (Col 1:9); see also Eph 1:8-9, and Jas 3:13. And we find the remarkable statement of Paul, that God dispenses his wisdom through the church (Eph 3:10): "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms." Human wisdom cannot approximate the divine wisdom embodied in Christ. From the human perspective the cross of Christ was shameful (Rv 5:12). Yet Paul explains that "God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise" (1 Cor 1:17); for human understanding God's wisdom is foolishness (1 Cor 1:19ff. and 2 Cor 1:12). Thinking of the arrogance of Greek wisdom, with its focus on superior reason and intellect, Paul knows human wisdom to be limited, incapable of bringing the happiness and salvation which it pretends to offer.

In bringing this understanding of the theme of wisdom in Scripture to bear on the portrayal of Stephen, we need hardly ask whether human or divine wisdom is to be understood. As Stephen possessed it, wisdom was clearly a gift of God, given not for a specific skill (as in the OT account of building the tabernacle), but as one of the gifts needed in building the church. It would have included discernment of good and evil, and as such it pointed to obedience, the fear of God, and a desire to walk in his ways. We must recognise, further, the extent to which this wisdom of Stephen contradicted human wisdom, but embodied rather the wisdom of Christ "who came not to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many".

Coincidence of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom in Scripture

Up to this point we have examined the two conditions for the seven as applied to Stephen, primarily as two separate attributes, understood individually. But we need to ask, further, whether

there is more to what is being said, whether another, deeper meaning might be indicated by the specific conjunction of the terms with use of *καὶ* :

ἄνδρας ἕξ ὑμῶν μαρτυρουμένους ἐπτά, πλήρεις πνεύματος καὶ σοφίας, “seven men from among you who are reputed to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3).

Before investigating the coincidence of the two terms in Acts 6:3 by turning to specific exegesis of this text, it is useful to survey briefly other passages in the rest of Scripture, both OT and the NT, where discussion of the Holy Spirit overlaps with reference to wisdom. *Prima facie* such passages should be of great help in determining the meaning in Acts as well. Outstanding in that regard is Dt 34:9, referring to the spirit of wisdom given to Joshua because Moses laid hands on him, when he appointed Joshua to follow him in leading the Israelites (Nm 27:16-20). Somewhat similar is the wisdom ascribed to Joseph (Gn 41:38-39, on which see Acts 7:10) and Daniel (Dn 4:8, 5:11, and 15-16), for both are also described as having the Spirit of the most holy God.

The Holy Spirit is associated with wisdom shown in special skills, as in special gifts of craftsmanship needed to build the tabernacle, as was noted above. But more relevant for our topic are the messianic prophecies of a king, as in Is 11:2, “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.” Similarly, “my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations” (Is 42:1).

Less well-known is the association of the Spirit with wisdom in post-exilic or ‘wisdom literature’, both canonical, and apocryphal books like the Wisdom of Solomon, or Ecclesiasticus, associated with Hellenistic Judaism. This literature is highly significant for our topic, because numerous passages show an important broadening of the conception of the Holy Spirit, and witness to the coincidence of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. The Spirit is presented as the divine agent in transforming instructions for living (from Torah) into reality, as in Ps 51:10-12, “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.” A similar coincidence is found in Ps 104:25-30, “in wisdom you made them ... when you send forth your spirit they are created.” Such a description of wisdom in post-exilic literature is reminiscent of the role of the Logos (representing natural law, or basic principles of creation) in Stoic philosophy and Middle Platonism as it influenced Hellenistic Judaism, especially through Philo.

Already in the book of Job we note that the human spirit, as the breath of God, is said to give understanding (Jb 32:8). Such a statement clearly reflects a post-exilic view of the Spirit and wisdom: “But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding.” Other passages, from both canonical and apocryphal books, present wisdom as an aspect of God’s power and his agent in creation, with attributes also assigned to the Holy Spirit in the OT; for example, she is said to proceed from his mouth and cover the earth with a mist at creation.

Some of the clearest references to wisdom identified with the Spirit, and wisdom as full of the Spirit, are given in the Wisdom of Solomon, from the first chapter (1:6), “Wisdom is a spirit friendly to humanity, though she will not let a blasphemer’s words go unpunished.” Most famous is the passage in Wisdom of Solomon 7:21-26, “And now I understand everything, hidden or visible, for Wisdom, the designer of all things, has instructed me. For within her is a spirit intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, incisive ... unperturbed, almighty, all-surveying, penetrating, all intelligent, pure and most subtle spirits. For Wisdom is quicker to move than any motion; she is so pure, she pervades and permeates all things. She is a breath of the power of God, pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty.” And we also note the virtual identification of Wisdom not just with a spirit, but with God’s Holy Spirit, in 9:17-18, “And who could ever have known your will, had you not given Wisdom and sent your holy Spirit from above? Thus have the paths of those on earth been straightened and people have been taught what pleases you, and have been saved, by Wisdom.”

As an important source of wisdom this literature presents the Spirit working through Torah, to give insight to simple believers. This view is anticipated in Ez 36:26-27, “I will give you a new

heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." And it may well be expressed in passages like Ps 104:25-30, "in wisdom you made them ... when you send forth your spirit they are created." Such an association of understanding, wisdom, and insight with the Spirit of God, expands the role of the Spirit far beyond that of prophecy or other specific skills.

There are some faint echoes of this association in the gospels, especially in the words of Jesus in Lk 12:10-12, promising wisdom for his disciples when they are under attack, "When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say" (especially Lk 12:11). This passage has considerable relevance for our story of Stephen.

