

# Many Christians Claim Unbiblical Spiritual Gifts, Survey Finds

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A surprising number of Americans who said they were familiar with spiritual gifts identified ones that are not listed in the Bible as gifts, a new survey found.

About one-fifth (21 percent) of respondents who said they have heard of spiritual gifts claimed to have gifts such as a sense of humor, singing, health, life, happiness, patience, a job, a house, compromise, premonition, creativity, and clairvoyance – ones that are not among those deemed to be spiritual gifts in the passages of Scripture that teach about gifts, according to a Barna Group report released Monday.

The report is based on three nationwide surveys that included 1,006 adults in 1995; 1,003 adults in 2000; and 1,006 adults in 2008. In each survey, the first question related to spiritual gifts was limited to people who had described themselves as Christians. The follow-up question regarding what spiritual gifts they possessed, if any, was limited to people who said they had heard of spiritual gifts.

Overall, two-thirds (68 percent) of Americans who described themselves as Christian said they have heard of spiritual gifts.

Among the self-proclaimed Christians, an astounding 99 percent of evangelicals have heard of the term, which is far more than the 74 percent of non-evangelical [born again](#) Christians and the 58 percent of nominal Christians.

An “evangelical,” as defined by the Barna Group, meets the “born again” criteria of beliefs plus seven other conditions, which include saying their faith is very important in their life; believing they have a personal responsibility to share their religious beliefs about Christ with non-Christians; asserting that the Bible is accurate in all that it teaches, among other beliefs.

The most popular biblical spiritual gifts that respondents claimed to possess are teaching (9 percent), service (8 percent) and faith (7 percent). Encouragement (4 percent), healing (4 percent), knowledge (4 percent), and tongues (3 percent) followed the top three. The gift of leadership was named by only two percent of those interviewed.

When evangelical respondents were looked at alone, the survey found that they were significantly more likely than the general population and other faith segments to say they have biblical spiritual gifts.

Nearly one in three (28 percent) said they have the gift of teaching, 12 percent said they possess the gift of service, and 10 percent claimed to have the gift of encouragement.

In other findings, the Barna survey also found that 13 percent of American Christian adults claimed to have one or more charismatic gifts (e.g. healing, interpretation, knowledge, miracles, prophecy, tongues).

Looking at data over the past 13 years, the Barna report noted that the percentage claiming to have the gift of encouragement has grown from two percent in 1995 to six percent today.

Meanwhile, those who could not identify their gift rose from eight percent in 2000 to 13 percent today.

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[http://www.christianpost.com/Society/Polls\\_reports/2009/02/many-christians-claim-unbiblical-spiritual-gifts-survey-finds-09/print.html](http://www.christianpost.com/Society/Polls_reports/2009/02/many-christians-claim-unbiblical-spiritual-gifts-survey-finds-09/print.html)