With the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, many gifts were given, among which was wisdom, as Paul explains in 1 Cor 12:8 "To one there is given through the Spirit the message (or word: logos) of wisdom, to another the message (or word: logos) of knowledge by means of the same Spirit." These gifts of the Spirit are given for the common good (12:7). As we know from 1 Cor 2:4, the work of the Holy Spirit is characterised by both power and wisdom, "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power"; see also 1 Thes 1:5, "our gospel came ... with power, and with the Holy Spirit." According to 1 Cor 2:6-16 the Spirit reveals to us the secret divine wisdom that is hidden from the powers of this world: "Who knows the thoughts of God but the spirit of God" (2:9-10)? And recalling the theme of Hellenistic Judaism, Paul reminds Timothy that the Spirit works through the Scriptures to give wisdom (2 Tm 3:16-17), "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

From such passages, as background for understanding the two conditions given for the seven, and for the appointment of Stephen as outstanding among them, we receive useful guidance in understanding the conjunction of the Spirit and wisdom. It would appear that we should understand this not simply in terms of the 'spirit of wisdom' as a character trait, but recognise a specific conjunction of the Holy Spirit in giving wisdom as one of her most precious gifts, giving unprecedented understanding of God's will, as the path to be followed by those who would discover life and joy in pleasing God.

Grammatical Considerations - use of καὶ

We have examined the two important attributes applied to Stephen separately, and also looked at the possible meaning of the specific conjunction of the terms with use of καὶ-ἄνδρας ἐξ ὑμῶν μαρτυρουμένους ἐπτά, πλήρεις πνεύματος καὶ σοφίας, 'seven men ... full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom' (Acts 6:3). The preferred interpretation of the passage must at the very least be shown to be in agreement with grammatical analysis, if not also upheld by the grammatical structures. So we need to ask, just exactly how is the conjunction καὶ to be understood? Although most translations assume use of καὶ for a simple connection of two elements, we realize that other possible functions present themselves: καὶ as explicative (or exegetical, where the second term gives precision to the first), and in the sense of hendiadys (where the second terms is presented as a variant of the first, 'two as one').

None of these three options is altogether acceptable as such. While the first option is most often implemented, the close association of the Spirit and wisdom in post-exilic literature counts demands that we reconsider a simple conjunction; passages cited above from the Wisdom of Solomon 7:21-26, and 9:17 clearly reflect wisdom as an aspect of God's power and his agent in creation, with attributes also assigned to the Holy Spirit in the Psalms and Job. The second option is less desirable because the early chapters of Acts emphasise the presence of the Holy Spirit as the defining character of the early church. If use of καὶ in Acts 6:3 is to be read as an example of hendiadys, as in the third option, the expression "full of the spirit and of wisdom" has to be translated (and taken to mean) 'the spirit of wisdom', or perhaps (reversing the order of words

joined by kai), 'the wisdom which is that of the Spirit', which may also be translated as 'spiritual wisdom', or 'spiritual insight, as wisdom', a usage which appears to assume a prior, underlying contrast or distinction of the two concepts, the Holy Spirit 'at odds' with wisdom, now integrated through hendiadys. Indeed, commentators do offer translations such as: 'spiritual wisdom', the 'spirit of wisdom', or 'wisdom qualified by the Holy Spirit'. These formulations are objectionable for the accent on wisdom 'at the expense of' the Holy Spirit, as it were, an accent which cannot be substantiated from the Greek text.

Perhaps a solution can be found by examining a parallel passage on the Holy Spirit and wisdom, one to which we have already given some attention, 1 Cor 12:8: "To one there is given through the Spirit the message (or word) of wisdom, to another the message (or word) of knowledge by means of the same Spirit." Discussing the gifts of the Spirit, Paul mentions that they are given for the common good through one and the same Spirit, for the same God works in all. In that context he mentions that the Spirit gives a message or word of wisdom (λόγος σοφίας), as well as a message of knowledge, alongside other gifts (1 Cor 12:5-11). Thus (a communication of) wisdom is clearly presented as a gift of the Spirit. The conjunction kai is not used, but a conjunction of wisdom with the Holy Spirit is implied; and the conjunction, if understood to be present, would have to be of the third kind (hendiadys), taking 'wisdom' as primary term with the relationship with the Spirit as the dependent genitive. This means that wisdom should be specifically understood as 'wisdom' of/given by the Spirit; indeed, the relationship in 1 Cor 12:8 is specified as given through the Spirit (διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος). As a gift, wisdom would presumably parallel the other gifts of the Spirit, as they are mentioned here (faith, miracles, tongues), or in the important listing of fruits in Gal 5:22-23 (peace, joy, love ...).¹

Conclusions on Stephen as 'full of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom'

What are the implications of our discussion, scriptural and grammatical? Comparison with post-exilic and wisdom literature encourages consideration of an equivalence of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. The context in Acts 6, as one of the results of the Pentecost event, would preclude understanding the conjunction to indicate the 'spirit of wisdom'. Even so, if the expression 'full of the Spirit and wisdom' is understood against the background of wisdom literature, one could reasonably affirm that such a meaning is not totally excluded. A different reading can be proposed from examination of parallels, namely the discussion of 1 Cor 12, where wisdom (or expression/logos of wisdom) is presented as a gift of the Spirit. Post-exilic wisdom literature indicates clearly that Israelites of that period did not typically understand an opposition between wisdom and (God's) Spirit; and this means that we should not expect the reference to wisdom alongside the Spirit in Acts 6:5 and 6:10 as indication of a particular type of wisdom (i.e. practical vs. theoretical or speculative wisdom). Our conclusion at this point allows for two possibilities; of these the first, with exegetical use of καὶ, giving the translation: the 'Spirit which is wisdom', is the less desirable. If hendiadys is the option accepted, the translation which follows is: the 'wisdom of the Spirit', i.e. that given by the Spirit (excluding the more usual order, 'Spirit of wisdom' since this subordinates the Spirit to wisdom in a way excluded by the contemporary literary usage).

Stephen: other Descriptive Words

To come to greater precision on the meaning of 'καὶ' in bringing together the two factors or conditions of the appointment of the Seven, we look briefly at the other adjectives and word-combinations describing Stephen, since these could be expected to confirm the ascription of attributes already given, and expand our understanding of the character of this gifted man.

According to Acts 6:5 Stephen was chosen as a man 'full of faith and of the Holy Spirit', (ἄνδρα πλήρης πίστεως καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου). 'Fullness of the Spirit' is coupled with faith also in the description of Barnabas (Acts 11:24), "He [Barnabas] was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord" (note, however, that here the two terms are reversed). Both in Acts 11:24 and 6:5, 'fullness' is expressed by the adjective (as also in 6:3); the first reference to faith specific to Stephen gives the noun πίστις, as also in Acts 3:16 "By

faith (πίστις) in the name of Jesus, this man ... was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him."

Just what does faith mean in this context? In Acts 3:16 faith is specified as 'faith in the name of Jesus', or faith 'that comes through Jesus', thus reflecting total reliance in him. This total reliance is evident also in Acts 14:9: "Paul ... saw that he had faith (πίστιν) to be healed," and at Acts 20:21 "... turn to God in repentance and have faith (πίστιν) in our Lord Jesus." Such faith is fostered by the word (preaching), discussion (Acts 2), and by signs, miracles, and healing (Acts 2:43 or Acts 4:4). Faith is clearly an element that can grow, for Peter refers to the heart purified by faith (Acts 15:9), and Luke mentions that "the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers" (Acts 16:5). Faith is essential for the life of the early congregation. Aside from reference to disciples as mathetai (Acts 6:1), we find the regular term for 'believers' as pisteuontes, using the participle with the same root, pistis, faith (Acts 5:14; see also 2:44, pantes hoi pisteusantes, all the ones who believed, i.e. those of 2:41, who welcomed/received his word, hoi apodexameno ton logon autou; and 4:32, plethos ton pisteusanton, 'the multitude of those who believed').

For the combination of 'fullness of the Spirit' and 'of faith', we should also examine whether the respective phrases are to be interpreted as referring to separate gifts, i.e. those of the Spirit and those of faith - an option not acceptable to the commentators (Williams, 1990 122). Or do we regard the two terms as representing a single idea, e.g. 'full of faith given by the Spirit'. At this point we must query the significance of the reversal of the two terms as they are attributed to Barnabas (Acts 11:24). Did Luke mean to speak of the faith/wisdom given by the Spirit? Or faith/wisdom that shows the presence/fullness of the Holy Spirit? Or does he simply mean to say that Stephen is full of divine enthusiasm (based on faith)? Here again it is probably safe to assume that, as in the above discussion on wisdom, Stephen's faith (in 6:5) is to be understood as a gift of the Spirit (as at Eph. 2.8, "by grace you have been saved through faith ... It is the gift of God"), or manifestation of the work of the Spirit in his life, as was his wisdom (vv. 3 and 10). We may even affirm his faith as exceptional, in that he follows Jesus, accepting the meaning of Jesus' life and death, and showing total reliance and trust to the point of being willing to risk his very life for Jesus. He does not halt in his defence even when he must have realised what the outcome could be. This closeness to Jesus is reinforced through the vision granted him before he is stoned to death.

'Full of God's Grace and Power'

A similar challenge is posed by the couplet describing Stephen in Acts 6:8, "Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people (πλήρης χάριτος καὶ δυνάμεως ἐποίει τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα μεγάλα ἐν τῷ λαῷ)." Grace, the element first named, is clearly an undeserved gift of God's mercy, kindness and goodness, effectively witnessed in healing and other miracles, but especially in the forgiveness of sin. Grace represents either God's favour to Stephen (see also 18:27, referring to belief through grace), or his being a gracious Christlike person (as in Lk 4:22, referring to the word of grace from Jesus' mouth). Stephen was certainly effective in preaching. In the present context grace may represent the favour received by Stephen; but because the reference follows immediately on mention of miracles attributed to him, it must also represent the grace which he passed on to others (though of course its source is in God himself, in Christ). The effect of that grace is evident in the radiance of his face when he begins his defence at the trial, and in his final prayer, echoing Jesus' own prayer, that God not hold this injustice against them.

With power we think of strength, boldness in doing the work of the church, and effectiveness in preaching, where weakness might be expected. Spiritual power is shown in miracles, for these, by definition, indicate something out of the ordinary. The disciples preach and perform miracles with boldness, not in their own strength; they receive encouragement and ability through the gifts of the Spirit.

The combination of grace and power reminds us of the apostles whose work was also characterised by signs and wonders (Acts 2:43; see also Acts 4:33, "With great power the apostles

continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all"). It has been suggested that the reference to God's grace and power for Stephen gives him a ranking equal to that of the apostles. The combination is certainly reminiscent of the passage on the apostles having power in witnessing to the resurrection, and boldness to speak word of God (Acts 4:31-33), "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. ... With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all." Grace is shown in generosity to the needy (4:33ff.), and power is witnessed in the miracles of healing (as in 4:16, "Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle").

Are the two aspects are to be taken individually, or together, meaning something like 'gracious power'? The combination is given in other passages, like 2 Cor 12:9, "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'" There the two would appear to be separate referents, grace and power; in Eph 3:7 however, they are intertwined, "I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power." Grace is given through divine power. Certainly the sequel to the choice of the Seven may be helpful, for as a man of grace and power, Stephen is portrayed in discussion of the faith with other Diaspora Jews, perhaps those who attended the same synagogue as himself; undaunted, he pursues his presentation of the gospel to the bitter end.

"His wisdom and the Spirit by whom he spoke"

Both of these aspects have already been presented, but they are given here (Acts 6:10) in reverse order, "they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke (καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυον ἀντιστῆναι τῇ σοφίᾳ καὶ τῷ πνεύματι ᾧ ἐλάλει)." Does this passage add to our understanding of the two elements given in 6:3?

It is of interest to note here the conjunction of 'the Spirit' and 'wisdom' is not given in terms of the conditions of the apostles in choosing those for help 'serve at tables'. The characteristics are used at this point to describe Stephen for a context not unconnected with the original problem for which that choosing was necessary, namely, the misunderstanding between Hellenist and Hebraic Jews, which turns out more exactly as misunderstanding and conflict among Hellenist Jews themselves; for we read in Acts 6.9, "Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called) Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These men began to argue with Stephen."

From the wording of this verse it appears that members of the synagogue of Freedmen (Liber-tini), or Jews from Cyrene and Alexandria as well as Cilicia and Asia, initiated the argument with Stephen. They were annoyed with Stephen's work, perhaps because it was done in the name and power of Jesus, testifying to his resurrection. However, when they interact with him they quickly discover that in their argumentation they are no match for him! And Luke explains the reason: Stephen does not speak his own words. The words he uses, words his opponents cannot refute, are words characterized by wisdom and the Spirit. They could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke. Thus we discover fulfilment of the words of Jesus in Lk 12:15.

The wisdom of Stephen's presentation apparently undermined the importance of the city of Jerusalem and of its temple as the focus of God's presence; for his listeners this was not just foolishness but, worse, blasphemy. Stephen's opponents were neither led to conversion by his presentation, or able to refute it. In their frustration their hearts were hardened. So they turned to false accusation, charging him with disrespect for the law, for Moses, and for the temple.

Acts 6:10 would thus appear to affirm our understanding that the factors of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, here shown to be crucial to Stephen's interaction with the Hellenists, are to be taken together, in combination. For Stephen here clearly exhibits Spirit-inspired or Spirit-given wisdom, the very same kind of wisdom indicated by Paul in 1 Cor 12:4ff., with his remarkable list of diverse kinds of service and gifts given by one and the same Spirit, placing the word of wisdom (λόγος σοφίας) at the head of the list, alongside the word of knowledge, with faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, discernment of spirits, speaking in different tongues, and

interpretation of tongues (1 Cor 12:8-10). Just like the apostles, Stephen has received the gifts of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom. In this way, too, Luke presents the remarkable profile of Stephen.

“His face like the face of an angel”

Luke’s presentation of Stephen, as one living close to God, is affirmed from the remark that his face was like the face of an angel (Acts 6.15). When accused of undermining the Mosaic law and traditions, and about to defend his position for the Sanhedrin, Stephen appears to this body with his face radiant like that of an angel. The remark is important, for the radiance of his face is reminiscent of the radiance of Moses when he came down the mountain with the stone tablets (Ex 34:29ff.). That radiance, reflecting divine glory, is explained from Moses’ conversation with God on Mount Sinai. Understanding this radiance as affirmation for Stephen’s cause, we note a divine irony, for it turns the tables on the situation of the Sanhedrin gathering. The Jews are accusing Stephen of undermining the Mosaic tradition, not recognizing that before them stood one whose radiance should have reminded them of Moses. Stephen is divinely inspired for this defence, and his cause affirmed all the more from his final vision before he succumbs to stoning, reassuring him of the risen Christ, as a special gift while enduring such attack.

“Full of the Holy Spirit... [he] saw the glory of God”

“But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit (πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου) looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God (δόξαν θεοῦ) and Jesus standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55). This is the third time that Stephen is said to be full of the Holy Spirit, showing not only the strong work of the Holy Spirit in the community, but more specifically, in Stephen himself. Stephen clearly fulfils the purpose of the Spirit’s presence at the beginning of the Christian church, signalling an entirely new period in the history of God’s covenant, a fulfilment of the predictions of Joel and Jeremiah. As at the beginning of Stephen’s speech, Luke affirms the active presence of the Holy Spirit once more at its end. Stephen’s defence itself shows that he was well acquainted with the teaching of Jesus; and as Jesus himself promised, the Spirit has brought the words of Christ to remembrance for him.

But there is more. Stephen must have recognised the extreme anger of the Hellenist Jews when they seized him, to bring him before the Sanhedrin (6:12). But he does not stop his argument, or retrace his way; nor does he make any real attempt to conciliate his opponents, or moderate his position. As a result he is headed for martyrdom, and he may well have sensed that from the reaction of the crowd at his final words, “You stiff-necked people! ... You always resist the Holy Spirit!” (7:51). Luke tells us, “they were furious, and gnashed their teeth at him” (7:54). Yet at this point Stephen’s words are affirmed, and before he is dragged out of the city and stoned to death, he is given a very special gift, as consolation and encouragement, with the vision of heaven opened, the glory of God, and Jesus at his right hand. In this way the Spirit confirms him, giving him the comfort and assurance of God’s presence and of the continuing work of Jesus, in spite of his own imminent demise.

At this point the portrayal of Stephen changes, as he gives his final prayer, before going to sleep, as it were (Acts 7:59-60), “While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he fell asleep.” In this final prayer we see a very different aspect of the presence of the Spirit for Stephen, who is shown taking on the likeness of Jesus himself when he suffered on the cross; the final words of Jesus are echoed here (Lk 23:34), “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” and (Lk 23:46), “Father into your hands I commit my spirit”. In this way Stephen makes intercession for his opponents, as Jesus had done for those guilty of his crucifixion, and we recognise a special indication of the grace that has been granted Stephen for this moment. Nor is his death, apparently, a difficult one, for Luke speaks of his ‘falling asleep’.

But if this is the interpretation of Stephen’s final hour, it also would appear that his opponents are guilty of the accusation made against them by Stephen (Acts 7:51), when he calls them stiff-necked, always resisting the Holy Spirit, quoting Is 63:10-12. This is a serious accusation, recalling

Jesus' reminder to the Jews that they not quench the Spirit, for blasphemy against the Holy Spirit would certainly not be forgiven (Mt 12:22-45, especially 31-32). Perhaps it is not surprising that these Hellenist Jews finally become irrationally angry with Stephen.

The Meaning and Significance of these Qualifications

Having examined the various phrases attributed by Luke to Stephen, we realize that he embodied fully the kind of person needed for the task assigned to the Seven, for fullness of the Spirit is mentioned no less than three times, while wisdom is specifically attributed at least once. He was clearly a person well qualified to address the problem now threatening to divide the early Christian church. Even so, there is at least one important obstacle for this conclusion, for the appropriateness of this assessment depends on our understanding of the issue raised at the beginning of Acts 6, which mentions not only the neglect of widows, but the division which loomed between Hellenist and Hebrew 'Judaic' Christians. Elsewhere in the New Testament we hear more about the needs of widows, particularly in the epistles (as at 1 Tm 5), but not in the sequel of Acts 6 and 7 here. The account of Stephen devotes no further attention to the question of fair treatment of Hellenist widows. What we do find is a discussion of Stephen's conflict with Hellenist Jews in Jerusalem, worshiping at the synagogue of Diaspora Jews. May we then assume that this was the true underlying issue troubling the early church, the issue which necessitated the choice of Seven?

Our discussion of the two conditions, fullness of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, noted their coinciding first in the list of qualifications of the Seven (6.3). The first of these terms presents no real problem. Although the work of the Spirit is ultimately as inscrutable as the work of God, we know the importance of the Spirit for the early stages of church growth; every chapter of Acts attests to that. Fullness of the Holy Spirit allowed Pentecost witnesses to speak the same language and be marked with the tongues of fire; the newly born congregation of believers is also led by the Spirit. Far more challenging is the meaning of fullness of wisdom. We need to examine, what kind of wisdom? Was it specifically a practical type of wisdom? And if so, are we thinking of 'practical' rather than 'theoretical' (in the Aristotelian sense) or 'speculative' (in the Gnostic sense) wisdom? Or are we thinking of the practical wisdom shown in the gift of the Holy Spirit for Bezaleel's work of designing the tabernacle? And we need to ask why wisdom is important enough to be mentioned so specifically in this context? Are we speaking of the gift of wisdom, or of a 'spirit of wisdom' as this is attributed also to Joseph, Joshua, and Daniel?

Both historical contextual and grammatical exegetical analysis lead us to conclude that wisdom as it is considered here is specifically wisdom as a gift of the Holy Spirit. We have yet to determine why that gift is so important, and how that wisdom was to be implemented. Taking into consideration the limitations (or possibilities) of the grammatical structure, as well as the specific problem for which the choice of the Seven is to provide an answer, I would argue that the wisdom of the Seven is not only a matter of 'practical' wisdom needed to serve at tables and assure equitable distribution of resources, however important that particular task, one for which wisdom would certainly be needed, as an assignment of trust. Rather we recognise the root of the problem in the early Christian community, namely the first intrusion of the challenges of ethnicity, culture and language. The condition of wisdom is indispensable for such a complex issue. But when we note the sequel, describing the actual work performed by those chosen, especially Stephen and Philip, we find no further mention of the Seven no mention of the Seven waiting on tables, or distributing goods. The story immediately focuses on Stephen, as one who performs miraculous signs, and is shown doing the work of an evangelist, in discussion with Diaspora Jews. Luke remarks specifically on his wisdom (6.10) in the context of debate and defence of the faith among Diaspora Jews and in the Sanhedrin. Glowing with divine radiance Stephen shows keen insight into the history of the Jews. In his counter-accusation he charges his opponent Jews with misunderstanding the way of God and the role of Moses (7.51-53). What then are we to conclude about the type of wisdom attributed to him? Which of the options for the meaning of wisdom in Scripture should we assume? Is it a matter of skill? Discernment? Is it a matter of understanding and knowledge,

especially knowing the will of God? And fearing God? We are at least sure that in this context his wisdom is guided and qualified by the Holy Spirit.

A second consideration for understanding the real nature of the problem is the opening mention of 'Hellenist' and 'Hebrew' Jews. We have devoted some attention to the threat of Hellenisation for Judaism in the years prior to the birth of Jesus. The work of the Pharisees may be understood as an answer to that threat. From the gospels we know of the deep tensions between the Pharisees and Jesus. It was hardly a surprise that, together with the Sanhedrin, the Pharisees would feel equally antagonistic to followers of Jesus. From the story of Stephen we discover that this tension comes to a head in the synagogue of 'Hellenist' or Diaspora Jews. While we do not know all the specific factors involved in the relationship of Stephen with members of that synagogue, we may assume that the Apostles were well aware of the kind of tensions already dividing Hellenist and Hebrew Jews, between Palestinian Jews and those of the Diaspora.

τοῖς σεβομένοις

A similar issue would erupt for Peter in the call to visit Cornelius, preceded with the vision of all kinds of unclean animals which he was called to slaughter and eat (Acts 10-11). The original problem may well have been compounded with a general sense of hurt on the part of the Hellenist Jews in Jerusalem, because Palestinian Jews tended to look down on the latter, as not really measuring up to the full standards and demands of Torah. It is possible that specific attention of Christians in caring for the widows among the 'Hellenists' would have been regarded as increasing the threat to the already tenuous status of these Hellenists in Jerusalem. This may also explain the vehemence of their attack on Stephen. Given the rather explosive nature of the factors surrounding the care of Hellenist widows, it would be little wonder that the apostles recognised that those who would attend to the problem must be gifted with divine wisdom.

This understanding of the real issue is confirmed by what we know about Luke, the author of Acts. It is generally accepted that Luke was himself a proselyte to Judaism, coming from a Gentile background, from Diaspora communities. He may have been one of the 'God-fearing' Gentiles at the periphery of synagogues— φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν (Acts 10:2, 22; and 13:26); Acts 13:50 uses a comparable expression, "τὰς σεβομένας γυναῖκας τὰς εὐσχήμονας," with a similar phrase at 17:4, "τῶν τε σεβομένων Ἑλλήνων πλῆθος πολὺ," and 17:17, "τοῖς σεβομένοις". According to Christian tradition Luke was from Syrian Antioch, and would have been acquainted with the early Christian church there. As such, the tensions between Hellenist and Hebrew Jews would be of special interest to him.

In fact, we may go further by claiming that Luke could be expected to reflect concerns of Gentile Christians in this work, for as a major premise of the book he argues that the gospel was for the Gentiles as much as it was for Jews. The book of Acts was written ca. AD 62, before Paul died, certainly before the persecution of Nero (AD 64) and the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 66-70). Luke would have been well aware that all the Seven chosen in Acts 6 bore Greek names. From Stephen's defence before the Sanhedrin we know that he had good insight on the real divide between Christianity and Judaism, and in this regard anticipated the work of Paul. Indeed, much of the book of Acts focuses on Paul, as 'apostle to the Gentiles'. Even though at the end of Acts 7 Paul is said to be a young man, he may well have attended the very synagogue where Stephen debated with the Jews, and must have realized the incompatibility between what Stephen taught and the basic assumptions and religious outlook of Judaism. The drama of the book of Acts shows progress in the growth of the church, while she still enjoys the protection of civil authorities (as in Acts 18:12-17, presenting Gallio, who does not listen to charges against Paul); the church progresses in spite of opposition from Judaising adherents, who complain of the apostasy of followers of Jesus. The story of Stephen's encounter with Hellenist Jews and martyrdom at their hands provides a crucial transition from early development and growth of Christianity in Jerusalem, to the new focus on the inclusion of the Gentiles. From that perspective it is understandable why two chapters are devoted to the story of the Seven and Stephen.

Stephen may be taken as a true representative of the Hellenist Judaic community. While the apostles were known to continue attending temple services (Acts 3), representing themselves as

observant Jews who also proclaimed Jesus as Messiah, Stephen's interaction with members of a Hellenist synagogue prophetically anticipated the abolition of the temple (as had Jesus' own words in Mt 24:1-2), even though Stephen too must have realized that Jerusalem depended on the temple as focus of pilgrimage, and source of taxes brought by Diaspora Jews. For the Jews an attack on the temple was an attack on the livelihood of Jerusalem. When charged with speaking against Moses, Jerusalem, and the temple, Stephen did not oppose the charges in such a way as to be acquitted. He continued to focus, rather, on impending changes in worship. And in the heat of the moment only one verdict was possible: blasphemy. Stephen was headed for martyrdom.

A common way of reading Acts 6 in terms of the institution of the diaconate, has, I believe, skewed our understanding of the specific qualifications of Stephen and the seven. Denominations have different job descriptions and qualifications for the office of deacon. In Reformed churches the diaconate is defined with a special focus on tending to the needs of the poor and (materially) disadvantaged in the congregation, so that no one suffers unnecessarily. While elders are charged with attention to spiritual welfare, the deacons are to look to more 'practical' needs within the congregation. To fully understand the story of Stephen, we need to broaden our horizon of interpretation.

But finally, our understanding of the passage must be shown to be in agreement with grammatical analysis; or at least not contradicted by the grammatical structures. While the attributes applied to Stephen and the Seven can be understood individually, the conjunction of the two primary factors (fullness of the Holy Spirit and wisdom) in post-exilic literature supports our understanding of a specific conjunction of the terms in this passage. Although various interpretations of the use of *kai* are possible, our analysis supports the understanding of wisdom inspired by, or given by the Holy Spirit.

Thus we conclude, on the basis of both historical contextual and grammatical considerations that interpretation of the qualifications of 'fullness of the Spirit and of wisdom' in the sense of practical wisdom, is inadequate in reflecting what is at stake in these chapters. It does not do justice to the magnitude of the problem already looming on the horizon, and indicated in an initial way in this passage. More than any other, this very problem - namely the extent that conditions of the law of Moses, as interpreted in contemporary Judaism, be required also of new Christians - is to occupy the first generation of Christians, especially Paul, as apostle to the Gentiles. To deal with a problem of this magnitude and complexity, the Christian community would surely need clear guidance of the Holy Spirit, and that same Spirit would be much needed to give wisdom in implementing the freedom of the gospel. The controversy is a reality already in Acts 6. Stephen does not avoid it; rather he takes full advantage of the conflict as an opportunity to address the Sanhedrin as a body which might not otherwise hear the message. He angers them; he accuses them of killing the prophets, and hindering the Spirit, a charge they do not wish to hear. And he pays the ultimate price.

Conclusion: Stephen's qualifications for spiritual leadership

If Stephen, guided by the Holy Spirit, shows wisdom, which is a wisdom that leads him to confrontation and even to his death, is there any message in that for us today? We find him in the context of the early Christian church, where the Holy Spirit has been poured out, evidenced by speaking in tongues, preaching, prophecy, signs and wonders. The Spirit guides the church, appointing its leaders, and directing them in its mission, through teaching, miracles of grace and mercy, healing and hospitality. The Christian life is nothing less than life in the Spirit, and the gifts of the church are gifts of the Spirit. In fact, the church is altogether the work of the Holy Spirit, and its communion is based on the Spirit. The firm instruction given through Stephen is, "Do not quench the Spirit."

Different gifts of the Spirit are manifest, and varied roles of apostles, prophets and teachers clearly portrayed; these have not necessarily constituted distinct and separate ministries or offices of the church. The first official tasks designated were those of deacons and elders or overseers/bishops. But we had to ask ourselves whether the appointment of the Seven designated Stephen

or Philip as 'deacon'? They are chosen by the community, and commissioned by the apostles for 'serving at tables', to allow the apostles freedom to minister the word. Yet, full of the Spirit, they preach and perform miracles as well, and do so very effectively. Philip goes out as an evangelist; Stephen remains in Jerusalem, interacting with Diaspora Jews. And Stephen's preaching would make a profound impact on Paul. These men are not elders, or part of a council of elders (even on the model of a quorum of ten elders needed for any synagogue). They are appointed by the church for leadership in a time of concrete and specific need, probably motivated by the growing presence of Greek-speaking, or Diaspora Jews within the congregation. And the problem this presented was not a minor one. In fact, a constructive solution will do no less than pave the way for the inclusion of the Gentiles as full members within the Christian community, foreshadowed here by the inclusion of Nicholas the proselyte with the Seven.

Wisdom in charismatic context

Acts 6-7 reveals the inevitably challenges of growth for the Christian community; such challenges are not necessarily a bad thing. In Jerusalem, however, tensions already present within post-exilic Judaism were now rearing their head in the congregation. And the issue had linguistic, ethnic and cultural roots, and therefore promised to be difficult to resolve. It called for leadership sensitive to the leading of the Spirit, characterised by the gift of wisdom to deal successfully with such a troublesome issue. Wisdom was essential. Our own experience as missionaries in various contexts has shown that the evil one is never far away, attempting to undo what is gained in conviction and a new life where the church is growing, when people are coming to faith and lives are changed. We need to be doubly on our guard, so that the gain in freedom and truth will not be undermined; we must also be willing to witness to the truth, the work assigned by the Spirit, even if it hurts. Stephen was the first of the disciples to give his life, and he would not be the last.

In this connection, the example of Stephen and the Seven can encourage us, as we also experience a time of incredible growth of the church; and growth certainly brings its problems, also today. For Stephen 'fullness' of the Holy Spirit was clear from the ability to argue his case with Hellenists, from the angelic radiance of his face, and the conviction of his defence. For us today, the presence of the Holy Spirit is not an uncommon phenomenon, noted in prophecy, healing and exorcism. Church growth is closely associated with charismatic ministries and leaders, and the signs of the Holy Spirit are not missing: power encounter, prophecy, healing and exorcism. As we noted above, these issues in ministry, for the most part, have not been taken seriously by main-line churches, whether as a heritage from reluctance of missionaries to deal with these matters, or a general reluctance based on Westernised concepts of spirituality (Bongmba 2007, 114-119). Churches have been ready to proclaim the victory of Christ over demonic powers, but have not found constructive ways to interact with a traditional worldview to implement that victory in healing and for issues of witchcraft or demonic possession. Indeed, the charismatic ministries are attractive precisely for their emphasis on work of the Holy Spirit in healing. Jesus is presented as the 'great healer'.

What about the second important characteristic of the Seven, and of Stephen: his wisdom? Here we note that the situation is not as straightforward. The particular meaning of Stephen's wisdom had to be established from exegetical analysis, but I believe that our conclusion is certainly valid, that wisdom is one of the important gifts of the Spirit, given to individuals and to the church when it faces a complex and difficult situation. The problem faced by the early church involved complex matters of ethnicity, language and culture, complicated further by the pride which characterised Judaism since the time of the Maccabees and their victory over the Seleucid 'Hellenising' intruders. The Christian church of our own time, certainly in Africa, and particularly in Nigeria, faces problems which are no less daunting and complex, and the origins are not altogether unlike those facing the early Christians, issues of language, ethnicity, and the pride of tribalism.

In this connection we simply note, at this point, that wisdom has also been considered an important aspect of leadership within the context of African traditional societies. Historically,

local communities needed leaders who exhibited extraordinary insight, vision, and prophetic foresight to be able to lead their people, to warn them of impending danger or disaster, and to guide them on the many issues confronting them at any one time. While these leaders might be outstanding warriors, they also had to rule with fairness, justice, and wisdom. In his analysis of magic and witchcraft in the traditional Nigerian context Umar Danfulani has accented wisdom as a characteristic of traditional rulers, and recognised the presence of wise men and women acting as the philosophers of the time in giving advice to rulers, forming an intelligentsia, as it were (Danfulani 2007, 146-147, 150-152). That same kind of wisdom is still needed today, even though the context has changed dramatically in the course of the last century. Leadership, whether civil or spiritual, needs wisdom, especially as a matter of discernment of good and evil, disaster or success. Leaders need wisdom in knowing the will of God, and in the ability to guide others in His ways.

For Stephen the gift of wisdom meant that he listened closely to the guidance of the Spirit. Where others might have drawn back from the conflict, he continued his defence. Even when he realised where this was leading him, he held the course, full of the Spirit of grace and mercy, even praying for his opponents. Divine wisdom led him to death by stoning; it led Jesus to the cross. Thus it is clear that the wisdom given by the Holy Spirit presents us with an inversion of what is given in worldly wisdom. This is the divine wisdom, embodied in Jesus himself, who also came not to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom.

Is such wisdom also relevant for our time? While churches of the charismatic movement have majored in prophecy, healing and deliverance, we hear much less about wisdom. In this respect we can learn from the early apostles who recognised that newly appointed leaders be characterised by both the Holy Spirit and wisdom. In a time of growth, expansion is inevitably accompanied by tension, for people come into the church from varied backgrounds; even so, the church seeks to be one body, one family of God. In such a context leaders need much wisdom. We may think that divine wisdom is beyond our reach. Yet, if our analysis is correct, and wisdom is a gift, it means that those who are in need have only to ask for wisdom in prayer; for our God loves to give good gifts to those who ask.

καὶ κύριον ἁγίου

Note on the use of “καὶ”

1. As a simple conjunction, it connects two ideas placed side by side, as in Heb 1:1, “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways.” In this sense the meaning of the two conditions ‘fullness of the Holy Spirit’ and ‘fullness of wisdom’ would simply be taken as placed side by side, with no emphasis on mutual effect.
2. For use of καὶ as explicative (meaning: ‘that is’, or ‘namely’), or exegetical (‘that is to say’), one would expect the second word to give more precise information about the first; see, for example, 1 Cor 15:24, “... when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.” Here καὶ joins the expression translated literally as ‘the God and father’, but is sometimes translated as “the God who is also the Father”. A similar usage occurs in Jas 1:27, “Religion that God the Father accepts as pure and faultless is...”; also at 3:9, “With the tongue we praise our Lord (κύριον) and Father, and with it we curse men.” In Jas 1:27 the reference is to “God who is (our) Father”, but the parallel in 3:9 may indicate a distinction by mentioning κύριον, often used for Christ, alongside ‘father’; that distinction would be clearer if accompanied with the definite article. Similarly, 2 Cor 1:3 “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”; or 2 Cor 11:31, “The God and Father of the Lord Jesus”; and at Eph 1:3. In Acts 6:3 this second use of καὶ would have the intent of saying, “the Spirit who is wisdom”, or “the Spirit, namely wisdom”. This interpretation would tie in closely with the post-exilic emphasis on the close association of the Spirit with wisdom. So this option should not be dismissed out of hand, although one could object that this approach would accent the qualification of ‘fullness of wisdom’, while diminishing, as it were, the accent on ‘fullness of Spirit’. If we understand καὶ to indicate the meaning “Spirit that is wisdom”, we also diminish the Spirit as ‘Holy’. Although the adjective ἁγίου is not used here, it would appear to be understood from the context (and is given explicitly in 6:5).

3. Use of καὶ in the sense of hendiadys, would mean that two words are used to express what is essentially one idea; hendiadys literally (from the Greek root) points to one expression or concept expressed through two (words). Thus the first word joined by καὶ would have virtual identity of concept with the second. This usage also represents phrases where one of the concepts (usually the first) is dependent on the other (the second). Such usage of καὶ can circumvent use of a dependent genitive. A good example can be given from Lk 2:47, "Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers." The use of καὶ can certainly indicate that "they were amazed at the intelligence of his answers." Similarly, in his defence before the Sanhedrin Paul claims, "I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead" (Acts 23:6); literally the phrase has, 'the hope and the resurrection', but it is usually translated to refer to the 'hope of the resurrection'. The example of Acts 14:17 is a little different: "He provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with gladness." The final clause is also translated to indicate the 'gladness of food' because, as Paul reminds his listeners, God had given rain and crops so that the fruits of harvest, namely good food, would be available to them. From this example we see that the use of καὶ for hendiadys, giving the meaning 'the joy of food', and avoiding the dependent genitive (even though it does show up in translations) here, puts the word given last in the Greek ('gladness') ahead of its counterpart ('food', given first in Greek). Thus the translation takes the second term as the basic one in the expression 'gladness of food'; this may be contrasted with the example above from Lk 2: 47 'the intelligence of his answers', where the term 'intelligence' occurs first while the second term, 'his answers' (expressed by the dependent genitive in English) is second

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